

BBC Learning English
Talk about English webcast
Thursday December 27th, 2007



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About this script, Callum says ...

Sorry, this is not a word for word transcript of the programme as broadcast. This is the script we used when we went into the studio. There was a lot of informal chat which isn't recorded here.

We hear the sound of cold winter wind through leather panelled library walls. A grandfather clock ticks.

Callum: Oh, hello, you've just caught me as I prepare to entertain a few guests. It's a bit chilly outside, so let me just light the fire.

FX - Lights fire

Aah, that's better.

How was your Christmas? Good I hope. And if you weren't celebrating Christmas I hope you've also been enjoying the holiday season. As it is the season for parties and holidays I really didn't want to go into Bush House, to the cold studio, through the streets busy with bargain shoppers. It's much more comfortable here. So welcome to my home and welcome to this special edition of Talk about English.

FX - Knocking

Aah, that sounds as if my guests have arrived. I'll let the butler get the door and they'll be with us shortly. Just time to tell you all about this programme. We'll be remembering 2007 and looking forward to the New Year, 2008. 2008 eh! How time flies I can hardly believe it. Remember the millennium? All the

worry over the millennium bug? That was 8 years ago! It's hard to believe isn't it.

FX - Knock

Come

Butler: Your guests sir,

Callum: Excellent, thank you, show them in.

Butler: Certainly sir. (To guests) This way please, go straight through.

Callum: Come in, come in, good to see you

All: Hellos, nice to be here , thanks, nice place etc

Callum: Do come in, sit down. Make yourself at home. Drink?

All: (Responses – oh yes, thanks, just a small one)

FX - Bottle opened and drinks poured

Callum: Cheers

All: Cheers, good health

Callum: How rude of me, I haven't introduced you, though I'm sure regular listeners to the webcast will have recognised your voices. My guests today are my fellow webcast presenters, Neil Edgeller, Willam Kremer and Jackie Dalton.

Neil: Hello

William: Hello

Jax: Hello

Callum: So how have your Christmases been so far?

Chat topics

Do you go for the big family Christmas or do you prefer to be with friends or by yourself.

What about New Year, plans? Party, family, friends, quiet night in, big gathering in town with fireworks.

Callum: Well Neil, this was your first year working on the webcast, how's it been for you?

Neil: (responds)

Callum: And what were your favourite moments of the year, anything that stands out?

Neil: Replies about guest from Idler magazine, Dan Kieran who thinks we work too hard, suggest we don't have to spend as long in the office as we do.

Callum: Well through the magic of modern technology, I think we can hear a bit of you and Dan

Neil and Dan

Do you think that we've got our attitude all wrong?

Absolutely, yes, I think that work has a much higher role in our lives than it should have and we should do the minimum amount of work for the maximum amount of happiness, and that doesn't always mean putting in longer hours.

Plenty of people are actually saying that they want to spend more time doing their own thing, so why don't they actually do it?

My thoughts are debt, mainly, especially in England, everybody has the mortgage to pay and bills to pay and I think we buy things to make us feel better because we work too hard and then we have to get into debt to buy those things which then mean we have to work harder, so it becomes a sort of a vicious circle.

So, don't get into debt and lead a simple life.

I think so, that's the way forward.

Callum: Very interesting points there

Discussion topic

Do we work to live or live to work?

Material possessions – do they make us feel better?

Callum: William, what have been your highlights of the year?

William: One of the great things about this job is that it gives us the opportunity to meet and talk to people from all over the world – sometimes on the phone and sometimes in the studio. The expression 'Travel broadens the mind' is appropriate here although it's a kind of virtual travel. By having the opportunity to hear from and about people of different cultures it helps to understand the world a little better and also see our own country through other people's eyes. I remember one conversation we had in a programme about tourism and we had a guest in the studio, Albert from Catalonia, and I remember he was doing his best, trying not to say bad things about British tourists in his part of the world – but in the end I kind of forced him too.

Callum: Well, coincidentally – as if by magic, I happen to have part of that conversation here. Let's listen.

Alex on British tourists in Catalonia

What I'm interested in is how do you the natives in Catalonia, how do you see these tourists?

What do you think of them?

No, we, the first thing I need to say is that the tourism is a big part of our economy, then we need to have a lot of tourists to be a very, to be a very big country.

But, but, how do they behave? I mean are they well-behaved, honestly?

Well we have a few problems with some tourists because they think that Catalonia is a good place to getting drunk.

Aah OK and where do these tourists come from?

These tourists come from United Kingdom, and from

Oh dear, well there you go, we were just advertising British tourism really well, Anastasiya said some really nice things and there you go, British tourist getting drunk in Catalonia.

All: Comment on insert – initial reticence, Will’s coaxing to get to the truth.
General comments on our impressions of Brits abroad.

Callum: Well, of course, we’ve been talking about Christmas a lot, which is the winter festival here in the United Kingdom, it’s a Christian festival but this year we’ve also looked at some festivals from other cultures which are also held here. And one particular one Jackie which I remember was your programme about Diwali.

Jackie: Yes, Diwali is the Hindu New Year festival and I went along to a huge temple in London to see some of the preparations

(talk some more about the experience and the visit, leading up to the following clip)

Jackie & Yogen Shah

So we're in a room here that has an amazing smell and lots of men with rakes - what are they doing?

