

Hello, this is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service with reports and analysis from across the world, the latest news seven days a week. BBC World Service podcasts are supported by advertising. Wake up, this is Frida from Sweden and this is the Happy Pod.

Hi, I'm Harry and this is the Happy Pod. Take the joy where you can. I'm Hannah and this is the They are so right. This is the Happy Pod from the BBC World Service.

I'm Jackie Leonard and in this edition, uploaded on Saturday, June the 24th, hearing her mum's voice again decades after her death. Gosh, that was quite mad for me hearing my mum's voice after so much time. I'm going to have a little cry now and I had a little cry in the car. Sweet, restful sleep and why you shouldn't feel bad for taking a nap. The project to replace windows blown out in Ukraine. One, it allows people to live in warmth. Two, it lets light through. So, instead of having a wooden board blocking up your window, actually you're living in the light. Also in this podcast, the man in Colombia making the streets of the capital safer with spray paint. Well, my family thinks I'm crazy. It was something rather unsuspected, but they are really pleased that we are doing some civil service. Hannah Neeta was only 11 when her mum, Laurel, died. And over the following 27 years, the memories of her and her voice had started to fade until a chance discovery. Hannah was contacted by retired teacher Valerie Bradshaw, who had found an old cassette tape with her mum Laurel's voice on it from an interview she'd done for her teaching degree. Valerie told us about rediscovering the tape. I was having a big turnout and I found in the back of a drawer a two or three cassette tapes and I had no way of playing them. So, I was telling my neighbour about it and she said, I'm sure we've got a cassette player somewhere and she found one and I listened to it and yeah, sure enough, there was the interview with Laurel on there. She was very easy to find, so I sent her a message and just didn't know whether she'd be interested in it because I thought, well, I could just throw it away, but I think I'd want to hear my mum's voice. I'd spoken to a couple of friends and one friend had said, oh yeah, you should do it, another one said, well, not too true about that, you know, might bring up sad memories, but anyway, I did it and it was absolutely fine. Well, let's hear some of that recording. This is Laurel's talking about when she was invited into a classroom to talk to children about her native France. I really enjoyed it when I went in. I was very nervous about it because I had to talk in front of the whole classroom. I'm not used to that at all, but I was also afraid of being taken into, you know, general stuff about France, so I find difficult to answer because I can only talk about personal stuff. I can't generalise very easily. We heard more from Hannah about the experience.

I hadn't even considered that I would ever hear my mum's voice again. I mean, it wasn't something that I've ever thought about or longed for and then to suddenly have it from a really kind, I mean, almost stranger. Yeah, I mean, it was a bit hard to believe, to be honest. I couldn't believe it. Tell us about your mum. Tell us about Laurel's. She was full of life and joy, which is kind of ironic because she took her own life. My memories from when I was 11 were that she was a real homemaker. She was French. She cooked everything from scratch. We did crafts. We all were on adventures. She was a gardener, so we were often outside and she also did volunteering in the classroom. Tell us about the impact of hearing her again.

Well, I'd gone to collect the tape and Valerie said, would you like to listen to it? And I just was really honest and said, I just don't know how I'm going to react, but I would love to listen to it. And we sat down and she pressed play. And I think I expected all these memories to come flooding

back like in the films and to be like, wow, that's my mum's voice. And I just remember so much. I didn't remember anything. I didn't remember her voice at all. It was so magical to listen to and to hear it and also to have the conversations with my children because we do speak about her, but it doesn't come up often in conversation. What was lovely was on the drive back and talking about it. And I just turned to them and said, gosh, that that was quite mad for me hearing my mum's voice after so much time. I'm going to have a little cry now. And I had a little cry in the car and they just take it all in their stride, kids. And you described her personality and in the tape, you do hear some of her personality coming through. Let's hear a little bit more, the bit where she was explaining what it is that she was telling the school children about. Funny enough, it's mostly to check about all the preconceived ideas you have about France and is it true that you eat lots of nails? I was quite surprised about that.

And so, Hannah, that little laugh, did you recognise that?

That was the bit that did trigger some memories was the laugh. And people often say to me, oh, that is just what I remember about your mum is her laugh. And I love that bit. It's my favourite bit. I love hearing that little giggle and I've sent it to her family as well. And they listen to it. And for them, that is the bit that they love hearing as well. And what impact has all of this had on your recollections of her and your other family members? I would say one of the best things that's come from it alongside hearing her voice has been the conversations that really open and honest conversations and difficult at times that I've had with my own family.

