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Earliest recordings of family Christmas found

21st December, 2012

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

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THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

The National Museum of London has uncovered what it says is the first ever recording of a family Christmas, dating back 110 years. It is of the 1902 family get-together of the Wall family from North London. It is part of 24 recordings made by the family between 1899 and 1917. The recordings are from various family gatherings, including comments made during World War I on sons who were sent to fight. The Wall family used a phonograph machine to put the audio of their special occasions on wax cylinders. Historians at the museum say it is amazing the cylinders have survived as they are very fragile and usually disintegrate over time. They also say the sound quality of the century-old recordings is amazing.

The phonograph machine was discovered in the year 2000 by David Brown, 71, in his house near Cambridge. Mr Brown is the great-grandson of Mr Cromwell Wall, who made the recordings. Brown saw no use for the machine and donated it to his local museum, which passed it on to the Museum of London in 2008. It discovered the significance of the wax cylinders and has spent the past four years painstakingly restoring them. The museum said: "We tried to reduce any noise by cleaning the cylinder first with a fine brush that can get in between the groove and once we had the best playback from the cylinder we then digitally cleaned them up". Mr Brown said: "It's incredible how clear the recordings are."

Sources: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-20772246>
http://www.huntspost.co.uk/news/latest-news/one_of_world_s_oldest_christmas_recording_tapes_discovered_in_st_neots_attic_1_1746738

WARM-UPS

1. CHRISTMAS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about Christmas. Change partners often and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

museum / London / family Christmas / get-togethers / recordings / audio / fragile / discovered / great-grandson / donated / significance / restoring / digitally / incredible

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. HOLIDAYS: What do you know about these? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	Origins	How it is celebrated
Christmas		
Ramadan		
Diwali		
Kwanzaa		
Hanukkah		
Chinese New Year		

4. XMAS STUFF: What's best? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- midnight mass
- Christmas tree
- turkey
- exchanging presents
- sending / receiving cards
- shopping
- Christmas songs
- lights

5. RECORDING: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'recording'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Archaeologists found a recording of a Xmas from 1,000 years ago. | T / F |
| b. The recordings that have been discovered are of family get-togethers. | T / F |
| c. Historians are very surprised the recordings survived until today. | T / F |
| d. A museum said the sound quality of the recordings was amazing. | T / F |
| e. The man who found the recordings didn't know what they were. | T / F |
| f. The man gave the machine with the recordings to an antiques shop. | T / F |
| g. Experts decided a special brush would damage the recordings. | T / F |
| h. The man who found the recordings is disappointed with the sound. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. uncovered | a. contributed |
| 2. get-together | b. fall apart |
| 3. various | c. a number of |
| 4. fragile | d. meticulously |
| 5. disintegrate | e. reunion |
| 6. donated | f. unbelievable |
| 7. significance | g. unearthed |
| 8. painstakingly | h. thin |
| 9. fine | i. importance |
| 10. incredible | j. delicate |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| 1. dating | a. family gatherings |
| 2. The recordings are from various | b. grandson |
| 3. Historians | c. over time |
| 4. very fragile and usually disintegrate | d. to his local museum |
| 5. the sound quality of the century- | e. back 110 years |
| 6. great- | f. the recordings are |
| 7. donated it | g. brush |
| 8. painstakingly | h. old recordings |
| 9. a fine | i. at the museum |
| 10. It's incredible how clear | j. restoring them |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The National Museum of London has (1) _____ what it says is the first ever recording of a family Christmas, (2) _____ back 110 years. It is of the 1902 family get-together (3) _____ of the Wall family from North London. It is part of 24 recordings made by the family between 1899 and 1917. The recordings are from (4) _____ family gatherings, including (5) _____ made during World War I on sons who were sent to fight. The Wall family used a phonograph machine to put the audio of their special (6) _____ on wax cylinders. Historians at the museum say it is amazing the cylinders have survived as they are very (7) _____ and usually disintegrate over time. They also say the sound quality of the (8) _____-old recordings is amazing.

