

## My mum talks about her life [977]



### My mum talks about her life [977] Episode Transcript

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#### Introduction

Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast. In this episode, you can hear a conversation with my mum and it's a really nice one. I think that you're going to enjoy it very much and I feel glad that I took the time to do this and I'm very happy that my mum was happy to come back on the podcast and record another conversation with me.

So the situation was that a couple of weeks ago I went and stayed with my parents for a few days, went to visit them. I went on my own, didn't bring my family, it was just me, just a chance for me to have some sort of one-to-one time with my mum and dad and help them with some things at home. Just, you know, a few little odd jobs and things like that.

And I don't get to see my parents all that much these days because obviously I live in a different country and so, you know, it requires a lot of organisation to go and stay with them and things like that. So it was very nice to be able to spend some time together with them and I thought that I wanted to really kind

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of make the most of that sort of quality time together. And how? How do you make the most of the time that you spend with your parents? I suppose for me and us at this age that involves talking and sitting and listening to them because I guess you have to make the most of these situations because often it's not until it's too late that you realise that there are questions that you should have asked your parents or things you wanted to know about their lives and as you get older you get more perspective on your life and you start to understand perhaps what your parents went through, what their lives must have been like having family, bringing up children.

You even start to wonder about your grandparents and you imagine what their lives were like because of course when you're younger, when you're a child, you look at your parents, you look at your grandparents and you don't see the whole story, you don't see the whole picture that they were once someone like you and they've been on a journey and gone through all sorts of experiences and that they've felt nervous and that they've felt unsure of themselves or they've had moments in their lives that you can't really imagine when you're a child. It's not until you kind of grow up and go through the similar things yourself that you start to wonder about what your mum and dad experienced and so I don't want to leave it too late. I want to ask them about these things and also I wanted to record conversations with my mum and dad to actually get records of them talking about their lives and so that's kind of what I decided to do when I was staying at my parents place just recently and so I recorded two conversations, one with my mum and one with my dad and yeah so that's what you're going to get, sort of personal history.

That's the result of the conversations that I had with them is that you will hear some personal history, some family history. I wanted to know what it was like for them growing up, the relationships they had with their parents, maybe what their parents, my grandparents went through as well, becoming an adult, having families, all that sort of personal history and family history. That's what I wanted and that's largely what I got from the recordings I made.

Okay so we start in this episode with the conversation I recorded with my mum. Now it's just audio. If you're watching the video version of this I'm afraid I didn't capture video of my conversation but if you're watching the video version you will see some text on the screen.

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There are sort of subtitles that will appear on the screen so at least you'll be able to read the words that you're hearing while you listen to them. There is a pdf that you can download for this episode which is a full transcript of the conversation so if you'd like to read the things that you are hearing then you can do that. You'll find a link in the description so you can get the transcript and use that to help you build your vocabulary or at least just check the things you've heard.

That's it for this introduction. I really hope you enjoy this conversation that I had with my mum. It was an absolute pleasure and I feel very lucky that I was able to sit down and you know get this recording and I'll speak to you a little bit at the end of the conversation but now without any further ado let's begin.

### Conversation

**Luke:** Hi, Mum. Hello. You just drank a big mouthful of coffee, and then I say, "Hi Mum"

**Gill:** Hello, Luke.

**Luke:** Hi, how are you today?

**Gill:** I'm all right. Thank you. How are you?

**Luke:** I'm pretty good. Thanks very much. Good. What's, what's the situation?

**Gill:** The situation is that you've been staying with us for the last couple of days, helping your father and me out doing a little, a few little odd jobs, which we cannot do anymore,

**Luke:** including,

**Gill:** replacing some, Bulbs in the lights that we've got that are in the ceiling sort of spotlights.

**Luke:** Light bulbs.

**Gill:** Light bulbs. Sorry, what did I say?

**Luke:** Well, you said bulbs, but I'm just, I'm cla

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**Gill:** Yes. Light bulbs in some very annoying, s spotlights in the ceiling, which we can't reach and they're very fiddly anyway. Anyway, so it's, you can do it much easier than us.

And you've been doing that, which is.

**Luke:** Yes.

**Gill:** Hopeful.

**Luke:** Yeah. It, it involves standing on chairs,

**Gill:** standing on things which we're not very good at.

**Luke:** Standing

**Gill:** on chairs reaching up.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** Looking up, which neither of us can do because it makes us dizzy. So we're a right mess and, but you have come and helped us out and you've done it for us, which is great.

**Luke:** Yeah. It's nice to. Be able to be useful.

**Gill:** Yes. When you have been

**Luke:** to come and help out in various ways. Yes. If I, if I possibly can.

**Gill:** Yes. You also mended our bathroom tap, which was had gone all loose and you've tightened it all up. Yeah. Which is a great help.

**Luke:** Luckily, it was one of those little odd jobs that I was able to do.

Mm-hmm. Because as you know, sometimes these little odd jobs come up in the house, things that need repairing, like a loose tap in the bathroom that's Mm. Wobbling this way and that way. And you try to fix it and you can't. And it's one of the most frustrating things. Very

**Gill:** annoying. Yes,

**Luke:** but it's like the, the gods of of DIY were smiling upon me because that bathroom tap in your bathroom was...

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wiggling all over the place.

**Gill:** It was.

**Luke:** And I looked underneath and sure enough, there was a, a,

**Gill:** a screw,

**Luke:** a screw or a nut that needed to be tightened. And I thought, right, I obviously need a spanner for this. And I went downstairs into your little toolkit and just grabbed a few spanners. And the first one I used was exactly the right size.

**Gill:** Wow. How incredible. I didn't know that. That's amazing.

**Luke:** But sometimes these, sometimes the luck goes your way and sometimes it doesn't. Yeah. You know, some, you have some days where whichever spanner you use is never quite the right size. But this was, this is not what,

**Gill:** that's just like life, isn't it?

**Luke:** It is.

It is, isn't it?

**Gill:** Sometimes you manage to find the exactly the right spanner and sometimes you don't.

**Luke:** Yes, exactly. I want to just say that, the last time we did something like this, sitting together and having a kind of rambling conversation, on the podcast, actually in person

**Gill:** Mm.

**Luke:** Rather than on Zoom.

Do you remember the last time?

**Gill:** Was it when we'd been to Devon?

**Luke:** Go on.

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**Gill:** And it was on the, you, you stayed here on the way back. You had a terrible journey back, you and James in the hire car. And when you got back we did a, an interview or have we done one since then?

**Luke:** Well, there was, yeah, there was the, that episode, is called, I think it was.

**Gill:** I know exactly when it was. It was in June, 2019.

**Luke:** Yes. '

**Gill:** because it was to celebrate my \_\_\_\_\_ birthday.

**Luke:** Yeah. Yeah. Right. I did record an episode with James in the car on that fateful day when, the car got a flat tyre. Yeah. And we had to go and get the tyre replaced. Yeah. And then it was kind of a, a wild goose chase.

Or basically everything went wrong and we ended up on this mad road trip together. Yeah, I did record an episode, of the podcast, which is a good one. I think it's a really good one. I'm trying to remember what it was called. I think it's called Emergency Road Trip or something like that. I'm just trying to find out because I, I don't like to mention an episode like that and then not say exactly which episode it was.

I see. In

**Gill:** case somebody wants to listen to it

**Luke:** Because they're, yeah, exactly. There might be listeners who haven't explored the back catalog, the archive of episodes. And so, and you know, it can be, there's a lot of episodes there and so they like to know. It's called Unexpected Road Trip,

**Gill:** right?

**Luke:** Episode number 605.

James and Luke go on an accidental road trip in the southwest of England. And record a rambling podcast while slowly going a bit mad. Will they make it to their destination before sunset? Listen to find out what happens and learn some words and culture in the process.

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**Gill:** And is it, am I right in saying it was possibly June, 2019 or have you not got the date?

