

LHP: SKOOG

**RHP: STRIVING FOR EDITORIAL AUTONOMY AND INTERNAL
RECOGNITION**

6

Striving for Editorial Autonomy and Internal Recognition

Kristin Skoog

<A>Introduction

On November 29, 1951, Janet Quigley wrote a two-page document to the Editorial Board of Talks Division about the staffing issue in *Woman's Hour*. Quigley was nearly a year and a half into her appointment as Editor and *Woman's Hour* was running in its fifth year. From the document it is clear that the programme's journey had not been smooth and was still, in 1951, an area of negotiation within the BBC:

As I understand it *Woman's Hour* was started some five years ago in rather a hurried and haphazard way: 'Let us have a daily programme for women and put in a woman to run it'. Now Marjorie Wace in her time fought a great battle for so-called women's interests and succeeded in getting the Corporation to take very seriously their programmes for women.

Quigley goes on to outline the problems encountered by successive editors, stating:

It is time that *Woman's Hour* moved from a hand-to-mouth struggle for existence to recognition as an established programme with a high listening figure whose claims to staff and money should be looked at on the basis of its worth to the Corporation (BBC Written Archives Centre hereafter WAC R13/408/6: Quigley to Editorial Board November 29, 1951).

Quigley's words provide an entry point for this inquiry. On the one hand they highlight the growth and development (since the inter-war period) of programmes made especially *for* women and often *by* women, and what a significant role these played. On the other hand she also demonstrates how this expansion was contested, showing that the development of radio programmes for women was a continual struggle for resources and recognition. It tells us

something about the perceived status of women's radio within an institution such as the BBC and also the determination of the women involved in this type of programming.

Women have had a long relationship with the radio. Kate Lacey (2005) has argued that women's radio in the inter-war period bridged the private and the public, integrating women into the public sphere. In the British context the BBC developed specific programmes and talks aimed at the female audience early on – many with a domestic flavour and focus (Bailey 2009; Andrews 2012; Chapter 2 in this volume). These talks and programmes continued into the 1940s. Sian Nicholas's (1996) study of the wartime BBC examines programmes such as *The Kitchen Front*, *Mostly for Women* and *Woman's Page*, and argues that these programmes changed from being mainly domestic in focus to more outward looking, covering topics such as equal pay and careers for women. This chapter will further explore women's radio by examining in more detail the production and development of the BBC's perhaps most famous women's programme, *Woman's Hour*, which built on a long tradition of programmes for women broadcast by the BBC. It was introduced in October 1946 at 2 p.m. on the BBC Light Programme (the BBC's response to the demand for more popular entertainment and output) and attracted listeners in the millions, the majority of whom were working class. *Woman's Hour* was produced and presented mainly by women, just as programmes for women in the inter-war period and during the war had been. Although the first presenter was a man, Alan Ivimey, he was replaced by Joan Griffiths in December 1946 and Olive Shapley in February 1949. In 1951, the 'trio', Marjorie Anderson, Margaret Hubble and Jean Metcalfe, took over. *Woman's Hour* was aimed at housewives and had a strong focus on the domestic setting including childcare, cooking and health, although as will be discussed this focus is much more complicated. Maggie Andrews (2012) has highlighted the programme's construction of the housewife as a consumerist citizen, which also reflected representations of women found

in many women's magazines at the time. Moreover, Anne Karpf (1987) and Sally Feldman (2000, 2007) have drawn attention to *Woman's Hour's* reputation for being pioneering and controversial (covering issues such as equal pay, the menopause) and how it provided companionship and advice to its listeners. Very little however has been said about the early development and the actual production of *Woman's Hour*.

