

Relay Women

Isa Benzie, Janet Quigley and the BBC's Foreign Department, 1930–38

ABSTRACT Between 1926 and 1938, the Foreign Department of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) played a central role in transnational broadcasting. Initially headed by a man, Major C. F. Atkinson, it would grow to become largely the domain of women. Starting in 1933, at the helm was Isa Benzie, an Oxford graduate who had joined the BBC in 1927 as Atkinson's secretary. Realizing her potential, he trained and encouraged her to deputize for him, and she was his natural successor when he resigned his post. In 1930, on Benzie's recommendation, her great friend Janet Quigley was recruited to the department. Together they oversaw international relays—the exchange of programs between different countries of the world. Benzie oversaw Europe, and Quigley, the United States. The two women operated in an area that was overwhelmingly peopled by men, and this article considers the significance of their work at a time when the gendering of broadcasting roles was the norm. **KEYWORDS** BBC, broadcasting, interwar, transnational, women

On May 18, 1936, Isa Benzie, director of the Foreign Department at the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), scrawled a handwritten note on the bottom of a memo: “Miss Quigley, please return this model memorandum to me after circulation.”¹ The memo, on the subject of the maiden voyage to the United States of the British liner the *Queen Mary*, had been written by her assistant, Janet Quigley, and it was indeed a model of tact. It was a request to John Snagge, representative of the BBC's Outside Broadcast Department, about being more flexible with his use of the onboard studio and equipment for the final stage of the journey. The Columbia Broadcasting System was hoping to use the facilities (which were provided by the BBC) to broadcast a thirty-minute pre-arrival “stunt” that would involve the mayor of New York and other dignitaries being flown out to meet the ship.² “Might I perhaps persuade you with the following arguments?!” Quigley wrote to Snagge. After emphasizing the cost of the circuit, to which Columbia would contribute (£2.10 per minute, a hefty sum in those days), she mentioned that they were agreeable also to the BBC

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recording and reusing any part of the special program. “Might this not add a little welcome colour to the seascape?” she suggested. In addition, she pointed out that Columbia, as well as the National Broadcasting Company (NBC), at that time the other major US broadcasting chain (companies that simultaneously broadcast the same material on a large number of stations), were giving a great deal of valuable assistance to the BBC’s own arrival program, “and I am sure you will agree that it would be graceful if we could meet them over this half-an-hour.” Quigley’s arguments swayed Snagge, and he concurred.

This article is about transnational broadcasting and the BBC’s Foreign Department, in particular the two women who would come to dominate it in the mid-1930s, Isa Benzie and Janet Quigley. As a department, it has been almost completely overlooked in previous BBC histories; this investigation is the first to uncover the breadth of its role.³ How did two women come to hold authoritative positions in an area of work that, elsewhere, appears to have been almost exclusively the domain of men—in Isa Benzie’s case, starting in 1933, as department head? Perhaps surprising is the lack of remark about their sex, but that only serves to make their story all the more intriguing. This is not to say that gender was not an issue, particularly in terms of pay and ultimately marriage. Rather, their story fits within the broader narrative of women’s work at the early BBC, which was on the one hand remarkably progressive, and on the other continued to reflect societal norms of sexual stereotyping and discrimination.⁴ It is also the story of women negotiating on an international stage; of the differing tensions that surrounded US and Continental broadcasting; of friendship and supportive management; of commitment, hard work, and a wry sense of humor. A key focus of Benzie and Quigley’s work was international relays, which refers to the provision of facilities and exchange of programs between different countries. And while much was small fry, it included, as we shall see, major events such as the *Queen Mary*’s maiden voyage, the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, and the coronation of George VI in 1937.

As Lesley Johnson, Kate Lacey, Michele Hilmes, and Maggie Andrews have shown, the new medium of radio provided a host of opportunities for women in the 1920s and 1930s.⁵ Histories of women who worked in broadcasting however, tend to focus on their work as producers of programs that were either educational or targeted at women and children. This was certainly true at the BBC, where *Children’s Hour*, schools broadcasts, and household talks were largely produced by female staff, and indeed Quigley would ultimately become a doyenne of women’s programs. But the BBC was also a place where women

could excel in areas usually associated with men, such as Mary Adams's science programs, Olive Shapley's radio features, or Hilda Matheson's role as director of Talks.⁶ The Foreign Department fits within this tradition. It was an important part of the BBC, which operated on a transnational stage and happened, largely, to be run by women.

What is revealed in this article has largely been built up through an interrogation of the relay files that are available to researchers at the BBC's Written Archives Centre at Caversham, Reading. While some of the files relate to European activities, the bulk deal with the United States, which is why the US focus is more pronounced. It has been possible also to view a selection of files from the International Broadcasting Union, which, despite its name, was overwhelmingly European. The files starting in 1933 provide insight into Benzie's role within this important organization, where she was the only woman among scores of men. The personal staff files of Benzie and Quigley have also been an important source.

ESTABLISHING THE FOREIGN DEPARTMENT

So what was the BBC Foreign Department? Its roots date back to December 1926, just as the British Broadcasting Company was reborn as the British Broadcasting Corporation. Although the BBC's predominant focus was its national role, from its beginnings in 1922 it was also attuned to the wider, international aspects of a medium that could cross boundaries and borders. John Reith, its first director general, predicted in 1924 that wireless would "cast a girdle round the earth."⁷ As Suzanne Lommers has explored in her work on transnational radio in interwar Europe, the potential for broadcasting in terms of world peace and cooperation was identified by the League of Nations Assembly as early as 1925.⁸ However, it was technical considerations that initiated the establishment of the International Broadcasting Union (IBU, also known by its European name, Union Internationale de Radiophone, UIR) in the same year. Arthur Burrows, the BBC's then director of Programmes, became its secretary general, moving to Geneva to take up his post.⁹ Charles Carpendale, Reith's deputy at the BBC, was elected president, an honorary position he would hold for many years.

