

'Mutual Effects' Transcription – EN

- 00.10 – 1.38 'We find ourselves to-day in the midst of a somewhat peculiar state of society, which we call Civilisation, but which even to the most optimistic among us does not seem altogether desirable. Some of us, indeed, are inclined to think that it is a kind of disease which the various races of man have to pass through—as children pass through measles or whooping cough; but if it is a disease, there is this serious consideration to be made, that while History tells us of many nations that have been attacked by it, of many that have succumbed to it, and of some that are still in the throes of it, we know of no single case in which a nation has fairly recovered from and passed through it to a more normal and healthy condition. (...) in our modern life we find the unity gone which constitutes true society, and in its place warfare of classes and individuals, abnormal development of some to the detriment of others, and consumption of the organism by masses of social parasites. If the word disease is applicable anywhere, I should say it is--both in its direct and its derived sense--to the civilised societies of to-day.' Edward Carpenter
- 11.50 - 14.33 What I see - from a philosophical point of view - going on here is really about building relationships as social transformation. So need is a really important conduit for building those relationships, because it's so levelling, what's going on here isn't – or shouldn't really be - a social provision model of taking care of each other, during an emergency or any other time. It is the original principle of mutual aid, where we meet each other's needs together. Everyone's coming here - volunteers or people who would like some food - to meet relational needs, and if we can all eat together, that's like a real-life, visceral metaphor of equality. It embodies experiencing and meeting our needs together. And that is why the idea here really is that there is no difference between people, whatever needs you're coming here to meet, whether it is food or companionship, community or relationship, and that's the model of social transformation that I think is going on. Capitalism isn't an external structure; it is a set of relationships. It is how we see each other, how we relate to each other and understand each other's interdependence. The unconditional meeting of needs was such an important point of principle here, without any questions, you know, people would come early on and they'd be explaining themselves – 'ah, this has happened' or 'that has happened' and just to be able to say to somebody 'this really doesn't matter. If you've come here then you're welcome, that really frees your soul to be able to say that to somebody. You know this has roots in early 20th century anarchist politics. Kropotkin said it is much harder to control people who aren't hungry. And the Black Panthers saw their radical mission as taking care of people who were considered expendable under a racialised capitalist model of economics. So this is all woven in, and then it is also about: when you're radicalising your idea of relationships, you're actually talking about love.
- 15.15 - 20.12 When you get to the time of the century, and into the 20th century and you start a sort of progressive liberalism of the pre-World War period and, with that, the sort of radi-socialist movement or liberal, labour alliance, it's a really fascinating period. Because, when you get to the First World War, obviously it's a terrible period in terms of death, upsurging jingoism, nationalism and all the rest but, if you look to the Home Front, you really see – I think – a lot of the big transition in terms of approaches to public feeding. Because you have several different approaches: the hangover of the Victorian Poor Laws, you have that voluntarist, 'churchy', charity-based approach, that liberalism, but also that socialism, or civic voluntarism. But the way that public feeding emerges, more on the Home Front, is really because of price inflation, especially towards the middle of the War, and it is really 'bottom-up' organisations: a lot of them from working-class women. So it is no longer relying on that model of the, kind of, 'lady

with the ladle', 'the lady bountiful', the 'Lord Mayor's Show', the 'grateful poor', the workhouse, soup being doled out, soup-kitchen model, but something that is a lot more communal, a lot more 'bottom-up', a lot more female-run, and a lot more organic, in terms of its emergence from working class communities. What happens to that in the First World War is also interesting because, really, you get women in cities in Britain organising to provide cheap and nutritious food for their communities – basically achieving food security from the bottom up -. The War starts to become quite serious on the Home Front from 1916 onwards. It is when you get an intensification of the U-Boat campaign; it's when Lloyd George takes over. We get a much more strident space of politics from his predecessor, Asquith. The quiet story of that Home Front though is these women combatting price inflation on their own, off their own back. But the state decides to sponsor it officially in 1917. The essential state thinks this is a great idea, and they want to sponsor it, which is really encouraging but there is a very great narrowness about the idea of lots of working class people congregating en masse together, to put it frankly, and it's then that you start to see a bit of control taken away from the working class who set up these things in the first place. Having said that, you do see instances – Sheffield is a case in point, actually – where you have women, through their local food control committees, there are local food vigilance committees - localised food security bodies, for want of a better term -, who go against the wishes of the Ministry of Food in London, and set these cafés up, even if they are not approved. In January 1918, for example, in Sheffield, you have local women, through their local food control committee, resolving to introduce their own communal kitchens despite, in that case, the refusal of the Ministry of Food to provide financial assistance. So you still have, despite the fact that the state has taken over running these things and has patriotically rebranded them, and is trying to rid them of any vestiges of socialism, you still have Sheffield being a good instance of localised control. And that is why it is so fascinating in terms of that covert war between local government and central government. From a couple of reports I have looked at, Sheffield had six of these communal kitchens in the city, which is quite significant, when you consider that they were always positioned in big, prominent thoroughfares, so they were in direct competition with commercial premises. For a city of Sheffield's size to have six is quite significant, especially when you consider that other cities, Liverpool and Newcastle for example, didn't really have any, right up until the end of the war. Big, Northern industrial working class cities don't even have one of these, due to local political opposition. Because, of course, a lot of conservative voices thought that it was the end of the family, the liberation of women, the death of society and everything else. For Sheffield to have six then is quite significant, and shows, I suppose - I would imagine that is partially due at least to the tradition in Sheffield of the working women, of having women working in Little Mesters, which emerged in Sheffield in the 19th century, that long tradition of organised working women which perhaps you don't have in other Northern industrial cities, where it tends to be male industrial workers.