My dad got out a bag of stuff that we had never seen, her handwriting, so diaries that she'd kept. You did share your story on Twitter and the public reaction has been quite astonishing, hasn't it? I came back with a cassette tape. I listened to it and I took a photo of the cassette tape and I just thought it might put a smile on people's faces and I'm all about taking the joy and you can take the joy. And then I think I didn't really look at it for a while and then logged back into Twitter and I think it had been viewed more than a million times and people sharing

that they had old video clips of their parents that they lost and they were younger that they loved watching because they could see their mannerisms or some people couldn't listen to the recordings. They have recordings they've never been able to listen to them. There's also like a community of people that the tape came from someone doing a dissertation and people that do dissertations and do research saying wow it's just more than data look at this and

I think someone even got in contact to say do you know what I have recordings of really old research papers that I've done and I'm going to go into the loft and get those cassette tapes and try and contact those families. I just thought isn't that an amazing ripple of hopefully joy that could be brought to people. That was Hannah Nita and we also heard from Valerie Bradshaw. Now what do Leonardo da Vinci, Salvador Dali, Eleanor Roosevelt and Albert Einstein have in common. They were in fact fans of the nap. I have no idea if they snored but thank you sound effects library and one positive discovery this week is that it looks very much like snoozing is good for your brain. The study led by Valentino Paz of the University of the Republic in Uruguay and Dr Victoria Garfield at University College London suggests napping may slow the rate of brain shrinkage associated with aging. Dr Garfield told us how the team reached this conclusion. People in our study had DNA measures DNA taken from blood and 35,000 had

a brain scan so you put people into the MRI scanner and you take images of the brain and then some

very clever colleagues of mine who are experts in brain imaging will segment the brain and then we are able to measure the size of each brain structure and then the overall size of the brain and and what we're doing is we're trying to use DNA to understand whether there might be a cause or relationship or association between having a regular daytime nap and the size of your brain in mid to late life. So a lot more work to do but we're quite excited by this kind of positive finding that having a short nap could be good to help preserve your brain size.

Now you were working with Valentino Paz from the University of the Republic of Uruguay and the bottom line what did you find? So our main finding was that people who appear to be regular daytime nappers or habitual nappers if you like they seem to have a larger brain size which is equivalent to about a one percent difference and it looks like we've calculated it could be slowing potentially the the aging of your brain by up to six and a half years.

And when we talk about habitual nappers are they not generally the people who don't sleep that well at night? We do know from previous research that the people who sleep for say less than six hours which we would say is sort of short sleep they seem to benefit the most from having a nap.

However you know if you're a good sleeper you sleep for the sort of really nice recommended seven to eight hours you can still potentially benefit from taking that break in the day and having a 15, 20, 30 minute nap. Are you a napper? I am not a napper. I can't really sleep in the day and I would probably prefer to spend that time exercising or going for a walk so we're not saying to people replace another healthy habit with napping it's more if you'd like to do it and you feel tired then don't feel ashamed or don't you know don't feel like you're losing productivity because you know it will possibly make you more productive afterwards. So should employers start embracing the idea that staff take a 10-minute power nap at work? Frida Ronghtel a neuroscientist and sleep expert from Sweden says there are differing opinions. How we view sleep can differ quite a lot between cultures and also between companies and how your boss is. So for some people I definitely think that a short nap in the afternoon like in this post-lunch dip can be beneficial both for performance and memory consolidation and many other things so a boss should maybe help people to get the sleep that they need even during daytime but I know sometimes this can be viewed as lazy but that's not necessarily the case. It could be the opposite that they care for their brain health and for their performance and that's why it could be of importance to take a short nap. And we have moved into a 24-hour culture haven't we expected to be available and connected all the time. Do you think we've become less respectful of the rest that we need?