With foreign matters now of heightened importance, it was decided that a dedicated post within the BBC should be established.¹⁰ At first there was no Foreign Department as such; rather, the role of foreign liaison officer was created, with Major C. F. Atkinson taking up the post. According to BBC standing instructions (these were executive directives), among his duties were the

collection, communication, and recording of foreign information; executive dealings with foreign and international radio organizations, cultural movements, and press interests; dealings with the public on foreign and international matters; advising on BBC policy as affecting or affected by foreign and international considerations; the provision of foreign courtesies; preliminary investigations into subjects suggested by foreign evidence; and representing the BBC at IBU meetings.¹¹ Rather than be placed within a department, the foreign liaison officer reported directly to Carpendale. This was because, as the title suggests, the purpose of the role was to ensure the effective coordination of foreign dealings across the BBC, although specific program and technical issues continued to be dealt with by the Programme and Engineering Departments. Atkinson was allocated three staff: a Miss Waller as secretary, a Mr. Morton as translator, and a Miss Sheepshanks as chief assistant.¹²

The appointment of a woman as chief assistant accords with the progressive nature of the BBC in this period. Her salary, £400 a year (approximately US \$32,000 today), was a respectable one at a time when £250 per annum was considered the minimum for a middle-class lifestyle.¹³ For women to be operating on the international stage was not unheard of in the 1920s. Feminist international organizations had been in existence since World War I, while a small number of women played important roles in the League of Nations.¹⁴ There is scant information about Sheepshanks, but because of the nature of the post, it is possible that this was the formidable women's rights activist and internationalist Mary Sheepshanks.¹⁵ Whoever she was, Atkinson noted that "Miss Sheepshanks was too senior to take kindly to the conditions, and she left after some months."¹⁶ With Sheepshanks's departure in June 1927, there was a vacancy for a new assistant, and a Miss Benzie was suggested but turned down as not having the experience and administrative outlook. In any event, the post was not filled, but in November 1927, following an office reshuffle in which Miss Waller took on the role of office management, Atkinson agreed to the appointment of a new secretary and on this occasion Isa Benzie was offered the job at £3 per week (approximately US \$240 today), starting on December 12.¹⁷

Benzie was one of numerous individuals in the 1920s—both female and male—who arrived at the BBC via personal connections.¹⁸ In Benzie's case it was through her father, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Marr Benzie, who had served in World War I with John Reith in the Fifth Scottish Rifles Regiment. In June 1927 he wrote to Reith, now director general of the BBC, about the possibility of work for his twenty-four-year-old daughter who was a recent graduate of Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford, where she had

gained an honors degree in German. He noted that it was Isa who had prompted him to write:

In a letter I have from her today she mentions that she thinks the BBC with its increasing activities holds out the possibility of useful work, on account of the fact that you must keep on developing. She imagines that in the near future you will require some staff with a knowledge of languages, even if only for international consultation.¹⁹

As a young woman with no previous work experience, it is understandable that Benzie had not been considered a suitable replacement for Sheepshanks. However, in the secretarial position she could use her linguistic skills. Within the hierarchy of the BBC, the title “secretary” was significant. It denoted a more senior status to the usual “shorthand typist” or “copytypist,” the starting point for most young women. In Benzie’s case her work “would lie in the direction of drafting and preparing material on the less routine side” of Atkinson’s work.²⁰ And she quickly proved her worth. In October 1928 Atkinson recommended that she be given an additional pay raise outside of the usual April wage round on the grounds that she deputized for him in his absence.²¹ Although turned down, he secured a promotion for her the following April to the roof of her grade, £5 a week. As he pointed out:

Apart from being a competent secretary and manager of papers, she is really a first class assistant and is, in fact, the executive of my department. She not only takes practically all details off my hands but also acts as my substitute for two months of the year (holidays and conferences abroad). She is a woman of good abilities, mentally mature for her age, with a high degree of initiative, capacity of negotiating on occasion, excellent style and a very keen eye for policy implications in letters, minutes etc. She knows French and German very thoroughly and has been extending into other languages. She is tactful in dealings and devoted to her work.²²

Certainly by 1930, Benzie had increased responsibility for relay work. In her 1931 annual Confidential Report (the term for what would today be termed a performance review), Atkinson commented on how the “detailed management of European relays with the foreigners, with Programme Branch and with FLE [foreign liaison executive] falls wholly on her.”²³ According to Atkinson, she managed the organization and routine of the relays both to and from the Continent, though not their technical side (this was left to the engineers). It was a “complex business” that included “items, timing line possibilities, publicity material, copyright etc.” In conjunction with the foreign liaison executive and

others, she had “brought it to a system that works smoothly.”²⁴ In spring 1932 she was sent by the BBC to personally negotiate a series of open relays from Germany and Austria, “a liaison which involved tact and command of an intricate situation,” enthused Atkinson, “and I know from what foreign colleagues have said to me since that she created an excellent impression.”²⁵ The *BBC Year Book* for 1933 lists a selection of relays from the previous twelve months, which includes a sermon on disarmament by the Archbishop of York relayed from Geneva; an oration by M. Tardieu at the funeral of the French president, from Paris; and an extract from the opera *Don Giovanni* from Munich.²⁶

At the same time that Benzie was honing her expertise in European relays, a new colleague, Janet Quigley, was making similar inroads with relays from the United States. The growing importance of Atkinson’s work had been acknowledged in January 1928, with his redesignation as foreign director in what was now called the Foreign Department. In December 1929 it was agreed that, because of the increased workload, a new staff member could be added to his team. Writing to his boss, Carpendale, about his proposed new staff structure, Atkinson identified a possible internal candidate, a male schools engineer, but then indicated that he also knew of an outsider, a Miss Janet Quigley, who had “rather special qualifications for the task.” She currently held a responsible administrative position at the Empire Marketing Board, he explained, having previously worked in publishing. She was an Oxford graduate, she was twenty-seven years old, and she was an old friend of Isa Benzie, “in fact they live together,” he added. Justifying his preference for Miss Quigley, he stressed that “the work could lie quite differently for example if instead of ‘Q’ there were a Chelsea young man with art and language as his only qualifications. As things are, it is the administrative type (with a cultured but not an arty background), that should be selected.”²⁷ Quigley clearly fitted that brief and she joined the department in February 1930 as an assistant on a salary of £260 per annum. Alongside this appointment, Atkinson had also requested a regrade and salary increase for Benzie, who, now also an assistant, saw her pay rise from £5 a week to £275 a year (and £300 in April 1930).

Atkinson’s new plan for the department included the allocation of all non-European relays to Quigley, and she was soon grappling with the burgeoning US work. In spring 1930 London had hosted an international naval conference to discuss disarmament. As part of this, the BBC had extended its relaying facilities to the two preeminent US companies, NBC and Columbia. By summer, it was clear that a more formalized agreement needed to be put in place because, as Atkinson noted, both NBC and Columbia had been “rather allowing for the



FIGURE 1. Staff of the BBC Foreign and Empire Service Department, ca. 1932. Janet Quigley is seated at the far left, and Isa Benzie is seated next to her. Image © BBC, courtesy the British Broadcasting Corporation, by license, all rights reserved.

arrangement made for their benefit to . . . dribble on into a sort of irregular permanency.” The “Columbia man” in particular had got it into his head that “he only had to notify Miss Quigley of his requirements and they would be satisfied.”²⁸ While an informal contract was agreed, which laid out fees and so forth, by December 1930 it was clear to Quigley that “in the light of experience,” procedures needed to be looked at again. In a long memo to Atkinson, she made suggestions about how the “unofficial” relaying of BBC programs could be curtailed (by ensuring that permission was always sought from the corporation) and also how the potentially “ridiculous” situation of the two rival companies competing over the same BBC program might be dealt with (by a first come, first served policy).²⁹ These ideas were subsequently adopted.