There has been a tendency within media studies to focus on the text or reception, and not so much the areas of production, and in particular production of women's own media or feminist media (Byerly and Ross 2006). Liesbet van Zoonen has argued that studies of production are important since 'communicators' decisions are shaped by institutional factors such as policy, organizational structure, work routines and power relations within the organization' (1994, 47). Histories within national contexts suggest that women's radio and women broadcasters were often marginalised within broadcasting institutions (Hilmes 1997; Badenoch 2008). Michele Hilmes (1997, 131), for example, has argued that in histories of broadcasting, production has almost always been male dominated, or as she says, 'so we are led to believe'. As Hilmes shows, women in American broadcasting were involved from the beginning in the development of key genres such as the serial drama and the magazine format. Women broadcasters and women's radio thus contributed immensely to the development of radio (and television) as tools of communication, information and entertainment. Furthermore, Hilmes has argued for the importance of daytime radio, that it was here in 'the hidden, subversive, and publicly disparaged space,' women found a place and the careers of key women broadcasters were built (1997, 154). As this chapter will argue, there are parallels here to be made with the British context.

This chapter is about recognising the role that women's radio played in mid-century Britain and the role women broadcasters have played in the development of British broadcasting. An examination of the production process of *Woman's Hour* will demonstrate that institutional and organisational structure had a considerable impact on the outcome of the programme. *Woman's Hour* initially fought for editorial autonomy and control, and against prejudice and disrespect from other members of staff, at a time when traditional gender roles overall were being challenged and contested. Furthermore, this chapter will suggest that initially working out what a programme for women should be about proved rather difficult. Preconceptions about the female audience and women's radio surfaced within the BBC and so setting out a clear editorial policy for *Woman's Hour* required a redefinition of so called 'women's interests'. This case study is therefore a contribution to the ongoing revisionist work within women's history which challenges the image of post-war Britain as a particularly stifling place for women. Recent histories have complicated this narrative of the 1950s considerably and shown women were given an increasing role as mothers, workers, voters (citizens) and consumers (Thane 1994; Zweiniger-Bargielowska 2000; Thane 2003; Holloway 2005). The need for women's labour continued after the war and between 1947 and 1949 the government campaigned to encourage older women, as well as married women, into paid employment. Women were acknowledged as playing an important part in the nation's economy, and taking up paid work – whether for single or married, working- or middle-class women – became more accepted (Holloway 2005). Concerns about both domesticity and work affected the post-war woman and gave her a central role in the rebuilding of Britain. In her analysis of femininity and film in the 1950s, Melanie Bell makes the valid observation that 'the contours of normative femininity were clearly under pressure, being transformed and rendered increasingly ambiguous by the greater economic, social and sexual freedoms that many women experienced' (2010, 10).

By studying the production and editorial process of *Woman's Hour* it is possible to see how the changing role of women in this period was reflected (and challenged) within the programme. The 'duality' of women's experience was felt in radio and impacted on the schedule when the *Woman's Hour* repeat, aimed at working women, was introduced. The programme makers had a close connection and awareness of the audience and responded to their changing needs. *Woman's Hour* promoted the democratic and intimate radio style now taken for granted. For example, the BBC Home Service in the 1960s moved towards programming that was more personal in style using 'real people rather than experts' and incorporating listeners' letters into programmes, providing greater interaction between guests, producers and experts, helping Britons to realise that it 'was both possible – and desirable – to talk' (Hendy 2007, 232), aspects which were already incorporated in *Woman's Hour* in the post-war period, as will be discussed below.

<A>Setting up a Programme for Women

Woman's Hour was one of several programmes aimed at the female audience introduced on the Light Programme after the war. Programmes such as *Housewives' Choice* (1946), a music request programme broadcast in the mornings, and the domestic serials *Mrs Dale's Diary* (1948) and *The Archers* (1951), all became hugely popular and indicate the female audience was important for the BBC. *Woman's Hour* was deliberately placed as a separate unit outside programme departments (the Home, Light Programme and the Third) but with a close relationship to the Light Programme and the Talks Department (later Talks Division), which supplied both the producers and the material. The intention of this was 'to preserve the programme's character as a magazine eminently suited to experiment and expansion' (WAC R13/408/5: Report from Evelyn Gibbs February 17, 1948). The BBC did not have separate

departments for its women's programmes but it clearly produced 'units' whose main focus was to create these programmes.

