

a familiar part of the local landscape as she would be seen walking her dog a few times a day. My daughter had been asking me for weeks to take her to see Faith's extensive Doll's house collection again for which she had been renowned for but I kept putting it off thinking I would be able to take her at a later time. But that time never came and I regret not taking a little time out of my day to go and see Faith and with my daughter and wander around her house being given a magical tour of her collection of dolls and dolls houses dating from the late 19th century.

I think living in a city can make us lead a very insulated existence where we are so involved in our own lives that we are unaware of what is going on in the lives of the people that we are surrounded by. I had heard stories of people dying in their homes and not being discovered for days. It used to appal me. One particular story that troubles me is about an elderly gentleman who died in his flat and the only reason his neighbours took the initiative to find out if something was wrong was because the milkman alerted them to the fact that the bottles delivered by him had not been taken in for a few days. I think this kind of tragic story is more common in a busy metropolis like London where people seem to try their best to avoid having too much interaction with anyone outside their immediate family or friends.

If you ever happen to travel on the underground in London, you notice how studiously people try to avoid eye contact with any of the other passengers. Everybody always manages

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to give the impression that they are perennially in a hurry. The fast pace of city life can make people a little insular and blinkered. However even in the UK it is less isolating living in small villages and in the suburbs, where people seem to have a little more human contact with their neighbours. There is some sort of community spirit and the residents are quite actively involved in organising and participating in local events.

It's funny that having lived in Bangladesh where everyone seems to know everyone else's business whether they like it or not, I did not even know that my next door neighbour had not only been hospitalised but had died, been buried and her relatives were now our new neighbours. It seemed that I had just changed one extreme for another. It is definitely nice when people show concern for your welfare and offer their assistance but it can be like living in a fish bowl where everyone is privy to everything going on in your life at any given time!

Don't you think it would be nice to find a middle ground where we could spare a little moment from our time which we regard as being so precious and invest it in the people that we live in such close proximity to. Maybe just take our blinkers off and care a little more. And on the other hand live our lives without the constant knowledge that everyone around us is aware of our every movement. It is probably worth doing today what we keep putting off for tomorrow. It may just save us a lot of future regrets...