20.44 - 20.33

I think for a lot of people it feels like a family space. It feels like their community. If they were to, say, name a place or group in Sheffield where you feel at home or comfortable, I think, for a lot of people, they would say Open Kitchen. You know, we get people that are from very chaotic backgrounds and, perhaps, only go to homeless eating projects. And we get other people that are here as refugees or asylum-seekers, that get forced into this situation of needing to access affordable or free food. So we wanted to create a space where everybody can come together, eat together and be social – which, obviously has had to change significantly. Of course, when the lockdown was announced, we had to close our cafés. We weren't able to keep opening our doors to people. It was difficult when things were really unclear, and we had to, kind of, just think on our feet. You know, things were changing every

day so, I think, the first week that we weren't able to let people in, we allowed people to come to the door and take food away. And then from there we gathered as many names, addresses and phone numbers as we could, or that people were willing to give us, and started setting up our delivery service, which then built, week by week, for the first few weeks. The most important group within that are the people who are being accommodated, because they are destitute asylum seekers. Their claims have been refused; they have no recourse to public funds; they are not receiving the asylum support package. So they are being supported by charity in shared houses. Once we were able to secure, or be able to go and deliver to people in those houses, I think it felt like, yes, we are really meeting and expanding our original aims and objectives.

23.37– 25.52

You know, Carpenter was quite an interesting character, in as much as he was a bit of a social rebel. Something of his social standing did enable him to have a voice. I think Carpenter was seen as actually living it and embodying it. He really threw himself into, trying to understand farming communities, what labour, toil and hard work did, and tried to kind of connect with that history. So, in a very singular way, he was doing it for himself, in terms of those socialist credentials. But then, he actively lectured on the subject. But who knows? Who knows what the implication of his openly homosexual identity could have been in those situations? People have speculated how he may have been marginalised because of those things. So I came across Carpenter in the early 90s and, when I do my own kind of coming out, a Carpenter anthology that the Gay Men's Press released in the 1980s was one of the go-to books. Through the Carpenter project, I had to rethink my politics. I had to rethink the way that I lived my life, the clothes that I wore, the way that I consumed. All of these kinds of things that I may have overlooked at one point, that I am having to rethink because I am trying to connect with that body. And in doing that, also connecting ideologically with something as well, so something changes in my own mindset by doing this work on Carpenter.

29.11 - 32.06

'Let us look at our own day and country. What is about the only conception of social duty that we have? Shall I say it? – It has been said before: To get on. It is true that a man may be a model in his own home life. It is true that the English are not wanting in domestic virtues. He may even thrust his hand into his pocket for the benefit of some charity; but once he has shut the door of his house behind him the one thought that oppresses him as he treads the crowded streets, chafing at the workman that thrusts him off the footpath or pushing contemptuously aside the ragged child that stands in his way is: "How shall I get on?". All the mass of humanity is nothing to him except as a beast of burden to carry him one step forward in the career that he has marked out for himself...

No one of course could think it wrong to make money or to seek the best companionship; but surely it is a deep wrong when his whole theory is to live as much as possible on the work of others, to get the most out of his fellow creatures and give as little in return as he with safety can.

Let us see a moment how the balance of indebtedness stands. We know very well that the food we eat has been obtained by the work of other men; the clothes we wear, the books we read, all the means of daily life are the results of the labour of thousands and thousands of people whom we have never seen. What are we going to do them, each one of us, in return for all these benefits?...

There is no great store of bread and cheese put by by our ancestors for our especial use but the quantity of all the things we want, depends simply and solely on the number of people who labour for them. It is easy to see therefore that if only half the population works - while the rest live out their lives in idleness - there will be precisely half as many good things to be divided as there would be if the whole population worked. And that not only will workers and non-

workers both in consequence be twice as badly off - but that the non-workers or idle people will be simply living on the labour of those whom with an elegant contempt they term "the lower classes".' Edward Carpenter

32.07 – 33.20

And you can have much bigger space, I think, for what you choose to do. It is a much more intentional idea, that we are not waiting for the forces of history to take over, and make these inevitable structural changes happen, that we are going to do that through what we choose to do, the relationships we choose to make, the organisations we choose to develop, the ways we choose to embody or express what we think the world should look like, and again, it is trying to build the future you want now through what you do right now. So it is very imminent, very immediate. That is your own engagement with history from an anarchist point of view. It is that you change the future by changing the present. Nothing magical or mechanical is going to happen, like in that Marxist view of historical change. So looking at the anarchist movement is fascinating for that reason: what do people actually do?

33.33 – 37.01

I have been in the asylum system almost ten years now. And to be in this situation is not something easy, especially when you think you can do better than this, and I can't stay like this, just stay at home and just do basically nothing. I want to do something good for others as well, and to improve myself, to feel I am still alive. OK, I am still in this situation now. It has been a long time, but I felt I used all that time in a good way, and I feel really proud of myself, to do something like this, not to just stay in this situation, and think just about this situation to make you feel down, down, and just make your mental health really bad, and make you isolate yourself from the whole world. So I have to fight that. I have to resist this situation. I come from an Arabic background. In Arabic culture, a man to be in the kitchen, and behind the cooker, it is really like something not right. I used to get around £10 per day, and when I went out to buy food, lunch, dinner mostly, it is really expensive. I can't afford to buy these. It's like: What's going on? For six months or something? I definitely can't manage that in this kind of way, so I start to have to cook, and I have to make meals. I used to make very simple, just fry something or boil an egg or just make tea or coffee, but to do proper cooking, this is something, so I have to cook because I can't afford that. And I used to call my family, how to do that. I make plenty of mistakes, plenty of tasteless food but, day after day, I start to be better and better. I start really loving to cook, and especially when we meet with my friends, we always share food and we always have to cook at one of our friends' house and from that point, I have plenty of friends and from different countries. This is the most important. I think as well, because each country has a different style, their way to do, so I pick up some tips as well from them, and start to really love cooking and the most enjoyable thing when you cook and, at the end, present the food, people start to eat that food, and make: wow! this really nice, this really good. It makes me feel better about myself as well. Since the lockdown, it has made other people as in my situation: there is no future; there is, like, all foggy, and just darkness. It's like no life, no future. And there is no end to that as well. So this is the tricky part. If you said: 'OK. You've got to stay in this situation for one year, it's like a prisoner. When you are in prison, you say, oh after one year I will get out, and then I can do whatever I want. So, in this situation it is like no end. Nobody will tell you when it is going to end, back to normal life.

