

One & Other Project

My name is Verusca Calabria and today is the twenty-sixth of July 2010 and I'm here to interview Louise Lee as a post-plinth interview, to reflect back on the time of being on the plinth as part of the One & Other Oral History Collection website. So Louise, thank you very much for agreeing to participate.

Oh, thank you.

So let me explain it to you. I just wanted to ask you some questions about the time on the plinth and I supposed we could begin by talking about what you did on the plinth, which was to set up a Twitter account and then asking people to send you messages, that then you would interpret, either by writing on the message walls or doing a drawing or something on the board, right?

Yes, that's it.

So tell me more about how you got to this idea?

I was struggling for an idea to begin with. I didn't know what I was going to do, because originally I thought I could do something musical and then I thought I didn't really have the confidence for that in the end and I play music with my boyfriend and we couldn't go up as a pair, so decided not to do that. I think last year is when I really did sort of start using Twitter. I thought it would be a good idea just to sort of move Twitter away from the Internet and put it on the plinth instead.

And how did you get your audience then to respond to you? Were they friends or did you find different communities interested in it?

Mostly it was friends. I've got friends in various places on the Internet who were already sort of interested in the plinth and had been watching it already. But I found that there were a lot of people, because I had the message on the back of the board when I was writing, a lot of people who were just watching generally, sent messages in as well, which was really nice, because I didn't think at that time in the morning a lot of people would be bothering to tune in but there were obviously a lot of people in America who were watching and took part, which was really nice.

So how did you know who it was that was contacting you then? Just by checking their IDs?

For the most part, I didn't really pay much attention. I knew that I could recognise a few of the names of people I either followed via Twitter or knew via email or knew online anyway. And then there was a lot of random stuff came in as well so I never really had a real chance to see who those people

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were, although a few people added me to their Twitter stream after I'd finished, so I'm still in contact with a couple of them, just through Twitter, random people I've never spoken to before, just because, I think, a couple of them had been on the plinth as well, so it's sort of lasting, sort of underlying acquaintances.

What sort of relationship do you have with them?

We're doing ... we don't speak a lot but, you know, we'll comment on what each other's posting via Twitter, usually something, some interesting news links or something, or something amusing. Often pictures of cats because they're funny but yes, it's just been nice to continue to talk to a few of the people who were up there, not very regularly, but, you know, occasionally they'll pop up and we'll have a quick chat.

What was it like to be on the plinth?

It was really interesting actually. I was a bit nervous because of the ... I think it was a Sunday morning so I thought there might have been a lot of revelers out from Saturday night but it was a good time. And it was quiet so I didn't get anybody yelling at me from the street, which was part of what I was worried about. But it was really nice up there, it was kind of quiet and peaceful and there was a good view from up there and I got to take a few photographs of Trafalgar Square, which I hadn't done for years and years. And it was just really nice, it was an interesting experience, it's not really something that can ever really do again. You hang out in London at that time of the night anyway, but it was really nice to have the sun coming up as well while I was up there. It was a really good hour to have.

And do you remember, I mean do you look back at these events now and again? Do you talk about it?

Very occasionally. I'll keep popping past one of my photos that I took of myself from the plinth, holding the camera, like you know, [?] it was really nice, it was a really nice evening, very nice sort of late summer's morning. I remember I stayed up all night to do it, because I think I had to get there for two o'clock in the morning. It was just something I don't do very often. I don't often stay up that late and I don't often stay out that late in public. And it was just, just nice feeling to be awake and see the sunrise and be interacting with some people even though miles and miles away.

So at the time, you talked to us about what was going on in your life and you were saying that you had been unemployed for ten months then because you had relocated from the south to the north?

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Yes.

So what's been happening since?

I continued looking for work for ages and ages and it just seemed really, really quiet and bleak and then at Christmas I managed to get a month working for the Royal Mail Christmas sorting office, which was actually quite interesting. It was really ... it was shift work, so I started early shifts and got to sort out Christmas cards and parcels and things. And actually got, it wasn't very [...] I can't explain, it's, it's it wasn't a job that most people would probably want to do, but I found it quite interesting because I've always been interested in post, always liked getting post, so I quite like the idea of finding out where it came from and how it was sorted and where, you know, the processes it went through. Although probably wouldn't recommend sending anything fragile through the post, knowing how I now threw parcels.

