I So as I was saying the study we’re doing is looking at how peoples experiences of community and their social life, how that is taking place as they’ve gotten older.

P Yeah and I do have, I’m not particularly sociable really, I have got a couple of very good friends and quite a lot of friendly acquaintances but I don’t think you tend to make friends so much, close friends, once you get older. You’re friends with people but it’s not the sort of deep friendships…

I So what kinds of people do you mean, when you say acquaintances who…

P Well, people that I meet, I belong to the royal horticultural society, which I call the garden club it’s simpler, and I know quite a lot of those and I mean we meet and we chat, we go out occasionally but that’s all.

I Right, so it’s not an intimate relationship, it’s just you know them.

P Mmm, and I don’t have relatives around here. I’ve got two sisters in Scotland and nieces and nephews and I’ve got a niece who lives in Fairham but otherwise I don’t have any relatives and my husband didn’t have any relatives at all, he was the last of the line.

I Oh, really?

P Mmm.

I And are you close to your family still? So your sisters…

P Yes, I mean we talk on the phone and I go up to Scotland and my middle sister used to come down every summer and stay but her husband hasn’t been well so they’d always drive down and they won’t hear of flying or coming up by train because they wouldn’t have the car and without the car we’re lost so they haven’t been for two years. Whether they’ll come down next year I don’t know because my nieces daughter is expecting her first baby, which will be my sisters first great-grandchild and she will want to see that baby.

I And which one’s this? Which niece?

P The one in Fairham.

I Okay. Yeah.

P And she will want to come down and see that baby the minute it’s born, if not before.

I And do you see her more often because she’s fairly close.

P I see my niece, not a lot because she works and her husband works. She works in a doctors surgery part-time, but he is a train driver so he works shifts so, it’s difficult. But we talk on the phone and she checks I’m alright and when I’m not alright she comes to make sure I am.

I Right, yeah.

P And they’re both very into sport, so they spend weekends cycling and she still does some running, but she used to train, she’s run the London marathon a couple of times, but she’s given up I think, but she still runs.

I So even less time because she’s doing that!

P She might do it again, although I doubt it. Really.

I So can you, just as a way of gauging who you see on a daily basis. If you choose a recent day that you would have considered like a typical day, it could be yesterday if you like, or any other day, talk me through who you would have met or talked to in a typical day.

P I don’t… I’m not very… I mean I can have a day where I don’t really see anyone.

I Right.

P I mean I might go out and have a walk and say hello to whoever I meet but I mightn’t actually know them well enough to stop and say, ‘how are you, how is so-and-so and so-and-so’, if I go… I go shopping on Friday mornings usually and I go up on a taxi rider.

I What’s that?

P Well now, the taxi rider is, it’s run by Lewes City Council, CTLE, who have got…

I Yeah, Hillcrest.

P Yeah, that’s why I was at Hillcrest because they run a travel club and I go out with the travel club fairly regularly, so I see people then. But they also run the taxi-rider which you phone and say, ‘I would like to go to Meridian Centre about’, and they say, well you will be picked up at around say, 9.30am and you go to Meridian Centre and you say, I’d like to come back about 4.12pm so you’re picked up at about 11.20am. And there I regularly meet the same people and we talk.

I You mean at the Meridian Centre?

P I meet them on the coach and then when I go to the Meridian Centre I meet others.

I Others that you’ve met on the coach?

P Yes.

I Okay…

P So, I do that on a Friday, but I mean on a day like today I’m not going out because I’ve got some gardening to do, so I’ve talked to my neighbour across the road. I’ve phoned him because I knew that he would see you arrive. He says, ‘I’m a nosey old git’, but he does tend to sit and you know he watches, he knows when you go in and out and I knew that he would see the car and he’d see you come out and he would think, ‘now who is that because I don’t know them and she didn’t tell me she was having a visitor, and I hope she’s alright’,

I Okay, so he’s sort of keeping and eye out for…

P So, I phone and say, ‘I’ve got someone coming’, I hadn’t a clue what you looked like or anything, so I said, ‘you’ll park the car and I’ll tell you about it later’ and I also phone a friend around the corner in Roundtree Avenue to say, ‘Did you know they were opening a new tea room in Peacehaven?’.