37.31 – 39.41

I was just waking up and, not having a focus, and not having that structure, of what I am going to do. I just end up walking aimlessly, like at a lot of other people. I lost my support, and had zero communication for about three weeks, which was really, really hard work. I've not been able to get in touch with the family, etc. etc. I've got used to things now, and for me it's not the fact that the city that I live in has turned into a ghost town over the past few months, it's about lack of routine and structure that I have for days. I do some voluntary stuff. I am involved with a community gardening group. I do some art groups at a local art centre and, for me, when I

put all those routines away as structures to the day, it's like Groundhog Day, every day. And it's like every day has been a Bank Holiday. In a few weeks, there's another Bank Holiday coming, then its Christmas. Now I think there's probably an awful lot of people who've been struggling a lot worse than me. Because I've got certain safety nets, which a lot of people might not have. And over the past few months, I've seen an awful lot of people just wandering aimlessly, like they're heading somewhere, but they've got no location, no destination in mind. So I think there's probably millions of people all over the country who've been struggling a lot worse than me. I found it unbelievably difficult – like I said, it's not the people, it's the routines and structure

40.13 – 44.49

I don't really make food from my country, but the other ladies take great joy in making food from their country. One is Ethiopian. She makes Injera, and then the sauce they are eating with it. One is Kenyan, and she loves to make chapatis with the sauce. We like to eat her chapatis with the all vegetarian sauce that you put on it. Then there is also, the lady who moved out, she is from Congo. I was very nervous about the whole thing. I was very anxious. Really, for maybe the first four weeks, it was very hard for me. I didn't even want to leave the house. I was paranoid with everybody. I was coming, if they would go out and come back, I would rather stay in my room. And it started to get a little bit easier. I started to trust the people in the house, you know, knowing that we all tried to be safe. I feel very safe in this country. You know, I can at nine o'clock at night come from the town walking coming here, although I am nervous about it, which I can't do in the country which I coming from – from South Africa, you know. The violence and things like that experienced, and you do feel a little bit looked down on sometimes, not by the people that you get in contact daily, but just by the public, you know. I feel embarrassed not working. I feel embarrassed, you know, having to sit and wait for charity money, you know. When I can go out and go in work, I am capable to work, but I can't work because the Home Office is giving me such a hard time. Just before you came – maybe 15 minutes – there was this guy with my solicitor because, you know, the Home Office look again and again for new evidence. You do try to do everything, you know, in your honest way. I don't know what more they want from me. I am in a great nervous position at this time, more than I am scared of the corona virus. But, being so vulnerable, you know, to be picked on by the Home Office. The Home Office, is the people who will say there are things about your life. So you feel you are on a kind of probe, you know. You can do something, but you can't. When I do give the Home Office things as to why my great fear is South Africa like everybody says in this country. Until you live in South Africa, until you live in the area where I come from. It's OK if you go there for a month or two months, six months, you go on holiday, because you're not living in the area where I am coming from. So that is very hard to tell the Home Office, you know, because they just say that's a big country, and they say you can get support there. You don't come from where I am coming from. You didn't live my life. The life I left, you know. So it is really hard. You don't know what to do. And sometimes, like last night, I was very tired this morning. You don't know what they will say to you tomorrow, what phone call you will get from your solicitor. You shake when a letter comes through the door, because I have been so many times rejected. It's heart-breaking. Sorry. It's very hard to be in this process. And especially so long. You know, if somebody is alone, like me, you can't talk. You exist, you don't live. You don't have a life. You exist. During the day, you just walk around. And you can only go and do walks for so long. You are very shy with other people. I go to church. At the moment, I am not going because of the virus. But, when I finish at church, I just want to go out of church as quickly as possible, because I don't want people to ask me questions. Because, at my age I should work. I should have a life of my own. I should not be having to, you know, like a – I have things I have to deal with, but, when I am sitting and doing nothing, it's just messing my mind