**Luke:** I haven't got the date. Well, I've got the date when it was published, but yeah, I'm, I'm sure it was June or July of nine, 2019. Mm-hmm. and then when we got, when we finally made it home, we did continue to do some recordings in the, in the garden and, and we, we heard the voices of you and dad and my daughter and, and my wife.

I think. but no, that's not the last time that we sat down together at your house and did this. No, there was a more recent episode, which is number 790. So the unexpected road trip was 605, which gives you a sense of how long ago.

**Gill:** Okay.

**Luke:** We're talking, I tend to do about 50 or 60 episodes a year.

**Gill:** Mm-hmm.

**Luke:** Right? So anyway, this, there's a lot of rambling here. Sorry about that, everyone, but everyone's fine with that. but no, episode 790 was just you and me in the garden. Oh. And I think it was called chatting with Mum in the Garden and we responded to, questions from listeners.

**Gill:** Oh, I remember that now.

Yes.

**Luke:** And then at the end, my wife and our daughter came back from the market and, my daughter joined us right at the end for a bit and she talked about. Bakewell Tarts and things like that.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Uh, I got a comment from that. Yeah. Which I've got lots of comments, but just one I thought I would share here is this from NikaNika

and it says. This is three years ago. Oh, I love listening to your podcast with your family. I love them all, and it doesn't matter what you're talking about. It's just great to hear a natural flow of your conversation. Thank you so much, Luke.

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**Gill:** Oh, that's nice.

**Luke:** I, I get countless comments like this from people in response to episodes with family members.

people really mean it. They love listening to casual conversation with you. Mm-hmm. Nika said, it doesn't matter what we are talking about, and I get that. Mm-hmm. But actually I have. So many specific questions I'd like to ask you about. Just stuff, I mean, we can go anywhere, we can go in any direction really.

Mm-hmm. But I thought that we could talk about, I dunno, stuff like childhood and growing up being an adult. Different phases of your life, family history, just everything.

**Gill:** Mm-hmm. Well that's kind of appropriate for this, time while you've been here. because one of the things you have done apart from the light bulbs is you got up to a tall cupboard where I store all sorts of stuff and you took down loads of boxes and things for me to look into so I could see what was there and if I could manage to throw some stuff away.

And the first box we opened was full of all sorts of interesting things to do with my parents and. A little bit to do with my childhood. so it's on my mind at the moment.

**Luke:** How does it make you feel when you open up a box like that and, and you see all these old photos and you see old letters and even your dad's diary and some other stuff.

How does it make you feel?

**Gill:** It's quite emotional, really. strange. Quite sad in some ways.

**Luke:** What, what's, what's sad about it?

**Gill:** Well, the fact that people are gone, you know, and I mean, one of the things we, we read that he had written was that he was realizing the truth of something that. His mother-in-law had said to him,

**Luke:** this is your dad.

You're talking

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**Gill:** about, this is my dad talking. And he's talking about what his mother-in-law my granny said to him, which was, when you get older, you suddenly realize all the people you knew of have died and they're not there anymore. All the people from your life. And it's, You get, you are regretful because you haven't didn't ask them enough about their lives and what they thought about things.

And now it's too late. And you sometimes have, I do exactly the same. I think about something and I'm not sure of the details and I think, oh, dad will know, but of course he's not there to ask.

**Luke:** What kind of thing are you thinking of?

**Gill:** Oh, crumbs. I don't know. Just

**Luke:** like stuff from your family's history.

**Gill:** Yeah, that's right.

And yeah, things we did when I was a child and. You know, and, and not knowing, not understanding why he did certain things in his life. Nev and realizing I never asked him when, when he was around.

**Luke:** Yes. yesterday, both you and dad, because as you said, we've been talking and thinking about all these things, after having opened those boxes and stuff yesterday, both of you said, why didn't I ask my parents and grandparents more?

Yeah. And I was just. I've got three questions. Question one is, why don't we do that? Hmm. Question two is, what would you ask them if you had the chance now? And question three is, what should I ask you today? There's a lot in there.

**Gill:** Yeah, there is.

**Luke:** But why do you think we don't ask why? Why is it that we all have this feeling where after someone is gone, we think, why didn't I ask them more?

**Gill:** Mm.

**Luke:** Uh, why don't we ask our parents more? Well, or why don't we ask people more when they're around?

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**Gill:** Very difficult. Very good question. I don't know. I think, I suppose it's because we're so, we are just sort of living in the moment and doing, living our lives and doing things at the time, and you don't necessarily look back or look back to a time when you weren't around.

You don't do that so much. It's only when you actually, it's only when you get older. That's what it is. I think you become more reflective about and you understand more about life and family life and what your parents might have gone through because you are going through the same thing now yourself, but at the time you don't think to ask them.

because it just doesn't, doesn't occur to you to want to know.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** What do you think?

**Luke:** No, I think that must be it.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** But all it doesn't occur to you. But also when you are just with your parents sometimes. It feels kind of, or you'll just be with them and those things don't come to you in that moment.

Exactly. Yeah. because you're just together. It's only when, later when you're being reflective as you say that those questions occur to you.

**Gill:** That's right.

**Luke:** But the, I think a lot of the time, our behavior. Socially is dictated by all sorts of things. It's not just dictated by our innermost truthful feelings, but our behavior with others is dictated by just how we're interacting in the moment.

Mm. It doesn't always feel appropriate to just jump in with the most profound of questions.

**Gill:** Mm.

**Luke:** Um, you know, because you're just talking about making a cup of tea or whatever.

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**Gill:** That's right. And these questions really only come up when you are. I don't know. Like you've got an evening, like we had last night when there's nothing on the television.

We're not going out, we're not doing anything, and we are just being together. And then you start, you do start then thinking about things because there's nothing else to distract you somehow. I don't know.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** And, and you do start talking about. Life.

**Luke:** Yeah. Yeah. When you know, when you are together with people Yeah. You're not thinking about,

**Gill:** you're too busy doing other things

**Luke:** and just too busy enjoying their company.

**Gill:** Yeah. That's it.

**Luke:** So, all right. What would you ask your parents now if you could? Oh

**Gill:** gosh. Well, I think we talked a bit about it last night. All sorts of things like, you know, my dad joined the war.

Loads of things I didn't ask him, of course. partly because I knew he didn't like talking about it.

**Luke:** So he was, sorry to interrupt you. He, just to be clear, he was, in World War ii.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Um,

**Gill:** and he had a very active war, you might say,

**Luke:** D-Day.

**Gill:** Yes. He was involved in the D-Day landings and everything that went on after that.

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**Luke:** He landed at Sword Beach. Yeah. Um, British Soldier of course. Mm-hmm. Landed at Sword Beach.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Uh, uh, I mean, it wasn't saving private Ryan because that was

**Gill:** No,

**Luke:** that's Omaha Beach in the first. People to arrive there. Yeah. but it, you know, it was arriving at a beach with machine being

**Gill:** shot at, being

**Luke:** shot at

**Gill:** having to get into the water up to your chest and wade ashore and, oh,

**Luke:** there were machine gunning placements that were still there, that were, and, and probably mortar mortars going off and goodness knows what else.

So he did go through that and, anyway,

**Gill:** and

**Luke:** he wrote, we all understand what that means. Yeah. And then, then after that there was a campaign.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** which evolved.

**Gill:** He worked his way through Europe. Yeah.

**Luke:** Yes. Going through Europe and stuff like that. So Yeah. I mean that must have been quite Yeah. An extraordinary experience.

**Gill:** Absolutely.

**Luke:** But he didn't really talk about it, did he?

**Gill:** No, he didn't. I mean, as with so many of those people. presumably you don't wanna bring it all back and you know, you don't really want to tell people the horrible things that you saw or did

**Luke:** plus that generation. It wasn't really in their nature. No.

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It wasn't the culture at the time to talk about things in order to deal with them. Mm-hmm. I mean, even like Sigmund Freud. That's right.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Freud had only just come out with the whole idea of talking therapy. Yes.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Um, really?