And then what happened, you mentioned you got a job now?

Yes, I was seeing ... I was part of the ... there's a ... some help called the Preston Employment Partnership, and they put me onto a chap from a company and he helped me sort of change my CV. I put three applications in on one day with this new CV and then the first one that I applied for actually gave me an interview and I got the job, so that was really nice. It was the day before my birthday and now I've been working there just over a month. It's not a very interesting job, it's just administration but it's a job and the days tend to go past really quickly and I'm actually getting paid for the first time in eighteen months.

I was interested really to find out how it's been for you to be unemployed for such a long time.

It wasn't, firstly it wasn't too bad because my mother had passed away a couple of years previously and we'd sold ... luckily managed to sell her house during the recession so I actually had some money to sit on, so it wasn't too bad. But it gets kind of tedious to be sat at home. You're filling out application forms and you you're sending off your CV and you're getting no response and you just sit there and you ... I spent a lot of time playing World of Warcraft which I did anyway, but I played it a lot more in the early stages of my unemployment and I read a few books and I just kind of spent a lot of time in this room doing not very much at all. I managed to not get into the trap of watching daytime television thankfully, but did watch a lot of rolling news, but it's just a very long ... people seem to think that a lot of people who are unemployed want to be unemployed and they're gaining something from it. But I was only on benefits for six months because that was all I was entitled to and after that it was just boredom and rejection from everywhere I applied to

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really. It was pretty tough it wasn't too; it wasn't financially tough but sort of mentally straining to not hear back from people and to not, you know, have anyone really care about what you're doing.

Why do you think it took so long to find a job?

Well, as I suggested, the sort of jobs I was applying for are just administration jobs and I think my background, because it was in journalism, a lot of people would think that I probably wouldn't stick with it for very long, before I went back to doing something more involving, which isn't the case really, because I never wanted to go back into journalism. I just wanted to do something that sort of just paid my way through until actually, obviously at some point I might actually know what I want to do, when I grow up, but I don't, I just wanted to be in work, but people didn't seem to want to employ someone who didn't have any specific administration background and had come from such a specific other background like the journalism. That was the problem I think in the end. That and the recession.

You mentioned that you took a while to get a job because you come from a different background. The job that you have now, is it a long term one?

Yes, it's a full-time position working for a company that does ... they do the outsourcing for a lot of the other companies. They do sort of all of the non-essential sort of paperwork stuff like doing staff expenses and doing things with invoices. It's not very ... it's not particularly interesting. It's very difficult to explain what I do because it's quite boring. But it keeps me going throughout the day. I've been there a month now and there's not been one day when it's gone slowly. There's always something to do which is good because I don't like to have to stop for minutes to try and work out what's next. I just want to keep going on with it and then the day will be over and I come home and have some dinner.

Where is it that you live at the moment?

I live just slightly northwest of Preston in the North West, sort of just outside of town called Longbridges, a small sort of hamlet of houses surrounded by fields and cows and sheep and things.

And how do you like it there?

It's nice and quiet actually because where I previously lived, I lived somewhere quite rural previously, but I lived in the town center of the rural place, so it was really very noisy, whereas here, when it's nighttime, it is nighttime. It's dark and you can see stars and there are occasionally some

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moos and you can hear owls hooting. It's really nice although it's a bit far out from anywhere, and I don't drive, it's actually quite a pleasant place to live.

You mentioned that you moved from the South to the North because of your boyfriend and you obviously had this interest in music and you met at a concert.

Yes.

So what was it like moving to where you are now, compared to where you were before?