various
together
century
occasions
uncovered
comments
dating
fragile

The phonograph machine was (9) _____ in the year 2000 by David Brown, 71, in his house near Cambridge. Mr Brown is the great-grandson of Mr Cromwell Wall, who made the recordings. Brown saw no use for the machine and (10) _____ it to his local museum, which (11) _____ it on to the Museum of London in 2008. It discovered the (12) _____ of the wax cylinders and has spent the past four years painstakingly (13) _____ them. The museum said: "We tried to reduce any noise by cleaning the cylinder first with a fine brush that can get in between the (14) _____ and once we had the best playback from the cylinder we then (15) _____ cleaned them up". Mr Brown said: "It's (16) _____ how clear the recordings are."

restoring
digitally
donated
groove
passed
discovered
incredible
significance

LISTENING – Guess the answers. Listen to check

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

- 1) It is of _____ together of the Wall family
 - a. the ninety-nine all two family get-
 - b. the nineteen all two family get-
 - c. the 1902 family got-
 - d. the 1902 family get-
- 2) including comments made during World War _____ sent to fight
 - a. won on sons who were
 - b. I on sons who were
 - c. one on one sons who were
 - d. II on sons who were
- 3) put the _____ occasions on wax cylinders.
 - a. all day of their special
 - b. audio of that special
 - c. audio of their special
 - d. all day of that special
- 4) they are very fragile and _____ time
 - a. usually this integration over
 - b. usually disintegrate over
 - c. usually this inter great over
 - d. usually over-disintegrate
- 5) the sound quality of the century-_____
 - a. old record inn is amazing
 - b. old recordings is amaze in
 - c. old recordings is amazing
 - d. older recordings is amazing
- 6) Brown _____ the machine and donated it to his local museum
 - a. sawn of useful
 - b. saw no use for
 - c. saw no useful
 - d. saw no use of
- 7) It discovered _____ wax cylinders
 - a. the significant sum of the
 - b. the significance for the
 - c. the significance of the
 - d. the significant so of the
- 8) spent the past four years _____ them
 - a. painstakingly restoring
 - b. pains taken in restoring
 - c. pain staking in restoring
 - d. painstaking to restore
- 9) a _____ brush that can get in between the _____
 - a. fire / glue
 - b. fine / groove
 - c. fine / glue
 - d. fire / groove
- 10) It's incredible _____ recordings are.
 - a. clear the how
 - b. how clear the
 - c. how the clear
 - d. the clear how

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

The National Museum of London has uncovered (1) _____ first ever recording of a family Christmas, dating back 110 years. It is of the 1902 family (2) _____ Wall family from North London. It is part of 24 recordings made by the family between 1899 and 1917. The recordings (3) _____ family gatherings, including comments made during World War (4) _____ were sent to fight. The Wall family used a phonograph machine to put the audio of their special occasions on wax cylinders. Historians at the museum say it is amazing the cylinders have survived (5) _____ and usually disintegrate over time. They also say the sound quality (6) _____ recordings is amazing.

The phonograph machine was discovered in the year 2000 by David Brown, 71, in his house near Cambridge. Mr Brown (7) _____ of Mr Cromwell Wall, who made the recordings. Brown (8) _____ machine and donated it to his local museum, (9) _____ the Museum of London in 2008. It discovered the significance of the wax cylinders and has spent (10) _____ painstakingly restoring them. The museum said: "We tried to reduce any noise by cleaning the cylinder (11) _____ that can get in between the groove and once we had the best playback from the cylinder (12) _____ them up". Mr Brown said: "It's incredible how clear the recordings are."

