

that I remember we set it in Cambridge as an exam question, you know, um, you know: how, how would, how would students judge that kind of representation of Roman warfare.

**I** It's very interesting that there seem to be more and more historical films recently, and many have won Oscars. Is that because history has all the best stories?

**M** Yes, there's no such good story as a true story – and that's what history's got going for it, you know, actually. Um, you know, non-fiction in a, in a kind of way is always a better yarn than fiction is. Um, and I think it's, you know... I feel very pleased because, uh, I think, you know, for one thing it gets, it gets some of the best stories from history into the popular, into popular attention, popular consciousness. But I think also, I mean, it shows that you don't always have to be deadly serious about history. I mean, you know, history, like classics, you know, is often treated as something which is good for you; but isn't actually going to be much fun, you know. You'll be improved by knowing about it, but it probably will be a bit tedious in the process. And I think that, you know, showing that history can be larky, it can be funny, it can be surprising, um, it can be something that you can sit down and have a good two and a half hours at the cinema enjoying, is really all to the good.

220

**Interviewer** Is there a period of history that you would like to go back to?

**Daisy** I'd really like to go back to Tudor England, sixteenth-century England.

**I** Why that period?

**D** Well I'm doing a PhD in the music of that period and I just think it's such a fascinating time because there was so much change happening and the way people lived their lives, their religion, the way the politics of the country was working. It must have been a really exciting time to live.

**I** Is there a person from history that you admire or find especially fascinating?

**D** There was a lady called Bess of Hardwick, um, who owned a lot of property in Derbyshire. She was a real social climber, and she lived through Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I, and Elizabeth I and into a bit of James I as well. Um, so she had a really long life, a really exciting life and she started from absolutely nothing and worked her way right to the top. I think she must have been a really amazing lady to know.

**Interviewer** Is there a period of history that you would like to go back to?

**Heather** I think I would have loved to be around in California in the sixties. I think it, it sounds like it was a really exciting time. I think, er, there was a lot of frightening things happening, in Vietnam, and, but it – but people were excited and, um, excited about the potential, I think of, of something new and really exploring their freedom, I guess.

**I** Is there a person from history that you admire or find especially fascinating?

**H** I think I most admire Nelson Mandela. I'm South African. So, er, he's the first person that comes to mind. I think he was, um, an incredible person and an amazing leader. So, um, yeah, I would have loved to have met him.

**Interviewer** Is there a period of history that you would like to go back to?

**Harry** Um, ooh, that's a really, that's a weird one. I don't know. Um, history was pretty brutal, life was really quite hard. Um, I mean, there are some parts, some aspects of it that I'd like, where time was slower, life was defined by the seasons and daylight, um, and you didn't have the same sort of pressures as you do now. So, I'd like aspects of it, but I'm not sure I'd really like to go back to the actual way of life.

**I** Is there a person from history that you admire or find especially fascinating?

**H** Um, probably, er, probably Queen Elizabeth I, because she, she managed to be the queen in a society where women weren't expected to have or hold or command any power and respect and that they were meant to do the bidding of men and their families and she actually stood up and was a person to be counted.

**Interviewer** Is there a period of history that you would like to go back to?

**Adam** Yes, there's a period I'd like to go back to, absolutely! I love ancient Greece. I love, er, ancient Athens. I think it would be so amazing to spend time there and see what it was like being in the Agora with, you know, er, Plato and Aristotle and talking. And, er, that entire world be very, very interesting to me.

**I** Is there a person from history that you admire or find especially fascinating?

**A** Hmm. A person from history that I find, eh, that I admire. There are a lot of people, I study a lot of ancient history, so I would love to meet Julius Caesar or someone like that who really transformed the entire world with his actions and you know he has a very unique personality, he was a very cocky person and it'd be fun to, er, just see what he was like in person and see how he was able to kind of take over the entire Roman Empire by himself.