- 46.57– 48.06 That's the reality of asylum. It is absolutely crushing and completely intractable for most people. There's nothing at all that people can do about there situations, other than just wait, and wait in the environment that the Government have explicitly called 'the hostile environment'. And one of the things that they can do to be more hostile is just keep people waiting. The people that we have talked to, asylum seekers today, have been waiting between six and twelve years – six, eleven and twelve years across three people -. They are just random cases. You can't imagine what it means to be stateless, to have nowhere to go, and the place where you live to not accept you
- 48.13 – 49.50 I am from Sri Lanka. When I came to the UK, six years ago actually, I don't know anyone. I just came for work. But I had some problem and then they stopped the work. I think five-and-a-half years I am in Sheffield now. I am an asylum seeker. Actually, I am waiting a long time. It makes that mentally and physically, really I go very low. And really I lost all my hobbies, my interests. I lost everything. I think nearly five years ago I was waiting and then they refused. And now I am waiting – they can see everything of mine – I am waiting now to go through the court. I got the court date but, because of the Corona situation it is cancelled, and now I am waiting hopefully until I get soon and I want to actually live a life because I am so tired. I am disappointed that I don't want to ruin any more my life, but I have to live for a law. Somebody pushing me behind. If somebody does not give me some push, I can't go on any more for tomorrow. That's the situation I am in.
- 49.59 1– 52.33 We have made three types of dolma. One of them with spinach, another one with vine leaves, another one with cabbage. And this day, last time I bring some dolma for all of them from free kitchen, I remember everyone liked it. Because I lost my daughter since December 2015. I lost her, and all the time I am crying. I cried, I cried for my daughter and for my husband. But now I find my daughter last year. I am very happy when I found her, and make a big dolma and bring it to the free kitchen. I lost my daughter because we are in Turkey, in the city of Izmir, and we are all family, 120 people, all together in the same hotel. And I remember, one night, my smuggler told all of them 'come downstairs', and he separated my family. He did it. He says 'don't worry, I will send all. He plans to send three boats, three small boats. In all boats to put 40 people. I remember the first time he sends me and Rojin with three boys. My husband holds my son. And I asked him. 'Please give me Lari. Please give me Lari.' And he gave me Lari, and I hold Lari. And after that I didn't see him any more. And we went with first boat. But after that second boat and third boat not coming, because this night we went by boat one hour and twenty minutes we are in sea on boat. For tomorrow, all the time I am looking, looking to sea, but I didn't see small boat coming any more
- 52.33 – 53.33 When I lost my family in Turkey, that was a very horrible time. A very horrible memory in my life. That happened, but after I escaped from Turkey to Germany, and then to Denmark, then to Iceland. You know, when she showed me a lot photo of the Iraqi people, I was really surprised, because 200 hundred photos, too much. But when I saw my Mum, I cried for, like, an half hour and, because there was a letter from my Mum, the number, after that, they called to my Mum and I called to my Mum, and we talked and I say 'Hi Mum'. So we were crying, because she wasn't expect that, to talk - like, she wasn't expect that it was me.
- 55.04– 1.01.08 People drink in my home and when they go out they give me letter, ring this number if you need any help or food for you, anything. This is very good, that people help each other. If you ask all the area here, you know, they know me, I help all the people all the time here. Especially I help here some old ladies, or some people are very disabled here. I help them. Because I have car. Some of them don't have car. Sometimes I take him some area or I bring him something. And other people, they help me. If you help people, my God send people to help you. Every time. This is my culture. Like, this one is sheepskin. I like this one here. And this one is some

Quran. Muslim Quran, and this, Allah, is my God's name, my brother Mohammed's name, and some Quran here. And this one is for coffee, Arabic coffee. When I come in my home, I'm feeling like my house before. Everything before was in my family in Syria. Because my house is gone now. I am coming, maybe, about April 2014, from Syria to Turkey. And I am coming from Turkey to Libya, and stay in Libya about seven, six months. And come from Libya to Italy. From there, some people say, for this trip is day trip – between Libya and Italy, yes. For a small boat, we come maybe 300 hundred people. From Libya to Italy. This time, 5th of August 2014. I lost this date. Stormy trip, difficult trip, yes. At sea, we nearly dead, but I come, just me, singly, not with my family, and I am coming from Italy to Belgium, from Belgium to France and stayed in Calais about three months, and I try to come here to England. Because I like to come here in England. I know some people maybe long time they live in England, maybe live in London fifteen years ago. So I am coming to Europe. I come to other areas but I found England is very good, yes. And for the English language, is easy for me and for my children. In Calais, I live in the jungle, maybe outside, under bridge, maybe three months, no food, no money, no anything, yes. Too many countries fighting now in my area, and people there is very tired. One dollar now maybe 3000 Lira Syrian. Ten years ago, fifteen Lira Syrian. The people there, they don't have money for food. They don't have anything. They don't have clothes. Too many people dead from the hunger, from the poor. Very difficult, yes. I'm stressed for my family, my brother, my aunties, my uncles. And not just for my family. For all the people, because we are human, yes? For ordinary people there it is very, very sad. Some people not worried; they have everything, they have money. They are fine. No... But my area, now, my family, where they live, they are no working, looking for food or something. They can't live. They don't have anything around. They have so much stress till now, and this now start again. And everyday, everything is expensive. They not find anything. No electric or anything. Everything is very difficult. I know some people. They don't have food. Ten years ago, when the dollar was 15 Lyra Syrian and everything was cheap in Syria, some people very hungry. How is now, with the war? Those people is dead. Too many children dead. My niece is dead because she was sick and you go to other areas to doctor. They can't go. If there is a Syrian or Russian aeroplane or Iran, if they see any car or motorcycle going to other areas, they think maybe this army or some people fighting, or some terrorist people. They bomb it quick. They can't go. My brother he stay with his daughter. They ask so many people 'please somebody go with me, five, six miles. I want to take my daughter to hospital'. They said 'I'm sorry. No hospitals. No doctor. They can't go. Dead. Now he come from Libya to Germany two years ago. He very sad. He lost one daughter, has just one now. And I know some people, they not find milk. Some people now. Two years ago, they not find milk for their children. They give their children or new baby, water and sugar. The sugar was cheap. Now, the sugar is very expensive, and milk very expensive. Some people sitting here. You see your daughter or your boy. They phone me...