**Gill:** Yes.

**Luke:** That was a fairly recent development. So it just wasn't the done thing. You, you would just sort of,

**Gill:** you just put up with it and tried to get on with life as it was.

**Luke:** Yeah,

**Gill:** I suppose.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** But it must have been so strange. I mean, know, I quite often think about it now, what it must have been like when he came home. because when I was younger, I used to think how wonderful it must have been when he came home and everything was happily ever after.

Which of course it wouldn't have been, it would've been very difficult. And another thing that I regret not asking my mum, although it was. My questions were answered to a certain extent from some of the stuff we discovered yesterday was how my, while he was away at the war, my mother actually bought a house.

**Luke:** She was in her twenties.

**Gill:** Yeah. 'cause we, we. they were married in 1944, just before D-Day, and we were speculating why it was that he got married then, and probably because there was always a chance he wouldn't come home.

**Luke:** Mm.

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**Gill:** And they probably thought, well, if not now, when. So they got married in the middle of the war, and at the same time, his father, his mother died and his father married someone else quite soon afterwards and left the family home.

And so dad, when he came home, wouldn't found out. Had anywhere to live really?

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** We'd have had to have lived with his father and his stepmother or his in-laws and it wouldn't have been satisfactory. Anyway, my mother obviously worked all that out and decided she'd buy a house and apparently I didn't know that what happened until last night when we found a bit of paper where dad had written it all down and, it was a colleague of my grandfather's, my father's father who was selling a house.

And it would, it was just the right kind of house. And so mum decided to buy it. And I suppose Leonard, my grandfather must have helped her to some extent with the practicalities and the money and everything. But it was quite something really. So it meant that when dad did come home two years later, he had somewhere to live.

**Luke:** Yeah. Incredible.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Mm. And you talked about it being difficult for him. I mean, there must have been post-traumatic stress and stuff like that.

**Gill:** I think so. Yeah. Yeah.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah, it's amazing, really. And I mean, were there mortgages and things like that? Well, how did she pay for it?

|

**Gill:** have, that's what I don't know.

Apparently he said, how much did he say it cost? 600 pounds, I think.

**Luke:** 600 pounds.

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**Gill:** And it was a nice little house. We went back to see it many years later. Rick and I took him on a tour around all his childhood haunts and where he'd lived and everything.

**Luke:** Was that in Yorkshire?

**Gill:** In Yorkshire,

**Luke:** yeah. because both the whole family's from Yorkshire.

**Gill:** Yeah, pretty much. And we actually went and had a look at that house. because it's the house they were in when I was born. And, we were outside looking at the house and the people, the owners of the house obviously saw us and thought, what are they doing? And they came outta the front door and said, can I help you?

And so we explained why we were there and they invited us in. Which was nice, so dad could see the house as it was now.

**Luke:** Oh, wow.

**Gill:** And, yeah.

**Luke:** W do you remember how he responded to that?

**Gill:** Oh, in the way that you could imagine your granddad responding just with great interest, you know? Oh, yes, yes. That's where such, that's where that table was, and that was what we did there.

Yeah. Not with great emotion or anything like that, just very. Straightforward and rational and logical.

**Luke:** He wasn't that sort of person. No. He didn't really show a lot of emotions.

**Gill:** He didn't. No.

**Luke:** Um, but it must have meant quite a lot to

**Gill:** him. Yeah, yeah. I'm sure.

**Luke:** Yeah.

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**Gill:** And it was interesting for me, of course, to see the house that I lived in for the first few months of my life.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. What do you, what are your memories of childhood? what are the, what are the, you know, good memories, fun times or difficult things?

**Gill:** Good memories. I had a very good. Childhood. it's funny because I listen to a podcast where one, an interview type podcast and the first question that is asked of all the guests is, what's your first memory?

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** And it's a very difficult question.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** Um, and I often, you know, when I'm listening to it, I'm thinking, well, what's my first memory? And I, I can remember. When we lived in Wolverhampton, we moved there when I was, oh God, you see, I don't really know. I was a small child, I suppose about seven or eight.

**Luke:** You moved to Wolverhampton, the city or

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Yeah. You lived in the urban

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Environment.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Did

**Gill:** you? My father, you know, he finally got his act together, after the war and decided what he was going to do and he, he worked in insurance and he got a, a job in Wamp. Mm-hmm. So they had to leave w Yorkshire and move down to Wve Hampton, which is where my brother was born.

Oh, that's a good. Memory because

**Luke:** 1950,

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**Gill:** my brother is three and a half years older than me, so maybe I was

**Luke:** younger. He's young, three and a half years younger, 1952.

**Gill:** So maybe we moved there at about, in about, oh, when I was quite young, maybe, of course I knew I was eight months old when we moved there, but my memories of.

That house.

**Luke:** Hold on a second. So you, you were born,

**Gill:** I was born in Barnsley

**Luke:** Yorkshire. In Yorkshire. Your parents were living in the time in this house?

**Gill:** Yeah. That was the house that my mother

**Luke:** bought during the war. When your dad, when your dad was in the war?

**Gill:** Mm-hmm.

**Luke:** And then when you were eight months old?

**Gill:** Yeah, we

**Luke:** moved. Then you moved. So this is probably about 1950, something like that. You. Then to, to,

**Gill:** Wolverhampton

**Luke:** Wil Hampton. And you moved into the city of Wilham?

**Gill:** Yeah. Well, yes. Kind of the edge of the city, yes. Sort of suburb, I suppose.

**Luke:** Okay. And he worked in insurance.

**Gill:** He did.

**Luke:** And then your brother, my uncle Nick was born.

**Gill:** He was born at the end of 1952.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

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**Gill:** And I actually, that's reminded me, I have a memory of seeing my brother when he was born, when I would've been three and a half now. It's very hard to know whether I actually have that memory or whether it's what I've been told. because you know, apparently I wasn't very impressed with him and I said, what a funny shaped head or something like that.

And I just have this memory of this child with a rather pointy head.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm. Well, babies do look weird.

**Gill:** They do. Yeah. Now whether that's actually a memory or whether it's just what people have told me, I don't know. It's very hard to. Separate them.

**Luke:** Do you remember how you felt about having a little brother?

**Gill:** Not really. I don't think I was traumatized by it or anything. I think I just, you know, no, I don't really.

**Luke:** Okay.

**Gill:** Alright. I don't think it had that much of an impression on me one way or another.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** I suppose it must have done, but don't have any memory of it,

**Luke:** but you lived in Wolverhampton for a few years and then you, you moved out into Staffordshire.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Which is the nearby county, just kind of to the north of Wilham.

**Gill:** Yeah. That was completely different. because the Wamp house was very urban, but the house in Stafford was much more rural and we had a wonderful time playing in the fields and. Along the rail, we line and by the canal all sorts of dangerous places, but we had a fabulous time there.

**Luke:** Just outdoors all the time.

**Gill:** All the time. Yeah.

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**Luke:** You'd just go out and your parents would, you'd just say, right, we're off, out to play in the field, and then you'd come back at dinner time or something on a Saturday.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** I know. It's hard to imagine really. and I remember there's been, there was some talk recently about the really bad winter that we had here in 1962.

Three started on the snow, started on Boxing Day 1962, and didn't really clear until. Around about Easter in 63. And I do remember that. Because I mind you, I was a good bit older by then, but I can remember walking along the lanes under seemingly, the fields were always covered in snow, seemed to be ages before we saw the green grass again.

**Luke:** Mm. And when you're that age, yeah. three months or something does seem like forever, doesn't it?

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Mm. That's interesting,

**Gill:** huh?

**Luke:** Okay. I've got a question about being born just after World War ii.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** I mean, I don't want to dwell on World War II or anything. Mm-hmm. But I just thinking about it, it's.