Alongside her role coordinating “American relays,” another of Quigley’s initial duties was working with the BBC’s experimental station G5SW. Based at Chelmsford in Essex, this had been used to trial shortwave broadcasts to Britain’s colonies and dominions, and also to the United States, since 1927. Starting in 1930 this had been extended to a regular transmission of news bulletins as well as relays of talks. Quigley was involved with the selection process of the talks, as well as other routine arrangements.³⁰ These shortwave broadcasts were the precursor of the BBC’s Empire Service, which, after several years of

painful negotiations with the British government and Post Office, was finally launched in December 1932.³¹

BENZIE AND QUIGLEY, TWO WOMEN IN CHARGE

The arrival of the BBC's Empire Service was to have profound ramifications for the Foreign Department. The director of the Empire Service was Cecil Graves, a prodigy of Reith's; Asa Briggs, in volume 2 of his BBC history, suggests that, as a result of this, Atkinson "lost his influence."³² What is certain is that by April 1933 his role as foreign director had ended, with Benzie assuming the post. In June 1933 the Empire and Foreign Services Department came into being, with Graves now the senior executive in overall charge. Within this new internal structure, the Foreign Department continued as a distinct entity, and the foreign director now reported to Graves rather than Carpendale. Atkinson was retained on contract. According to a memo from Graves, Atkinson's wide knowledge of European broadcasting affairs was to be used, for example, in terms of wireless exchange, "juridique" (related to the legal framework of European broadcasting), and "rediffusion" (another way of describing relay programs).³³

I have yet to locate any documents that reveal the discussions that surrounded Benzie's promotion to foreign director. But her growing responsibilities and the continued high esteem in which she was held by Atkinson are apparent from her staff file. In Benzie's 1931 annual Confidential Report, he enthused that she had "justified all the expectations formed when, from being my secretary, she was made 'No 2' and Executive of the Department."³⁴ His request for a £25 raise for her was honored (the more usual increment for staff in Grade D was £20).³⁵ In 1932's review he gushed how "Miss Benzie has shown a steadily increasing capacity for handling its [the department's] affairs with judgment, long sight and exactness."³⁶ Her 1933 review emphasized how "apart from carrying on the work of foreign executive at least as efficiently as previous years, Miss Benzie is dealing personally with an increasing share of the major affairs of our foreign relations."³⁷ For Atkinson, this increase in responsibility merited not only a sizable pay increase, but a regrading. In a February 1933 letter to Valentine Goldsmith, the BBC's then head of administration, he made a case for Benzie to be promoted to Grade B.³⁸ Her salary did indeed jump from £350 to £500 per annum, as recorded in the April 1933 salary review, but this coincided with her new status as foreign director.

Following Atkinson's departure, Briggs in his BBC history makes no further reference to the Foreign Department; it is as if it ceased to exist. However, despite now being aligned with the Empire Service, there is no indication that

the role of foreign director, or that of the Foreign Department, was diminished. In fact, investigating the roles of Benzie and Quigley makes evident that the department's work continued to grow. It retained responsibility for all the international work that did not fall within Empire Broadcasting—for example the relays, negotiations with international broadcasters, and dealings with foreign dignitaries. Graves was clear that Benzie was head of department and treated her as such, as her 1934 annual Confidential Report reveals:

Since I took over the Foreign Department the opinion I had already formed of Miss Benzie's intelligence has been confirmed. Nothing escapes her. She has a very shrewd and in most cases sound judgement. At times I think that personal opinion may influence her but such cases are rare. She is a mine of information and can at short notice produce a concise and clear reference on any subject falling within her preview. In view of her promotion to the head of department I recommend no less than £50 rise in salary as from April 1st.³⁹

She would actually receive a £100 raise. Basil Nicolls (in the newly created position of director of internal administration) pushed for this, as “£500 is very low for a head of a department even though it is a small one.”⁴⁰ And Benzie's salary would continue to cause concern for BBC officials, as will be revealed.

In his aforementioned February 1933 letter to Goldsmith, Atkinson also requested a substantial pay increase and a regrade for Quigley. Among her many attributes, he commented particularly on her adeptness at US negotiations, which were “intricate, and call for qualities additional to those required for the straight forward routine part of the work (which is itself considerable), namely, capacity to handle policy correspondence at any levels and the necessary personality for contacts with the Agents of the American systems and other people of standing.”⁴¹ Quigley received a £100 pay raise and was promoted to Grade C.

It seems clear that Atkinson nurtured the careers of both Benzie and Quigley, placing them in positions where they could succeed and rise to the challenge of running the Foreign Department. In his 1930 departmental restructuring, he had ensured that both were paid as salaried assistants and then tirelessly requested that they be recognized for their skills and experience. It is not known whether he was aware that he was soon to quit when he wrote to Goldsmith in February 1933, but his language leaves no doubt as to his belief in the two women's capabilities. He indicated that they were undervalued by the BBC, and requested that “they may be assessed relatively to salaries attaching to equivalent responsibilities in other departments.” His final justification for their

regrading introduced a gendered dimension. After reiterating that he was “entirely satisfied that their competence justifies salaries of this order,” he made the point that “either, had she entered the teaching profession (which is perhaps the only definite career to go by in the case of women) could reasonably expect to reach a headmistress-ship of the £1,000 a year class.”⁴²

The Goldsmith letter also includes a valuable description of how the department ran, emphasizing the collegial relations of the two women:

Each of course keeps sufficient track of the other’s work to be able to answer in her absence. The Department in fact works rather as a team of staff. Experience has shown, I think conclusively, that requirements here are far better met by a small group of, so to say, senior quality than they would be by a larger staff of a more ordinary kind in which each member would have allotted and defined work.

It is important to remember that Benzie and Quigley were very close friends.⁴³ They had known each other since their school days and had attended Oxford University at the same time. Indications are that they continued to house-share into the 1930s—if not a flat in London, then a “weekend” country cottage in Oxfordshire.⁴⁴ In their work together at the BBC they were always consummately professional. In letters and memos they never referred to each other by first name—it was always Miss Benzie or Miss Quigley—but there was clearly an extraordinary understanding between them and palpable respect for each other’s respective expertise.