The immediate success of *Woman's Hour* meant that the small production team was under pressure from the start. Within its first weeks a demand for a more efficient and a better-staffed production was already put forward. The programme did not have an editor but an 'Organiser'. This post was held by Nest Bradney, who had already, at the start of the programme, complained about the need for more secretarial help and better facilities (WAC R51/640/1: Bradney to Collins, October 16, 1946). Beside Bradney, the production team was made up of Pat Osborne, who selected records, while Peggy Barker (and other producers through her) supplied material for talks. Scripting and production were done by Leslie Perowne (WAC R51/640/1: Memo October 16, 1946). Norman Collins, the Controller of the Light Programme (often referred to as the creator of *Woman's Hour*) realised the urgent need for more resources and staff and in a memorandum to the Director General, William Hayley, at the end of October 1946, echoed Bradney's concerns, and in particular raised the issue of the need for a full-time editor. Collins further suggested that the editor must be able to 'cater for all tastes and [. . .] be as aware of the interest aroused by the Mountbatten wedding in Romsey Abbey as by Basil Henriques's remarks on Juvenile Delinquency' (WAC R13/408/5: Collins to Director General October 30, 1946).

Collins' remark says something about the expectation as to what topics a woman's programme should cover. Rosalind Coward (1986) has written that 'to try to understand the history of *Woman's Hour* is to try to unpick the contradictions which reside in that most ambiguous of terms, "serving women's interests."' As Murphy (Chapter 2 in this volume) identifies, this notion of defining women's interests was already a challenge in the interwar

period, when the BBC's women's programmes first developed. The 1930s is of course in many ways a different context from post-war Britain, providing different possibilities and challenges for women. Broadcasters catering to diverse audiences, with different needs and expectations, were confronted in both periods by changes in women's lives. In their choice of topics and approaches they aimed to improve women's lives whether as homemakers or employees. As the war drew to a close there was much internal debate in the BBC, however, about how to continue the wartime output. In November 1945, one member of staff who had experience working in commercial radio, and had seen the 'terrific response' to women's programmes, suggested that the BBC ought to do something similar. This would be an hourly programme including items on household hints, fashion, childcare and a radio doctor (WAC R34/949: Inns to Chalmers November 23, 1945). This approach was further echoed in March 1946 when a Talks Producer suggested that fashion, dress-making and gardening should be part of the proposed daily women's programme (WAC R51/299/1: N.G. Luker to Chalmers March 13, 1946).

Woman's Hour had at its start an explicitly domestic feel and addressed the audience mainly as homemakers and mothers, consistent with pre-war women's programmes and talks. The first programme in October 1946 was promoted in *Radio Times* with a photograph which featured a swirling ribbon and the text: 'Today's Recipe', 'Your Winter Clothes', 'Children in the Home', 'Your Health Problems', 'Putting Your Best Face Forward', 'Answering Your Questions', and 'Mother's Midday Meal' (*Radio Times* October 4, 1946). But not long after its start the focus turned to subjects such as current affairs, women's employment, and other areas of national and public interest. Early on Collins told producers there was too much focus on cookery and more serious talks and discussions were needed on topics affecting domestic life (WAC R51/642: Collins to Assistant Controller Talks October 14, 1946) and

requests were also made to include regular talks on current affairs and Parliament (WAC R51/640/1: Assistant Director of Talks to Director Talks October 19, 1946). In 1948 it was reported that the programme had moved ‘towards more serious subjects’ and that this was due to listener demand (WAC R34/422/1: Chalmers to B. E. Nicolls March 19, 1948). There were reports on new government legislation and equal pay, as well as coverage of women’s groups and of the Conservative and Labour parties’ women’s conferences. This move towards a broader definition of what a ‘woman’s interest’ might constitute appears to have been steered as much by listeners’ requests as by producers’ or senior management initiatives. Hence *Woman’s Hour* should be seen as a continuation of the more outward-looking programmes for women introduced (by women such as Janet Quigley) during the war.

