Pioneering television food and cooking programmes: overlooked content, controversy, and contributions to innovation in British television production 1936-1976

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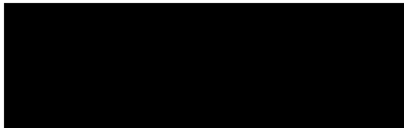
A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Edinburgh Napier University for the award of Doctor of Philosophy

2024

Declaration

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification, and that it is the result of my own independent work.



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March 2024

Abstract

Early television food and cooking programmes from the period 1936-1976 remain a neglected area of media history research, despite their inclusion in the broadcasting schedules from the very beginning of television broadcasts in Britain. This thesis centres on archival research conducted mainly at the BBC Written Archives Centre and is supplemented by other primary sources such as the archives of the *Radio Times*, *The Listener*, *TV Times*, *TV Mirror*, the *British Newspaper Archives*, and examples of popular magazines of the time, published books, photographs and a selection of advertising, promotional and other materials. This thesis examines the content of these early television food and cooking programmes to challenge existing thinking on their design, appeal, and potential audiences, ultimately presenting a new historiography and exploration showing a key role for the presenters as innovators who influenced the design and established the format, style, variety, and content of the television food and cooking programmes we still watch today, a role which has not been previously credited. Although my focus is on the programmes, presenters and archives held mainly by the BBC, this research briefly shines a light on early ITV programmes and presenters, and the role the connections, competition, challenges, and opportunities both channels provided. The thesis offers an insight to the early days of television in Britain, especially programmes and presenters which are often considered to be too 'ordinary' to be celebrated, both at the time and since. Far from 'ordinary', these programmes and presenters inhabited the space between 'everyday' television and 'spectacular' programming, offering a space for innovation to flourish, providing a fresh perspective on a set of programming often assumed to be 'for women' and 'by women'. This thesis proposes an original contribution to knowledge to early television history in Britain, and to interdisciplinary research on food, gender and to broadcasting production and innovation. This thesis further challenges assumptions about early television and early television food and cooking programmes and their presenters, reinstating them as pioneers who developed a blueprint for the genre and plethora of television food and cooking programmes which followed.

Publications associated with this research

During the five years of my part-time PhD, the following **articles** and **chapters** have been published:

Geddes, K. 2020. For The Housewife? From 'The Singing Cook' to 'Common-Sense Cookery': The First (Disrupted) Twenty Years of Television Cooking Programmes in Britain (1936-1955) *Dublin Gastronomy Symposium 2020 – Food and Disruption.* Available here: https://arrow.tudublin.ie/dgs/2020/Diswar/1/ DOI: 10.21427/fv5b-ww74

Geddes, K. 2022. 'The Man In The Kitchen' Boulestin and Harben - Representation, gender, celebrity, and business in the early development of television cooking programmes in Britain. In Tominc, A. (eds) (2022) *Food and Cooking on Early Television in Europe – Impact on Postwar Foodways*. London: Routledge. pp. 19-36. DOI: 10.4324/9780429327995-2

Geddes, K. 2022. 'Common Sense Slimming' – How the contribution of Joan Robins, television's 'afternoon cook', was not the perfect-fit for the culture of the BBC in the 1950s. *Critical Studies In Television: The International Journal of Television Studies*. Vol. 17. Issue 3. pp. 254-268. DOI: 10.1177/17496020221103469

Geddes, K. 2022. A Conceit of Coney: Philip Harben and Britain's First Television Food History Programme. In McWilliams, M. (2022) *Food and Imagination: The proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 2021.* London: Prospect Books. pp.174-183.

Geddes, K. 2023. "Accompanying the series': Early British television cookbooks 1946-1976. *Food and Foodways.* Vol. 31. Issue 3. pp. 219-241. DOI: 10.1080/07409710.2023.2228034

In addition, I have presented aspects of this thesis to the following **Conferences** and **Presentations** during my PhD research period:

Geddes, K. 2018. It's All In the Booklet: Fanny Cradock's Power as a Pioneer TV Celebrity Chef and How She Used It to Transform Cooking Shows on the BBC. *Dublin Gastronomy Symposium – Food and Power.* Dublin: Technological University Dublin.

Geddes, K. 2018. Nailed It! The history, development and evolution of entertainment in British Television Cooking Programmes 1936-1976. *1st Biannual Conference of Food and Communication.* Edinburgh: Queen Margaret University.

Geddes, K. 2019. Book Me - A Feast of Celebrities – the history and development of television celebrity cooks and their associated cookbooks in Britain 1936-1976. *Cookbooks: Past, Present and Future.* Portsmouth: University of Portsmouth.