Following Atkinson’s departure, no extra staff were appointed to the department. Apart from Benzie and Quigley, the only other salaried member of the small team was the (male) foreign liaison executive, who provided the administrative link.⁴⁵ There were also two secretaries, including a Miss Curl, whom we shall meet again later.

DEALING WITH THE UNITED STATES

While Benzie was now in overall charge, a key area of her work continued to be Europe, while the US relay work remained firmly with Quigley. As Atkinson had identified, one of Quigley’s knacks was working amicably with the “agents of the American systems”—in other words, the London-based representatives of Columbia and NBC. Cesar Saerchinger of Columbia arrived in the capital in 1930, shortly after the naval conference; Fred Bate from NBC arrived in 1932.⁴⁶ Quigley liaised between them and the BBC, whether that be Engineering, Talks, Outside Broadcast, Copyright, *Radio Times*, or whoever might have input

for, or interest in, the relayed programs. For example, in October 1933 she alerted Cecil Graves to a request from Bate as to whether the BBC might consider setting up a special program to celebrate NBC's seventh anniversary on November 15.⁴⁷ Graves, in turn, alerted the director of entertainment, Roger Eckersley, who agreed. While much of the ensuing discussions about program content and technical issues happened away from the Foreign Department, it was Quigley who dealt with any hiccoughs, such as appeasing Bate about wrong information being provided by the BBC press office; communicating the importance of the US studio picking up Sir John Reith's introductory broadcast at exactly the right time; and ensuring that the BBC credited Radio City correctly.⁴⁸

Immediately apparent from the relay files is the extraordinary rivalry between NBC and Columbia, something that Quigley constantly grappled with. For example, in 1934–35 she was at the center of discussions about the relaying of a light program, predominantly of music, from the United States on a Saturday afternoon.⁴⁹ With shortwave transmissions in the daytime now improving, this had become a possibility—but only for the more technically advanced NBC.⁵⁰ Anxious to incur no costs, the BBC was clear that the proffered program should not be specially made, but should rather be a broadcast from that morning's NBC schedule (as a live program, it would be five hours earlier in New York). The BBC knew full well, however, that NBC would actually create a bespoke half-hour—at their expense—to ensure that they were represented in a good light. As the transmission date approached, Quigley had to reassure NBC's representative, Bate, that their first program, due to air on the BBC on February 16, 1935, would not be compared unfavorably to an evening news relay *Transatlantic Bulletin* that Columbia was also preparing for a February start.⁵¹ Conversely, given their knowledge of NBC's afternoon transmission, Columbia was desperate for the BBC to take a light program from them, with Saerchinger “exercised in his mind about NBC having got in first, and for the present alone!”⁵²

Shortly before the first broadcast of what had been named *Five Hours Back*, it was realized that there were serious issues with music copyright.⁵³ This would continue throughout the series, along with a plethora of other complications such as frequency changes, studio changes, time changes, contributor changes, and problems with transmitting conditions, all of which Quigley fielded. In most of these instances it was not Bate that she dealt with at the NBC London office, but Mildred Boutwood. It is not certain when Boutwood arrived in London, nor is her status clear (specifically, whether she was Bate's secretary or assistant), but we do have the frequent correspondence the two



FIGURE 2. Janet Quigley, October 1936. Image © BBC, courtesy the British Broadcasting Corporation, by license, all rights reserved.

women exchanged. It was always polite and obliging, obviously respectful, and with even a hint of friendship.

NBC and Columbia were not the only US radio chains interested in broadcasting BBC programs. Many smaller enterprises were now approaching the BBC, and Quigley became aware that the way these requests were dealt with

needed to be put on a firm footing.⁵⁴ Rather than introduce an official contract, she identified certain conditions that should be met. While NBC and Columbia would continue to have first refusal over regular BBC broadcasts (on a first come, first served basis), other stations could apply to relay those programs the two chains did not want. Major British events and ceremonies that were covered by the BBC would be available to all foreign broadcasters free of charge, although costs would be incurred, for example, for the use of special lines or studios.⁵⁵ Quigley was eager that the new conditions be adopted as soon as possible because of the escalating number of requests. While her ideas were approved by BBC management in December 1933, NBC and Columbia raised a host of petty concerns, and it took until the end of May 1934 to get their final approval.

There are several bulging files of correspondence between Quigley and a plethora of small radio US stations—as diverse as “The Voice of Labor” in Chicago, WBNX in New York, and KECA in Los Angeles—all eager to relay BBC programs.⁵⁶ These three (and likely most others) assumed that “Quigley” was a man—and she never put them right. A particularly poignant exchange developed between “Mr. Quigley” and Mr. Le Roy Mark from ABC in Washington, DC, which began in March 1934 and continued for almost two years. The letters reveal Mark’s increasing frustration with the BBC’s “conditions” for relaying, which, he believed, prohibited spontaneity. The letters also became more personal in tone, but Quigley’s responses remained exemplars of tact.⁵⁷ Finally, on December 8, 1935, she handed Mark over to Felix Green, the BBC’s newly installed North American representative (NAR), explaining that Mark “writes such reasonable and rather appealing letters that I do not want to leave him with the impression that we cannot do anything to meet him,” adding, “I hope, however, he will not be a nuisance to you!”⁵⁸

The recruitment of a “BBC Man” to represent the corporation in the United States and Canada had been hammered out over many months.⁵⁹ As Valeria Camporesi has emphasized, for the BBC to have its own representative in North America had become “an inexorable necessity.”⁶⁰ The arrival of twenty-six-year-old Green in New York, however, would both help and hinder the Foreign Department. It undoubtedly made sense to have a representative based in the United States, as Columbia and NBC had in London. But because Green’s main role was to broker US programs for broadcast by the BBC, this inevitably trod on the toes of Benzie and Quigley, and the relationship was sometimes strained.⁶¹ He was also young and relatively inexperienced.