Women were expected to (and did) participate in public discourse, something which further complicates images of the post-war woman and post-war domesticity and reveals that the housewife was no longer expected to be isolated within the four walls of the home. Prejudice however remained; one BBC announcer left a message in a log book commenting on a current affairs series in *Woman’s Hour*:

The first one – today – has been all about the Comet. I should have thought this quite unsuitable for *Woman’s Hour*. Surely the yardstick for this sort of thing is to say “Is this more suitable elsewhere?” If you have to say “yes”, then put it there. In this case, your most interested audience is obviously children. Whey [sic] not have made up a feature of all the worry, work and general preparation leading up to the Dress Show the Queen went to at Claridge’s? There are plenty of things reported in the papers which are of exclusive interest to women and I’m dead certain the Comet isn’t one of them! Women, on the whole, distrust anything mechanical (WAC R15/244: Engelman to Editor, *Woman’s Hour* November 17, 1952, emphasis in original).

Whether this comment was meant as a joke or a serious point remains uncertain but the implementation of a programme especially for women suggests institutional and gendered

prejudice, not least in the way the programme team was treated in terms of resources and lack of editorial autonomy and control.

In this period the Talks Department was growing steadily in size and going through internal restructuring, which consequently impacted on *Woman's Hour*, especially in the pursuit and appointment of an editor for the programme. Although a request was made and approved in the autumn of 1946, an editor was not appointed until July 1947 (WAC R51/640/1: Memo, William Haley November 25, 1946). *Woman's Hour's* first editor was Eileen Molony, a Talks Producer who was also given a clerk and secretary, which improved the workload and staffing situation. Molony however did not stay long and neither did her replacement, Evelyn Gibbs, who was appointed in 1948 (and left in 1950). Both women made strong points about the difficulties in running the programme. Two recurring themes appear: a lack of resources (including staff) and not being able to exert editorial control. Molony produced a very detailed and in many ways interesting report of her time as editor and she made clear that there was confusion over editorial lines of command:

When I took over the programme, the Controller of Talks, Mr. Collins and subsequently AD(T) [Assistant Director of Talks] impressed upon me the necessity of my taking responsibility for the general professional level of the Programme as well as its adjustment to the audience. Here in practice there seems to be some confusion. Furthermore responsibility appertains also to the Head of Talks Department who is responsible for the quality of all Talks output. The practical results of this system is [sic] often bewildering to the Talks Producer who may receive two or three sets of widely differing and often contradictory criticisms. Thus, the Chief Producer (who does not study the special audience) may criticise a production qua talk without reference to the special points which the Editor has been trying to make (WAC R13/408/5: 'Report on *Woman's Hour*' February 5, 1948).

She continued to explain in the report that, for example, a talk which had been approved by the editor of *Woman's Hour* and the Light Programme management might then be considered too simple in its tone and content by the Head of Talks Department. She argued that this 'double supervision' was unnecessary since as the editor of the programme she:

[I]s well placed to offer criticism of presentation and production because of her special knowledge of the audience. She also knows in detail what the Controller of the Light Programme wants and in practice she must brief the Producers. Moreover, so long as the Editor has no say in the choice of Producer she can only exercise her control by discussion and criticism. It would seem only logical that the Producers should work to her and the Head of Talks Department exercise his responsibility by sampling rather than by editing before transmission (WAC R13/408/5: 'Report on *Woman's Hour*' February 5, 1948, emphasis in original).

This was a tentative effort to assert a degree of autonomy, in so far as BBC editorial structure would allow. It is also about establishing power relations, staking out her role as editor, and being recognised as a professional in her own right. Due to its placement as an outside 'unit' the programme fell between 'supply' and 'output', in other words, supply departments such as Talks might have set a certain standard or editorial preference, whereas the output (the Light Programme or the Home Service for instance) relied on other policies. It appears as if this process affected the output; press material from the late 1940s reveals that the programme was criticised for talking down to listeners and this seems to have been a result of various editorial interference, and as the *Evening Standard* suggested, producers not being familiar with the audience they were aiming for (Radio dept. February 15, 1947). This problem persisted and was not entirely resolved until Gibbs took over as editor in 1948 and was given full editorial control of the programme:

[I]t is surely essential that the practical difficulties of this arrangement should be overcome so that *Woman's Hour* may become not indeed a microcosm of broadcasting as a whole, but a programme where material of interest and value to a specific audience may be given its most suitable and effective presentation (WAC R13/408/5: 'Report on *Woman's Hour*', by Evelyn Gibbs, no date).