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

1. What is the name of the museum in the article?

2. In what year was the first Christmas recording done ?

3. When were the 24 recordings done?

4. Who was sent to fight in WWI?

5. What usually happens to wax cylinders over time?

6. What did David Brown discover in his house?

7. How are Mr Brown and Cromwell Wall related?

8. When did the Museum of London receive the machine?

9. What did the museum use to clean the wax cylinders?

10. What did Mr Brown say about the recordings?

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

1. How old is the recording of the first family Christmas?
 - a) 1,902 years old
 - b) 110 years old
 - c) scientists cannot date it
 - d) dating back two centuries
2. What's the name of the family who is on the recordings?
 - a) Hall
 - b) Mall
 - c) Ball
 - d) Wall
3. How many recordings are there in total?
 - a) 22
 - b) 23
 - c) 24
 - d) 25
4. Where were the family sons sent?
 - a) to fight in WWI
 - b) to bed
 - c) to various family gatherings
 - d) to the local store to get some bread
5. What usually happens to wax cylinders as they age?
 - a) they improve in quality
 - b) they disintegrate
 - c) they melt
 - d) they harden
6. Who is David Brown?
 - a) the great-grandson of Cromwell Wall
 - b) the grandson of Cromwell Wall
 - c) the great-great-grandson of Mr Cromwell Wall
 - d) Cromwell Wall's great-great-great-grandson
7. What did Mr Brown do with the phonograph machine?
 - a) he kept it
 - b) he auctioned it
 - c) he gave it to a museum
 - d) he sold it to an antique shop
8. When did the National Museum of London get the machine?
 - a) 2008
 - b) 2009
 - c) 2010
 - d) 2011
9. Why did the museum clean the cylinder?
 - a) to increase the noise
 - b) to hear the noise
 - c) to create noise
 - d) to reduce the noise
10. What did Mr Brown say was incredible?
 - a) the skill of the restorers
 - b) digital recording technology
 - c) the recordings
 - d) his family history

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PRESENTS

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

What would you buy these people, and why? Talk about your answers with your partner(s).

Who	What?	Why?
Barack Obama		
Your English teacher		
Yourself		
Malala Yousafzai		
Mark Zuckerberg		
Lady Gaga		
Ban Ki-moon		
The world		

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'local' and 'museum'.

local	museum
--------------	---------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• dating• part• various• special• time• old	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 71• use• 2008• reduce• fine• clear
--	---

CHRISTMAS SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

Write five GOOD questions about Christmas in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.
When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

CHRISTMAS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'Christmas'?
- c) What can you remember of your first Christmas?
- d) What do you think is different between Christmas today and Christmas 1902?
- e) What do you think is on the 1902 recording?
- f) How far back can you go with your family history?
- g) What is the meaning of Christmas today?
- h) What do you think your relatives from 100 years ago were like?
- i) Would you like to hear the recording?
- j) How do you think the first family Christmas was spent?

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CHRISTMAS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
- b) Do you think Christmas was better, more traditional a century ago?
- c) Why is 'Christmas' sometimes spelt as 'Xmas'?
- d) Do you think it's OK for kids to believe in Santa Claus?
- e) What sounds of Christmas from centuries ago would you like to hear?
- f) Is there anything you dislike about Christmas?
- g) Have your feelings towards Xmas changed since you were a child?
- h) Is Christmas stressful?
- i) How do you feel when Christmas is over?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Santa Claus?

DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

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DISCUSSION (Write your own questions)

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

MULTIPLE CHOICE - LANGUAGE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

The National Museum of London has uncovered (1) _____ it says is the first ever recording of a family Christmas, (2) _____ back 110 years. It is of the 1902 family (3) _____ -together of the Wall family from North London. It is part of 24 recordings made by the family between 1899 and 1917. The recordings are from (4) _____ family gatherings, including comments made during World War I on sons who were sent to fight. The Wall family used a phonograph machine to put the audio of their special (5) _____ on wax cylinders. Historians at the museum say it is amazing the cylinders have survived as they are very (6) _____ and usually disintegrate over time. They also say the sound quality of the century-old recordings is amazing.