1.04.28–
1.07.37

I moved to Sheffield from India in September 2018; a move that required tremendous sacrifices from my family, in terms of my mother very kindly volunteering to put our family home papers as collateral for a student loan, so that I could come to England, because she wanted me to avail this opportunity to gain an education and further my career as a psychologist. Coming to England was a unique discovery, in terms of how denial – the arrogance that comes with denial –, and the poverty of speech that perpetuates denial – function in making English society almost like the perfect psychosomatic patient. And, to me, these afflictions, which start from an institutional denial of colonisation, to an institutional denial of austerity and its horrendous consequences, are something which people know, but they don't know how to talk about it. Because, very often, they don't have the vocabulary. Very often, they don't have the resource. But, more than anything, they don't have the strength. The way society functions over here is,

literally, people on the top annihilate people on the bottom – by a thousand cuts, all the time. The lower you can get your standard, the easier it gets. And then, at one point of time, once they are low enough, people just crack. And then, nobody notices that it is going lower and lower. Nobody should be hungry. This is a problem which is very logically possible, and exists in India. But with it over here, I mean, it's almost like it is another proof of the fact that, adding insult to injury is a national sport in England. Food is just like nourishment. Nourishment starts with food. It's really, really important that nobody should go hungry. It is perfectly possible to alleviate it, by passing very humane policies

1.08.00 –
1.14.38

I live in a rat-infested building. There's rats running about your feet, under your feet. They have colonised the building - can't get rid of them. I sat watching tele about two month ago. They're fighting in the wall, in the cavity of the wall, chasing mice and, honest to God, all of us, we have all caught summat. One of the lads has got big holes in his head where the rat mites are attacking him. And they're not doing owt for us. I got some medication yesterday. £350 a box. I got two boxes. Antibiotics, because I got a secondary infection in the leg. I've got a hole in my leg there, and it just won't heal. What it is, I were locked up last year. I got out ten month ago, and they put me in a bed and breakfast. After three weeks being homeless, and he turned it, while I were there and other tenants – about six of us – put scaffolding up, turned it into a building site while we were staying there. And he ripped all carpets out. Didn't warn us or anything. I got slaughtered. Dust mites, rat mites, pigeon mites: I had 'em all. I got a magnifying glass and you catch 'em and you crush 'em. And to be sat there. It took 'em five weeks – I am on probation. I am still on a curfew, ten months after getting out, seven while seven – I don't want to see that. I've fucked my life up, and – I don't swear often – and that how severe I have fucked my life up. I have fucked my life up due to the choices I have made: ignorance, that's what it were. I've come from a family, my dad, I were born in Burnley, Lancashire. I've got a big family: sisters and brothers and half brothers and half sisters to a different mother, so I had a step mum and my real mum. But me mum kidnapped us four times as we were growing up. My dad always brought us back to Sheffield. She come to live in Sheffield when I were 18, and I'd just had my daughter. She come to live in Sheffield: Wincobank, in a flat, and she found out what my dad were doing to my younger sister and my older sister. It was incest. When I lay there on the bed, looking up at ceiling in prison, I think about what happened, and when I was in Armley, on YP (young prisoners' wing), I were going to church on Sunday and 'Rule 43s' – nonces, rapists and all that – were coming off A Wing – I was on B Wing - , and I were first, walking off the Wing, and there was about 80 YPs behind me, going to church. My dad was stood there: first in queue for nonces – and I couldn't acknowledge him. I walked past him like that. Can you imagine what that felt like? Can you? And I was on that side, watching my dad walk around yard with these. And my mum killed herself when she found out. She killed herself. A few months ago I was in hospital, and nurse has left some scissors on side. I rammed them straight in there, and I were looking for veins, and I couldn't find it. That...that's...that's just done. Done. Life. Its fucking tortuous, mate. Honest. It's torture. It really is torture. Seriously, I am waiting to die. Serious, mate. I'm not a mardy cunt. I am a realist. And, honest to God, mate. My body now, I'm fucked. I'm fucked. And I am aware, I'm totally aware if what's going on. And it's not right. Like I just said, it's not just me. It's other people with holes in their heads where they're getting bit off these mites. They were put in these places, bed and breakfasts, to take them away from town, because people weren't working any more. They were sat at home. And when they're sat at home, watching all this on the street: homelessness, begging, one in every two doorways. It's mad, there's that many. And that's a reflection on society. That is a reflection of what's happening, in how human beings... we're evil, mate. It's greed. Greed. That's all it boils down to, when you think, when you burn all the crap off, you're left with a pan of greed.

It's selfishness and greed. Ignorance. I'm telling you. It's ... other people are suffering big time. You've got to help them. Are you telling me, the life I've lived... the life I've lived is normal behaviour? Get fucking real. I'm not on my own. There's a fucking lot of other people from situations similar. Not far, do you know what I mean? And that's just life. It's fucking horrible, mate. You know, when you come from it: madness, mate. Honest to God. And to be living...like that...in this day and age...in a country that's wealthy. This country's wealthy, it's rich, and to have people living like that

1.15.21 –
1.16.44

And yes, we've got... this week actually, we've stocked vegetables off the price list. We've gone into the market and picked up various things for about a quid (£1) a box that are on the edge, or well, maybe, past the edge. Not sellable, but with a lot of edible stuff in. So, the carrots, yes, there are some carrots that urgently needed using today. And these peas, probably 30% too far gone to use, so going through 45 kilos of peas in their pods, and sort out what we can use from what we can't. Which has taken quite a long time to get through 10 kilos. So, we'll be here all day, shelling peas. Historically, I believe people thought this was easy.