Like I said I was in the town centre, so it was actually ... it wasn't a very big town. So there weren't a lot of facilities there, but it was you know, it's kind of nice to be able to stroll out and walk over to a, to news agent or, I actually lived next door to where I work so it was literally just roll out of bed and roll into work. And the people were nice. It was an odd, being in the job that I was last, everybody kind of knew who I was. I walked down the street and there wouldn't be you know two or three faces and then there'd be someone I knew who knew me or more people knew me than I knew them, but it was very interesting to be recognised and here it's kind of nice to be anonymous and, although I'm quite far away from the main town, Preston, I mean city, Preston. It's quite nice to be to be out slightly further from people even if it takes a couple of ... a good twenty minutes to get into town, it's still a nice place to be.

And what attracted you to become a journalist in the first place?

It was sort of an accident really. I'd done a media degree. I had no real designs to be a journalist, but I'd ... it was my friend from university or college was living in the next town to where I moved to and when this job came up I thought "Ooh, it's a media job" which is, you know, what my degree is sort of based on and I've been to this town so I'll apply. And I got this job and unfortunately I've got this sort of thing where if someone offers me a job, I can't bring myself to turn it down because you never know when the next one's going to come, so I ended up in Warminster and it was an interesting experience for six years.

What is it that you were doing in your job?

I was writing news and taking photos basically. It was just a standard fare, I mean the newspaper is I think one of the last couple of independent newspapers left in the country, so um the facilities weren't the same as you know some one of the bigger newsgroups like News Press, or the Daily Mail or something but it was a very interesting job, you get to meet a lot of people. Before that, I'd been quite shy, I'd been very closed, very shy and didn't like

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telephones, I didn't like talking to people I didn't know. When I was younger, I used to send my little brother into a shop to ask for something because I didn't like to talk to people. But it was quite good, you know, you're interviewing people, you're going out to crashes, you're talking to people all the time. I attended a lot of council meetings, which wasn't particularly fun but it was part of the job, and it was, yes, it was good. Quite liked some of the things like the country shows and things, those were nice.

What was the name of the newspaper you worked for?

It's the Warminster Journal.

And you say that you preferred not to be in the spotlight, but then actually it also sounds like that you enjoyed it.

Yes, I say that, it's odd. I spent ages and ages sort of thinking about not enjoying these sorts of things, and then I actually get up to do them and find that it's actually quite good, because there was two weeks into my new job, there was a company away day and we had to dress up in ridiculous costumes and dance and in the end I really enjoyed dancing. I actually because we didn't hadn't rehearsed properly, in the end I ended up doing some sort of solo thing on stage, I'm not even sure what happened in the end, um but I was dancing in front of a bunch of people I barely known and had to see again the next week in work, but I actually really enjoyed the dancing, but I spend a lot of time musing about how much I'm going to hate something and then actually end up enjoying it quite a lot.

Yes, I think you mentioned something else about where you come from and the difference between where you are now, I think you mentioned that perhaps there was some small mindedness or people ... they couldn't really understand the things you liked?

I think I find that everywhere I go there's a lot of people who don't ... I sort of grew up being a nerd. I was always a nerd and then a bit of a geek. I liked Star Trek back then and I like Star Trek and the X Files and everybody else was into certain types of music that I didn't like and football which I didn't follow and it was just average kind of just slightly outside sort of person, seeing that everywhere it takes a while for people to understand that these things aren't particularly strange, they're just things that other people haven't discovered is usually the problem. Or just, I just tend to find little niche things that people haven't heard of or haven't done themselves and they think that's a little bit strange but you know, you would just have to listen to me more I think. I'm quite happy to blabber on about things if they ask.

That's great. So why did you choose to study media?

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That's a long time ago now, I can't remember. I think it's because I watched a lot of television and I had ideas on making my own television programmes or films or something. It was a long while back but I had a kind of notion that it would be an easy job to do, but I think I was getting into the media education sort of time when everybody was getting into it because it seemed like an easy route. Although I hadn't chosen it because it was easy, it's because I wanted to create, but when I got out of it I realised that it's such a competitive industry that I really didn't have the kind of get up and go you need for selling yourself in that kind of industry. It's just too much pressure; I prefer to mess around with things at home for my own, for my own fun really. It's just no pressure on then, you can just do whatever you want to do and if any, if people don't like it, then you haven't lost out on anything.