I Oh right, okay.

P And she said, yes, her daughter-in-law had told her and she said, ‘we must go and try it when it opens’.

I Fantastic! So is that someone that you’ve met? This is someone round the corner, you’ve just met as a neighbour or a…

P Er, yes, her brother-in-law used to live just the other side of the hedge in Arundel Road. And I knew them, we knew them very well and Les’ met Joan, who lives in Roundtree there, but I knew her already because she used to work in the wool shop down Southcoast Road and I used to go in the wool shop so I knew her and then we just, we saw each other and we’ve become quite friends.

I Are you a knitter? Do you knit?

P Yes. Not a lot, but I do.

I Do you do that with other people, is that?

P Pardon?

I Do you do that on your own at home?

P Yes. I don’t knit and natter.

I No.

P I couldn’t. I’d either natter or knit.

I (laughing) Yes. Distraction.

P And I’m quite slow. So I’d feel self-conscious in a group of women who just sat. My sister sits and click-clacks all the time.

I Yeah, okay. It’s amazing, when people are really good at knitting they can do it almost unconsciously, I remember my gran used to do that.

P I used to knit quite a lot and then I stopped and I’ve only just recently re-started and I’ve not got into the rhythm of it properly yet.

I It’s a lovely thing to do. Okay, so we’ve talked a little bit about the people that you meet on a daily basis. So going back to the notion of community, what we call community, what do you think community means? What does it mean to you?

P Well, the people who live around you.

I Right.

P The whole sort of, not just this street or this end of Peacehaven but really all of Peacehaven.

I So, do you mean lots of people that you don’t necessarily know but who live in this area? Is that what you mean?

P I know quite a lot of people, but I don’t know, I’m not, I think it’s because I’m quite happy on my own. I don’t get worried or depressed. I mean, some people do get worried and depressed on their own, but I’m quite happy because I’ve never, ever been bored in my life. That sounds funny doesn’t it! But and I read a lot which is a solitary occupation and in my case if I’m really reading, the house could fall down and I wouldn’t notice. And I’ve always been like that.

I What, you get really absorbed in it?

P Yes, you get completely absorbed in it. And I wouldn’t, I don’t hear the phone, people could be talking around me, I haven’t a clue what they’re saying. That’s it.

I That’s lovely. So you give yourself over to it. So have there been any times where, maybe in the past, or somewhere else or here even, where you’ve felt a strong sense of community? Is it something you know?

P Yes. Since I tripped you just now, it’s perhaps the wrong time to say it, but last year I broke both my arms. I tripped in a pothole in Roundsea and I was carrying a bag and I took all the weight on my right hand and I broke my wrist. A fortnight later I came in from the hairdressers and there was one rose left in the garden and I came in and got the scissors and went out to cut it and I turned awkwardly at the door, I don’t know what happened and my foot slipped off the step and as I fell I thought, I mustn’t break that arm again and broke my other one, so I spent a fortnight in hospital and four weeks in Medal Lodge because they wouldn’t let me come home. Because I was on my own. They said, I must, when I came home they said, ‘you must have someone come in to make sure you get up in the morning and help you dress and someone to get you lunch’, and I said, ‘don’t bother about that because I’ll get my lunch’, I can have it brought in because ??? (13 minutes) in Newhaven, I knew about them, so I thought I’ll have them and I can quite easily get myself to bed, ‘oh no, you must have a lot of help’. So, in the end I had someone come in for ten minutes every morning to check I was still alive and that was it.

I Right, so in terms of the sense of community…

P But, when I was in hospital the man next door came in to see me, he brought ??? (13 minutes) across the road to see me, the people on the corner came to see me and I got loads of cards and I thought, I didn’t realise that and I thought, yes, if anything went wrong, I realised…

I You were more connected than you…

P Yes. I wasn’t as independent as I thought I was. Everybody was round.

I And that was nice?

P Yes. It was a nice feeling.

I Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, when there’s a crisis people do.

P People do. You know.

I That’s nice isn’t it?