Disagreement between Green and the Foreign Department is evident in discussions about whether the Mutual Broadcasting System (MBS) should be

given the same special status accorded to Columbia and NBC.⁶² This dates from November 1935, when Quigley received a letter from Alfred McCosker, president of MBS, requesting a working relationship with the BBC.⁶³ Raising the issue with Graves, she expressed her view that the special agreement should be extended because of MBS's high reputation, and because, like NBC and Columbia, it was now a "chain broadcaster."⁶⁴ Benzie was of the same opinion, urging that the issue be dealt with quickly. Graves duly wrote to McCosker (drafted by Quigley), and the letter was sent to Green to hand deliver.⁶⁵ But Green refused to do so. In a long letter to Quigley, he portrayed the US situation as "full of dynamite" and warned that "to extend to Mutual the same privilege that we are extending to NBC and Columbia will cause the most unholy row."⁶⁶ This was followed by a thirteen-page report full of the "threats and blandishments" of the two companies, which arrived in London in late January 1936. Benzie's attitude was that Columbia and NBC were "passionately concerned to keep Mutual down" and batted away most of Green's concerns. After an extensive correspondence that pitted Benzie's composure against Green's passion, it was Green's viewpoint that was upheld. It was agreed that, for diplomatic reasons, MBS should not be given special treatment at this time.⁶⁷

Much of Green's time as the NAR was spent traveling, building relationships and touting for business for the BBC. This meant that for many relays, Quigley remained the key liaison. This was the case for the maiden voyage to the United States of the Cunard-owned ship the *Queen Mary*, which was scheduled to leave Southampton at the end of May 1936. It was Quigley who oversaw the detailed negotiations with Cunard, NBC, and Columbia (and, later, Mutual) as well as many other international broadcasters, which had begun as early as September 1935.⁶⁸ These were highly complex discussions involving the BBC's departments of Programme Planning, Outside Broadcast, Programme, and Engineering. While foreign broadcasters would have access to the onboard studio and the various microphone sites around the ship, it was made absolutely clear that all technical matters would be handled by the BBC. A meticulous timetable was devised, which was to be supervised by John Snagge, a senior member of the Outside Broadcast team (who was introduced at the opening of his article). Although Quigley was the main point of contact, Benzie attended all official meetings between, for example, the BBC, Cunard, and the General Post Office (who had responsibility for the telegraphic lines). At Benzie's request, after the event, Snagge wrote a detailed report about his experience of the voyage. This offers further insight into the "farcical" relationship between Columbia and NBC, with Snagge commenting that the only thing upon which they

agreed was “their condemnation of Mutual.”⁶⁹ And the rivalry was to continue, as we shall see.

EUROPEAN CONNECTIONS

While Benzie felt confident to leave the bulk of the US work to Quigley, she continued to deal firsthand with all matters European. This might involve developing new ways of funding relays; commenting on the technical quality of European programs, for example blocking those from Czechoslovakia because of interference; or selecting which Hitler speeches should be recorded by the BBC.⁷⁰ The fact that the foreign director of the BBC was a woman did not go unnoticed in the press. British newspapers of the 1930s frequently featured articles about its pioneering female staff.⁷¹ “A woman’s tact helps to unravel the foreign complications which arise in the BBC’s relations with other nations,” exclaimed London’s *Evening News*.⁷² In an article headed “Key Women of the BBC” the London *Morning Post* wrote of how Benzie “rings up New York, Sydney, Calcutta or Cape Town as casually as you and I call a taxi. . . . She is personally responsible for the cabled conversations over the entire globe, for the timing and faultless routine of American broadcasts and for all facilities that are offered to foreign stations.”⁷³ *Wireless* magazine emphasized, “She has a job that would intimidate many a man,” while the Wolverhampton *Express and Star* proffered that “it seems a very strange position for a woman to hold,” but after reviewing Benzie’s many qualities reassured readers that even though “almost without warning she was put into this position of considerable responsibility, . . . she has made good.”⁷⁴

Benzie also now had new status as the only female representative of the International Broadcasting Union. By 1934, sixty-six of Europe’s preeminent broadcasting organizations were members of the IBU, which had huge clout in terms of transnational agreements.⁷⁵ IBU documents show that the first meeting Benzie attended was in Amsterdam in October 1933.⁷⁶ By February 1935 she was a full member of the Rapprochement and Relay Commission.⁷⁷ As a sitting member of the Administrative Council of the IBU, also in February 1935, she was placed on a committee that looked into, among other things, taxes, delays for relays, and the broadcasting of European concerts.⁷⁸ Benzie represented the BBC at the first Intercontinental Meeting of International Broadcasting Organisations in February 1936. Also known as the Paris Conference, this was attended by delegates from, for example, China, Japan, and Argentina as well as the United States. Benzie was elected one of three secretaries of the Programmes



FIGURE 3. Isa Benzie, March 1936. Image © BBC, courtesy the British Broadcasting Corporation, by license, all rights reserved.

Section of the conference. She also sat on a subgroup that considered the wider exchange of intercontinental programs.⁷⁹ Although Benzie was the BBC's official representative, she was not the only BBC member to attend IBU meetings. Despite his retirement in 1933, Atkinson continued to attend as an "observer." L. W. Hayes, whose title was foreign and empire engineer, was often in attendance too, as was, on occasion, Cecil Graves. Charles Carpendale,

IBU president until 1935, was also there, which meant that there was often a strong British contingent at meetings.

It is difficult to get a clear picture of Benzie's role and status within the IBU, which as Suzanne Lommers has shown largely functioned as a "gentlemen's club."⁸⁰ Was she invited to private dinners? To one-to-one chats? To other social functions? Benzie's membership coincided with fierce debates about the admission of women to the Foreign Office of the Civil Service in Britain. This is significant because the BBC of the 1930s increasingly looked to the Civil Service as its institutional model. Since 1925, women had been eligible for recruitment to the Administrative Division of the Civil Service. However, although by 1934 a number of women had risen to positions of some authority, entry to the Diplomatic Service remained firmly closed. Helen McCarthy has traced the dramatic attempts by feminists and others to get this ruling overturned, to no avail.⁸¹ It was deemed inappropriate, at this time, for British women to access this fiercely defended male world.⁸²

Benzie, on the other hand, did operate within this sphere. The files of one European relay in particular reveal her status and careful diplomacy: the negotiations for the 1936 Berlin Olympics. On May 11, 1935, Benzie wrote her first letter to the Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft (RRG) about facilities for foreign broadcasters at the games.⁸³ During the next few months, she worked alongside the BBC's controller of Programmes, controller of Public Relations, director of Outside Broadcasting, Overseas Engineering director, Empire Programmes director, director of Talks, director of Programme Planning, and chief news editor, conveying to the RRG which events the BBC wanted to cover, organizing accommodations for the BBC representatives who would attend the games, and facilitating special programs. She advised caution in the coverage of the opening ceremony "to avoid lending ourselves to the immense propaganda the Germans will be doing."⁸⁴ She also strongly expressed the view that British athletic star Harold Abrahams could be used as a commentator. She believed that, despite his Jewish origins, the RRG would not dare to interfere with the BBC's choice.⁸⁵ In the event, he provided eyewitness accounts rather than official commentary.

DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES

Working alongside Benzie on the more routine aspects of the Olympic Games negotiations was her new assistant, Richard Marriott. In August 1935 it had been agreed that a second assistant was needed in the Foreign Department, where workloads were becoming "intolerable."⁸⁶ And it was to be a man.