Well I think there has been a huge shift here in that we need to be more aware of the things that we do during 24 hours to take care of our sleep and today in this 24-hour society this doesn't come natural we have to actually take measures to do this so I think in the future it requires more from us. Do you sleep well? Yes I do actually I really enjoy sleeping and I know what to do if I haven't been sleeping enough. For instance I know that I get energy from doing some exercise or socializing meeting other people or to do some relaxation exercise so we don't always have to do sleeping to restore some energy. And if you need some help dropping off here's Jason Stevenson he's a sleep meditation expert in Australia. Last night I had to use a method to help me get back to sleep because I woke in the middle of the night and it's called the 478 breathing technique. It's simply breathing in through the nose on a count of four holding at the top for seven counts so you're holding your breath and then you're breathing out for a count of eight through the mouth and you do that for 10 minutes and what's that do? That helps us to move into that relaxation response it takes us away from the fight or flight mode. Now a little

earlier we were hearing from Dr Vicki Garfield who carried out this study that said that daytime napping can be a positive thing for your brain but she was saying that the limit really you should be trying to sort of go for maybe 15 minutes or 20 minutes or half an hour and some people find it difficult to nod off. So in your expert opinion how would you advise people to drop off? Wherever you are doing that if you can get your environment okay so when I'm talking about that I mean if you've got the chance to make it dark especially when you're going to sleep make it dark have those dark curtains that black everything out earplugs if you need to wear them they're really good and if you all got a phone next to you get rid of it. And we will hear more from Jason later on now though more of your sounds. My name is Jessica I am an American living in Switzerland for the past year the sounds that give me joy are to listen to the birds chirping and the beautiful European church bells ring. The only thing missing in this recording is the sound of the cowbells and justice centres this of his wolf malamute hybrid.

Coming up in this podcast making Bogota's perilous pavements safer. We paint them in a pink font with a black X it's really hard to miss it at least if they don't get the sidewalks fixed they can see it every weekday morning wake up with an in-depth look at a single story that's affecting Africa right now and every weekday afternoon wind down with three essential stories from across the continent and hear African perspectives on global news that's what you'll get from Africa daily and focus on Africa to BBC World Service podcasts all about Africa and where will they find them just such for Africa daily and focus on Africa wherever you get your BBC podcasts now in an earlier edition we heard this unusual sound

that came from Marina in Buenos Aires in Argentina so we had a chat it's the sound that knife sharpeners do when they are trying to sell their service which is knife sharpening what is the object that makes that noise well i feel that it must be a kind of instrument like a harmonic like a harmonica yes perhaps a pipe or something yes it must be that okay i've never seen them doing or playing this sound but i have listened to it and why do you love this sound so much i love this sound because it reminds me of another stage of my life some years ago when i was living in Miramar a little town where i grew up at that time i was constantly listening to this sound and you as an inhabitant could be in close contact with the rest of the community with almost each and every neighbour i do find it hilarious that you've been hearing the sound for years and years and years and years and you've never quite seen the thing that makes it yes no no no it's it's a mystery and i've never seen one knife sharpener in person so it's not great advertising if you've never actually had a knife sharpened is it definitely yes you like the noise but you've never been tempted to give them any money and have them sharpen any of your knife no no no no yes it's ludicrous that was marina in Buenos Aires now there hasn't been much positive news for ukraine since the full russian invasion in february last year and according to the united nations millions of people living there are in buildings with insufficient protection and phd student harry bleakiston houston decided he wanted to help so he set up the insulate ukraine project to replace bullet and bomb damage windows and he told us why there are 10 million windows in ukraine

and estimated 10 million windows that have been shattered by bombs or bullets what we're trying to do is come up with a solution that works for ukrainians in the short to medium term to allow them to live in their homes in relative comfort warmth and actually some normalcy and why is it that you chose to get involved why did you feel the needs to get involved in this conflict the organization that i set up in select ukraine you know really it spawns from the fact that engineers

in my opinion normally desire to do one thing and that is to have an impact and really the reason we're involved is somewhere like Ukraine is because that's where the need is we saw that people were

in need and I suppose out of the main thing is just love for other human beings decided to take it as a problem to work on and tell us about what is different about the solution that you've come up with how does it work I think it's important to focus on the functions the outcomes for the individual there's sort of a couple of main ones so one it makes people warmer it allows people to live in warmth if they've got a fire going on in their home then it insulates them from the cold outside and it gets very cold in Ukraine two it lets light through so if you are living in a home instead of having a wooden board blocking up your window which ends up causing it to become dark in