The phonograph machine was discovered in the year 2000 by David Brown, 71, in his house near Cambridge. Mr Brown is the (7) _____-grandson of Mr Cromwell Wall, who made the recordings. Brown saw no (8) _____ for the machine and donated it to his local museum, which passed it on to the Museum of London in 2008. It discovered the significance of the wax cylinders and has spent the past four years (9) _____ restoring them. The museum said: "We tried to reduce any noise by cleaning the cylinder first with a (10) _____ brush that can get in between the groove and once we had the best playback from the cylinder we then (11) _____ cleaned them up". Mr Brown said: "It's incredible how (12) _____ the recordings are."

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | (a) what | (b) that | (c) which | (d) why |
| 2. | (a) dates | (b) dated | (c) dating | (d) date |
| 3. | (a) got | (b) getting | (c) get | (d) gets |
| 4. | (a) myriad | (b) a number | (c) assortment | (d) various |
| 5. | (a) occasions | (b) happenings | (c) incidents | (d) occurrences |
| 6. | (a) agile | (b) fragile | (c) guile | (d) angular |
| 7. | (a) fabulous | (b) incredible | (c) superb | (d) great |
| 8. | (a) lose | (b) use | (c) functioning | (d) available |
| 9. | (a) diligence | (b) meticulous | (c) painstakingly | (d) industrious |
| 10. | (a) finish | (b) fine | (c) finale | (d) finite |
| 11. | (a) digitalise | (b) digital | (c) digits | (d) digitally |
| 12. | (a) clarity | (b) clear | (c) clearness | (d) clears |

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SPELLING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

Paragraph 1

1. family etg-rgtoeteh
2. uisavro family gatherings
3. special ccsnisaoo
4. wax nysdelirc
5. very lfeigar
6. nirsegetitda over time

Paragraph 2

7. ohaorgnpph machine
8. local ummeus
9. discovered the nicnfsaigiec
10. anlnikytasigp restoring them
11. we then agitdylil cleaned them up
12. It's lieebirncd

PUT THE TEXT BACK TOGETHER

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

Number these lines in the correct order.

- () very fragile and usually disintegrate over time. They also say the sound quality of the century-old recordings is amazing.
- () occasions on wax cylinders. Historians at the museum say it is amazing the cylinders have survived as they are
- (**1**) The National Museum of London has uncovered what it says is the first ever recording
- () near Cambridge. Mr Brown is the great-grandson of Mr Cromwell Wall, who made the
- () The phonograph machine was discovered in the year 2000 by David Brown, 71, in his house
- () on to the Museum of London in 2008. It discovered the significance of the wax cylinders and has spent the past four years
- () and 1917. The recordings are from various family gatherings, including comments made during World War I on sons who
- () recordings. Brown saw no use for the machine and donated it to his local museum, which passed it
- () from the cylinder we then digitally cleaned them up". Mr Brown said: "It's incredible how clear the recordings are."
- () of a family Christmas, dating back 110 years. It is of the 1902 family get-together of the Wall family
- () first with a fine brush that can get in between the groove and once we had the best playback
- () painstakingly restoring them. The museum said: "We tried to reduce any noise by cleaning the cylinder
- () from North London. It is part of 24 recordings made by the family between 1899
- () were sent to fight. The Wall family used a phonograph machine to put the audio of their special

PUT THE WORDS IN THE RIGHT ORDER

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

1. of The a first family ever Christmas recording.

2. part of 24 recordings made by the family It is.

3. from are recordings The gatherings family various.

4. their special occasions on wax cylinders Put the audio of.

5. disintegrate very usually time are and over They fragile.

6. use no saw Brown machine the for.

7. the cylinders significance of It the discovered wax.

8. years Spent painstakingly the restoring past them four.

9. by cylinder to noise the tried any cleaning We reduce.

10. brush that can get in between the groove A fine.

CIRCLE THE CORRECT WORD (21 PAIRS)

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

The National Museum of London has *uncovered / covered* what it says is the first ever recording of a family Christmas, *dates / dating* back 110 years. It is of the 1902 family *gets-together / get-together* of the Wall family from North London. It is part of 24 recordings made by the family between 1899 and 1917. The recordings are from *various / variety* family gatherings, including *commented / comments* made during World War I on sons who were sent to fight. The Wall family used a phonograph machine to put the audio of their special *incidents / occasions* on wax cylinders. Historians at the museum say it is amazing the cylinders have survived as they are very *fragility / fragile* and usually disintegrate *over / pass* time. They also say the *sound / sounds* quality of the *century-old / century-age* recordings is amazing.