In a way crazy to think, to imagine that you were born like really just a few years after the end of World War ii. Well,

**Gill:** my father came home in 19, towards the end of 1946, and I was born July 49.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** So it's very, very close.

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**Luke:** Yeah. You're just a three, three years or so. Three and a half years. Less than three

**Gill:** years.

**Luke:** Yeah. Three years. Dad. My dad, he was born in 47. 47. Yeah. That's like just about two years in fact. Less than two years after the end of World War

**Gill:** ii. Yeah, just about a year after.

**Luke:** Yeah. Do you, I mean, And what was it like growing up in that immediate post-war period? Were were, were you aware what had happened?

**Gill:** Not really, no. I mean, rationing and all that was still going on, so we must have been first few years of our life, we can't have had any sweetss or anything like that. And certain foods would've been. Unthought of,

**Luke:** yeah, it didn't have like a lot of sugar and butter

**Gill:** and stuff. No, and I do remember things like, you know, bomb sites and everything.

Yeah. All these houses ruin us houses and just, I. Areas with nothing ha you know, just derelict areas in, in the town. But, it didn't have that much. It was just, you know, you're a child, you think that's how life is. You don't think, oh, that's a mess or wonder what happened there, or whatever. It's just the way it is.

**Luke:** Yeah. And everyone was just getting on with it really, weren't they?

**Gill:** Yeah, yeah, of course.

**Luke:** Yeah, yeah,

**Gill:** yeah.

**Luke:** mm-hmm.

**Gill:** And also, I mean, I often think back to. You know, when I was a teenager in the 1960s and how we all, none of us wanted to know anything about the,

## My mum talks about her life [977]

the wartime generation. We thought they were really boring and going on about the war, and we weren't interested in that.

And we were, you know, I just think how unfeeling we were really, and we didn't, we didn't appreciate everything they'd gone through. We just, you know, oh, don't wanna know anything about that.

**Luke:** You

**Gill:** just wanted to, you just wanted to. You know, go to Beatles concerts and listen to the radio and that sort of thing.

**Luke:** Right.

**Gill:** Incredible. Really.

**Luke:** Were, were you aware of a generational divide? Because that is one of the things that sort of marks, if we talk about generations, that you've got the greatest generation as they're called. Mm-hmm. That's your parents' generation mm-hmm. That lived through World War ii. Mm-hmm. And then after that, you've got the baby boomers.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** And you are definitely a, a boomer. Oh, I'm

**Gill:** a boomer. Yeah.

**Luke:** You are a boomer. And there is, with the alternative counterculture movement and stuff. Yeah. A lot of that was about a generational. divide between the boomers and the greatest generation, I suppose. I mean, was that something you were, you were aware of?

Did you feel like a big, gap between and

**Gill:** your parents? yeah. There was a huge gap between my parents' generation and, and my generation, very, very big. hardly surprising, really.

**Luke:** Yeah,

**Gill:** but

**Luke:** they, for example, they didn't understand your, your, your fascination and obsession with the Beatles.

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**Gill:** Well, I think they were a bit puzzled by it, didn't quite know how to deal with it, but, I mean, they weren't horrible or strict about it.

They just allowed me to do what I did, and they just sort of looked to scant, you know?

**Luke:** Right.

**Gill:** Um, but, no, they were fine. But I mean. I didn't think at the time, gosh, there's a big gap between my generation and my parents' generation. That was just the way it was.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** And, and although we were living through this momentous time, we were so lucky with everything opening up and freedom and all the rest of it and the music and you know, everything.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** And I didn't think to myself, gosh, aren't we lucky? I never thought to. Compare my life with theirs. Terrible, really,

**Luke:** but not really terrible because to give yourself a chance, I mean, it requires a hell of a lot of perspective and a, a level of wisdom to be able to see outside of your own what you're

**Gill:** going through

**Luke:** yourself, your experience like that.

You only gain that kind of perspective later in life. So in a way, I mean, I dunno, there must be some quote that sums this up nicely, but mm-hmm. I mean, it's youth is wasted on the young, maybe something like that. But you only, you're only able to get that kind of perspective in hindsight. Exactly. And so you can't blame yourself too much, your younger self.

But if you, if you, I mean, I'm gonna ask you another one of those stock kind of questions, which is, if you could go back and talk to your, I don't know what your 12, 13, 14-year-old self in the early sixties, just, what would you say to yourself, anything.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Gill:** Be, work harder at school, be more aware of what your education is for, have more confidence.

'cause I was always very timid.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** And I didn't really do as much as I could have done.

**Luke:** why the school thing? Why work harder at school?

**Gill:** Well, because I didn't work hard at school. I mean, that's another thing. Yesterday we were looking at school reports. Oh, dear me. I mean, mine were terrible. Yours weren't much better.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** Um, but yeah, I mean, there was one, what was it that said about me? You know? You'd think from this report that Gillian was very unintelligent. In fact, I think she's very intelligent and it's a, it's a shame she doesn't, use it or something like that. And that was the, the way it was through the whole of my life really, that I never really achieved my potential when I was at school.

**Luke:** Mm.

**Gill:** And I wasn't really. Into school at all. I wasn't, I didn't have any desire or interest in learning, which is a terrible thing. I mean, I got it later, but, when I was at school I didn't, I don't really don't know why. It's very strange.

**Luke:** I've got one report here from January, 1957, so you were eight years old.

Same age as my daughter at the moment. Yeah. General report. Julia needs to practice her spellings and her tables hard, and to concentrate during lessons. Conduct is generally very good. Hmm. composition English spelling. If Gillian's spelling were improved, her English marks would be higher. Well, of course, arithmetic, that's sort of like maths.

She needs to pay far more attention in lesson time and general knowledge. She's generally interested. Right. Okay. But do you, do you think that your life was impacted by not concentrating enough in school?

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Gill:** Well, I suppose so. because I didn't do terribly well. I never went to university, but then. People didn't go to university as a general rule like they do now.

When I was young, lots of people did, but I didn't, and I never considered going to university. I never even thought about it. I just left school and. Got a job and you, but you could do that then jobs were much more easily got if you didn't have qualifications. I did have a, I had, shorthand in typing secretarial qualifications and so got a secretarial, well, I got a job before I even left college.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** And in fact, there were always loads of jobs going. And when I got fed up with my first job, I just applied for another job and got that, you know?

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** It was never any problem getting a job.

**Luke:** Yeah. And that's an important skill to have

**Gill:** a secretarial. Secretarial. Well, it was then. It isn't now. You don't have such thing as a secretary these days.

**Luke:** What did you do most of the time as a secretary? What was the, like, the absolute bread and butter of that job?

**Gill:** Well, correspondence, I suppose. because you know,

**Luke:** writing, sorry? Writing letters.

**Gill:** Writing letters and things. Yeah,

**Luke:** typing letters.

**Gill:** Well, taking down the, the boss would dictate the letter to you, you know, would speak it out loud and you would use shorthand to write it down.

**Luke:** What's shorthand?

**Gill:** Shorthand is a TA form of writing, which is much, much quicker and much shorter than writing in longhand.

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**Luke:** It's

**Gill:** a, it's a, it's, Pitman's shorthand is what I did.

**Luke:** It's a kind of code in a way.

**Gill:** Yeah, it is. Using lots of different strokes. It's based on, or Audi, or, you know, you write down the, the stroke represents a sound,

**Luke:** right.

It's phonetics,

**Gill:** that's a word.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** Um, not, spelling like most words, but it was, you wrote it down phonetically. And I wasn't brilliant at shorthand, but I, you know, I got by. They would dictate letters. Sometimes there were loads of letters, reams and reams of them. Then you'd go to your typewriter and you'd transcribe it from the shorthand to the typewritten letter,

**Luke:** and you learn how to type, efficiently.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Meaning, you know, to do it quickly and without making any mistakes. Yeah. Which is a, a quite a specific set of skills. It's,

**Gill:** what do they call it?

**Luke:** Touch typing,

wait,

**Gill:** touch typing where you don't, I all, I, you know, you don't look at your hands at all. You look at what you're copying. So my shorthand pad would be one side of my typewriter and I'd just be looking at that and my hands would be just doing what was necessary.