Geddes, K. 2019. Kitchen Magic! Did television invent 'celebrity chefs' or were the early pioneers of television cooking programmes producing innovation? *SACI PGR Conference.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh Napier University.

Geddes, K. 2020. For the Housewife? From 'The Singing Cook' to 'Common-Sense Cookery': The First (Disrupted) Twenty Years of Television Cooking Programmes in Britain (1936-1955). *Dublin Gastronomy Symposium – Food and Disruption – What Shall We Eat Tomorrow? Disrupted by War.* Dublin: Technological University Dublin.

Geddes, K. 2021. Pioneering Television cooking programmes: content, controversy and innovation in British Television 1936 – 1976. *IAMHIST Masterclass.* Online.

Geddes, K. 2021. A Conceit of Coney - Britain's First Television Food History Programme and how Philip Harben pulled a rabbit out of a castle to imagine what food broadcasts may have looked like in Elizabethan times… *Oxford Food Symposium – Food and Imagination.* Online.

Geddes, K. 2021. 'Common Sense Slimming' How the contribution of Joan Robins, televisions 'afternoon cook', was reduced by the male-dominated culture of the BBC in the 1950s. *100 Years of Women at the BBC.* Online.

Geddes, K. 2021. 'The Man In The Kitchen' Boulestin and Harben - Representation, gender, celebrity and business in the early development of television cooking programmes in Britain. *IECHA 6th International Conference on Food History and Food Studies.* Online.

Geddes, K. 2022. A Conceit of Coney - Meeting Philip Harben - Britain's First Television Food History Programme from 1953 and re-thinking early television cooking programmes. *SACI PGR Conference.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh Napier University.

Geddes, K. & Irwin, M. 2023. Feminist Archival Research Practice & Shaking The Archive - The BBC Written Archives and Early Television Production and Presentation. *Shaking the Archive - Reconsidering the Role of Archives in Contemporary Society.* Edinburgh: Queen Margaret University.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisors at Edinburgh Napier University, Dr. Diane Maclean, Dr. James Blake, and Dr. Louise Milne, for their sustained support over the five years of this PhD, guiding me gently, and otherwise when required, as I found my way through the various systems and milestones of the 'journey', ticking off each and every RD6 and reflecting on the progress I made. Thanks to you all.

I would like to thank Dr. Haftor Medboe, also at Edinburgh Napier University, for his advice, perspective and excellent taste in jazz for not only the motivation, but also the 'normality' that his sage comments provided, keeping a focused perspective on my research, my writing and how to communicate it. Gratitude must also flow in the direction for Dr. Scott Lyall, again at Edinburgh Napier University for supporting and encouraging my trips to the archives, financially and otherwise, as well as ensuring I had the necessary access on-line. Appreciate it.

It has been a joy to connect with and befriend Catherine Robins, daughter of television cook Joan Robins, who by delightful chance I discovered lives around the corner from me here in Edinburgh. I am so grateful to Catherine for clambering into her attic to rescue some photographic archives connected to her Mothers career. It has made my research 'real' and worthwhile to share back with Catherine just how productive, innovative, and important her Mother was in the development of television cooking programmes in Britain. Spoilers. Thanks Catherine, and to the families of Zena Skinner, Philip Harben, Marguerite Patten, Moira Meighn and Rosina Dixon, who inconveniently do not live around the corner, but have been equally supportive. So grateful.

Of course, I must also shower as much appreciation as possible in the direction of the Archivists at the BBC Written Archive Centre, Caversham, for all their patience, organisation, and access to all those wonderful files, without which this peek under the surface of the history and development of television food and cooking programmes in Britain would simply not have been possible. Similarly, the support, insights, and physical resources which Simon Vaughn at the Alexandra Palace

Television Society Archive was able to provide for my research have been incredible. Archivists rock.

Thanks also to Dr. Calum Neill, Dr. Alistair Scott and Dr. John A. Burnett for the support, encouragement and for the opportunities to explore the world of teaching at Edinburgh Napier University during this PhD, which helped me immensely to reflect on my own research; and to Dr. Claire Garden, Dr. Gráinne Barkess and Robert O'Brien for their patience on project plans and progress. Phew, we did it.

I am grateful to Professor Christine Geraghty, University of Glasgow, and Dr. Caitriona Noonan, Cardiff University, for their teamwork and clarity as part of the *Critical Studies in Television* Book Review crew, it has really been a pleasure and of course a welcome distraction from *all of this* over the past few years. I have learnt lots and hopefully have not bothered the publishers too boldly. We will see.

