

CONNECTED HISTORIES OF THE BBC: A UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX RESEARCH PROJECT, FUNDED BY THE AHRC.

Our latest website has recently been released, featuring previously unseen footage from the BBC Oral History archives

PIONEERING WOMEN includes a large number of clips from programmes which have not been seen or heard since they were first broadcast several decades ago. There are also numerous extracts from interviews, as well as photographs and written documents that are being made publicly available for the very first time.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- The BBC journalist Martha Kearney (presenter of *Today on BBC 4*) reflects on the inspiring career of the BBC's first female war correspondent Audrey Russell.
- In the year that has seen the appearance of the first female Doctor Who, the website highlights the pioneering composer Delia Derbyshire of the **Radiophonic Workshop**, who was responsible for the extraordinary arrangement of *Doctor Who's* theme tune. Photographs, footage and interviews with other women of the Radiophonic Workshop including Daphne Oram, Maddalena Fagandini, and Elizabeth Parker, the sound designer for cult TV series *Blake's 7*.
- A specially recorded interview with the first female DJ on Radio 1, and first female presenter of the *Old Grey Whistle Test*, Annie Nightingale, who talks about facing sexist attitudes in broadcasting, and how moving from journalism to radio allowed her to concentrate on what really mattered – the music.
- A specially recorded interview with Lorna Clarke, the Head of Production for Radio 2 and 6 Music, who discusses the equal pay dispute.
- The surprising story that in its earliest decades, the BBC was at the forefront of employers who promoted equal opportunities and equal pay for women. Documents reveal the determination of the first Director-General John Reith that women and men “should rank on the same footing” and should be equally eligible for promotion, and that the BBC was one of the first organisations to introduce maternity leave, in 1929.



NEWS RELEASE FEB 2019

This new website explores the contribution that women have made to shaping close to 100 years of British broadcasting:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/women-pioneers>

PROJECT

The **100 Voices that Made the BBC** series is part of the AHRC-funded **Connected Histories of the BBC** project based at the University of Sussex and running from 2017 to 2021. For background, see:

<https://connectedhistoriesofthebbc.org/>

Image: Olive Shapley (producer) with Mrs Emerson in the colliery village of Craghead, County Durham BBC North region 01/01/1939

- A unique BBC love story between the BBC's first telephonist Olive May and the engineer **Cecil Bottle**, which provoked John Reith to reprimand the head of engineering for letting it happen!
- The contribution of women from the Empire and Commonwealth, including Muriel Howlett, an Australian who was working as a typist in the BBC newsroom when John Reith asked her to report from on board the first flying-boat service from England to Australia in 1938.
- A specially recorded interview with Jenni Murray, the presenter of **BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour**, who reflects on the pioneering BBC women who inspire her, including Audrey Russell, Mary Somerville and Hilda Matheson. She also talks about her experiences of sexism in the 1970s; and being a "member of the #metoo brigade".
- Interviews with women who became broadcasting engineers during the Second World War, and excelled in roles previously only occupied by men.
- Recorded interviews with important presenters and producers including Olive Shapley, Gillian Hush, Monica Sims, Yvonne Littlewood, Zena Skinner, Margaret Dale, and Susan Belbin.
- A television interview from a 1954 edition of **Mainly for Women**, with the Indian politician and diplomat, Lakshmi Pandit.

The text has been written by Dr Kate Murphy (Bournemouth) and Dr Jeannine Baker (Macquarie University, Australia), with guest contributions from Professor Lucy Robinson (Sussex), Dr Sejal Sutaria (Grinnell College, Iowa), Dr David Butler (Manchester), Dr Emma Sandon (Birkbeck), Kate Terkanian (Bournemouth), Professor Helen Wood (Leicester), as well as Martha Kearney (BBC).

PREVIOUS WEBSITES

in the **100 Voices that Made the BBC** series can be found at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc/100-voices>

They include websites about British identity, the history of elections broadcasting, the birth of television, and the reinvention of radio in the 1960s.

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