**Luke:** Yeah.

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**Gill:** and also you learned all sorts of things, like how to set out a letter, how to punctuate it. I mean, there were lots of rules, which I don't think there are so much now.

**Luke:** Well, it's sort a lot of it's automated and stuff.

**Gill:** It is. And of course, bosses just do their own stuff on the computers. They don't have secretaries doing, doing it for them.

**Luke:** I think there are sort of, now it's all about emails and email etiquette and email conventions of email writing, and it's probably a bit more vague now. Yeah. But I think still, there are right and wrong ways of writing emails. That's, that's another question for another time.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Um, but just going back to, so you talked about school, and stuff like that, and, and you can see that you may, maybe you should have concentrated more.

What about at home as a young person? Did you ever get into trouble?

**Gill:** Not really. I was quite a good girl.

**Luke:** Okay.

**Gill:** I don't remember a time of really getting into trouble. My brother was used to get into trouble more than I did.

**Luke:** Mm.

**Gill:** But no, I, I was very, that's another thing, I was very, you know, meek and mild and I wouldn't dream of making a fuss or, well, mind you, that was the way I was brought up.

I was brought up to be a people pleaser. I think that's what they call it these days.

**Luke:** Right. Is that 'cause you were a girl?

**Gill:** possibly, yeah, possibly. It was more so for girls. But it was considered good if he didn't make a fuss or you just behaved yourself and, you know, seen and not heard. Almost

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** children should be seen and not heard.

**Gill:** Oh, that's a Victorian idea, but there was still a certain amount of it.

**Luke:** Do you think your, your brother was brought up any differently?

**Gill:** Different? I think he was, I think he had more freedom. he was allowed to do more.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** Uh, but then he had the, the nows to do it. He wanted to do it, to do stuff that I didn't want to do.

**Luke:** Like what?

**Gill:** He was very adventurous. He'd go out, you know, when he was quite young, 11 or 12, he'd go off on his bike, you know, when we lived in Stafford. He'd say, well, I'm going to go to Litchfield today on my bike, which was quite a long way.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** And my mum used to say, oh, okay.

**Luke:** That means riding off on his bike.

On, yeah. On a Roads,

**Gill:** on Roads,

**Luke:** roads

**Gill:** B, roads Road. Mm.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** And, yes. And also one of the houses we lived in when we moved to Sutton, it had an embankment at the end of the, a railway embankment at the end of the garden.

**Luke:** A railway embankment that's like a, a, a drop down.

**Gill:** Mm mm The railway was. Below the level of the garden.

**Luke:** And so there was a sort of a wall,

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Gill:** sort of like a steep hill down steep, steep hill down to the railway track.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** And no fence or anything. And he used to spend a lot of time down on the railway track doing things like putting coins on the rail, you know, and the train went by, so he had all these flattened coins and so on.

And of course it was steam trains. Yes. And that's where he got, he, he became very enthusiastic about steam travel. Steam trains. Steam engines.

**Luke:** Wow. That's, I mean, that's, that must have been amazing to be able to sit on the embankment and, and watch a steam engine.

**Gill:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Luke:** Come down the track.

**Gill:** but I mean, I never did anything like that.

It was, it was him, but it amazed me that he was allowed to do it, you know, that my parents didn't say, you know, come away from there. It's

**Luke:** unbelievably dangerous.

**Gill:** Very dangerous. Yeah. And I think, you know, putting things on the line, I mean really.

**Luke:** Yeah. Okay. So then you said you didn't go to university, you left school and you've got qualifications.

As a secretary, when

**Gill:** I left school and went to a further education college to do my secretarial training, then got a job as a secretary and it wasn't until I was in my forties that I finally did my university degree.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm. How did you feel about the future at that time? because I remember when I was. A university age or had graduated and even before, I never had any idea of no.

What I was gonna do. No. And it was always like, it was always a major issue

**Gill:** mm-hmm.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** That I, I didn't know what to do. I remember.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** And it was a real sort of identity crisis. Mm-hmm. And I felt a great deal of pressure of like, what are you going to do? Yeah. Uh, with your, uh, for your career and all this stuff.

Yeah. Um, did you feel similar sort of thing?

**Gill:** Not really.

**Luke:** No,

**Gill:** I was just, I lived in the moment, I suppose, and I enjoyed, you know, as I said, when, when I got fed up with a job, I'd just move on somewhere else.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** And I was always looking for something a bit more interesting. And I ended up at the BBC, which was, you know, very interesting.

**Luke:** Yes.

**Gill:** And I suppose terrible to say it, but I just assumed that I would get married and have children.

**Luke:** Is that terrible to say

**Gill:** that? Well, it, it seems incredible to have such a, a low. I don't know.

**Luke:** Low, low level of ambition

**Gill:** or

**Luke:** expectation.

**Gill:** Yeah. Not to think of getting a job or a career or anything. Never occurred to me.

**Luke:** I mean, that's just what was expected of you.

**Gill:** It was, yeah. But

**Luke:** these days it's different and I mean

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Gill:** mm-hmm.

**Luke:** Girls have the option

**Gill:** Yep.

**Luke:** To kind of do whatever they choose,

**Gill:** and they're expected more to do that kind of thing.

**Luke:** Do you think it's, it's easier or harder to be expected to just not really be that ambitious and to become a housewife and a mother and a wife and everything?

Or to be expected to maybe do both?

**Gill:** Mm-hmm. I don't know. All I know is that I look at, Your family and your wife who works very hard and you know the way you have. The way you, she

**Luke:** works very hard on her career.

**Gill:** On her career

**Luke:** and family stuff, but

**Gill:** yeah. Well, yeah, but also I was gonna say was because she has this career.

She, you know, a lot of her energy goes on that, and then she has to look after the children as well. And all that entails. And of course you do a lot of childcare and what have you as well, which Rick didn't, of course, when in our setup it was me that did all the home and the childcare,

**Luke:** like just stuff like cooking, dressing, just

**Gill:** everything, picking up from

**Luke:** school and stuff.

**Gill:** He could concentrate on his job alone, didn't have to worry about. You know, things at home. there was very differentiation. You know, mine was the home bit. His was the work bit.

**Luke:** Yes.

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**Gill:** And I, you know, I look at your family and I think, God, how do they do it? You do so much.

**Luke:** Mm.

**Gill:** I don't know. I, it feels very different to me.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** Yes. Uh, of course many women in my, my generation did do far more than I did. You know, women did have careers at that time. It's just that hadn't been in my upbringing to expect to have a career, I suppose.

**Luke:** Yeah. Okay. Uh, and then, so, you know, you know, you met, you met dad and then eventually you got married and had children and stuff like that.

Mm-hmm. And later on you did go to university Yeah. And got a degree and stuff like that.

**Gill:** Mm-hmm.

**Luke:** But going back to when you were in your early twenties mm-hmm. And you didn't necessarily feel there was an expectation to do anything other than. Let's say set up a H home.

**Gill:** Yeah. Look after the family.

**Luke:** When did that?

Did idea change at any point? Did you at some point think, wait a minute. No, I think I should. I, I quite like to do more. I think there should be more than this. Well, I suppose

**Gill:** yes. It did gradually dawn on me that maybe I could have done more, and I think that's when I did my degree. But I was lucky I didn't have to do the degree.

For my job. I just did it because I wanted to. And Rick supported me in doing that. And I just did it for my own sake and for my own education. And it was, it was just brilliant. It's made a lot of difference.

**Luke:** What did you

**Gill:** To my life?

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** What did you study?