Relying on supply departments such as Talks posed other problems and the material reveals that internally *Woman's Hour* was seen not to be a prestigious programme to work on, as observed by Gibbs in 1950:

I think there is a lot to be said for this way of running *Woman's Hour* as opposed to a small production unit, but the Editor's job would be made much easier if the responsibilities of all the departments concerned could be more clearly defined and agreed. As it is, they are most of them inclined to regard *Woman's Hour* as something

outside and additional to their own work. The result is that nearly always *Woman's Hour* work is given to the most junior or least experienced producers and in moments of stress our needs are entirely ignored (WAC R51/640/7: Gibbs to ACT, 'Woman's Hour Report' June 5, 1950).

One example of this was the regular current affairs item. In 1949, it was brought to the attention of the Controller of Talks that *Woman's Hour* had been allocated five different Talks Producers in the past eighteen months to produce current affairs talks (WAC R51/128/1: Assistant Controller of Talks to Controller of Talks September 9, 1949). This lack of internal recognition and prejudice from fellow staff did put a strain on the women behind the programme. One of the regular producers, Isa Benzie, who pioneered medical and health talks, expressed clear frustration in 1951 to the Chief Assistant in Talks:

I wonder if you could help over the attitude which producers not working for *Woman's Hour* take in their ignorance for that programme? The weight of this programme is resting on the shoulders of people who can tolerate a very severe amount of work year after year; and who can tolerate also, and also year after year, the ever-repeated exhibition of fellow producers' contempt (WAC R51/640/10: Benzie to Chief Producer December 4, 1951).

Within the BBC, *Woman's Hour* was clearly being sidelined. The internal structure complicated the editorial process and it is striking that allowing the programme greater autonomy and control was so problematic. The unit behind *Woman's Hour* possessed strong audience awareness and was further encouraged with the appointment of Janet Quigley as editor in June 1950 which gave the programme a stronger sense of identity and crucially a sense of control and ownership that had been absent before.

<A>Knowing Your Listeners

Quigley's career and involvement in women's programmes at the BBC spanned the 1930s to the late 1950s. She was without a doubt a key figure in the development of women's radio at the BBC; she expanded and broadened talks and programmes for women, showing an

inspiring dedication and determination (Nicholas 1996; Chapter 2 in this volume). Quigley left the Corporation in 1945 when she married, but returned in 1950. The records make it clear that the Controller of Talks, Mary Somerville, was very keen to see her as editor for *Woman's Hour* and Somerville certainly supported her appointment (WAC L1/784/1: Janet Quigley). The pair had both worked for the Corporation in the 1930s when Somerville had become BBC's Director of School Broadcasting in 1931 and Quigley had been an Assistant in the Foreign Department since 1930. Together their knowledge of broadcasting and its possibilities helped *Woman's Hour* gain new strength and vigour in the 1950s.

Quigley firmly believed that a producer or editor must know the programme and the audience to whom they were broadcasting. She often emphasised working 'hands-on' and did a lot of work herself in the studio (Quigley 1958, 53). Quigley's appointment took the staff on the programme to: editor, deputy editor, compère, two secretaries and one clerk (WAC R51/640/7: Gibbs to ACT, '*Woman's Hour* Report' June 5, 1950). In a report a month into her new position she gave a good insight into the situation, observing that the programme was not produced as an entity and there was not enough communication between producers, speakers and editor (WAC R13/408/6: Report from Editor to Controller Talks, '*Woman's Hour: reorganisation*' July 3, 1950). Quigley suggested a scheme whereby producers would work more closely with the programme and producers would take turns, being responsible for the whole production of *Woman's Hour* for a week at a time. In this experiment she wanted to include the more experienced producers such as Elisabeth Rowley, Isa Benzie, Peggy Barker and Marguerite Scott. It was also Quigley, Benzie and Rowley who would later create the *Today* programme in 1957, and thus it is tempting to suggest that *Woman's Hour* was an important stepping-stone in this process. Quigley was also keen to develop reporting, interview techniques and mobile features (WAC R13/408/6: Report from Editor to Controller Talks, '*Woman's Hour: reorganisation*' July 3, 1950). Material examined suggests that the

internal relations within the *Woman's Hour* unit were working well once clear leadership and direction were achieved. Quigley's previous experience of producing women's programmes proved invaluable for the programme's continued success and development.