P And they still say, are you sure you can do that? If you want any help just ask. I don’t often ask but, if I’m desperate I will, I mean I can’t change a lightbulb, so I have to get somebody to do that.

I Yeah, that’s nice and now you know they’re there.

P Yes.

I Yeah, yeah. So, it sounds like you know quite a lot of people in this area, even though you wouldn’t say that they’re your best friends or anything like that.

P No, I wouldn’t necessarily go and say, ‘can I borrow a cup of sugar’, but I know them.

I And obviously there’s something about people being aware of how you are and I guess the same for you are you aware of how people are in…

P Yes, I’m aware, but I think most of them are more aware because I’m right at the top and it’s, this house is quite secluded if you look out of the window. I mean, even if I drew the blind back there’s still the tree in front and I don’t actually sit and look out of the window at people going up and down. I mean I’m conscious of people going up and down the road. I think, well where is so-and-so because the car’s not there, but the people that moved into the next house, I’ve never seen them. But then Pat hasn’t either, so I think, if he hasn’t seen them or talked to them they obviously just want to be left because he is quite friendly.

I Yeah, so you mean even, even leaving people be is being aware of them.

P Mmm, because the people across the road, although they’ve lived there for quite a long time and I know them and speak when I meet them, but I don’t know them well, but when I was in hospital, when I’d broke my first arm, Lisa said, ‘now if you want anything just come across and ask me to do it and I’ll do it’, so I know that she was there.

I Yeah, yeah, that’s nice. Thinking back to maybe when you were younger, did you grow up in Scotland?

P Sorry?

I Did you grow up in Scotland?

P Yes. I didn’t move here until I was, how old was I? 29.

I Right, so what was the experience of community like when you were growing up?

P Well, we lived in the country, really in the country. There were no buses apart from the school bus and I went to school where there was one teacher and then for some time there were two teachers and I did that until I was twelve and then I went to school in the town, Kerrymuire, which is about the size of Newhaven I suppose, probably a bit smaller and I travelled by bus every day in and out, which was, I mean I quite enjoyed it.

I Yeah and did you know, when you were growing up did you know people in your street? Did you.

P I mean there wasn’t a street. We lived in a house called, Lone Head which was a cottage and it was at the end of a Lane. I suppose it must have been about half a mile from the main road and our nearest neighbours were, our house was at the end of the drive, you couldn’t go any further.

There were three farms fairly nearby and that was all and so as a child I spent a lot of time on my own, I mean I went to school and I had friends at school and we’d come and play one evening, one afternoon after school and we did things like that, but apart from that there was nowhere to go. It was during the war. Well at that time there weren’t social events so we put it like that. So, that was me. And we walked everywhere until I learned how to ride a bike and then I could cycle, which gave me a certain amount of freedom, but the nearest town was about seven miles away, which was quite a cycle when you have to cycle there and back and it’s extremely hilly.

I And how did you get on with your family then? I mean they were your only source of social contact.

P yes. There was mum and dad and there was me, but my mother began to foster children and first of all she had an evacuee during the war and it wasn’t arranged, I don’t know who arranged evacuee’s but this child was from Glasgow and my father knew her and who wanted somewhere for her to live after the raid on Glasgow in the 1940’s they wouldn’t allow her to be evacuated before that. Most Glasgow children were, but she wasn’t, she was kept at home because she was the youngest and her mum didn’t want her to be evacuated, but when, after the raid it was so awful and they were so scared that they had her evacuated, but she was evacuated to my mum, it was a private arrangement. She had the same name as me. I’m Marion, but at home I was never, I’m not Marion to my sisters or to my relatives, I’m May-May, because when I was a child I couldn’t say Marion, I’d say May-May and I should have kept to it, but my mother wanted me to be called Marion at school and so it was difficult. But when I came here I should have said I’m May-May and that would have been it, but I didn’t because I don’t like Marion, it doesn’t suit me I don’t think. Anyhow, she was May-May, but at the end of the war she went back to Glasgow, now she didn’t want to go she’d lived with us for four years and I was heartbroken and my mother was heartbroken, so someone said, well why don’t you foster? So, she fostered children and two of them she adopted, so when I say I have two sisters, it’s adopted sisters, but they’re my sisters because I don’t know, I don’t know real sisters and we are quite and we are close so that’s it. So, for a time until I was ten I was an only child and I had cousins who lived fairly close but they were grown up, my dad was the youngest of the family and he didn’t marry until he was in his late thirties, so I was, all my cousins were older, so in some ways I was the youngest grandchild because I was a bit spoilt, but in other ways, they weren’t… and I don’t mean they weren’t any use to me but they couldn’t come and play because we were too old for that and I couldn’t go and do the things they were doing because I was too young. So I’ve always sort of been a bit, out of my depth in a a way, or out of my age because all my relatives were a lot older and then when I was sixteen my mother lost her sight completely so it became a bit difficult sometimes because in those days there was no, if you lost your sight well you were on your own because there was no help, or not much.