**Interviewer** Is there a period of history that you would like to go back to?

**Richard** Oh, there's so many. Um, I kind of have this romantic idea of the 1920s maybe, when there was a motor car had been invented, but not many people were driving so I like the idea of wandering and walking the quieter roads of, of England.

**I** Is there a person from history that you admire or find especially fascinating?

**R** Erm, it would probably be one of the ordinary men. So not a, a big person, a big name, but one of the hundreds of men who were like, on, say, Nelson's ship, the *Victory*, who were maybe firing cannons or pulling up the sails. So one of those characters, so just an ordinary seaman, sailor.

228

1 Sounds or noises that particularly annoy me, I would say dogs barking, very irritating, they just don't stop, especially the small yappy dogs, they just go on and on and on and just keep yapping at you and I just find that extremely irritating because there isn't any real way to shut them up like a child, or something – you can tell them to shut up, but a dog, no, they'll just keep going.

2 Any noises that annoy me? I suppose I'm annoyed by excessively creative cell phone ringers, that can be of overly popular songs or themes from television series that people obviously think are really cute, but I probably don't think they are as cute.

3 The one sound I really hate is car horns, which you hear an awful lot of in cities. And the reason I hate them is because in my mind, at least, a car horn is meant as a warning, but of course nobody uses them for warnings any more, they use them because they're angry and impatient, and it, it seems to me that it's like shouting at somebody, and I don't like hearing that expression of anger all around me from dozens of cars.

4 For me, the most annoying sound is the buzzing noise of a mosquito. When you're just falling asleep in your bedroom at night and you hear that sound, and it's just terrible, I actually can't sleep until I've stopped the sound by killing the mosquito. So what I tend to do is, I tend to leave the light off actually, and just follow the sound, and just search the room for the sound for as long as I can until I can track it down and kill it, 'cause otherwise I, I can't sleep knowing that I will wake up in the morning covered in bite marks.

5 I work in an office, and the person who sits next to me, Julie, she crunches on rice cakes every lunchtime, and it's really annoying, and I don't know what to say to her, or how to put it, and if I do tell her now, she'll know I've been annoyed for the last four years, but I think she's leaving soon, so maybe I'll just have to bear with it for the next few weeks, or months.

229

**Interviewer** London has often been accused of being an unfriendly place, but is it really, and if it is, does it matter and what could or should we do about it? Today I'm talking to Polly Akhurst, one of the co-founders of 'Talk to me London', an organization that aims to get Londoners chatting to each other. Hello, Polly.

**Polly** Hello.

**I** Could you start by telling us a bit about 'Talk to me London'?

**P** Sure. 'Talk to me London' is all about finding ways for people to talk to other people they don't know. And we

do this through fun activities including a badge, which says *Talk to me London* on it and shows you are open to conversation, as well as through regular events that, that get people talking, and we are also organizing, a 'Talk to me London' day at the end of August.

**I** And how did you get the idea for it, I mean, do you personally find London unfriendly?

**P** Well I personally talk to a lot of people I don't know, and I think that is where the idea came from, I found that the conversations that I have with people just kind of randomly, have been hugely, kind of, beneficial, really, so I've made, I might have made new friends, new business connections, sometimes they just kind of just cheer up my day. So 'Talk to me London' comes from this idea of, you know, what happens if we do start talking to each other more and you kind of, you know, are able to see more opportunities and possibilities there.

**I** Have you ever been anywhere either in the UK or abroad, a, a large city, which you thought really was a friendly place, which made you think you wish London was like that?

**P** There are definitely places that I've found friendlier than London, but I think that we all kind of change a bit when we travel and when we're out of our normal circumstances, we feel like, you know, more free to, to do things and perhaps talking to people is one of them. There is a tendency for, people say that Mediterranean countries are friendlier, however, or Latino countries even, but there was a similar initiative to this which was set up in Madrid a couple of years ago which I think indicates that, that they're facing the same problem as us, and perhaps, you know, points to the fact that this is a phenomenon in all large cities.