your house you have one of these and actually you're living in the light and then the final one is that we see come up more and more and people are particularly you know they they realize the values of these things when this happens is they don't shatter when a shell drops so a lot of the areas we're working in are sort of in war of attrition type territory they are actively shelled on regular bases and if a shell goes off and you're sitting inside the house and you have a glass window it can often be the shockwave in the glass that then lands you in hospital rather than with our ones what happens is they just sort of crumple or they just pop out and you put them back in what are they made of how do you get them fitted into the spaces where windows once were we essentially send the raw materials to these houses and we build the windows in situ in the individual's house they're made out of PVC pipes as an internal frame we then wrap that with UVI stabilized polyethylene the only difference in comparison to old solutions is that these have four layers of polyethylene where upon most of the old solutions have two and so it's a tiny tweak on what has been an approach to do this stuff this sort of like cover up homes for a long time but that tiny tweak has huge consequences this design that you've come up with this tweak you call it a tiny tweak but this design presumably can be rolled out to other natural and man-made disasters more widely around the world this is a long-term intention of this project really my opinion is you have to focus on nailing the first thing first which is something like Ukraine but already we're getting to the stage where I'm looking like it's going to be possible to have insulate Ukraine run as a Ukrainian organization and begin focusing on how we adapt the solution slightly to different environments I sort of think that insulate Ukraine has brought me in towards much more of a sort of calling in my life I suppose a group of you know tasks or things at a place where I'm supposed to be and work that I am supposed to be doing and yeah we we're just going to have to see where it takes us in the future that was Harry Blakeston Houston whose PhD is currently on hold a couple of other stories that we liked over the past few days bellies has been certified malaria free by the WHO it's seen indigenous cases drop from 10 000 in 1994 to zero in 2019 bellies is the third country in the world to be certified this year so far after Azerbaijan and Tajikistan there's promising news on bowel cancer researchers in Scotland have solved a decades-long riddle of why the immune system of patients ignores the disease they hope the discovery will help in finding a new effective way to treat bowel cancer and just in case it passed you by welcome to the start of the Dutch herring season the ceremonial first barrel of fish has been sold at charity auction for about 170 000 it's the third record breaking year and the Dutch fish marketing board said we are in euphoria so there you go uneven and sometimes dangerous pavements or sidewalks are a common hazard across the world

but one man in Bogota in Colombia has made it his mission to make the streets of his capital a trip free zone francisco de nicolas and his friends have identified more than 11 000 uneven paving slabs and potholes and painted them bright pink adding big black crosses so first question just how bad is the problem when it rains you step on them and in the best case scenario your shoes and your pants will get all wet in the worst case scenario you can fall down and have some serious injury says her he's a 50 year old male he was running to catch a bus he tripped with one of those sidewalks fell he suffered a serious head injury and he broke his tibia from the fall i think that's a perfect example of what a damaged paving stone can do to a person my grandmother was hurt she's 91 years old she fell and we had to take her to the hospital she was in the icu for three days what exactly is the action that you're taking we are taking some spray cans and we are going on the sidewalks and we marked uh where people have had accidents and honestly this has been a movement that has been growing day after day people contacted contact us through our social media and they just report like uh my grandma but um their grandmothers or their grandfathers have had accidents and they just uh says in this address there's a big pothole or there or there's um like uh we call them like death traps for pedestrians and what we've received from the people around from neighbors is a really welcoming sign because nobody does anything to fix them but at least with the spray cans and the paint we paint them in a pink font with a black x it's really hard to miss it at least if they don't get the sidewalks fixed they are they can see it so what does your family think of this well my family thinks i'm crazy it was it was something rather unsuspected but they are really pleased that we are doing some civil civil service sidewalks should be like safe places for people of of all ages people shouldn't be afraid to go on a sidewalk that was francisco de nicolas in bogota and that's nearly it but before we go let's go back to the whole naps being a good thing story we heard that some people find it tricky nodding off in timely fashion for a 20-minute power nap so we will hand over to jason stevensson the sleep coach in australia and if you're operating heavy machinery at this point i think you should probably stop so just finding a comfortable place where you are right now and just taking in a deep breath in through the nose and release through the mouth and another one breathing in through the nose and release through the mouth and feeling into your body so what we're going to do is just do a bit of a body scan so from the top of your head just scan through your body as though there's a scan going down your body and you're just becoming aware of your body parts and if there is any tension around so we're going to breathe still breathe normally now take that breath back to a normal breath and just scanning down and if you come across any tension breathe into that area of your body so you breathe into that area and then you release that you visualize that tension melting on the way out so it's just breathing in releasing and then continue scanning down your entire body isn't that better thanks jason and that's it from us for now remember if you would like to be part of the happy pod you can email us the sound that brings you joy we would also love to hear if you have any stories to share that will make us smile as ever the address is globalpodcast at bbc.co.uk this edition was mixed by charlotta tozhimska the producers were tracy gordon and anna murphy our editor as ever is caron martin i'm jackie lannard and until next time goodbye