A key feature of the longevity and the continued success of *Woman's Hour* lies in its ability to connect with and respond to the listeners. This was a staple aspect of the programme from the start in 1946. A few weeks after its first broadcast it was reported that the programme received more than a thousand letters per week (WAC R51/640/1: Collins to Director General October 30, 1946). Eileen Molony stated in 1948 that it was crucial for the editor and the producers to have access to the letters since these gave an enormous insight into audience attitudes (WAC R13/408/5: 'Report on *Woman's Hour*' February 5, 1948) which in turn sometimes resulted in listener participation. For instance, in December 1948 it was suggested that *Woman's Hour* should run a regular discussion 'in which listeners are invited to take part' (WAC R51/640/5: Editor *Woman's Hour* to Bentinck December 8, 1948). In 1949 it was noted that one of the producers recorded a 15-minute discussion once every four weeks with the editor and listeners to the programme (WAC R51/640/6A: Marguerite Scott, 'Listeners Discussions for *Woman's Hour*' February 1, 1949) and in 1951 Quigley introduced an experimental theatre series in which 'ordinary' people (instead of professional critics) reviewed a theatre production on the programme (WAC R51/640/11: Scott- Moncrieff to Boswell March 31, 1952). Quigley saw the programme as a co-production between the listeners and the producers:

Woman's Hour has come to be regarded by many of its listeners as a kind of club. Far from being confined to passive listening, membership of this club takes an active form: listeners write about the programme and about themselves, they criticise, encourage, suggest and occasionally broadcast. This co-operation in building the programme insures that it is really their own and forges a chain that links listeners to us and to each other. (1953, 5)

Listener's letters were taken seriously and it is therefore possible to argue that the female audience took part in shaping BBC radio programming in the post-war period. This indicates how interactive and ahead of its time the programme really was. Interestingly, other studies show that women's radio has tended to forge very strong bonds and connections between its producers and audience (Hilmes 1997; Badenoch 2008). For example, Karin Nordberg (1998) has examined the Swedish Radio's women's programmes (1930–1950) and argues that in Sweden women radio producers had a different relationship to the audience compared to their male counterparts, employing a much more subjective and less authoritative style. One key broadcaster was Ingrid Samuelsson, who in the 1940s, in similar style to Quigley, introduced listeners to the microphone, clearly understanding the potential for discussion and dialogue over the air (Nordberg 1998). Nordberg suggests it created a conversation in the ether, opening up a space for women to discuss, debate and voice their questions and outlooks. Clearly, parallels can be made with *Woman's Hour*.

<A>The Working Woman

A problem faced by *Woman's Hour* was how to reach and cater to the working woman. During the war, women had been mobilised into work and in the post-war period the introduction of part-time work and the abolition of the marriage bar facilitated significant changes. The programme was keen to respond to the development of the increasing employment of women and did so mainly in two ways. The first strategy was to address the working woman with a steady flow of editorial items in the regular programme covering women and work. For example, in 1948, features producer Eileen Hots put together a programme on 'Women in Industry: Qualified Women Engineers' which introduced a range of women engineers and a detailed description of how someone could become an engineer (WAC: Programme as Broadcast Transcript, *Woman's Hour*, 'Women in Industry': Qualified

Women Engineers' by Eileen Hots December 16, 1948). The second strategy, which was deployed after lengthy negotiation, was to introduce a weekly repeat.