**I** So you wouldn't say it was a uniquely London problem?

**P** No, I wouldn't, no.

**I** You've had some quite high profile support of 'Talk to me London', on your website I think there's a quote from Boris Johnson saying what a wonderful idea it sounds. But on the other hand there's, there's been some quite negative media coverage which must have been a bit discouraging for you?

**P** I mean, I don't think so, I think that this idea is quite controversial in some ways because we're trying to encourage people to think about the way that they act and to reflect on that and to possibly change that, so, it hasn't really been surprising for us that we've had the negative coverage.

**I** And what would you say to people, and there are plenty of them I think, people who would say, 'I'm sitting on the bus, I'm sitting on the Tube, I really don't want to talk to anybody, I really don't want anyone to talk to me, I just want to read my book or listen to my music, whatever it is'. What would you say to those people?

**P** I would say that it's not about everyone talking to everyone else, it's about enabling those people who want to talk to do so, basically, so that's why all the things that we do are opt in, so the badge, for example, you wear it if you want to talk, if you don't want to talk you don't have to wear it, so you know, this, this isn't something for everyone, but we want to give people the choice between talking or not talking and currently there doesn't really seem to be that choice.

**I** Well, I wish you all the best with the project, I hope it's extremely successful and thank you very much for talking to us.

**P** Thanks a lot.

230

**James's story**

I was heading home at rush hour a few weeks ago. I was tired and bored, and there was this guy standing beside me reading a book. So I started reading it over his shoulder – it was all about the history of popular social movements. I couldn't see the title, so I asked him what it was called. Surprisingly, he reacted quite positively and told me the name. He told me that he commuted for two hours each day and that he always tried to read something enlightening cause it made him feel a bit better about his life and being productive by the time he got home! It was such a nice unexpected conversation – and it got me thinking about my own reading habits!

**Anneka's story**

I was getting the last Tube back home one evening, and I had to wait for ages on the platform, so I started talking

to the girl sitting next to me. She was Czech and had just come over to the UK with her boyfriend for work. She was a science graduate in the Czech Republic, but was working at a sandwich chain. I suppose in many ways it was a pretty typical story, but she was so upbeat and positive about London and living in the UK. At the end of the journey she emphasized how good it was to talk, and pulled out a sandwich from her bag and gave it to me. I was both shocked and grateful! Perhaps my stomach had been rumbling too loudly...

#### Philippa's story

I was on the Tube home today and this young man asked me how my day had been. We chatted about the area and iPads and TV and that kind of thing. Then I mentioned the concept of 'Talk to me London' and encouraged him not to stop talking to people. An older lady in the meantime had sat down by us and thought the fact that we were chatting was lovely! And then I bumped into an old neighbour from about ten years ago, and we caught up. When he got off the Tube, the guy opposite me mentioned how nice it was to see us catching up, and then we got talking too. It was enthusiastic. It was quite contagious. I had a smile across my face for the rest of the day.

#### Alise's story

I was standing on a bus, and I would have thought I'd looked unapproachable, but instead a man sitting close by saw I was carrying a guitar. He gave me a big smile and asked if I'd play him a song! Before long we were chatting about travelling and living in different countries and cities around the world, and about music. He was leaving the next day for a few months travel around South America. Because the man was a small distance away from where I was standing, quite a few people nearby were able to hear us talk, and many of them also joined in. It felt a little surreal, stepping off the bus later, smiling and saying goodbye to a bunch of strangers as though they were long-time friends.

### 234

**Interviewer** What made you want to be a translator?

**Beverly** It was something that I'd done when I was at university and when I moved to Spain it was difficult to get a job that wasn't teaching English, so I went back to England and I did a postgraduate course in translation. After doing the course I swore that I would never be a translator, I thought it would be too boring, but I kept doing the odd translation, and eventually I came round to the idea because I liked the idea of working for myself, and it didn't require too much investment to get started. And, and actually, I enjoy working with words, and it's, it's very satisfying when you feel that you've produced a reasonable translation of the original text.