1.17.08 —
1.17.33

I think it's been very difficult, and very draining. I don't know how many meals, B has cooked, but I feel I have cooked well over a thousand. To come in every week and do this. It used to take out the next day, after cooking the 300 hundred meals, I wouldn't be able to get out of bed. It felt very worth it, but it's very exhausting and draining

1.18.02 -
1.24.25

My oldest brother, he retired this year, actually. He worked on buses. His missus, she used to work on buses, but she used to be, they don't do ticket machines any more, she used to do that. And I used to save up badges from different pits, 1983-84, and they used to go round different places and help out in soup kitchens and that, and raise money for miners' families and that. So soup kitchens were a big part of me brother's life. So any time he weren't working, or his missus weren't working, they'd be out, getting food or donations off people, and taking them round, like Barnsley, Rotherham, Doncaster. Then to see it happening again in this situation is quite outstanding. There's always been that giving spirit in South Yorkshire anyway. Like, 'we are on our arse; you're on your arse; but we've got a bit more than you, so you can have this'. Do you know what I mean? Does that make any sense? I thought it were wrong what they were doing. And, to see so many blokes who – I mean, I like football and I've been in loads of scrapes at football – with Sheffield United, like -. Loads of fights. But this were actual people who were fighting for their lives. Fighting for their families' lives. I don't mean, like, killing each other, but fighting for their way of life, should I say. Their way of life. And that's what people that I went with, that's what we stood for: to help preserve that way of life for people. I mean, I remember my brother being up at ten, twelve o'clock at night, doing food parcels for miners' families, like. And it were horrible. As you saw working class people who never fought in their lives. But they fought for their right to work and get a decent wage, and to feed their families. It weren't just about Arthur Scargill. It were about pure families on the ground. And what did Government do? They divided and split them. Help from general public to the miners and their families was unbelievable. All right, it weren't like a pot of gold for everybody, but least all the family, and all the kids, at least they had food on the table. I were at Orgreave; I've been on anti-racist demonstrations at Welling, against BNP, Poll Tax demonstrations in '91 and nearly got gates of Parliament ripped down. But, like, you saw police on horseback chasing people down with truncheons. You were next to it - quite scary, actually -. And you put in context today, like – oh, they haven't got enough for a pay rise for nurses, and stuff like that, but yet they can send a Cruise missile every ten minutes to bomb Syria, or they can send Saudi Arabia billions of pounds worth of weapons to bomb Yemenis - innocent women and children. Yet they can't afford a pay rise for nurses. It's like history repeating itself as far as I'm concerned. It's been the same again: working class getting fucked over again. Full stop. That's always. I

mean it doesn't matter what colour your skin is, what gender you are, whether you're fat, slim... It doesn't matter. Working class people always stick together. And if they know that you're struggling, they'll always turn out and help you out. I've been on my arse at least half a dozen times, and friends have come to my aid and took me in, do you know what I mean? Got me sorted and everything. And then I've started off on another journey. And now, well, for the past eight years I have been quite stable, managing my depression and that. You know that one? That's 'victory to the intifada' in Arabic. Remember Palestine uprising in 1991? I had that tattooed on. It were a mate of mine from... Northern Turkey...Kurds, yes. Well, he came over to England as an asylum seeker. And he were a doctor or something, but he were into revolutionary politics. And he used to do jobs for everybody at the same time. And then he started, he went back ten years ago. I asked him to write it me down, because he spoke Arabic fluently. And that's what it means: victory to the intifada and the Palestinian flag. That one, that's a cover up. It's a scorpion with a jewel. That's a SWP (Socialist Workers Party) tattoo. That one nuclear generation – I thought I'd have that, and then that one is bit of William Blake: 'To see a world in a grain of sand, heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand, eternity in an hour'. I just think it's a beautiful part of his poem. So that's me, and then I've got 'Peace' on one side, and 'Anarchy' on other side, down my ears

1.25.05
1.27.00

So, we've just arrived at Scotland Street, and this is the site of the Commonwealth Café. So let's walk up toward it, yes? Now the Commonwealth Café was – and he writes about it in his biography – It was a kind of a temporary space that was taken over for Carpenter's socialist group to meet on a regular basis. And, as part of that, they would invite speakers, and they would speak, and there would be reading groups and lectures etc that would go on. It was a small space, and the upstairs rooms, kind of, accommodated and, at the height of it, Carpenter was, kind of, living there on a regular basis. But it was just on the edge of a really, really poor area between here and Kelham Island, where it was heavily industrialised, and lots of, kind of, slum housing. He was nationally and internationally reknowned at this point as well, so he did get lots of really famous speakers coming into Sheffield City, coming to the café, and doing talks on behalf of Carpenter's socialist group. And visiting the farm, and just, kind of, hanging out. Scotland Street is now a karaoke bar and Chinese restaurant and, for a gay British-Chinese artist, I think that's... it's very pleasing for me(!) that the site of this place is another kind of communality – a site of communality and a connection