Benzie specified that “he should be young, adaptable and presentable. . . . The essential qualifications are quickness of mind, ability to get on by himself, and good judgement.”⁸⁷ Graves too “was definitely anxious the job should be given to a man.”⁸⁸ Why this was the case is unclear, but it could be linked to the perceived status of the department. In his memoir, Richard Lambert (former editor of the BBC journal *The Listener*) certainly thought that this was an issue at the BBC. He cited the Photographic Section, which he believed would have “had the deserved dignity of a department” had it not been staffed by women.⁸⁹ Marriott, a twenty-four-year-old Cambridge graduate, joined the Foreign Department in October 1935 on a salary of £350 a year (Quigley was at this time earning £450).

The following year, in August 1936, there was a further significant change with the transfer of Janet Quigley to the Talks Department. This was to replace Margery Wace, who had been moved from morning talks (the mainstay of women’s programming at the BBC) to become empire talks assistant.⁹⁰ Benzie had hoped to replace Quigley with Mrs. Stewart, the married name of her former secretary Miss Curl, praising her familiarity with the US work and the Empire Service as well as her valuable experience, great competence, and language skills.⁹¹ Curl, however, had fallen afoul of the BBC’s marriage bar, which had been introduced in 1932. This was not a full bar; women deemed “exceptional” were allowed to remain, and Curl had been the first to face the newly introduced Marriage Tribunal in early 1934. Her case to keep her job, however, had been dismissed; she was forced to resign and was not permitted to return.⁹² With Curl out of the running, several male staff members were suggested for the Foreign Department post but, following the position being advertised, it was offered to Cecilia Reeves. Reeves, a linguist and graduate of Newnham College, Cambridge, had entered the BBC in May 1933 as secretary to L. W. Hayes, the foreign and empire engineer. Whereas Quigley had wrestled with empire correspondence alongside her US work, with her departure the job was split in two, with Reeves concentrating only on the foreign relay aspects of the role.⁹³

It seems likely that a parting gift from Quigley was a relay, on August 18, 1936, of NBC’s *Woman’s Radio Review*. This appears to be the only US women’s program broadcast on the BBC prior to World War II. Billed in the *Radio Times* as “a programme by women for women,” it was explained that it was under the direction of a “hostess” who introduced guest speakers and presented features, and that “topics of the day are discussed with particular reference to women’s interests.”⁹⁴ Broadcast at 4 p.m. on the East Coast of the United States, this meant that listeners in the UK heard the program at 9 p.m.

Besides these staff moves, there were other notable changes for the department, including a new status. On April 15, 1936, administration controller Basil Nicolls announced, "As from today, the Foreign Department is given the status of a major Department on an equality with the independent Departments of the Programme Division."⁹⁵ This public acknowledgment of her worth would have been a boon to Benzie, who had long been praised privately by her seniors for doing excellent work.⁹⁶ Since her appointment as foreign director, there had been awareness that, in comparison with other BBC officials in similar positions, her salary was low. The year previously, in April 1935, Nicolls had authorized a £100 pay raise because "Miss Benzie's salary is much too low for her responsibilities."⁹⁷ The following year there was agreement that she should be "on a level with other heads of department," and again, she received a £100 raise, her salary now £900 per annum.⁹⁸ In June 1937 she was informed that she had been moved to Grade A, the top BBC grade, and could expect a salary in excess of £1,000.⁹⁹

This regrading came shortly after what was almost certainly the most complex and important negotiation of Benzie's career: arrangements for the foreign broadcasting of the coronation of King George VI on May 12, 1937. Because this was a major national event it was to be offered free to all broadcasters, but with special provisions made for selected countries. Only the files for the United States are available, but these show that Yugoslavia, France, Belgium, Germany, Sweden, Holland, Czechoslovakia, Norway, Denmark, Hungary, Japan, and Argentina all requested facilities for their commentators to attend. A large part of the US correspondence shows Benzie dealing with what were viewed as the impossible requirements of the two US chains, but ultimately the coverage of the day was, according to Columbia, "extraordinarily successful," while NBC telegraphed that it was "the greatest achievement of broadcasting in radio history."¹⁰⁰

Alongside the coronation, however, Benzie had other things on her mind. In early June 1937 she informed the BBC of her intention to get married. Because of her seniority she would have been exempt from the BBC marriage bar, but despite this she made the decision to resign, "clear in her mind that she does not want to lead the double life that some girls do."¹⁰¹ Her wedding, to the young television producer Royston Morley (who, at twenty-four, was ten years her junior), took place during her lunch break on September 2, 1937. There were only two witnesses, one of whom was Janet Quigley. Benzie's decision to leave the BBC is surprising, particularly as a precedent had been set by Mary Somerville, School Broadcasting director.

Somerville was the BBC's most senior woman at this time and was not only married, but also a mother.¹⁰² Benzie was certainly keen to have a family; her daughter Teresa was born the following year.

Benzie was aware that the BBC would have difficulty replacing her, so she agreed to stay on for some months, finally leaving in January 1938. She recommended Richard Marriott as her successor; having nurtured him, she was aware of his abilities and was convinced that he had a promising BBC career ahead of him, given encouragement and time.¹⁰³ But Marriott was not promoted to foreign director; instead, Benzie's departure prompted a wider departmental restructuring. The Foreign Department was downgraded to a section, with Marriott assuming the original title given to Atkinson: foreign liaison officer. He did receive a generous salary raise, from £400 to £650 per annum, but this was significantly lower than what Benzie had been earning. Marriott, and Cecilia Reeves, who moved with him, now had a home within the newly amalgamated Home Intelligence Department. Although they continued to coordinate relays, with war on the horizon, the nature of foreign work quickly changed.

Benzie's parting was not the end of her BBC life. During World War II she worked for the Ministry of Information, returning to the BBC as a talks producer in 1943 and, starting in 1951, as a senior talks producer. She retired in 1964. Quigley would become Benzie's superior, first as editor of *Woman's Hour* in 1950 and ultimately as assistant head of talks, from which she retired in 1962. Throughout this period, the two women remained great friends. Marriott retired as director of radio programs in 1969, and Cecilia Reeves as Paris representative in 1967. All those connected with the Foreign Department had long and distinguished careers.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this article has been to give insight into a thriving department of the early BBC, the Foreign Department. It had an important function within the corporation, particularly in connection with transnational broadcasting. It was small—even at its height in 1937 it had only eight staff—and despite its overt technological connections, which in other scenarios might have effectively barred women from entry—almost from the beginning the majority of its employees were women. While this included typists and secretaries, two women—Isa Benzie and Janet Quigley—were pivotal to its status and development. That they held important roles was not without precedent. During the interwar years, the BBC was a place where women could excel. Hilda Matheson and

Mary Somerville, for example, both held director-level posts, as director of Talks and director of School Broadcasting, respectively, and many other women reached well-paid senior positions.