I Right, so you were helping her out a lot?

P Yes. I did things that she couldn’t do, but she was very good. I mean she taught herself braille so she could read, but I used to read to her when I was about… I mean her sight was very poor, always and by the time I was about ten I was reading magazines to her and books that were far beyond my comprehension really.

I So, reading really has a particular place in your life.

P Yes. And so I read to her I read, that was it. I did look after… my sisters were a lot younger, so I had a lot of responsibility.

I Right. So that must have been difficult, she’d adopted these children and then lost her sight.

P It was quite difficult. But she was, I mean she was, she was really very good in that she was very independent. She did all her own housework, she missed bits sometimes, but you filled those in. She cooked. She could go out and around the house and garden un-aided, you just had to be careful not to leave things in her way. If she re-arranged the furniture you didn’t move anything because she knew where it was and she could go to a drawer and pick out what she wanted. I couldn’t do that because mine are too untidy! But her drawers were all stacked neatly folded.

I So, she found a way to deal with it.

P Yes, I mean she looked after us, she looked after herself, she looked after my dad, she couldn’t do things like ironing, but I did that. But I mean she washed, she cooked, she did the washing up, she cleaned.

I Amazing.

P I know.

I Haven’t we got it easy now.

P Yeah.

I So, we’ve talked a bit about your sense of community during your life…

P So, I’m not really all that community minded in a way.

I Well, I think everyone has their own understanding of how it operates in their life, you know? For some people it’s significant, for others it’s not. I think it’s interesting talking to everyone. Everyone has such different takes on it, it’s interesting. So, if now we were to say, who are the most important people in your life at the moment, who do you think that would be?

P My sisters. My niece in Fairham. My other niece and two nephews, I mean they’re important but I don’t know them so well, because they weren’t born when I left and I’ve only seen them when I go up on holiday and they grow-up and they’ve got children of their own. Well, one of them does, the others don’t, but I mean I’m still fond of them, but I don’t know them as well.

I So, why do you think, I mean you’ve already told me some of the history, but why do you think those relationships have become so important, or are so important?

P Well, we shared so much together when we were young, I mean we grew up together and I suppose in some ways I was an older sister, I took care of them. I was a bit bossy sometimes, or so my younger sister says, but I probably was.

I Comes with the territory doesn’t it?

P But, as she said, they remember things and I remember things and we can fill in the gaps. Do you remember so-and-so, well sometimes one of us will have forgotten but one of us will remember and they’ll say, ‘oh yes, and do you remember when’, there’s a whole, your whole life’s history is entwined with theirs and nobody really, like a… well I don’t know, a sister or brother I suppose as well, who knows you as well as your siblings do.

I And do you mean it’s like, remembering things about you as well, is that part of it. So that they might remember you in a different way to how you remember things yourself.

P They’ll say, ‘do you remember when you…’ and I say, ‘I didn’t, did I?’ I was in Scotland in April and I met someone and my brother-in-law said to me, ‘do you know who this is?’ and I said, ‘no’, I looked and my sister said to me, ‘think of J.L.’ and I said, ‘Jimmy Lothian’, now I hadn’t seen him since we left school and he talked about things that used to happen and I didn’t remember them. Some I did, but some I didn’t.

I Yeah, it’s funny isn’t it? The things we choose to remember as we get older, well, maybe we don’t choose, but… so, was that a nice meeting?

