MEDIA ARCHAEOLOGY – HEARING THE PAST AGAIN

BBC NEWS | UK | Magazine | Getting back into the groove

News of some more fascinating media archaeology in Berkeley – recovering sound from wax cylinders too delicate to touch.

Queen Victoria, Abraham Lincoln, Florence Nightingale and other characters from history may soon be able to speak again, as scientists perfect techniques to recover the sound from recordings that are far too delicate to be played.

Sound seen in the microscope

In the corner of a California university laboratory, two men are battling against time to perfect a machine that will read old recordings – using special microscopes to scan the grooves – and software that can convert those shapes into sound. Their work could bring history to life.