Finally, all my remaining thanks must go to my partner, Callum, for his continued patience as I have journeyed along the five years of this PhD path and for never rolling his eyes (well, not too often) when I had to delay, postpone, and cancel personal plans to prioritise my research. Thanks also for giving me the much-needed kick in the areas that needed it most to finally cross the finish line. I won't do another PhD, don't worry. Probably.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The relationship, connection and discourse between television food and cooking has been in place since public television broadcasts themselves began in Britain in 1936 (Briggs 1985, p. 164) although a detailed understanding of the history and development of television food and cooking programmes in those early decades has been missing from accounts and discussions. In March 1937, just five months after the first broadcast, the food, cooking and household magazine, *The Table*, established in 1886 (Weir 2013, p. 3) and published until 1939 (Deith 1998, p. 25), which was created by Victorian food entrepreneur Mrs Agnes Bertha Marshall (Weir 1998), published amongst its 'matters of the moment' pages a small article encouraging readers to consider the forthcoming 'Television Exhibition' to be held at the Science Museum, South Kensington, in June 1937 (The Table 1937, p. 269). The article claimed that attendees of the exhibition (the first public exhibition of television of its kind) would be able to would be able to view demonstrations of BBC programmes on the 'modern' equipment on display.

Although Mrs Marshall had herself died in 1905 (Kay 2017, p.94), her cookbooks (see Marshall 1885, 1888, 1891 and 1894), cookery school, products, and cooks' agency, were still very much at the fore of 'high-class' cookery in London (Weir 1998), and further afield because of her mail-order business established through her 'celebrity' and reputation (Mennell 1985, p. 183). Considered to be a leading cookery writer herself (Brears 1998, p. 43)), Mrs Marshall used her flair for entrepreneurial activities to capitalise on her abilities (Wheaton 2013, p. 5), connecting her readership with a range of additional tools they would require to be a success in the kitchen (Brears 1998, p. 43). Mrs Marshall invented (and patented) ice-cream making machines (Barham 1998, p. 46), popularised products considered to be everyday essentials in modern kitchens such as packaged baking powders, curry powders, bottled vinegars, and harmless vegetable food colourings (Weir 2013, p. 3) and sold these to attendees at her cookery school (Wheaton 2013, p. 5). Mrs Marshall missed the opportunity to transfer her businesses to

bigger audiences yet with the establishment of radio broadcasts by the BBC in 1922 (see Scannell and Cardiff 1991). And again, when radio presenters transitioned to television in 1936. Today, however, the multi-platforming (Bonner 2009, p. 345) that Mrs Marshall established 'as a woman at the forefront of modern technology, science and marketing' (Weir 1998, p. 1) linking food, the transfer of knowledge, her own celebrity and personality, marketable products and recipe books is a mainstay of television food and cooking programmes today, worldwide (Bonner 2009, p. 345). This activity is the backbone of this thesis and forms the basis of my interest in the topic of television food and cooking programmes in Britain – linking the ordinary and mundane with the spectacular and entertaining to enable a space for innovation and development.

The television food and cooking programmes which dominate broadcasting schedules and streaming services today have been developed into formats, genres and events which lend themselves to research and analysis in a variety of academic fields (see Strange 1998, DeBacker 2020 and Tominc 2017 as examples). Often, these developments are presented as 'new' with little reference to historical developments, or considerations, or with a view of history as a period covering the past thirty years (see Smith 2021, Oren 2023 as examples). However, television food and cooking programmes had already been produced and broadcast for over fifty years before that (see BBC Genome 2023 for details) although little scholarly research has focused on them, or their development. These early years of television food and cooking programmes may provide essential information, and historical context, on: the development of the genre; the role of the presenters in progressing the innovations in terms of broadcasting and connected industries; the content and structures of programmes; the linkages that they were able to capitalise on; and how wider societal changes were reflected.

These television food and cooking programmes were much more than the 'ordinary' (Bonner 2003, p. 3) which they have been portrayed as in recent years, simple food or cookery demonstrations that are often referenced or assumed, particularly when discussing 'housewives.' In contrast to the 'ordinary', early television can also be seen as 'spectacular' (Wheatley 2016, p. 1) as a new domestic technology and system of entertainment, with innovation built in from the beginning. However, this connection between the ordinary (everyday recipes,

demonstratable techniques and mundane presentations), the spectacular (engaging, entertaining and audience-connected presentations, eye-catching style and elaborate and aspirational ideas) and the innovative (new presentations styles, studio sets, camera techniques and ways to discuss food and cooking) has previously not been researched regarding early television food and cooking programmes in Britain. This thesis shines a light on this period of development, and those who drove it forward.

