

BBC WRITTEN ARCHIVES CENTRE

RESEARCH GUIDE



This guide gives a breakdown of the different ways to access the material held in the BBC's Written Archives.

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If you are looking for information about a person:

³/₄ Contributor Files

These record dealings with **non-staff contributors to BBC programmes such as artists, speakers and performers**. (Staff members may have Contributor Files relating to work outside their BBC duties). The purpose of these files was to store the contracts for BBC engagements and this is mainly what the files contain. However, any correspondence with contributors was also filed here and the earlier files (mainly pre 1960s) contain letters, memos and other written material in addition to contracts.

- Contributor Files are divided into **Radio Contributors (RCONT)** and **Television Artists (TVART)**. People who took part in programmes were booked by separate units according to the capacity in which they were used. This led to separate collections of RCONT files covering: Artists, Talks (Speakers), Sc

¾ Press Cuttings

There are two collections of press cuttings containing critical responses to BBC programmes and policy in the press.

- **BBC Press Cuttings from before 1960.** This collection consists of hard copy press cuttings relating to BBC related issues and programmes. It is indexed by person and subject, but indexes need to be requested.
- **General Press Cuttings from c1960 to 1990s.** This is a microfiche collection not specifically related to BBC. Cuttings are f

If you are looking for information about an aspect of BBC Policy:

³/₄ Policy Files

There is a large selection of files created by departments responsible for general BBC Policy. These cover topics such as the BBC's operational arrangements with the government and other broadcasting organisations, the Television Licence, programme content, political balance, editorial issues, complaints and viewer feedback.

- The main series is **R34: Policy (up to c1966)**. There are also separate series of policy files unique to radio and television (**T16: Television Policy**, **R92: Radio Management Registry** and **T62: Television Management Registry**).
- Correspondence around high -

If you are looking for technical information about broadcasting :

There are several series of files from the **Engineering Department**

If you are looking for BBC coverage of a News Event or Subject:

¾ News Bulletin transcripts for Radio and Television

These provide a record of how the BBC reported on world events. News bulletins transcripts for radio are held from 1939 to 1993 on microfilm. Television news bulletins are held from 1954 to 1997. There are subject indexes for news broadcasts available on microfilm alongside the scripts themselves (Indexes are available up to 1992).

- Meeting minutes are available for the **News and Current Affairs Group** (spanning roughly 1958 to 1996) , which discuss how news events were handled by the BBC in their broadcast output .
- **Radio Talks scripts** often include noted individuals commenting on current affairs and subjects of the time. A comprehensive person and subject index is available for Radio Talks to c1970. (The Card Index is not freely available to browse so specific subject/person cards must be requested – these cards are then used to locate the script on microfilm). Many of these talks are reproduced in The Listener magazine, copies of which are also available to view. The magazine is also available digitally through many academic institutions.
- Major national and international events generated **Management/Policy files** covering specifically how the BBC presented them to its viewers and listeners – they are also frequently discussed in **Board of Management and Board of Government Minutes** .
- **Summaries of World Broadcasts (SWBs)**
Published by BBC Monitoring, SWBs are summarised reports of the domestic and overseas output of broadcasters around the world. They contain details of how foreign broadcasting organisations cover domestic and international news from their own perspectives.

If you want to view BBC Magazines, Books and other Publications:

¾ There are multiple collections of **BBC published material**, including BBC magazines and programme tie -in material.

- **The Radio Times:** a complete run is available in hardcopy or microfilm. For earlier issues we will refer you to microfilm as hardcopies are fragile. The Listings sections to 2009 are available online as the [Genome Project](#), so copies of the magazines themselves should only be requested for the articles or other sections.

Personal papers donated by individuals (not collected by BBC):

- ¾ Our series of **Special Collections** contain material that has not been accessioned to the archive through