**Gill:** Oh, all sorts. Some, because I did the Open University degree, which a wonderful university.

It was, developed by, in the, in the 1960s by the labour government, of course Harold Wilson. And, Oh gosh, what was her name? Barbara Castle. And it was designed for people exactly like me, who left school without any education, didn't even do a levels or anything like that, but they could join the courses and do the degree, without having any further.

Because normally when you go to university, you have to have certain number of A levels or whatever in order to be able to apply for university. Well, the Open University, you could do it. If you had no qualifications at all, which was me, really, I think I had four row levels

**Luke:** and it was done via distance learning.

**Gill:** Yes. I did it at home and we had materials. I don't think it's done like this now because things have changed with the computer, in the computer world, with the internet and everything. But when I did it, we were sent our materials through the post written materials, which was our teaching. We didn't have a teacher or anything.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** We just had this written stuff. And so we did it all from this book, wrote it, and we had a, did have a tutor who we saw maybe once a month for a couple of hours and we were given essays to do and we would submit the essays to this tutor and get a mark.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** And, In the first couple of years we had summer school, famous Uni, Open University, summer schools.

**Luke:** You used to really enjoy them.

**Gill:** Oh, it was brilliant.

**Luke:** So this is when I was. Sort of late. You were a teenage. I was. I was very 18, 19, something like that.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Gill:** Maybe a bit younger.

**Luke:** Maybe a bit younger. Okay.

**Gill:** And it was two, two weeks, sorry, A week in a university summer. So during the university summer. So it would be in the summer sometime.

Hence summer school.

**Luke:** Summer holidays.

**Gill:** Uh, yeah, the university summer holidays. so, which meant that the universities were empty and we could stay in the halls of residence and use all the university facilities. And, so that was our chance of having one-to-one tuition and, and being with other students.

**Luke:** And lectures,

**Gill:** yeah.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** Lectures, tutorials. Just being with the other students. It was fantastic.

**Luke:** And you actually met your fellow, students and you hung out with them and you went, went for drinks and things

**Gill:** went to the bar. Yeah. All the student things.

**Luke:** Ah, that's great.

**Gill:** Mm-hmm.

**Luke:** Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** And that was all concentrated into one week?

**Luke:** Yeah. Whereas I had three years of that and, probably didn't take advantage of it as much as I could have done. Yeah. as we were talking about yesterday.

**Gill:** Mm.

**Luke:** What about having kids then?

**Gill:** Mm.

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**Luke:** What was that like having two boys? Was it, I mean, was it exactly as you expected?

**Gill:** I always expected to have children.

I always wanted children. Well, the actual physical, having children was terrible. Much worse than I thought it would be.

**Luke:** The pregnancy or the birth of

**Gill:** both? No, the pregnancies were fine. It was the births that were the problem. Didn't, it didn't work out either time. It was bad, but you know, it happened and I recovered and you were great.

**Luke:** That could be, that could be kind of. Traumatic though

**Gill:** it was traumatic,

**Luke:** difficult birth.

**Gill:** Mm-hmm. Particularly the first time it was very traumatic.

**Luke:** Did you get a sense that you had suffered some? Oh God. Sort of trauma. Not just physically,

**Gill:** but yeah, no, no. I knew I was in a right state after James was born.

**Luke:** Well, like emotionally.

**Gill:** Mm-hmm. Every way.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** What kind of emotional thing

**Gill:** was it? Oh, well, I don't know. Just my whole confidence. Everything I had assumed would happen, you know, was, was wrong and it was, I don't know. It felt like, it felt like failure somehow. It's very weird.

**Luke:** Really

**Gill:** had a very bad effect on me.

Yeah.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** Well, because you hadn't just I,

**Gill:** because I hadn't done it the way it was supposed to be done.

**Luke:** You hadn't just.

**Gill:** Exactly.

Job

**Luke:** done. It was, it had been a lot more difficult. Yeah. And you struggled.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** And that felt like failure.

**Gill:** Yeah. Yeah. Well, I mean, it, I, I won't go into details, but when James was born, it was horrible.

I mean, it was not quite as bad when you were born because they, they looked, you know, they were aware that I'd had such a bad time the first time. Yeah. And they were a bit more careful to look after me and intervene earlier.

**Luke:** Mm.

**Gill:** But, uh, but I think lots of women have that experience.

**Luke:** I agree. Yeah. I'm sure they do.

Yeah. I mean, it's one hell of a thing giving birth.

**Gill:** Oh, it is. I mean. It's amazing what we women do. Yeah. Giving birth, when the more you think about it, the more incredible it is.

**Luke:** Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. It's, it's extraordinary. And it's sort of like a terrifying moment. Yeah.

Yeah, can be

If you just think about it for what it is without adding, adding sort of, a rosy tint to it. You know, just simply the physical act of doing it. Yeah, of course. It's, it's, it's also sort of dangerous and

**Gill:** Yeah.

## **My mum talks about her life [977]**

**Luke:** And I mean, it's sort of like being injured, you know? Yeah. It's extraordinary, really. Physical trauma, emotional trauma and all that stuff. yeah. Okay. But that must have been quite hard.

What about like, having a, having a baby at home? Was it?

**Gill:** Well, to begin with it

**Luke:** a shock?

**Gill:** Yeah. It was after James, but, for the, for the reasons, because I was in shock really. And, I wasn't in a very good physical state, so it was difficult, but, and it wasn't the way I thought it was going to be, but, oh, that only lasted, I don't know, six months at the most.

Probably

**Luke:** lasted, I don't know, 28 years. Years. Yeah.

**Gill:** 50 years maybe? no, it only lasted a few months. And then, because I remember after he was born, I said to Rick, "You don't mind if we don't have another, do you?" And he said "No" because he was as shocked as I was. But of course we then decided, no, we did want another one after about six months.

**Luke:** Thank goodness for that.

**Gill:** Otherwise, no. Otherwise you'd be no Luke and no Luke's English Podcast.

**Luke:** Imagine the state of the world.

**Gill:** I know.

**Luke:** No. Everyone would be like, I do. We, I just dunno how to

**Gill:** speak English. There's something missing. There's something missing and we don't know what it is.

**Luke:** What can I listen to?

I wanna listen to something to learning. Just there's nothing. Yeah.

**Gill:** Yeah.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** okay.

**Gill:** So yeah, once all that trauma was over, it was great. I loved it.

**Luke:** Alright.

**Gill:** Looking after you. Mm-hmm. We had some great fun.

**Luke:** Yeah, we did. We, we definitely did. Mm. Yeah, we had really great times, including family holidays and things.

Yeah. Where we inevitably ended up in the middle of nowhere on a Welsh Mountain or Scotland or something like that,

**Gill:** which is probably the sort of thing you fancy doing

**Luke:** there. Oh yeah. You

**Gill:** can understand now, can't you? Why we did it.

**Luke:** Always understood. I mean, you know, you would say to us in the morning of whatever Easter holidays or whatever we were on, you would say, right, today we're gonna do a, you know, four mile walk along the clifftops.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** And James and I were both going, oh. But actually it was great. Yeah. And once we were up there actually walking and we had like walking boots and we'd get a stick each and then we, you know, it was great. And we'd have a picnic, we'd stop somewhere. By the footpath in a field or sit on a rock or something and have a picnic of the sandwiches and chocolate bars that we'd packed.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** And then we, we'd get these amazing views. Of like the Pembrokeshire coast or something like that. Yep. And you get great up close views of different types of wildlife.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** And plenty of fresh air and stuff and Yep. And it was all just within a couple of hours drive.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Gill:** Mm-hmm.

**Luke:** Um, no, we had wonderful, wonderful times.

yeah. Yeah. Yeah. What about when we became teenagers?