**I** What are the pros and cons of being a translator?

**B** Well, um, it's a lonely job, I suppose, you know, you're on your own most of the time, it's hard work, you're sitting there and, you know, you're working long hours, and you can't programme things because you don't know when more work is going to come in, and people have always got tight deadlines. You know, it's really rare that somebody'll, 'll ring you up and say 'I want this translation in three months' time'. You know, that, that just doesn't really happen.

**I** And the pros?

**B** Well the pros are that it, it gives you freedom, because you can do it anywhere if you've got an internet connection and electricity, and I suppose you can organize your time, cause you're freelance, you know, you're your own boss, which is good. I, I like that.

**I** What advice would you give someone who's thinking of going into translation?

**B** I'd say that - I'd say, in addition to the language, get a speciality. Do another course in anything that interests you, like, economics, law, history, art, because you really need to know about the subjects that you're translating into.

**I** What do you think is the most difficult kind of text to translate?

**B** Literary texts, like novels, poetry, or drama because you've got to give a lot of consideration to the author, and to the way it's been written in the original language.

**I** In order to translate a novel well, do you think you need to be a novelist yourself?

**B** I think that's true ideally, yes.

**I** And is that the case? I mean are most of the well-known

translators of novels, generally speaking, novelists in their own right?

**B** Yes, I think in English anyway, people who translate into English tend to be published authors, and they tend to specialize in a particular author in the other language. And of course if it's a living author, then it's so much easier because you can actually communicate with the author and say, you know, like, what did you really mean here?

**I** Another thing I've heard that is very hard to translate is advertising, for example, slogans.

**B** Yeah, well, with advertising, the problem is that it's got to be something punchy, and, and it's very difficult to translate that. For example, one of the Coca-Cola adverts, the slogan in English was 'the real thing', but you just couldn't translate that literally into Spanish - it, it just wouldn't have had the same power. In fact it became *Sensación de vivir*, which is 'sensation of living', which sounds, sounds really good in Spanish, but it, it would sound weird in English.

**I** What about film titles?

**B** Ah, they're horrific, too. People always complain that they've not been translated accurately, but of course it's impossible because sometimes a literal translation just doesn't work.

**I** For example?

**B** OK, well, think of, you know, the Julie Andrews film, *The Sound of Music*. Well, that works in English because it's a phrase that you know, you know like 'I can hear the sound of music'. But it doesn't work at all in other languages, and in Spanish it was called *Sonrisas y Lágrimas* which means 'Smiles and tears'. Now let me - in German it was called *Meine Lieder, meine Träume* which means 'My songs, my dreams', and in Italian it was *Tutti insieme appassionatamente* which means I think, 'All together passionately' or, I don't know, something like that. In fact, I think it was translated differently all over the world.

**I** Do you think there are special problems translating film scripts, for the subtitles?

**B** Yes, a lot. There are special constraints, for example the translation has to fit on the screen as the actor is speaking, and so sometimes the translation is a paraphrase rather than a direct translation, and of course, well, going back to untranslatable things, really the big problems are cultural, and humour, because they're, they're just not the same. You can get across the idea, but you might need pages to explain it, and, you know, by that time the film's moved on. I also sometimes think that the translators are given the film on DVD, I mean, you know, rather than a written script, and that sometimes they've simply misheard or they didn't understand what the people said. And that's the only explanation I can come up with for some of the mistranslations that I've seen. Although sometimes it might be that some things like, like humour and jokes, especially ones which depend on wordplay are just, you know, they're, they're simply untranslatable. And often it's very difficult to get the right register, for example with, with slang and swear words, because if you literally translate taboo words or swear words, even if they exist in the other language they may well be far more offensive.