The demand for a repeat of the programme had begun in April 1948. At this point the programme received a flow of letters from women in industry asking for a programme they were able to listen to (WAC R51/640/4: Acting Controller Light Programme to ACT April 14, 1948). Later the same year, the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs complained about the timing of the programme. Mary Somerville (at that point Assistant Controller of Talks) referred the query to the management of the Light Programme and the Home Service but with no luck, prompting her to reflect 'it is a pity to overlook the claims of the outside working woman in these days' (WAC R51/642/1: 'Resolution from National Federation of Business Women' December 1, 1948; Somerville to CLP and CHS December 17, 1948). Women's groups such as the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs continued to lobby the programme. Mary Hill, one of the programme's producers, suggested in March 1951 to Janet Quigley that the reputation of *Woman's Hour* would improve among some women's groups if they could broadcast a programme in the evening or at the weekend (WAC R51/640/9: Hill to Editor March 28, 1951). Quigley brought the request to the management once again and emphasised that the pressure came from both individual women and women's organisations. She reiterated the argument put forward by these women and made the point that there was not really a difference 'between women with home interests and women with careers' (WAC R51/640/10: Quigley to Controller of Light Programme July 2, 1951).

Quigley's plea had an impact, and in August 1951 the first repeat was broadcast on Sunday afternoons under the title 'The Digest'. The repeat was well received amongst listeners and

women's organisations such as the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs (WAC R51/640/11: Editor, *Woman's Hour* to CT and CLP January 25, 1952). There is, however, a paradox here. As stated earlier, Quigley had made the point that there were no differences between women with home interests and women with careers, but she would later argue that because 'The Digest' was placed on a Sunday afternoon, it did not fully cater to the working woman (it was described as 'family listening'):

The fact that it was placed on Sunday afternoon defeated the ends of the original project as it at once became apparent that, far from selecting material from the previous week's programme that would be of most interest and service to business and professional women who can't listen to the daily programme, we were forced by considerations of the actual audience which included fathers, husbands and children to choose instead the items of least specialised interest [. . .] I still think we have an obligation to the growing body of women who work either whole or part-time outside their homes (WAC R51/640/13: Editor, *Woman's Hour* to CT November 24, 1952).

The result of this was that after much discussion a 'new' version was introduced in 1953 broadcast on a Sunday morning. This time it was called 'Home for the Day' and became quite a success. In 1954 the Controller of the Light Programme, Kenneth Adam, who was very supportive of Janet Quigley, was full of praise: 'I think "Home for the Day" is so good these days it ought to be on Sunday afternoons in the autumn' (WAC R51/ 640/17: Controller, Light Programme to Mr. Pelletier April 22, 1954, emphasis in original). Its success was also confirmed in a listener research report the same year: '[O]n the whole, the evidence suggested that "Home for the Day" was thought to offer some very interesting and often unusual talks and discussions, and was generally much appreciated' (WAC R9/9/18: LR/54/1043 August 24, 1954). The programme was important in acknowledging the working woman, but at the same time the 'separation' and creation of something for a 'special audience' also sent mixed signals, undermining the initial project of appealing to all women. Quigley's persistence not only resulted in the introduction of a repeat, she also fought against a decision to cut the programme's airtime in the summer of 1951, and by expressing her

frustration won *Woman's Hour* more staff and more money. In September 1951 the budget for the programme increased from £325 to £355 per week (WAC R51/640/8: A.R Bell to Editor September 1, 1950). In December 1951 another extra £10 was allocated to cover for extra editorial assistance (WAC R51/640/10: Controller Light Programme to Postgate December 12, 1951). Slowly the BBC began to acknowledge the success of the programme. Quigley left *Woman's Hour* in 1956 when she was promoted to Chief Assistant in Talks (the post was later renamed Assistant Head of Talks Department (Sound)) and she retired in 1962 (WAC L1/784/1 Janet Quigley). *Woman's Hour* continued to thrive after her departure and has now been running on the BBC for over sixty years, a testament to its importance in the schedule and to its listeners.