I see, so what is it like now then, that you've been up there for a while, do you enjoy being there?

Yes I do, there's a lot of space here so I don't have any problems with you know, wanting to do anything. There's an [?] bike behind me which I've attempted to exercise on and there's plenty to do, in fact tomorrow I start bass guitar lessons. I've bought a bass guitar last year and I haven't played it yet and I'm actually going to start trying to learn how to play a bass guitar. So there's those things to do up here which I didn't really get around to doing in Wiltshire.

For what reason?

Mostly because I was living alone and I don't drive so I only drive a scooter so it was difficult to go anywhere or do very much unless I got on a train and then I was restricted by what limited trains there are, so now I've got ... I'm living with my boyfriend and he can drive me places.

You've mentioned that you two do some music together but we never found out what instrument you play or, you know, what your role is?

Well we're ... John's full-time job is music producer but on a sideline we did some music together. The band is called the Attary Squash. I sing a bit and play the guitar but I kind of taught myself guitar for quite a number of years and then I took up some lessons for a year before moving up here. And I sort of play the keyboard, but not in any particular way, just my own kind of punky style. I taught myself so it's not really a ... I couldn't play live on a keyboard, unless it was just one finger. I've learned odds and sods of instruments over the years. I've played saxophone for a year and I played the violin when I was at school. I've got a plastic flute over there and ukulele over there. There's

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instruments floating around that I occasionally strum and pick and play, it's just nice to have them around I think.

Do you play together often?

Not so much recently because we've finished our album and we're sort of waiting for it to cycle on to iTunes and we've stopped playing anything together. We haven't played live yet but I'm sure we will eventually. Some friends in America wanted to come out, want us to come over and play, but we sort of haven't gotten around to that and what with it being quite expensive to get to America, but I'm sure one day we'll eventually play live.

What's the name of the album?

Oh, the album is called Citation Needed, like it says on Wikipedia you know when, when, when somebody's written something dubious on Wikipedia, it says citation needed, so that's the name of our album.

And what are the songs about?

They're kind of satirical really, there's a bit about the Daily Express and how awful it is and there's a bit about how the Jonathan Ross saga, sexgate kind of, apologising for things even when you shouldn't have to be apologising and something about space aliens not existing. Another one about how everyone's a nerd now, but they haven't realized it. I can't remember any others because I haven't heard it for a couple of weeks. But it's basically that they're satirical songs, slightly humorous but I quite, I sing along to my own songs so I think they're all right.

Just to bring you back to the use of technology, the digital age, why do you think Twitter is such a popular way of communicating with people nowadays?

it's been really weird. I think the only reason, the first reason I joined it I think it was because of the Jonathan Ross thing, when the Jonathan Ross / Russell Brandt incident happened and Jonathan Ross was thrown off of the radio or wherever it was he was doing and he was on Twitter, and I thought well I'll see what he's saying. So I didn't know what Twitter was. It's like a lot of things I do, I don't need to sign up for that, I'm not signing up for Facebook and there I am, with a Facebook page, but I think Twitter's been really good. A lot of people don't understand Twitter. Twitter is what you make of it yourself by who you follow and I think it's been really useful to find, firstly following a few people that I know, so keep in touch like that and we can share links and things and just generally have a chat and then there's people who you're following who's recommendations simply because they're saying something of interest or they're finding news that's interesting or they're finding articles that

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are funny and it just seems to be that where I seem to be getting a lot of my news and a lot of opinion that suits me, is coming from Twitter rather than through almost any other medium now, to be honest with you. I think I go to Twitter before I go anywhere else, simply to see what's been happening.

And how would you compare your use of Twitter to Facebook?

I've never really liked Facebook. The only reason I'm still on is because there's a lot of school friends on there who aren't signed up to anything else. I'm not entirely keen on it. I don't use it for anything other than just seeing what everyone's saying and I can mostly do that now on Twitter anyway. If there was a way apart from email, because I'm not really good at keeping up with email to keep up with old school friends, I'd probably use that and get rid of Facebook but I don't spend a lot of time on it. I mean it's, I say that, there's a page always open on my other screen, but I'm not looking at it very frequently. I don't find Facebook very useful to be honest with you. There's photos and friends are on there, but there are other better mediums for both those things, if only they would make them less intrusive.