1.27.02–
1.29.33

'In 1887 we took a large house and shop in Scotland Street, a poor district of the town; and opened a café, using the large room above for a meeting and lecture room, and the house for a joint residence for some of us who were more immediately concerned in carrying on the business. We had all sorts of social gatherings, lectures, teas, entertainments in the Hall - the wives and sisters of the "comrades" helping, especially in the social work; we had Annie Besant, Charlotte Wilson, Kropotkin, Hyndman, and other notables down to speak for us; we gave teas to the slum-children who dwelt in the neighbouring crofts and alleys (but these had at first to be given up on account of the poor little things tearing themselves and each other to pieces, perfect mobs of them, in their frantic attempts to gain admittance - a difficulty which no arrangement of tickets or of personal supervision seemed to obviate)... As to the Café, we were only able to hold to it for a year. Though quite a success from the propagandist point of view, financially it was a failure. The refreshment department was not patronized nearly enough to make it pay. The neighbourhood was an exceedingly poor one. And so we were obliged to surrender the place, and retire to smaller quarters. During that year however I really lived most of the time at the Scotland Street place. I occupied a large attic at the top of the house, *almost* high enough to escape the smells of the street below, but exposed to showers of black which fell from the innumerable chimneys around. In the early morning at 5 a.m. there was the

strident sound of the 'hummers' and the clattering of innumerable clogs of men and girls going to their work, and on till late at night there were drunken cries and shouting. Far around stretched nothing but factory chimneys and foul courts inhabited by the wretched workers. It was, I must say, frightfully depressing; and all the more so because of tragic elements in my personal life at the time. Only the enthusiasm of our social work, and the abiding thoughts which had inspired *Towards Democracy* kept me going.' Edward Carpenter

1.29.48 –
1.35.43

Food, sustenance, yes? It's OK. It's up and down, obviously, with this, but most of the time is spent indoors and in the garden. The garden's nice. The weather's been nice, so it's OK. A lot of drawing... a lot of drawing of magpies – I never had a model before! These magpies are sitting beside me, or nearly sitting beside me, so getting a sense of drawing them, which didn't really draw figuratively much in my life, but enjoy drawing the birds. I don't want to go back through the story of my life, but there is links, through all of this, to addictions and loss and fear, leaving prison after 18 years – actually, 9 years in prison and nine years on licence, and then I went to the Quaker community in Bamford. Moving from Bamford, I got offered an opportunity to live in this place, which is the Alms Houses. So you have to be a pensioner at least. And, so as I was a pensioner by then, I thought this would be a good place to move from, because I have difficulties with breathing, so there's COPD. Going uphill makes it a bit more difficult, so leaving Bamford in the winter, it just got harder and harder. So I got a bursary to be part of S1 Artspace and then, just coming round to making an exhibition, I had a stroke. So that kind of wiped me out, as strokes do. This was quite a serious stroke. I think they're all serious, but I could barely speak; I definitely couldn't read or write. Someone asked me in the hospital 'Was it scary?' and I said 'Well, maybe, but I don't know what scary is' – at that time. I knew before and I know now, but at that time I didn't know what scary was, which is quite a gift, really – to not have any fear or be scared, even for a short time. And then, recovering from that, which was just down the road, at a place called Beech Hill, which is a stroke hospital, yes? I heard, dreamt, imagined or felt this: 'Good morning Armin. I'm the Buddha. I've just come back to say 'hello'. I can't stay, because I am really busy. Bye. And that was a kind of a gift for me. Someone who may have lived, may not have lived, it's a spirit of a Buddha, from 2,300 years ago or so, and I thought, well, I'm not in too bad a place having the stroke, if I can communicate in a spirit of a Buddha... Now whether it was a dream or just an imagination or something going on in real, it doesn't matter. It came, and I'm really grateful for it. Coming out of the hospital and getting back to here, I started to draw, or paint, and this sound that I never heard before or used, ever. So I guess it's a bit of a mystery; it's also definitely for me a gift. I don't know what it is. Do I need to know? Probably not. Who knows? Who knows? I don't know how cavemen spoke. I don't know what language they used...[some speaking in his own 'mystery' language] and this comes out, just like speaking English, even though it's a mystery to me, and I don't understand it, I can't... I can't, what's the word? I can't translate it, but I feel it. There is hope – and I'll go back to that word 'hope' again – for anyone who's having any difficulties, health-wise, stroke-wise, addiction-wise, any kind of way, what ever and how ever that dark place may feel, you can overcome it. It's possible. And I know it's possible, because I've done it. So it's not a test; it's not a game. It's just something that's appeared in my consciousness since I had a stroke. So, as I am talking to you right now, talking to you in English, and looking around and listening to the crows and looking at the chimney across the road there [more speaking in his own 'mystery tongue']. I think the crow's telling me to shut up! It's given me a strength, even though I don't know what it is. This has happened; I have come through this. I don't know what it is; but there is hope within it.

1.37.13 -
1.40.32

So I first started volunteering when I was 18, and my first year at university. I came to a Late, the first ever night they did here, with a friend, and I was just a bit bored at university and so I

started coming and cooking here every Friday for the whole of my second term. And it felt like I'd found the people that were like me almost, cycling and cooking and loving food as much as I did. And also had the same politics, and world view as me. I started coming when I was feeling a bit hungover, and getting fed. And then you start having conversations with different people, and you form relationships. So then I started coming to the café more. In March, I organised a meal for 80 people – a three-course meal. It was called 'Woman, Food and Community' and that felt like a real turning point. It was, this is a really, really big part of my life. And then, a week later, we went into lockdown, and I realised that this was the biggest shock to the capitalist system in my lifetime, and that, like the National Health Service had been made in World War Two, this was an opportunity to create a National Food Service. So, in the last five months, I have probably done four days a week, every week, voluntary, doing all the press and comms and admin, to try and get the National Food Service off the ground. We had around seven branches at the start of lockdown, but it wasn't a particularly active network, and people weren't supporting each other as much as they could be. But, during Covid, we've grown to now have fifteen branches. So fifteen places like Foodhall across the country, where people are providing emergency food provision, but hope to be going back one day to social eating spaces. We were approached by some previous volunteers from Foodhall who lived in Hackney, who wanted to start up a similar project, and they used the systems from Bristol - who also, basically, established themselves during Covid - and Foodhall, to create the helpline and the system to distribute emergency food parcels across Hackney. So these three branches have been the three main branches during lockdown. In a few month's time, a lot more people are going to be going hungry than they were during lockdown, because there was the support there. That's really scary in a way. I think, during the recession, it's gonna get... deaths are going to increase a lot more, but not just because of coronavirus. I want to support grassroots organisations that are feeding people, to do it in a way that can tackle the other issues, like social isolation and inequality, be that foodbanks, be that mutual aid groups, be that cafés who are happy to do a 'contribute what you can', at lunchtime, so that our network can grow even bigger, and we're even stronger against what the future holds.