The phonograph machine was *discovery / discovered* in the year 2000 by David Brown, 71, in his house near Cambridge. Mr Brown is the [*fabulous-grandson / great-grandson*] of Mr Cromwell Wall, who made the recordings. Brown saw no *use / using* for the machine and *donated / donation* it to his local museum, which passed it *in / on* to the Museum of London in 2008. It discovered the *significant / significance* of the wax cylinders and has spent the past four years *painstakingly / painlessly* restoring them. The museum said: "We tried to reduce any noise by *cleaned / cleaning* the cylinder first with a fine brush that can *get / let* in between the *groovy / groove* and once we had the best playback from the cylinder we then digitally cleaned them up". Mr Brown said: "It's incredible how *clear / clarity* the recordings are."

Talk about the connection between each pair of words in italics, and why the correct word is correct.

INSERT THE VOWELS (a, e, i, o, u)

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

Th_ N_t__n_l M_s__m _f L_nd_n h_s _nc_v_r_d wh_t _t
s_ys _s th_ f_rst _v_r r_c_rd_ng _f _f_m_ly
Chr_stm_s, d_t_ng b_ck 110 y__rs. _t _s _f th_ 1902
f_m_ly g_t-t_g_th_r _f th_ W_ll f_m_ly fr_m N_rth
L_nd_n. _t _s p_rt _f 24 r_c_rd_ngs m_d_ by th_
f_m_ly b_tw__n 1899 _nd 1917. Th_ r_c_rd_ngs _r_
fr_m v_r__s f_m_ly g_th_r_ngs, _ncl_d_ng c_mm_nts
m_d_ d_r_ng W_rld W_r _ _n s_ns wh_ w_r_s_nt t_
f_ght. Th_ W_ll f_m_ly _s_d _ph_n_gr_ph m_ch_n_t_
p_t th_ __d__ _f th__r sp_c__l _cc_s__ns _n w_x
cyl_nd_rs. H_st_r__ns _t th_ m_s__m s_y _t _s
_m_z_ng th_ cyl_nd_rs h_v_s rv_v_d _s th_y _r_v_ry
fr_g_l_ _nd _s__lly d_s_nt_gr_t _v_r_t_m_. Th_y _ls_
s_y th_ s__nd q__l_ty _f th_ c_nt_ry-_ld r_c_rd_ngs _s
_m_z_ng.

Th_ ph_n_gr_ph m_ch_n_ w_s d_sc_v_r_d _n th_ y__r
2000 by D_v_d Br_wn, 71, _n h_s h__s _n__r
C_mbr_dg_. Mr Br_wn _s th_ gr__t-gr_nds_n _f Mr
Cr_mw_ll W_ll, wh_ m_d_ th_ r_c_rd_ngs. Br_wn s_w_n_
s f_r th_ m_ch_n_ _nd d_n_t_d _t t_ h_s l_c_l
m_s__m, wh_ch p_ss_d _t_n_t_ th_ M_s__m _f L_nd_n
_n 2008. _t d_sc_v_r_d th_ s_gn_f_c_nc_ _f th_ w_x
cyl_nd_rs _nd h_s sp_nt th_ p_st f__r y__rs
p__nst_k_ngly r_st_r_ng th_m. Th_ m_s__m s__d: "W_
tr__d t_r_d_c_ _ny n__s by cl__n_ng th_ cyl_nd_r
f_rst w_th _f_n_ br_sh th_t c_n_g_t _n b_tw__n th_
gr__v_ _nd _nc_ w_ h_d th_ b_st pl_yb_ck fr_m th_
cyl_nd_r w_ th_n d_g_t_lly cl__n_d th_m _p". Mr Br_wn
s__d: "_t's _ncr_d_bl_ h_w cl__r th_ r_c_rd_ngs _r_."

