

...with Catherine Loveday

## 'I'm optimistic, some might say idealistic'

### One place

On top of Exmoor, with the sea and views of Wales on one side, sweeping purple moors on the other and, right by my feet, a bubbling river with steep waterfalls enticing me down the valley, through the woods, towards a little farmhouse selling cream teas. My mum was evacuated to a place near Porlock during the war and passed on her instant love of the place to her own parents who eventually retired there, providing all nine grandchildren with the perfect summer holiday home. Despite moving around a bit as a child, Exmoor was the one constant and we went there every school holiday.

### One children's book

I love so many children's books and I have thoroughly enjoyed rediscovering many of the classics with my two sons, as well as devouring many new brilliant texts. However there was one book that, although not my favourite,

I genuinely believe changed my outlook on life – *Pollyanna* by E.H.Porter. I'm a little shy to admit it, given the pejorative way that the 'Pollyanna principle' is generally used, but it had a very powerful effect on the seven-year-old me. I can vividly remember trying to play the 'glad game' when things got difficult. My approach to life is optimistic, some might say idealistic, and I often wonder if the message of that book is at the root of that.

### One revelation

I'm afraid I'm one of those evangelists who, having hated running all my life, has discovered that it is a fantastic, cheap and efficient exercise. A succession of events, and increasing evidence for a link between cardiovascular health and brain health, led me to seek out a personal trainer in the hope that I might finally find a form of exercise I could stick to. I told him that I was prepared to try anything except running. He accepted these protestations at first but over the next few weeks every bit of evidence pointed to it being the exercise that fitted my needs, so reluctantly I gave it a go. He appeared once a week for three months by which time I could

comfortably run a mile without stopping. That was over five years ago and since then I have never wavered in my commitment... I run at least three times a week.

### One regret

My biggest, and probably only major, regret is that I didn't write up any papers from my PhD, despite being very proud of the work I'd done. I went straight into a full-time senior lectureship... by the time I got back to doing research again it just felt like it was too late. My regret is magnified by the fact that one of my supervisors, Alan Parkin, died suddenly a few years after I graduated. I can still hear his voice telling me that I mustn't let academic admin jobs get in the way of publishing the work from my PhD!

### One visit

A visit to Clive Wearing with Barbara Wilson. I knew all about Clive from lectures, books, magazines and TV clips but to actually meet him, chat to him and sing at his piano with him was a very privileged thing. This was probably the moment when I realised that no amount of reading and teaching can replace the experience of spending time with real people. The extent of Clive's amnesia was so palpable and was in such stark contrast to his intellect and easy charm.

### One radio show

*Desert Island Discs*. An absolute gift for someone who is fascinated by both memory and music: now that the whole archive is publicly available I will never have any excuse to be bored.

### One album

*Quadrophenia* by The Who. My introduction to The Who was learning to play the violin solo for Baba O'Riley for the

band in which I usually played keyboards. I loved the song, which despite being 20 years old by then, felt refreshing and original, so I begged the guitarist of our band to tape all his albums for me and then moved on to all the films. I particularly loved *Quadrophenia* and when I went to watch them performing it last year I felt quite overwhelmed!

### One luxury

My phone, with wifi or 3G. Who would have believed 20 years ago that you could carry a single gadget in your pocket which would allow you to communicate with almost anyone in almost any form, while also providing you with



Exmoor – the one constant

a newspaper, a camera, a dynamic train timetable, a jukebox, a map of the whole world on any scale with a 'you are here' blue dot, a guitar tuner, a scrabble board, a dictionary, a torch etc. It really is *Star Trek* and while I recognise the potential negative impact a smartphone can have on social interactions in the real world, I think it is a wonderful testament to human endeavour and I would miss mine terribly!

### One aim for *The Psychologist and Research Digest*

As the new(ish) Chair of the Psychologist and Digest Editorial Advisory Committee, I hope to work with the office and membership to make our offerings *the* daily authoritative voice of psychology!



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