1.40.56 – It's a collective statement of intent. And to me... it's this, kind of, Utopian gesture, which is the
1.41.30 beauty of it to me, in that we can say this. We have the power to say this, as a group of projects, that this is what we believe, that food should be viewed as important as health, because it *is* health

1.41.32 – There is so much going on in such a big moment, where so many things are in play, and I have,
1.42.05 kind of, taken the decision to be helpful. But I feel like there is good reason for that, like the, I mean, a lot of it is fairly naff, but the upsurge in consciousness about Black Lives Matter is a real heartening thing to see

1.42.06 – My hope is that nothing should de-escalate. What has happened with respect to, not only Black
1.44.00 Lives Matter but a complete focus on every single type of social discrimination that has been brought to the fore by Covid, nothing should de-escalate. There are a lot of people in power who are trying to de-escalate, simply because this is power quaking in its boots, because people are questioning finally. I really hope people don't stop asking questions, and I hope people value each other a little more. I hope people are kinder to each other. I really hope that - no not hope - I *expect* white people to black, indigenous people of colour as humans. I think it is important to state this, that the entire world is under a global state of trauma. I think, for the first time, neuro-typical individuals – so-called 'normal' individuals - can understand what it means to be, literally, distanced from everything – a kind of life that is being led by hundreds who suffer from so many ailments: physical, economical, psychological. I think there is a growing empathy. I hope there is a growing empathy in people.

1.45.20 —
1.46.24

You know, I was very aware that, on virtually the first day that the lockdown was lifted, to the extent that people were allowed to go into shops again - non-essential shops like Primark, for example, on the same day they brought back the conditionality on benefits claimants to be available for work 40 hours a week, every week. So, straight away, you know, the economy is nominally open – clearly it's not in any way a functional economy like it was before, but, you know, almost before those shop doors have really opened, the Government is saying 'And if you have the opportunity to work, and you don't take it, we will cut your benefits. So we will take away your ability to sustain yourself, unless you are willing to make yourself available for any type of work at any time. You know, it's a horrible situation, and it's something that people who are already marginalised, already economically disadvantaged, its an axe over their heads I would have been quite happy to go back to what we left it at, but it won't be the same. Things are not going to go back to being the same as they were – not for a long time. I don't really think about the future, because I could conjure up some horrific thoughts. It's been a good innings – can't go on for ever -, but you don't like to think about it. So you don't, and you always carry on as though you're going to live forever. And the thought of the options what have loomed today, of what's happening in care homes and the whole business of care for the elderly, is so horrendous that you think, well, do I really want to carry on with that kind of existence. I'm willing to fight it to the end. But then I look and I think, well, here I am in bed. If something happens now, what happens? Because I don't have this emergency thing round my neck, where I can press a button and somebody will come round, and so on. Because you think, well, I'm not at that stage and, hopefully, I will not need to know. It will just happen, and so on. But, at present, I still think I've got a future. But I'm not happy about planning for it. Because it's not easy, and this particular epidemic has not helped

1.46.25 –
1.48.43

1.48.45 –
1.50.32

During lockdown, I found myself reading a book called 'Radical Hope', and it was based on the conversations of the leader of the Crow First Nation Tribe, and conversations that were recorded between him and a white trapper, at the point of the tribe's move from being nomadic hunter-gatherers on to a reservation. And how the chief brought his people through that enormous change. And it's quite dense, and the ideas are quite difficult, but what I took from it was the idea of putting faith in something, even though you don't know what it is yet. And the hope for something, even though the terms by which you might hope are altered.

1.51.36
- 1.52 58

One of the things that's been interesting me, thinking about, firstly, from the Commonwealth café and then reflecting on a number of other social food care initiatives, projects and so on, is how you deal with the fact of - each project, each initiative, looks at the fact of its own limitation: physical limitations, limitations of resources, and retains its direction, but also, kind of, is able to consider that within the bigger picture of a much greater need, a much greater issue. And, how, without building a conglomerate or a franchise, which is very 'business', how at the sort of levels and initiatives we are talking about, we can talk about multiplication of service, multiplication of initiatives, care and so on. That's, you know, broadly the question. And it's not a criticism of any initiative at all, because we all of us have – we do what we can do. On the same level, we exist in something that is much bigger. It's that broader question.

1.53.01 –
1.53.37

It's at this moment in which we've seen, all across the country, and more than likely all across the world, how projects like ours have been able, precisely because they are small-scale, to fulfil a need where no other larger organisations or institutions were able to.

1.54 46 –
1.55.55

I think anybody in this country is a long way from having a normal life back. I think it's going to be a very long time. I think in 18 months, we're going to live in a very different society. I think the playing field's going to be levelled a lot more, if that makes sense. I think there's going to be a lot more widespread understanding about mental health conditions, because people, like doctors, actually they didn't understand before. But it makes sense now, that they understand

some of those issues with mental health and anxiety, maybe. I think in this situation, I would have really, really struggled a few years ago. But, mentally, I found it... it's been a real struggle, and I feel that I am a nervous wreck half the time, but yes, I think it's made me a stronger person mentally. And it's not really about hopes for me; it's about hopes for the rest of society.