### 32

Again and again people tell us that mindfulness greatly enhances the joys of daily life. In practice, even the smallest of things can suddenly become captivating again. For this reason one of our favourite practices is the chocolate meditation. In this, you ask yourself to bring all your attention to some chocolate as you're eating it. So if you want to do this right now, choosing some chocolate, not unwrapping it yet, choosing a type that you've never tried before, or one that you've not eaten recently. It might be dark and flavoured, organic, or fair-trade, or whatever you choose. Perhaps choosing a type you wouldn't normally eat, or that you consume only rarely.

Before you unwrap the chocolate, look at the whole bar or packet - its colour, its shape, what it feels like in your hand - as if you were seeing it for the very first time. Now very slowly unwrapping the chocolate, noticing how the wrapping feels as you unfold it, seeing the chocolate itself. What colours do you notice? What shapes? Inhaling the aroma of the chocolate, letting it sweep over you. And

now taking or breaking off a piece and looking at it as it rests on your hand, really letting your eyes drink in what it looks like, examining every nook and cranny. At a certain point, bringing it up to your mouth, noticing how the hand knows where to position it, and popping it in the mouth, noticing what the tongue does to receive it. See if it's possible to hold it on your tongue and let it melt, noticing any tendency to chew it, seeing if you can sense some of the different flavours, really noticing these.

If you notice your mind wandering while you do this, simply noticing where it went, then gently escorting it back to the present moment.

And then when the chocolate has completely melted, swallowing it very slowly and deliberately, letting it trickle down your throat.

What did you notice? If the chocolate tasted better than if you'd just eaten it at a normal pace, what do you make of that? Often we taste the first piece and perhaps the last, but the rest goes down unnoticed. We're so often on autopilot, we can miss much of our day-to-day lives. Mindfulness is about bringing awareness to the usual routine things in life, things that we normally take for granted. Perhaps you could try this with any routine activity, seeing what you notice? It could change your whole day.

### 33

**1** One thing I really hate waiting for is waiting at home for a delivery to arrive, 'cause sometimes you get, like, a two-hour delivery window, and that's fine, but more often they'll say 'Could be any time 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.', and you're stuck in the house - you don't even dare go and buy a pint of milk - and of course it always ends up arriving at five to seven in the evening, and you've spent the whole day waiting.

**2** It annoys me if I have to wait for web pages to load, if there's a really bad internet connection and the pages are very slow to load and you actually sort of see one line loading at a time, pixel by pixel it seems, but, you know, invariably, if you need the information you sit and wait as long as it takes.

**3** Is there anything I really hate having to wait for? Not particularly, I'm, I'm fairly patient. If I'm in a queue I'm fairly patient, but I will get annoyed if people start to disregard the laws of queues, and try and jump them or try and get to the front in some other way. As long as there's a system to follow, it, that usually keeps me calm.

**4** I really hate waiting for anything where I've been given an appointment time for a specific hour, you know, a specific time, and then having to wait for ages before I have it, so, well, you know, for example a hairdresser or a dentist or a doctor. I think particularly things like hairdressers and dentists, because I think they must know how long the previous person's going to take, you know, they don't have to deal with emergencies or anything like that, so why can't they give me a correct time? I mean, I'm very punctual so I always turn up on time, in fact usually at least five minutes early, and it really, really annoys me if I have to wait for a long time. Anything more than fifteen minutes over the appointment time drives me completely insane.

**5** Waiting for Jerry, my husband, is a complete nightmare, because he's never ready on time and I always tell him to be ready fifteen minutes before we need to be ready, and even so he's so late, it drives me completely bananas. I don't know why it drives me completely bananas because, in fact, often we don't need to be there on time, or it doesn't need to be that kind of precise, but it does. I hate it. He's preening himself, you know, getting his jacket on and looking himself in the mirror, I mean, he takes much more time than I do.

**6** I can't abide waiting in check-in queues at airports, because I'm standing in the queue watching people take ages and ages and ages to check in, and I know when I get to the front of the queue I'll do my check-in in twenty seconds. I don't know why these other people can't do the same.

### 315

**Interviewer** Where did the idea of microfinance come from?