Just to go back to your time on the plinth, you know you got a booklet in the post to say try and get some media attention or let people know you're going up there, did you do any of that?

Only via Twitter mostly. A lot of people, like I said, they would have been already been watching it so they were already interested. So I sort of made a very basic webpage saying I'm going on Twitter ... I'm going on the plinth, you can contact me while I'm on the plinth by emailing us or going via Twitter. I just asked people I knew to re-tweet it so other people could see it was happening so that's basically how I did that. I didn't really have any real world to, any bigger contact than that, because I didn't think I was doing anything that was as worthwhile. Because some people are going up there for charities and some people are going up there with some sort of cause. I was just going up there to well I wasn't going up there for any particular cause, but you know it seemed like it wasn't important enough to you know, to sort of big up myself as it were to anyone other than people I knew.

The webpage you set up is now taken down, I noticed. What did you have on it?

I think it was just a picture of ... I was wearing a gas mask at the time, because originally I thought I might wear a gasmask up there, but I practised wearing that for, I only got through about forty minutes before I had to take it off because it was a claustrophobic... it was basically a picture of me saying I was going on the plinth, and what I was going to be doing and how they could contact me, while I was on there, so I could spread you know, put their

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messages up or do drawing, or something like that. That was basically, it was very, very basic, because I dislike html so I made it very, very basic so I didn't have to twiddle with anything that drove me mad.

Did you write about the experience afterwards using digital media?

I think I probably did some tweets on the way home, and I think I possibly, I wrote a bit about it. I've got a very long-standing live journal account, and I think I just wrote a bit on there. Basically that account I don't add anyone new to it anymore but I kind of keep it there for my own sort of memory really. A lot of things I've gone back on and I go 'when did I do that'? It's easier to go back on there and have a look at what I did and some photos I've put up so I think I probably put on there, just for my friends to see. I didn't really write about it much anywhere else.

Overall, what do you think the impact of the experience has been?

I'd like to do something similar again I think. I'd like to be able to ... it's sort of, it's really odd, it was like an anonymous way of connecting people who didn't know each other again. It's the same wave; it was like it's like a personal, a rural Internet, except not with an Internet. It was like me as a sort of third person in between the person sending the message and the message being relayed. It was a very a very strange ... think I'd quite like to do something like that again but I'm not quite sure how I'd go about it or anything else. But also I think it's just another boost to my confidence I think, because a lot of things are still not, are still not like I said when I was with me journalism, I was never particularly ... I was quite a shy kid and shy growing up and things like this always seem to help, when something like this happens, which isn't very frequent, but you know, like the dancing and all like this, it's just useful I think personally.

So can you tell me more about what you mean, so are you suggesting the idea that because people were on the web, they were being streamed live, and then you could watch yourself again and communicate live, interactively, is that what you mean?

Yes, I think it was just interesting to sort of be a human third party. Usually you get the Internet, somebody will post a message, then someone will re-post a message but it will be on the Internet. But this time it's sort of like me in between re-interpreting it, if it was a drawing or just generally relaying it in my scrappy handwriting. Just thought it was just a putting a human element into the Internet almost. I think we lose sight of the ... that there are actually people on the end of the, on the Internet. I mean I've been through a lot of the ... you know how internet forums and also in especially the internet newsgroups, on Newsnet, can get, people forget that they're talking to actual

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human beings on the other end the other end of the line. Can often get a bit unruly but it was interesting.

So you're referring to the idea of being disembodied by the Internet?

Yes, I think so, yes. I think people forget that there are other people sometimes on the internet, because it's in the same way that when you spend money on the Internet, you're not physically seeing any money going anywhere so you forget you're spending any money. I think it's the same when you're talking to people on the Internet, if you don't actually, you're not seeing people or you're not speaking to them in real life, you forget that they're real people sometimes, even if you know them, you can forget that they're someone that was actually made of flesh as well.