<A>Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates the importance of studying the site of production (when possible) to fully understand how programmes are shaped by institutions, organizational structure, policy and also individuals. *Woman's Hour* was a relatively small unit within the BBC that was not so well regarded by some as other parts of the Corporation. This exposed the programme to patronising attitudes and a continuous lack of resources and support. Although the programme attracted millions of listeners and played a key part in the schedule, it was treated as something 'outside' and 'additional'; not a key priority for producers or the management in the 1950s. This study of *Woman's Hour* indicates the challenges women broadcasters and women's radio faced in an institutional setting in the post-war era when they were marginalised and often had to withstand gendered stereotyping. The women behind *Woman's Hour* fought to further the programme's development and continued existence but they *also* fought for their own professionalism to be taken seriously and recognised. Women broadcasters in the late 1940s and 1950s may not have been organised or fought loud

campaigns, but they clearly showed an awareness of being professionals in their own right. The women working on *Woman's Hour* established and pioneered broadcasting techniques and styles developing and refining the magazine genre. It was an interactive programme with a dialogue between the producers and the audience; listeners' demands and suggestions had an impact on the editorial process and the final output. Daytime radio, therefore, provided an important public space for women, and the programme sought to learn more about its audience and to represent not only the housewife but also the working woman. By doing so it acknowledged and perhaps further challenged the representation of women in post-war Britain.

Note

I would like to acknowledge and thank the staff at the BBC Written Archives Centre, Peppard Road, Caversham Park, Reading, RT4 8TZ, UK, abbreviated above as WAC.

Bibliography / Sources

- Andrews, Maggie. 2012. *Domesticating the Airwaves. Broadcasting, Domesticity and Femininity*. London: Continuum.
- Badenoch, Alexander. 2008. *Voices in Ruins: West German Radio across the 1945 Divide*. Basingstoke, UK and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Bailey, M., 2009. 'The Angel in the Ether: Early Radio and the Constitution of the Household.' In *Narrating Media History*, edited by Michael Bailey. London; New York: Routledge.
- Bell, Melanie. 2010. *Femininity in the Frame: Women and 1950s British Popular Cinema*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Byerly, Carolyn M., and Karen Ross. 2006. *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Coward, Rosalind. 1986. *The Listener*, October 23.
- Feldman, Sally. 2007. 'Desperate Housewives: 60 Years of BBC Radio's *Woman's Hour*.' *Feminist Media Studies* 7 (3): 338–341.

- Feldman, Sally. 2000. 'Twin Peaks: The Staying Power of BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour*.' In *Women and Radio: Airing Differences*, edited by Caroline Mitchell. London: Routledge.
- Hendy, David. 2007. *Life on Air: A History of Radio Four*. Oxford University Press.
- Hilmes, Michele. 1997. *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1950*. London; Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Holloway, Gerry. 2005. *Women and Work in Britain since 1840*. London: Routledge.
- Karpp, Anne. 1987. 'Radio Times: Private Women and Public Men.' In *Out of Focus: Writings on Women and the Media*, edited by Kath Davies, Julianne Dickey, and Teresa Stratford. London: The Women's Press.
- Lacey, Kate. 2005. 'Continuities and Change in Women's Radio.' In *More than a Music Box: Radio Cultures and Communities in a Multi Media World*, edited by Andrew Crisell. Oxford: Berghahn.
- Nicholas, Sian. 1996. *The Echo of War: Home Front Propaganda and the Wartime BBC, 1939–45*. Manchester University Press.
- Nordberg, Karin. 1998. *Folkhemmets Röst: Radion som Folkbildare 1925–1950*. Stockholm/Stehag: Brutus Östlings Bokförlag Symposion.
- Quigley, Janet. December 1958. *Brown Book*. Oxford: Lady Margaret Hall Archives.
- Quigley, Janet. 1953. Foreword to *The Book of Woman's Hour: the Words behind the Voices* by Joanna Scott-Moncrieff. London: Ariel Productions Limited.
- Thane, Pat. 2003. 'What Difference did the Vote Make? Women in Public and Private Life in Britain since 1918.' *Historical Research* 76 (192): 268-285.
- Thane, Pat. 1994. 'Women since 1945.' In *20th Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, edited by Paul Johnson. London: Longman.
- Zoonen, Liesbet van. 1994. *Feminist Media Studies*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Zweiniger-Bargielowska, Ina. 2000. *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls, and Consumption, 1939–1955*. Oxford University Press.