P Yes, it was because although we haven’t seen each other, he sees my sisters and he always says, ‘how is she’ and they say, ‘well, yeah, she’s doing such and such’ and his cousin and I were great friends, used to come and stay on the farm during our summer holidays, we were the same age and I was able to say, ‘how is he, what’s he doing’ and so on and so forth and it was a great shock to discover that somebody who was much more active than you were and much more outgoing is now, doesn’t want to go out anywhere and doesn’t go out, she lives in town, one of her daughters lives nearby, she does all of her shopping, she doesn’t go out at all and yet she would be the most sociable girl you could imagine and I can’t think of her not going out.

I And why do you think she’s changed in that way?

P I don’t know. She didn’t have a very happy marriage and that may have contributed to it. I don’t know.

I Yeah, peoples lives take funny turns don’t they?

P Because I know it’s not shortage of money, because I know that an aunt left her quite a lot!

I So do you think the way you relate to other people has changed during your life?

P I think I’m probably more relaxed now than I used to be. I’m still very quiet. I go out with CTLA on trips out, we went to Heaver Castle on Saturday and I’m going out with them on this Saturday as well, and they say, ‘you’re so quiet, you’re so quiet, you’re so quiet’, and I am, I’m quite quietly spoken. I didn’t realise that but I always think I’m shouting, but I’m beginning to realise that I must be quite quietly spoken and I mean, I’ve made friends on CTLA but I’m still the quiet one but I’m more confident than I used to be. I mean, I should have been confident but I never was. I hate going into a room full of people that I don’t know, I may know one or two but I don’t know many and my eyes are frantically searching for a friendly face. But I think I am, well I am more confident than I used to be.

I So when you make new friends, like the people you’ve met at CTLA, how do you get to know people, from what you’ve said, you’re quite quiet, is it…

P Well, I am quiet, but if I’m with a talkative person they are talking I can carry on the conversation quite happily. It’s… I tend not to make the first move. I know that’s wrong, but I do.

I Is it wrong?

P That’s me.

I So you’re a good listener?

P I’m very good listener. I get peoples life stories and they must go out and think afterwards, I told her all about me, I don’t know anything about her because I don’t talk about myself. If they question me I do, but, I find other people much more interesting.

I From what you’ve said, you don’t feel a great need to meet new people, make new friends. It’s not something that drives you.

P I feel that I probably know that somehow, when I want someone they’re there. That sounds funny but I’m quite happy and I suppose if I get bored, fed-up, I’ll perhaps say to Joan, ‘would you like to come down’ and she will say yes or no if she’s doing something else, or I’ll phone someone and it goes. But I don’t… I’m quite happy on my own. I’m self-sufficient.

I So, the other thing that we started talking about earlier was how technology seems to have… be so pushed as a way of contacting people, like email, Twitter, Facebook, texting. So, what technologies do you use to keep in contact with people at the moment?

P Telephone.

I Just the telephone?

P Yes. I can text if I have an hour to do it.

I So have you got a mobile phone as well?

P Oh yes, I’ve got a mobile phone and every time I use it I’ve got to look at the instructions because I use it so seldom. I only use it. I take it with me when I got out and I used it all the time I was in hospital, but otherwise I don’t use it. It’s a very basic one. I can receive calls, send calls and text and that’s the lot, nothing else and I couldn’t tell you the number! When I go out I ring my home number and then write down my mobile number because I can’t remember it.

I I’m the same! And do you still write letters?

P Yes.

I And are you quite an avid letter writer? Do you…

P I don’t really write many, but I write to both my sisters. To one sister very regularly, to my other sister occasionally, because she doesn’t like writing letters, she phones and so it doesn’t matter, but although I phoned my other sister, although we keep in touch just as often by phone we still write because we find we… on the phone we find that there are things that we forget to say that we want to say, so we write them down.

I So letter writing is good for pondering over things, is that what you mean? Those things that you think about at different times.

P Yes, you’ve got time to think, ‘oh, I must talk about this’, or, ‘I must say that’, that you can’t on the phone, you tend to go off at a tangent because something comes up and at the end you hang up and you think, ‘I forgot that!’

