



Alexander Graham Bell

Work with Sound

While working with his father, Alexander Graham Bell became very interested in speech and how we make sounds.

He and his brothers invented an 'automaton' - a mechanical man. Using bellows to push air through its windpipe, they could make it 'speak' a few words. Their neighbours all came to see and were amazed by it!

At the age of nineteen, Bell conducted some experiments with tuning forks, to explore how sounds are transmitted. He wrote a report of his findings and sent it to his father's colleague, Alexander Ellis. Ellis wrote back to tell Bell that his experiments were similar to some that had already been done by Hermann von Helmholtz in Germany, and sent him a copy of the report of those experiments.

Bell was very disappointed that Helmholtz had already published his ideas. He read his report and came up with a new idea based on Helmholtz's work. He started to concentrate on using electricity to transmit sound.