You may have already answered this question but I'll ask you again just in case you may want to add something else. What do you think attracted you to the project in the first place?

Originally, the idea was that I thought I could ... we could promote our band but when I realised we couldn't put two people on, I'd completely forgotten about it anyway, and then the email came through to say you've been offered a place on the plinth. I thought, "Ooh, shall I do this?" And I'm thinking well there's only, it's only a couple of thousand, is it a couple of thousand? I can't remember how many people were taking part, but not very many people taking part and thinking ... forget opportunities, you just do something different and, you know, it's, what was your question again?

Just to bring you back when you applied to be part of the One & Other, to try and see whether you remember the reasons why you decided to apply for it.

I think when I was applying it was, it was about the band, I thought we could do something with the band but when I finally actually got a thing through saying you're on it, I thought oh, this is an opportunity just to, even if you're not going to do anything important, you know, some people went up and just had a snooze, so it wasn't particularly as if I had to do anything ground-breaking, but I thought it was a good opportunity because it's not something I'm ever going to be able to do again, at least in that particular venue or time or space and I think I think I just decided I would go for it because there wouldn't be an opportunity to do anything like this again in fact I questioned, I asked a couple of friends and said should I do this, and they said oh, you're not ... 'yes' because you're not going to get another chance. I had another friend who actually got a letter saying they could go up there, unfortunately they had to go on holiday and they couldn't postpone the holiday so they missed it, so they were, you know happy that someone else could go. It's a shame we couldn't swap our times because I could have done any time at

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that point and he could have come, done my slot, but um it was nice just to be you know involved in something that was so few people were involved in.

Did you know a lot of people that were following the project?

When it first started, a lot of people were on Twitter, sort of talking about who was up next. I remember one of the first things, I remember seeing myself was a guy in a panda suit taking phone calls from people. So you know over the first course of first sort of few weeks, there were a lot of people sort of tuning in and sort of talking about it, so it was actually, it was interesting, so I didn't watch it all the time, but it was on and off. And it was kind of enjoyable some of the times, obviously a few people got in the paper for doing some raucous things up there so it was nice that people were paying attention to what was going on. It's not often that people actually pay attention to art.

And were you watching it at all, the project?

On and off yes, I watched it on and off quite a bit at the beginning and then paused for a bit and then I can't remember whether I got my email then and then I thought I better start watching some more of it, because I think I remember tuning in to, I was on, I was on very early on a Sunday morning so I tuned in the previous two Sunday mornings to see what, what it was like at that time in the morning and I watched bits and bobs of it. I couldn't watch it all the time because it was eating my bandwidth, but it was interesting to watch people up there because it was, you know, everybody had different ideas and it helped in trying to form my own idea in the end.

So what do you think the project was about?

I think it ... I haven't actually read specifically what Antony Gormley wanted to do with it. But I think it was about involving more people in art and trying to make people think what about art and what art actually is because so many people went up there and did so many different things, and lots of people discussing it, and that doesn't really happen very much to things that people usually call art. I mean we tend to [?] occasionally that something like a masterpiece is stolen and people go ooh that's bad, and then occasionally Tracy Emin will do something boring with a bed or a tent or something and ooh that's controversial and that's about it. There is no ... there doesn't seem to be an in-between where people feel that they can take part in anything or don't feel particularly connected to anything because it's either too old, or too historical, or too outlandish and too expensive and people don't seem to understand there's an in-between.

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So now just to bring you back to what's going on in your life, you know you mentioned you were unemployed for a few months. How many months was that?

It was eighteen months altogether but excluding a month that I did at the Royal Mail sorting office.

And what are your expectations for the future in terms of your career?

