



Alexander Graham Bell

1847-1922

Undoubtedly the most common and most widely used electrical instrument is the telephone, invented by the Scottish-American scientist Alexander Graham Bell. The date was June 2, 1875, when Bell and his assistant Thomas Watson transmitted a musical note. The first intelligible telephone sentences, "Mr. Watson, come here. I want you," were spoken inadvertently by Bell himself on March 10, 1876, when he called Watson to come to an adjoining room to help with some spilled acid.

Bell was born in Edinburgh, Scotland. His father, Alexander Melville Bell, was a well-known speech teacher and his grandfather, Alexander Bell, was also a speech teacher. Young Bell, after attending the University of Edinburgh and the University of London, also became a speech teacher. In 1866 Bell became interested in trying to transmit speech electrically after reading a book describing how vowel sounds could be made with tuning forks. Shortly afterwards, Bell's two brothers died of tuberculosis and Melville Bell moved his family to Canada for health reasons. In 1873 young Graham became a professor at Boston University and began his electrical experiments in his spare time. It was there that he formed his partnership with Watson and went on to his great invention. Bell's telephone patent was the most valuable one ever issued, and the telephone opened a new age in the development of civilization.

(Source: D. Johnson, J. Johnson and J. Hilborn, *Electric Circuit Analysis*, Prentice-Hall, 1989)