I So, what’s your feelings about email and things like that? Do you… do your sisters use?

P I want to know how to email, but I couldn’t do it now. But I do know that I’ve got to learn how to do it. The only thing is that, like I get a lot of junk mail and phone calls wanting to compensate me for accidents that I’ve never had. I don’t want that and if you give your email address you tend to get a lot of…

I Right. You mean the unnecessary spam that you get when you open an email account.

P So I think I’ll try to be selective about who I give my email address to.

I So, and either of your sisters, do they use email?

P No. They’re on the internet, but they don’t use email. They receive emails, but they don’t send them. I don’t quite know why, but they just don’t. Well, Trudi is like me, she’s a bit wary of them and she doesn’t use it a lot, but Maureen uses it, they’ve got a lap-top and she uses that and she Google’s everything.

I Right. She searches things out and kind of… Yeah. So all of that information that you can get from the net she likes that.

P Yeah and then she phones me and says, ‘I’m doing this puzzle and I want… and this is the clue and I can’t find the answer on Google’.

I She has to resort to human answers not Google answers.

P Yeah.

I Oh, that’s sweet. So, what’s the other thing I was going to say? So, this idea of community, we haven’t really talked about this but one of the things that we’re looking at is the idea that community is something that could exist on the internet through the people that you get to know.

P But it’s not the same as real people, it’s like texting, Maureen texts all the time. She doesn’t text me because I’ve told her. I use the text, it’s emergency, it’s a short message. She uses it, she writes a letter when she sends a text and I say, you can’t really communicate because you’re just telling them something, you get nothing back. Whereas if you phone it’s different.

I So you mean you can tell how they’re responding to what you’re saying?

P Yes. Yes. An instant response, it’s not the same. And children on the computer talking to each other all the time. That’s not the same either. I don’t care what anybody says. It’s not quite the same as going out to play with someone and chatting and pushing and running and jumping.

I Yeah, so when you hear about things like Facebook?

P I cringe. Well I don’t know. It seems to me that you can do anything on Facebook, you can put your picture up and you can say the things that you like but it needn’t be true and I mean it’s just… I don’t trust it, I think it’s… it’s somehow not personal.

I And what do you think about the people that do use it? What do you think?

P I don’t like to say it but I think they’ve got a very high sense of their own importance to be on Facebook. But I can see that some people find it… I mean if you’re in the public eye it must be quite invaluable almost, to be on Facebook, but if you’re just an ordinary person, nobody’s really ordinary, but if you’re just like me, I mean what importance is it for me to be on Facebook and write, ‘I went shopping this morning and I bought two apples and three oranges’. You know, it’s…

I So you mean, it seems quite trivial, is that… is that the word?

P It seems a bit trivial to me and I think it could isolate you because you’re putting up what you’re doing and you’re waiting for somebody to reply to it, but it’s not the same as walking down the street and saying, ‘good morning, how are you?’ is it?

I Yeah, so do you mean it’s isolating, which bit of it is isolating, you said it could be isolating, why do you think it’s isolating?

P I’m thinking more probably of things like Twitter where you put your day-to-day things and I think well, yes, you’re putting that but why can’t you just go and tell them what you’re doing instead of informing the world when 99 % don’t know you.

I Yeah, that’s right. It’s kind of, the fact that you’re broadcasting it doesn’t mean that anyone’s listening. And do your…

P I mean I’ve no ambition to be on Facebook, actually my nephew was on Facebook but he didn’t push it on himself, someone else did.

I Oh right. Was he alright about that?

P He had it removed, it was one of his friends I think, we thought perhaps he should be on it and he took it off.

I Yeah, I suppose that’s where it gets really dodgy isn’t it. Where somebody else is putting up your… supposedly your information. I think that Facebook are quite good about policing that kind of thing but I’m sure people do it. Okay, so I think that’s all the technology questions.

P Yes, I don’t like technology…

I Yes, that’s quite clear!

P … it takes me to use the DVD and record from the television and as for deleting it I’ve got to look up the instructions every time.

I Oh, you mean when you’ve recorded something and then recording over the top of that, yeah. So, have you got a digital TV?