I don't really know because the job that I'm in, I expect to be in that for a while. It would be rude to try and move up immediately and I wouldn't want to do that to the people that are there, because every time someone new comes in they have to spend some time training you so they're actually doing their job. I don't know what I'd want to do within the place where I am now, because it's, you know, when people describe business to you and you think ooh business, that's basically what they're doing. They're doing business, they're doing what keeps things ticking over and it doesn't really interest me but I'm happy to keep doing that while at home. I can play music and I can make videos and I can watch television and see films, and I can do the creative bit while I'm at home. Where my career is going, I have no idea at the moment because I've only really just got my foot back on the ladder again, but there's a lot of scope in this company for doing something more interesting within the business world later on, but I don't know that's something I would, I would no idea if that would be something I'd wanted to stick out for, a decade, I don't know how, how these things work.

You said that you wouldn't consider going back into journalism, right?

Yes, yes I don't want to go back into journalism.

For what reason?

As much as I enjoy the job, there are aspects of it which are very intrusive and because the market is so competitive and what with us, that newspaper being independent, they have to be very careful to keep up but not lose sight of their background, they're not you know, they're not like a new, one of the bigger sort of regional newspapers, they don't they don't fight for a headline. They don't want to make something sensational when it's not but in the end you have to, you have to take up a mindset where you have to do that sort of thing and I'm just really not into being that aggressive with my questioning and chasing things down and it was just, it was just a bit much. Also I don't have MTCJ qualification so if I wanted to go back anywhere else, I don't, I'm not even sure my six years experience will be enough for them. I think they'd want a qualification and I don't want to learn anymore from that aspect, that angle.

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Can you tell me what the qualification is called?

It's called an MTCJ, but I can't remember what it stands for, but if you look it up, it's like the standard journalism qualification that probably most journalists have. I think it's an element of law and shorthand and all the aspects you need to be qualified to be a journalist rather than having an experience of it. I enjoyed the photography side of it, that was always good, because I always enjoyed taking photos anyway but I don't think I'd want to go back into journalism. Plus the ... it's a very difficult market to get into which is very underpaid and at the moment they're just battling with blogs and the internet and I don't think they're going to win.

It sounds like you do keep up your journalistic skills anyway, for the work that you do on a creative level?

I like taking photos and I still, my ears still kind of perk up when a police car goes past or something but that's sort of in-built now. I think that I ask a lot more questions now that I used to do, just generally. I like to know things that are going on, but I won't want to ... really wouldn't want to actually stick to journalism unless it was very specific journalism, you know, someone said why don't you write about mobile telephones for a living, we'll give you all your mobile telephones for free, I'll go all right, or computer games or something. If it's specific journalism magazines or something, I might think about it, but those don't come up very often and highly sought after sort of things, and that's what I suppose blogs are for these days.

Do you go home much, to Wiltshire?

Actually I grew up in Essex. I don't go very often, simply because it's a long way away from here, but I saw my dad and my brother, my brother was in Manchester until a little while ago at university so I saw him every so often and my dad and my brother came up for a day recently because my brother just graduated. And I think my dad's coming to visit for the first time properly in August, so that will be nice.

And what is it like for you to settle up North, in terms of culture, how does it compare?

It doesn't really make much difference to me because wherever I've been, I've never been a real out, an out sort of person. I'm quite happy to sort of stay in and watch television or read a book or... I mean I like going out but socialising, most socialising is done in pubs and clubs and you just can't socialise in a pub or a club and I've always, always found that a very odd way to go about things. Very occasionally I'll go to, I've been on a specific web forum for about ten or eleven years now, and we'll have an annual meet-up

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and that's just about as much as I need to be honest with you. I occasionally see those people throughout the year, but we have a like big meet-up either at Christmas or summer and we get together, and it's nice because we always sit at a pub that's quiet and I just, just going out generally in town, there's always something that's sort of, I've never really found a use for, but occasionally it would be nice, but you know, just I can't understand people who go out all the time to the pub. I just can't understand why people want to get incredibly drunk and can't talk to anybody anyway because the music's so loud, so I'm just ... I'm just boring stay at home sort.

Well thank you so much for the interview today. How have you found it?

Yes it was all right. I don't usually like talking about myself so I've survived so it's okay.

Oh thanks so much Louise.

Thank you.