Benzie and Quigley's situation is of particular note, however, because the Foreign Department dealt overwhelmingly with men. The IBU in Europe was an exclusively male organization; the representatives of the US chains in London were two men (albeit with some support from women); the presidents and organizers of the small US broadcasting companies who contacted "Mr. Quigley" were men. The senior managers and heads of departments with whom Benzie interacted with at the BBC were always men. Yet there is rarely a comment in the files about Benzie or Quigley's gender; they made decisions, they were listened to, they were treated with respect. Where gender did play a role was in their remuneration. Although paid less than men in comparative positions, both Quigley and Benzie received hefty pay raises because of their perceived undervaluation. Neither of the two women were recruited into strategic roles; rather, their aptitude and capabilities saw them grow into this work, under the encouraging eye of their manager, Atkinson. This in turn was acknowledged by the most senior executives of the BBC. The friendship between the two is also of consequence; the collegial and supportive nature of their working relationship helped them thrive.

This article, then, paints a different picture than the commonly portrayed female roles within early national broadcasting organizations. Rather than being confined to the more gendered arenas of women's, children's, and educational programming, at least in this one department of the BBC they flourished and succeeded in an otherwise male world. ■

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NOTES

I am very grateful to Teresa Howell, Isa Benzie's daughter, for sharing with me recollections of her mother and Janet Quigley.

1. BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham R47/696, Queen Mary (SS), Quigley to Snagge, May 18, 1936. All subsequent archive files are from the BBC unless otherwise stated. R47 are "relay" files.

2. The BBC always called CBS "Columbia" at this time, and thus I refer to it that way in this essay.

3. The only BBC history that I am aware of that refers to the BBC Foreign Department is Asa Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless: The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 2:352, 2:385, 2:387.

4. This article is informed by my wider research into women in the early BBC: Kate Murphy, *Behind the Wireless: An Early History of Women at the BBC* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Kate Murphy, "New and Important Careers': How Women Excelled at the BBC, 1923–1939," *Media International Australia* 161, no. 1 (2016): 18–27.

5. Lesley Johnson, *The Unseen Voice: A Cultural History of Early Australian Radio* (London: Methuen, 1988); Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996); Michele Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); Maggie Andrews, *Domesticating the Airwaves: Broadcasting, Domesticity and Femininity* (London: Continuum, 2012).

6. Murphy, *Behind the Wireless*, 181–87, 139–41, 168–75.

7. John Reith, *Broadcast over Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), 219.

8. Suzanne Lommers, *Europe – On Air: Interwar Projects for Radio Broadcasting* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012). In the same volume Lommers touches on how the League of Nations used broadcasting to spread its aims and ideology.

9. For a more detailed account of the establishment of the IBU see Asa Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting: The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 1:308–24; Lommers, *Europe – On Air*, 61–71.

10. E2/322, Foreign General, Foreign Liaison Section, Internal Memo no. 21, December 31, 1926.

11. BBC Standing Instructions, Foreign Department, 1927.

12. E2/322, December 31, 1926.

13. Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918–1951* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 44, 45, 71, 72.

14. For example, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom was founded in 1915. Myriam Piguet, "Gender Distribution in the League of Nations: The Start of a Revolution?," Aarhus University blog, March 16, 2017, <http://projects.au.dk/inventingbureaucracy/blog/show/artikel/gender-distribution-in-the-league-of-nations-the-start-of-a-revolution/>.

15. Sheepshanks's salary was to be £400 a year. E2/322, Atkinson to Carpendale, December 11, 1929.

16. E2/322, Atkinson to Carpendale, December 11, 1929.

17. Weekly waged staff had different conditions of service from salaried staff. See Murphy, *Behind the Wireless*, 47–79.

18. This method of entering the BBC continued until appointment boards were introduced in 1934.

19. L1/1049/1, Isa Benzie Staff File 1 (subsequently IBSF1), Colonel Benzie to Reith, June 6, 1927.

20. IBSF1, Atkinson to Goldsmith, November 29, 1927.

21. IBSF1, Wade to Carpendale, October 28, 1928.

22. IBSF1, Atkinson to unknown, March 6, 1929.

23. IBSF1, Confidential Report, February 1931. The foreign liaison executive formed the link between the Foreign Department and BBC administration, for example sanctioning expenses and authorizing sick and holiday leave.
24. IBSF1, Atkinson to Goldsmith, February 6, 1933.
25. IBSF1, Confidential Report, January 1933.
26. *BBC Year Book* (London: BBC, 1933), 138.
27. L1/784/1, Janet Quigley Staff File (subsequently JQSF1), handwritten note by Atkinson, undated but sometime in late December 1929.
28. R47/804/1, Short Wave American Relays, Atkinson to Carpendale, May 12, 1930.
29. R47/804/1, Quigley to Atkinson, December 1, 1930.
30. R47/804/1. See for example memo from Quigley to Atkinson, March 18, 1932; also JQSF1, Confidential Report, 1933.
31. For a detailed history of the BBC Empire Service see Simon Potter, *Broadcasting Empire: The BBC and the British World, 1922–1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Gerald Mansell, *Let the Truth Be Told: 50 Years of BBC External Broadcasting* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1982).
32. Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*, 2:385.
33. E4/75, Graves to Carpendale, November 16, 1933.
34. IBSF1, Confidential Report, 1931.
35. BBC salaried grades started at E (lowest) and rose to A (highest).
36. IBSF1, Confidential Report, 1932.
37. IBSF1, Confidential Report, 1933.
38. IBSF1, Confidential Report, 1933.
39. IBSF1, Confidential Report, 1934.
40. IBSF1, Confidential Report, 1934.
41. IBSF1, Atkinson to Goldsmith, February 6, 1933.
42. In fact, many other high-paying careers were open to women by this time, including the Administrative Division of the Civil Service, advertising, and journalism. At the BBC, Mary Somerville earned £950 in 1933 as director of School Broadcasting. This had risen to £1,500 by 1939.
43. The two women were lifelong friends. After the war they would continue to work together at the BBC on *Woman's Hour* and also on the development of the *Today* program.
44. *Ariel*, April 1937, n.p. An article in the BBC staff journal about the Foreign Department mentions the “cottage on the Oxfordshire-Buckinghamshire border” that Benzie shared with Quigley.
45. Initially this was M. M. Dewar, who was replaced by J. M. G. Best in October 1934.
46. Edward Bliss, *Not the News: The Story of Broadcast Journalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 71–72.
47. R47/545/1, National Broadcasting Co. Birthday Programme, 1933, Quigley to Graves, October 24, 1933.
48. On these three matters see R47/545/1, Quigley to BBC press representative, November 8, 1933; R47/545/1, Quigley to Bate, November 10, 1933; R47/545/1, Quigley to Dewar, November 14, 1933.