P Yeah.

I Yeah.

P Yes.

I You don’t have an option these days, do you?

P No, when I… I needed a new set so I went digital. I’ve got Sky, because I wanted BBC3 or BBC4 and ITV3 and so I went to Sky, I still have Sky, but I think it’s really a waste of money because I mean the amount of channels that you don’t ever watch and never will is incredible! I go through them sometimes and think… who’d ever want to watch that!

I Yeah, we all gravitate to the same ones don’t we. The BBC and ITV… yeah, it’s strange. Do you still listen to the radio?

P Yes. I do listen to the radio. If I had to choose, I’d probably ditch the television and keep the radio.

I Yeah. I mean that can give a nice sense of something going on in the home, can’t it? Having the radio on…

P I don’t like… it sounds strange, but I don’t like quiet. Complete silence. I have the radio on all the time. I put it off this morning about quarter past ten because I knew you were coming but normally the radio is on, it’s habit, I watch BBC news while I have breakfast, because we always watched that together. But after that, television goes off and the radio goes on and it’s on until I want to watch television again. I often watch it if I’m having my lunch at 1pm, I watch the news and then television goes off until the news at 6pm. I don’t watch a terrific amount of television, but what I do watch I watch and don’t like to be interrupted.

I It sounds like the way you read as well.

P No, I actually watch television and I do crosswords and I knit. I don’t like to watch television and not do something else. I don’t feel comfortable just sitting. Although I watch some things, if I’m watching a murder-mystery or Downton Abbey then I will watch that, but most of the others it’s more listening than watching.

I Thank you Marion.

P Peculiar person!

I No! Not at all. That’s really all the questions. Is there anything that you thought I was going to ask about but we haven’t really discussed at all?

P I don’t know. I suppose I’ve got one or two friends who would say to you, ‘oh yes, she’s very helpful’ and that makes me feel better because sometimes I don’t feel I give anything back to community. I’ve got two friends who do voluntary work, they work with… one does a lot of work with the church, another one does work with… is it, dogs? Or Patcham where they do…

I Oh, the RSPCA?

P Yes. She does voluntary work with them and with Martletts and with the Beacon. So, they do that and I think, I should be doing something like that but somehow I never. I’m too old to do it now, but if I’d started when I retired first I probably would have, but my husband was ill so I looked after him and that was my voluntary work. And that was it. But I sometimes feel guilty when I see people doing things and I think, I’ve never done that, I could have done that or I could do that, but ….

I Has life changed a lot since your husband died?

P Well, yes, because I don’t know, we were sort of great friends, we liked doing the same things, so that went and we tended as my mother kept telling me, ‘you do too much together, you want to get a life of your own and do this that and the other’, but I never wanted to, I was quite happy. I still wouldn’t change it, but I know that you should try to build a bit of your life on your own while your husband was still alive, but then I always thought that I would die first so what was the point? You know, I mean he was ill for years, but I still didn’t think… he was very strong, mentally and he was quite strong physically although he wasn’t well and he had a terrific will to live so… he did say at one point that he would have died years before if it hadn’t been for me, but he liked life, he enjoyed life.

I That’s nice.

P And we spent a lot of time together, so it did leave a terrific gap, but you just get over it. Well you don’t get over it, but you just gloss over it and…

I Yeah, yeah.

P And my nephew thinks I’m mad, but sometimes I think, he’s still sort of watching and doing things. I lose something, well don’t lose it but I put it down, I think and I go to find it and I think, I’m sure I put it there, but I didn’t and I will say, ‘where did I put it? You know where it is, find it!’ And storm off and come back and I suddenly find it. But that’s just imagination, I know it is, but it’s comforting imagination.

I Yeah, I suppose people stay with you in a very internal way, don’t they?

P When I do something silly, or when I want to think about something or make-up my mind, I say, ‘come on, you can help’ and it sort of filters through my mind what he would say because I know what he would say, I can just imagine him saying, ‘don’t do that, that would be very stupid!’ or ‘you stupid woman!’ (laughing)

I Giving you advice?

P But life goes… you just go on.

I Thank you Marion.

RECORDING ENDS