**Gill:** Oh, that was another thing. Again, that wasn't my favorite time

**Luke:** mm-hmm.

**Gill:** Of child rearing.

**Luke:** Yeah. Child rearing as if we're animals that you, well, that you sort of are born in a farm or something.

**Gill:** Well,

**Luke:** well, yeah.

**Gill:** No, there were, you were challenging on occasions, but, the way it is,

**Luke:** like, what?

**Gill:** Oh, I dunno.

**Luke:** Do you know, don't want to, you don't want to talk about

**Gill:** Nah. Doing the sorts of things that teenagers do.

**Luke:** Yes. Okay.

**Gill:** You know,

**Luke:** I do know,

**Gill:** but, you're all right now.

**Luke:** Yeah. Okay. going back to what I said earlier of three questions.

**Gill:** Mm-hmm.

**Luke:** What, you know, why don't we ask our parents more? Yeah.

What would you ask them?

**Gill:** Mm-hmm.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** Um, and the third question is, what should I ask you today? I mean, I've, you know, I've talked to you about quite a lot of stuff there. There's always more to explore. But what should I ask you today? because uh, you know, I'm trying to be. It. you often talk about these things, you know, because you are being reflective and stuff, and you talk about why didn't I ask my father these things and stuff.

**Gill:** Hmm.

**Luke:** Um, and then I think, right. Well I should, I should listen to what my parents are saying and try and do, try and ask my parents various things. Yeah. So that I don't regret not asking them later. Yes. And then I think, but alright, but what, but what, what am I gonna ask them? because mm-hmm. I do have moments when I, I'm struck by the inspiration of.

Right. I've got to talk about this and that. Mm. But then sometimes then you carry on with your life. Mm. You know, you might have those moments when you're just sort of lying in bed, maybe just falling asleep, or in the middle of a night when you can't back, get back to sleep. And it's in those moments, those weird moments that these.

Thoughts come to you and are so important

**Gill:** Mm.

**Luke:** In, in those reflective moments. But then most of the time you're just invol I'm involved in just doing whatever my brain is called.

**Gill:** Well, of course you, I mean, you, you are very busy all the time. You haven't got time to, it's, it's, the thing is, it's when you get older that you

**Luke:** Yeah, of course.

**Gill:** Think of things.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** And I don't know, Luke, I dunno what you should ask me.

**Luke:** What do you want to know? I dunno, was it, was it, I mean, I don't know.

**Gill:** Yeah.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** Uh, I mean, I could ask you things like, you know, about whether it was difficult to be married and have kids, but I don't necessarily want to dwell on. Those sorts of things, but that's always interesting.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** Um,

**Gill:** well, to me, I mean, I think I got away with it incredibly easily. You know, again, as I say, when I look at your family and the, the way you and your wife work and look after your children, I mean, it seems incredible to me that you do as much as you do. I think our life was much more straightforward.

Rick went out to work, came back by which time the children were in bed, you know, that sort of thing.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** and we had a, I had a routine with the children, which made, which made life easier. It was a sort of routine you can't really have, because. you know, I was there to pick you up from school. We'd go to the park or something and we'd go home and you'd have your dinner, your tea, and what have you.

Then you'd have a story and you'd go to, you'd usually, you'd have a bath or something and you'd go to bed and that would be it. So by half, by seven, you were in bed and,

**Luke:** yeah.

**Gill:** I had the whole evening

**Luke:** and at weekends, dad would take us to the swimming pool. Yeah. Or he'd take us to the park or whatever.

**Gill:** We'd go. You'd go with it. Going with him when he went to play football. Do you remember you used to go to grandma's house in Sutton?

**Luke:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Gill:** Uh, when he was playing football. Yes. So I often had a Saturday afternoon off.

**Luke:** Right.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Gill:** Yeah. that sort of thing. It was so much easier than what you have to do,

**Luke:** but it's not just the family roles, but it just feels like life is so much more intense and packed with.

Other things? I dunno, like is it the internet, is the, the, the internet has kind of like sped up the pace of life or the over the overpopulation. The fact there are so many more people everywhere. The economy is a, in a different condition. Well, as it was then, it's like everything's like mega fast and developed in this sort of post late capitalist period or whatever.

I dunno.

**Gill:** Well, I mean, I'm just looking at it from a personal point of view and seeing it from a personal point of view. And I suppose you could say it's to do with, I don't know. I mean, we manage perfectly well on one salary. I mean, your father had a good job, which helped, but I mean, there are not many people these days who can manage on one salary.

**Luke:** Mm.

**Gill:** Which is where, you know, all the complicated childcare comes in. I don't know. And we had our defined roles, you know, and it was, it seemed to me much easier to have someone in charge of the children and the home.

**Luke:** But then on the other hand, I think. Maybe both me and my wife, we can both do. Oh yeah. A lot.

Oh yeah, you can. We do, we do do a lot of things. You

**Gill:** do.

**Luke:** And we are able to achieve a lot of things and

**Gill:** mm-hmm.

**Luke:** We've both got careers. Mm-hmm. Which are interesting and allow us to have interesting experiences and to achieve a lot of things. Mm-hmm. So there's good and bad. It swings and roundabouts,

**Gill:** isn't it?

## My mum talks about her life [977]

I just see it from my point of view and think that if in my day if I'd had a very demanding job like your wife has

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** As well as looking after the children, which is very demanding. I dunno how, you know, I can't imagine being able to do that.

**Luke:** Yeah.

**Gill:** Splitting yourself two like that.

**Luke:** Yes.

**Gill:** Two demanding things.

**Luke:** It is generally quite demanding because the mental load

**Gill:** absolutely

**Luke:** is, is is greater.

**Gill:** Yeah.

**Luke:** And often it's the, often it comes down as always on the woman in the relationship because women, there's still the leftover from the days when. Women were responsible for the home.

**Gill:** Mm-hmm.

**Luke:** And now that, and nowadays women obviously are expected to slash want to slash have to have a career and stuff too.

Mm-hmm. And the man has the career as well. But then there's still this kind of expectation that the woman does still so many of the other things, A lot of men do it too, but then a lot of men don't. You know, lot.

**Gill:** Yeah. I mean, I think you do a heck of a lot, but I'm sure there are other. you know, people that you know of your generation who don't do as much as you, but I dunno.

I find it mind blowing. Really?

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** Yeah. Well, yeah. Yeah, everything's, I think everything's always mind blowing, really, in a way. What about today, mum? How would you describe your time? These days? Is that a good question?

**Gill:** I mean, it's amazing how, how all of a sudden you feel old, you go along for years and years and you know you're getting older, but you don't feel much different.

Well, the last three or four years, we've both felt much older. And we've got aches and pains and arthritis and you know, like you coming and doing little jobs for us because we can't do these things. And it is immensely frustrating when you suddenly can't do things. You think, oh, I'll just get up that ladder and, and you realize, no, can't do that.

I'll fall off. That sort of thing. And I can't reach up and do that and I can't do the garden because it's knackered. Yeah. So it's a bit, Disturbing.

**Luke:** Right.

**Gill:** But we, you know, we still do loads of things. Still involved in lots of things.

**Luke:** Mm. Mm-hmm.

**Gill:** Um,

**Luke:** what would you advise for me as I get older?

**Gill:** I don't think you need any advice, because I'm sure it's what you'll do.

You'll just do lots of stuff all the time. Keep active, keep doing stuff, you know, don't sit back and. And give up. But you know, a lot of it comes down to, health. If you're lucky and you are healthy and you are active, you can keep going and doing stuff for a long time. But, you know, if you, if you're unlucky and your health isn't very good, then that's another thing again, you, you suddenly find that you can't do stuff because of your health.

So, I don't know, just keep an open mind and you know, be as interested as possible in everything. That's the most important thing.

**Luke:** Yeah. A lot of people say seize the day. Carpe carpe diem.

**Gill:** Do things when you can

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** and live in the moment.