49. R47/790/1, Saturday Afternoon Relays from America, File 1a, December 1934–March 1935.
50. R47/790/1, December 7, 1934. Benzie subsequently led a discussion with relevant department heads based on Quigley's memorandum.
51. R47/790/1, Quigley to Benzie, January 8, 1935. NBC and Columbia had shared an evening news relay slot on the BBC in late 1934 called *American Point of View*.
52. R47/790/1, handwritten note from Benzie at bottom of Quigley to Benzie, January 8, 1935.
53. R47/790/1, Quigley to Benzie, February 4, 1935.
54. R47/730/1, Relaying Conditions, August 1933–May 1934, Quigley to Graves, October 11, 1933.
55. R47/730/1, document entitled "Conditions governing foreign relays of programmes either broadcast or originating in this country."
56. R47/729/1–3, Relaying Conditions A–Z, 1934–35.
57. R47/729/1, see for example Quigley to Le Roy Mark, April 26, 1934.
58. R47/729/1, Quigley to Green, December 8, 1935.
59. E1/113/1, American Representative of the BBC, 1934–35.
60. Valeria Camporesi, *Mass Culture and National Traditions: The BBC and American Broadcasting, 1922–1954* (Fucecchio, Italy: European Press Academic Publishing, 2000), 106.
61. For a colorful description of Green's work as NAR see Camporesi, *Mass Culture and National Traditions*, 105–15.
62. R47/539/1–2, Mutual Broadcasting System, November 1935–August 1936.
63. R47/539/1–2, McCosker to Quigley, November 21, 1935. McCosker had recently visited the BBC in London.
64. R47/539/1–2, Quigley to Graves, December 12, 1935.
65. R47/539/1–2, Graves to McCosker, December 16, 1935.
66. R47/539/1–2, Green to Quigley, January 10, 1936.
67. R47/539/1–2, Graves to Benzie, February 14, 1936.
68. R47/696/1A–1B, Queen Mary (SS), September 1935–April 1936 / May 1936–October 1938.
69. R47/696/1A–1B, Snagge to Benzie, July 9, 1936. In Snagge's view, Mutual was by far the more professional and considerate broadcaster.
70. On funding relays see R47/340/1, General Policy, Benzie to Graves, June 29, 1937. On technical quality see R47/340/1, Benzie to Graves, August 8, 1935. On selecting speeches see R47/347/1, German Political Speeches, 1933–1939.
71. In 1932 Elise Sprott had become the BBC's women's press representative, with a remit to inform women about the work of the BBC and also to sell BBC women to the press.
72. *Evening News* (London), November 30, 1934, n.p.
73. "Key Women of the BBC," *Morning Post* (London), May 18, 1936, n.p.
74. *Wireless*, May 1936, n.p.; *Express and Star* (Wolverhampton), September 4, 1936, n.p.

75. Lommers, *Europe – On Air*, 93.
76. IBU, Rapprochement and Relay commissions minutes, November 15, 1933. I would like to thank Suzanne Lommers for making these files available to me.
77. IBU, Rapprochement and Relay Commission minutes, April 3, 1935. At the June meeting held in Warsaw, a Madame H. Sosnowska is listed as an observer, credited as vice director of the Programmes Department for Polskie Radio – Polish Radio.
78. IBU Administrative Council minutes, March 29, 1935.
79. IBU First Intercontinental Meeting of International Broadcasting Organisations, Paris, February 27–March 6, 1936.
80. Suzanne Lommers, “The ‘Gentlemen’s Club’: The Lighter Side of Co-operation,” *Inventing Europe*, accessed June 21, 2018, <http://www.inventingeurope.eu/story/the-gentlemens-club-the-lighter-side-of-co-operation>.
81. Helen McCarthy, *Women of the World: The Rise of the Female Diplomat* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 86–150. The Inter-Departmental Committee on the Admission of Women to the Diplomatic and Consular Services sat from February to July 1934. The report, finally published in 1936, accepted that the service should remain men-only.
82. British women were finally admitted to the Diplomatic Service in 1946.
83. R47/758/1–2, Olympic Games, Berlin, May 1935–September 1936.
84. R47/758/1–2, handwritten note, April 22, 1936.
85. R47/758/1–2, Director of Outside Broadcasts to Graves, December 5, 1935.
86. R13/206, Foreign Department, 1935–38, Benzie to Empire and Foreign Executive, August 27, 1935.
87. R13/206, Foreign Department, 1935–38, Benzie to Empire and Foreign Executive, August 27, 1935.
88. R13/206, Graves to Director of Internal Administration, September 4, 1935.
89. Richard Lambert, *Ariel and All His Quality* (London: Gollanz, 1940), 137.
90. Margery Wace would become Empire Talks director in 1941. She died in 1944 following the birth of her second daughter. For more details on Wace’s BBC career see Murphy, *Behind the Wireless*, 207–13.
91. R13/206, Benzie to Foreign Executive, April 29, 1936.
92. R49/372, Married Women Policy: Tribunals, 1934–37, minutes of Marriage Tribunal, January 30, 1934. For more on the BBC marriage bar see Kate Murphy, “A Marriage Bar of Convenience? The BBC and Married Women’s Work 1923–39,” *Twentieth Century British History* 25, no. 4 (2014): 533–61.
93. R13/206, Controller (Administration) to General Establishment Officer, April 28, 1936. Very little is known about Cecilia Reeves’s work in the Foreign Department.
94. *Radio Times*, August 16–22, 1936, n.p.
95. IBSF1, Nicolls to Head Office Distribution/Station Directors, April 15, 1936.
96. IBSF1, see for example Benzie’s Confidential Reports for 1934, 1935, 1936.
97. IBSF1, Confidential Report, 1935.
98. IBSF1, Confidential Report, 1936.
99. IBSF1, Director of Staff Administration to Benzie, June 2, 1937.

100. R47/240/1, Coronation, 1937–38, White to Benzie, May 13, 1938; Royal to Reith, May 12, 1938.

101. IBSF1, unknown author to Controller (Administration), June 7, 1937.

102. See Murphy, *Behind the Wireless*, 159–67.

103. L2/247/1, Richard Marriott staff file, “notes a propos an annual report,” written by Benzie, January 1938.