

When the cows come home – a mooving translation

British Library Volunteer, Dr Amy Evans Bauer, writes: Have you ever had trouble explaining the definition of a word, and even more so, conveying an idiom in literal language? An idiom is defined by Oxford Dictionaries as: a form of expression, grammatical construction, phrase, etc., used in a distinctive way...

Recording of the week: the song of the Montezuma Oropendola

This week's selection comes from Cheryl Tipp, Curator of Wildlife and Environmental Sounds. The sound archive is home to over 250,000 wildlife recordings from all over the world. Over 100,000 of these are recordings of birds. As a curator it's impossible to have a favourite when surrounded by so many...

Ghosts in the collections

It's Halloween, so what better time to delve into our oral history collections in search of accounts of the eldritch, mysterious and paranormal?

The words we live by

British Library Volunteer, Dr Amy Evans Bauer, writes: The Library's Evolving English WordBank holds many imperatives, sage warnings and pick-me-ups. These reveal a strong relationship between idiomatic language and our behaviour, even our emotional responses, which is passed down through generations via spoken codes of conduct. While reflecting on this,...

Recording of the week: a high fidelity direct recording

This week's selection comes from audio engineer Robert Cowlin. Instantaneous lacquer discs frequently contain unique or rare recordings and, due to the instability of their sound carrying layer, are a preservation priority at the British Library Sound Archive. Also known as acetate discs, they generally consist of a metal substrate...