**Gill:** Absolutely.

**Luke:** What does that mean though, for you?

**Gill:** To live in the moment.

**Luke:** Yeah, to seize the day and live in the moment. What does that actually mean?

**Gill:** Well, it means do as much as you can in the moment. If you, if you wanna go and, I don't know, try and do as much as you can if you feel up to it, because tomorrow you might not. Yeah.

**Luke:** You don't wanna exhaust yourself though, as well.

**Gill:** Well,

**Luke:** you know,

**Gill:** yeah. I don't know. It's a bit of a balancing act, but, Yeah, just keep as interested in everything as you can. That's the main thing, I think,

**Luke:** and appreciate probably what you have in front of you right

**Gill:** now. Oh, absolutely. Yeah. But don't sit back and say, oh, I can't do that, or, I don't understand that, or,

**Luke:** you

**Gill:** know, try and,

**Luke:** dad just entered the room and, oh, they're still recording, turned straight, turned around and left again.

He can, he can be in, he can be in the room while we're doing this. But we, I decided that we'd, I'd do two different conversations. Yeah. One with you, one with him.

**Gill:** Mm-hmm.

**Luke:** Um,

**Gill:** you've probably had enough of me now you have to take over.

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** Well, I'm just wondering how to wrap up this.

**Gill:** Okay.

**Luke:** Very profound.

**Gill:** Yes.

**Luke:** Conversation that we've had.

**Gill:** Well, in terms of advice to you, I would say carry on doing what you're doing and being as active as you can for as long as you can. And keep interested in everything and don't stagnate. That's the main thing.

**Luke:** Mm.

**Gill:** Keep reading books, keep watching films, going to the theater, doing comedy, going on holiday to nice places.

**Luke:** I consider myself to be very lucky.

**Gill:** Mm.

**Luke:** Um, for lots of reasons, but also because. Had you and dad as parents. Oh, and I'm not just saying that, you know, it's true. I think that, James and I were both very lucky because well, I don't know how to put it, but, you know, we just had a great time growing up and I think that you,

**Gill:** good.

**Luke:** And I think you did a good job.

**Gill:** Good.

**Luke:** I think, I mean, how do we judge

**Gill:** as far as we know?

**Luke:** How do we judge these things? yeah. But that's good. I like, I like the fact that. I've managed to have a kind of a relationship with you as parents. Uh, that is, that I'm capable of having a conversation with you like this, for

**Gill:** example.

So you see us as people as opposed to parents now?

## My mum talks about her life [977]

**Luke:** Yeah,

**Gill:** yeah,

**Luke:** yeah.

**Gill:** Because that suddenly occurred to me. With my parents that I suddenly realized they were people. Seems a strange thing to say, but rather than just my parents, they were people.

**Luke:** Mm.

**Gill:** Uh,

**Luke:** I'm sure that one day I'll still think, oh, why didn't I ask them this and that, probably the other, but.

I, I dunno, maybe, I dunno if it's wise of me to say to myself, well, yeah, there's always gonna, I'm always going to have those feelings. Yeah. So I'll give my future self a break and say, don't worry about it.

**Gill:** Yeah, absolutely. And, and if you, something does occur, "how did they do that? Or what happened when they did so and so" Then just ask us.

**Luke:** Yeah. Okay. Uh, thanks for talking to me on the podcast again, Mum.

**Gill:** Oh, it's nice. I enjoy it.

**Luke:** Yeah, it's very, very nice indeed. Okay, well I'm, I'll speak to dad

**Gill:** next. Yes. He's feeling left out now, I think.

**Luke:** Yeah. Okay. Thanks Mum.

**Gill:** Alright. Bye

**Luke:** bye-Bye.

## Ending

So there you go listeners, that was my conversation with my mum recorded just a few weeks ago and I just want to say thanks again to mum for doing that. It was really really nice to have the chance to talk to her in that way and

## **My mum talks about her life [977]**

also to be able to record the conversation. Everyone listening, hello, I hope you enjoyed listening to that very much.

As I said before you can find a PDF transcript of all of that if you'd like to go back through that and check any words, phrases that you heard and you thought hmm that's a nice phrase I think I'd like to have that one please. I want to learn that specific bit of English. Use the transcript because it's a good way to find those bits of vocab that you've heard.

So next week it will be my dad and you'll hear the conversation I recorded with him and you'll get kind of his side of the story and more or less the same conversation from my point of view but obviously it's totally different. We end up talking about my dad and his life and his experience and his parents and so on and hopefully you'll really enjoy that but you'll have to wait for a week before you can listen to that depending on when you're listening to this. If you did enjoy this conversation with my mum then I've got a couple of other episodes in the archive that I'd like to recommend to you.

Maybe you've already heard these if you're a long-term listener but if not there are lots of episodes with my family in the archive. The archive is [teacherluke.co.uk](http://teacherluke.co.uk) slash episodes that's where you can find all of the episodes of my podcast and if you have subscribed to Luke's English podcast using an app on your phone you know Spotify, Apple podcasts or whatever you'll find all the episodes in there too. So you could check out episode number 250 which was called Marooned With My Music which is basically my version of the popular British radio programme Desert Island Discs which is where a guest is interviewed about a hypothetical situation where they're going to be marooned on a desert island and they're allowed to bring some things with them, specifically some records, some songs.

Basically they're being shipwrecked and they've managed to rescue some of their favourite records and so okay it's a complicated concept. Essentially it's a way for someone to talk about their life story and to name their favourite bits of music which they'd like to be able to take with them as they get shipwrecked on a desert island and I interviewed my mum with that format, asked her for her musical choices, spoke to her about her life. It's a similar episode to this, a similar conversation to this.

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I feel like we perhaps went a little bit deeper in this episode today but if you want more of this kind of thing you could listen to episode 250 and you'll hear all my mum's musical choices as well and you hear little clips of the music that she has chosen. So that's marooned with my music with my mum, that's episode 250. Episode 259 is called Eulogy for Dennis and that was recorded just after my grandfather died, that's Dennis, my mum's dad.

He died in 2014 and after he died and after the funeral I recorded an episode about him basically so if you'd like some more stuff on that particular subject you could listen to episode 259 and then lots of other episodes with my mum. There's episode 488 and 489 called A Rambling Conversation with My Mum which is exactly that, another rambling conversation with mum but we talk about all sorts of other stuff. What do we talk about in that one? Hold on and I'll tell you, just a moment.

I mean I've done so many episodes with my mum and my dad. Let me try, here it is. Right so a conversation with my mum in which we generally witter on about a number of different things including British history, ways of describing rain, different expressions for talking including words like rambling and wittering, my mum's accent, what she thinks of this podcast and some of her podcast recommendations.

Also some stuff about the bookshop where she used to work, some of the books she's read recently and some of her film recommendations. So that's episode 488 and 489. If you'd like to spend a bit more time in my mum's company on the podcast you could listen to those episodes.

But I'll leave this episode here. That's the end of this one. Thank you for listening all the way up until this point.

I would love to read your comments in response to some of the things that you heard in this conversation. I wonder which things sort of resonated with you, which things touched you or moved you, which things did you sort of recognise in yourself, did you notice any similarities between, I don't know, things my mum said about her life or about her parents' lives, about my relationship with my parents, my mum's relationship with her parents, anything. Did you feel like some sort of similarity or any connection with the things that you heard us talking about here? Share your comments in the comments section.

## **My mum talks about her life [977]**

I always try in these episodes to make a sort of human connection through English, right? That's what language is all about really, it's about establishing connections. And my episodes can be quite personal at times. I'm glad that my mum was willing to share some of the things she talked about in this episode with my audience.

And it's always nice when listeners, when you reciprocate in some way and you share some things about yourself or some things you want to say, things that kind of come to mind as you're listening, if you were moved by any of the things you heard, then put your thoughts into English and write them in the comments section. It's always very interesting to read those responses. Okay, thanks for listening and have a lovely morning, afternoon, evening or night.

I will speak to you next time, but for now it's just time to say goodbye. Bye. Bye. Bye. Bye.