They're actually preparing the savoury items – easiest term, 'Bombay mix'... This is going to be part of the *prasadem* that will be packed to dish out to all the visitors that come on New Year's Day and on Diwali as well. We're going to pack approximately 60,000 packets and as you can see this is approximately half a tonne of Bombay mix being prepared here.

Just an entire room filled with Bombay mix all across the floor on sheets, basically, it's amazing! So we can see the men here who are preparing the food – where are they from are they cooks, or...?

These people are not cooks they're actually volunteers. They've learned their skills here at the Mandir here, and they're all volunteers from all different walks of life someone of them may be businessman, some of them may be consultants in some of the larger firms, like PWC, Logica all those firms as well. So here, as a volunteer, nothing about your social status counts at all. Everyone works at one level and together to prepare for this event.

Callum: I love the background sound in that clip, you really get a sense of everybody working away together to prepare the food. (Food associated with many festivals, Christmas food – mince pies, tangerines – not traditional but something that reminds me of Christmas.

Well I think it's time to have a little break, maybe a mince pie and some wine, but while we're doing that here's a recording of a phone call I made earlier with one of our listeners

Callum & Bruno Cesar

So hello, who am I talking to today?

Hello, this is Bruno, speaking from Rio di Janeiro, Brazil.

Hi Bruno and I guess the weather in Rio is a bit warmer than it is here because of course you are in the middle of summer now, isn't that right?

Yea, it's summer at this time of year. It's very hot here.

Well you're very lucky. Now Christmas and New Year, a big time of year for us here in the United Kingdom. What about in Brazil? Is it a big time of the year, Christmas and New Year?

Yea, it's a big time of year too. Christmas, it is usually celebrated by families all over the country and New Year's Eve we usually spend with friends.

Now New Year is also a time when we look forward to the coming year and also when we look back and I wondered if you have any particular memories of 2007 that you'd like to share, maybe something special, some, you know, some of your favourite moments from the year.

Well, I'm a teacher of English here in Brazil and I've been lucky to get to know some people who are members of BCELТ online community for Brazilian teachers of English and I got to know your programme and I got to listen to some of your programmes. And you know, I thought it would be a very good opportunity for me to listen to your programmes in order to practise my English and you know, I've been lucky to have you call me and be one of your guests too.

Well that's fantastic that one of your best memories of 2007 is finding us here at BBC Learning English, thank you very much for saying that. Now before we go, one thing that we do in Britain at New Year is we try and come up with what we call a resolution, like a promise to ourselves for something we want to achieve in the next year or maybe we're going to lose weight or maybe we're going to go to the gym more. And I wonder if you have a resolution for 2008?

Well, there is something I've been procrastinating for quite a long time, that is, I should learn how to drive a car and I you, now, we do a lot of commuting from one school to another so I think I should start learning how to drive a car. I've procrastinating for quite a long time and I think it's time for me to start doing it now.

Well I hope, I hope that comes true for you in 2008. Good luck with that. Bruno, thank you very much for joining us on the programme today and I'd just like to wish you a very Happy New Year for 2008.

Well a Happy New Year for you and everyone there at the programme.

Thank you very Bruno, it's been a pleasure to talk to you.

The pleasure's mine

And keep coming back to the programme!

Alright then, I will.

OK cheerio Bruno, bye for now, bye bye.

Bye bye

Callum: Bruno from Rio there. Talking about his best moments of 2007. And I promise, I didn't pay him to say that about us!

He also talked about his New Year's resolution, something he was hoping or planning to achieve in the New Year. He said he had been procrastinating for along time, Will, what did he mean by that.

William: Yes, it's a good word, fairly formal which means you plan to do something but it takes you a long time to start, you keep thinking of reasons not to do it, or you never really manage to get round to it. To procrastinate.

Callum: Are you a procrastinator Will? Or do you always get on with what you have to do when you have to do it.

William: (replies – all respond and comment)

Callum: Well, enough procrastination, are you considering New Year's resolutions? Did you make one last year and did you keep it?

(All respond and comment)

Will: And Callum, what about you, do you have a favourite webcast moment?

Callum: Well, yes, I do. I've really enjoyed the quizzes we've had this year. And in each quiz we have a little debate. Each team has to argue an opposite point of view. Well this particular quiz the team had to argue that English food is as bad as its reputation – but it didn't quite happen like that. I've got the recording here and remember these are team mates and they supposed to making the same point that English food is as bad as many people say.

Food debate

I think English food is not bad, really bad, but the reason is that English people they don't use spices, for example, a lot, but still English food is, I think, healthy. Yea, because they eat vegetables, fruits and so.

At the same time these vegetables they are just boiled. You don't do anything nice with them, you can fry them, you can stew them, normally what people do they just boil them, it's boring and it is absolutely disgusting.

I think that English people they worry about their health, healthy food, that's why they don't use spices and normally people they don't like food without the spices.

Well in my opinion it's not because they really like healthy food it's just because they are a bit lazy to think about some new ways to cook and to eat.

OK, well I'm not sure you were arguing exactly the same point there

Callum: There is an expression which is very suitable here – if looks could kill!
Margarita was the woman we heard – she wasn't very happy with her partner's debating points – but did very well to control herself and used some good language to make her point – but it was hard as she had to debate her partner as well as the other team!

All comment / respond

FX - Chiming of Grandfather clock

Callum: Ah, well those chimes tell me that it's nearly time for dinner. Before we head off though, just time from all of us here at BBC Learning English to wish everyone all the very best for 2008. Thank you to everyone who's taken part in the programme in 2007 and thank you for listening.

All: Happy New Year!