PUNCTUATE THE TEXT AND ADD CAPITALS

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

the national museum of london has uncovered what it says is the first ever recording of a family christmas dating back 110 years it is of the 1902 family get-together of the wall family from north london it is part of 24 recordings made by the family between 1899 and 1917 the recordings are from various family gatherings including comments made during world war i on sons who were sent to fight the wall family used a phonograph machine to put the audio of their special occasions on wax cylinders historians at the museum say it is amazing the cylinders have survived as they are very fragile and usually disintegrate over time they also say the sound quality of the century-old recordings is amazing

the phonograph machine was discovered in the year 2000 by david brown 71 in his house near cambridge mr brown is the great-grandson of mr cromwell wall who made the recordings brown saw no use for the machine and donated it to his local museum which passed it on to the museum of london in 2008 it discovered the significance of the wax cylinders and has spent the past four years painstakingly restoring them the museum said "we tried to reduce any noise by cleaning the cylinder first with a fine brush that can get in between the groove and once we had the best playback from the cylinder we then digitally cleaned them up" mr brown said "it's incredible how clear the recordings are"

PUT A SLASH (/) WHERE THE SPACES ARE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1212/121221-christmas.html>

The National Museum of London has uncovered what it says is the first ever recording of a family Christmas, dating back 110 years. It is of the 1902 family get-together of the Wall family from North London. It is part of 24 recordings made by the family between 1899 and 1917. The recordings are from various family gatherings, including comments made during World War I on sons who were sent to fight. The Wall family used a phonograph machine to put the audio of their special occasions on wax cylinders. Historians at the museum say it is amazing the cylinders have survived as they are very fragile and usually disintegrate over time. They also say the sound quality of the century-old recordings is amazing. The phonograph machine was discovered in the year 2000 by David Brown, 71, in his house near Cambridge. Mr Brown is the great-grandson of Mr Cromwell Wall, whom he made the recordings. Brown saw no use for the machine and donated it to his local museum, which passed it on to the Museum of London in 2008. It discovered the significance of the wax cylinders and has spent the past four years painstakingly restoring them. The museum said: "We tried to reduce any noise by cleaning the cylinder first with a fine brush that can get in between the groove and once we had the best playback from the cylinder we then digitally cleaned them up". Mr Brown said: "It's incredible how clear the recordings are."

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about the history of family Christmas celebrations. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. CHRISTMAS: Make a poster about Christmas in different parts of the world. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. COMMERCIAL: Write a magazine article about the commercialization of Christmas. Include imaginary interviews with people who are for and against it.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. WHAT HAPPENED NEXT? Write a newspaper article about the next stage in this news story. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Give each other feedback on your articles.

6. LETTER: Write a letter to a Christmas. Ask him/her three questions about Christmas. Give him/her three of your opinions on it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE (p.4)

a F b T c T d T e T f F g F h F

SYNONYM MATCH (p.4)

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. uncovered | a. unearthed |
| 2. get-together | b. reunion |
| 3. various | c. a number of |
| 4. fragile | d. delicate |
| 5. disintegrate | e. fall apart |
| 6. donated | f. contributed |
| 7. significance | g. importance |
| 8. painstakingly | h. meticulously |
| 9. fine | i. thin |
| 10. incredible | j. unbelievable |

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS (p.8)

1. The National Museum of London
2. 1902
3. Between 1899 and 1917
4. The sons of the Wall family
5. They disintegrate
6. A phonograph machine
7. They are great-grandfather and great-grandson
8. 2008
9. A fine brush
10. He said they were incredible

MULTIPLE CHOICE - QUIZ (p.9)

1. b 2. d 3. c 4. a 5. b 6. a 7. c 8. a 9. d 10. c

ALL OTHER EXERCISES

Please check for yourself by looking at the Article on page 2.
(It's good for your English ;-)