Given the lack of complete, or even partial, recordings of the television food and cooking programmes broadcast in Britain either before or just after World War II, this thesis instead pieces together a picture of these 'ghost texts' (Jacobs 2000, p. 14) and broadcasts through the collection and analysis of a variety of available archival primary and secondary sources, to uncover the context without the available text.

Building on my previous research on Fanny Cradock (see Geddes 2017, 2018a, 2018b) which demonstrated Cradock's contribution as an innovator, entrepreneur and personality, this thesis considers the wider television food and cooking presenters and programmes before, and including, Cradock herself. This research analyses the pioneers of early food and cooking programmes and considers if they acted as 'producers', as well as presenters, to create and develop the programmes, following the tradition of 'food entrepreneur' established by Mrs Marshall decades earlier, to establish the form of television we today recognise as television food and cooking programmes. In the same way as Marshall is recognised in scholarly works as forever changing the landscape of women's publishing, food and marketing, the early pioneers of television food and cooking programmes deserve to be re-positioned into the wider history of television in Britain, and particularly the history and development of television food and cooking programmes.

Aim of the Thesis

This thesis provides a history, an examination, and an analysis of the extent to which the early television food and cooking programmes and their presenters, between 1936 and 1976 in Britain contributed to the evolution of television production more widely through the development of innovative ideas, concepts,

and formats designed to engage audiences with food. This thesis examines the BBC Written Archives as a primary source of essential information, thematically analysing their files for examples of 'ordinary', 'spectacular' and innovative television in early food and cooking programmes. This research explores the concepts of 'production' and 'content' to uncover roles for these early television presenters as 'producers' in contrast to the 'producer driven' histories (Tunstall 1993, p. 1) and as innovators (Newcomb and Alley 1983, p. xiii) prior to the established hierarchies of television including commissioned programmes which were established by the 1970s (Casey et al 2008, p. 36).

By outlining a focused history of the development of television food and cooking programmes (primarily on the BBC, although with some scant reference to commercial television, which began in 1955) in Britain during the period 1936-1976 and the role and contribution of the pioneer personalities in both innovation and the development of the connection between television, food and celebrity, this thesis adds a new dimension to understanding particularly of television's Golden Age of the 1950s to 1970s (Briggs 1985), but also crucially the pre-war years of 1936-1939, covering the periods of development before the shift from 'production' to 'commissioning' which followed (Bignell 2008, p. 51).

A Thick Description approach

The term 'Thick Description' was first introduced into social anthropological research in the early 1970s by Clifford Geertz (1973). Geertz himself borrowed the term from the language philosopher Gilbert Ryle, who used the term to provide an interpretative account of what was signified by certain actions, depending upon the social context and circumstance. Ryle later defined Thick Descriptions as 'involving ascribing intentionality to behaviour involving understanding and absorbing the context of the situation' (Ponterotto 2006). For Geertz, a Thick Description was a tool used to characterise the process of paying attention to contextual detail in observing and interpreting social meaning, especially in qualitative research. A Thick Description should not only consider the 'immediate' (Dawson 2012, p. 943) but instead consider the contextual and experiential understandings of a social event or action in rich detail, illuminating the complex layers of understanding

structuring the social world. It is this ‘paying attention to’ that is considered in this section.

A simple, or perhaps ‘thin’ description, can be described as an account of something in words, reporting facts. A more deep, more dense, more detailed, more ‘thick’ account can be useful for interpretation of the same event (Denzin 2011, p. 98). Denzin sees ‘thin descriptions’ as merely an inscription of a person making a statement, lacking detail and density. As this is the starting point for my whole research, a thicker more detailed statement is appropriate. Thick Descriptions can be viewed as a contrast to ‘thin descriptions’, which simply report facts or occurrences (Ryle 1949, p. 141), glossing events, giving superficial, partial, and sparse accounts using few words to describe complex, meaningful events (Denzin 2011, p. 116).

For Geertz, collecting meaningful data that makes sense of the social world allows interpretation of culturally informed activities, providing a level of insight into the many nuances and complexities of human actions which may naturally be open to interpretation. Geertz saw Thick Descriptions as ‘interpretations of interpretations’ (1973, p. 15), interpreting as the description unfolds. Denzin (2011, p. 52) viewed Thick Descriptions as important for ‘thick interpretation’, balancing the description itself with analysis to highlight the significance of actions, behaviours, and events. For this thick description of the history of television food and cooking programmes in Britain, I am ‘interpreting interpretations’ such as this looking at the television food and cooking programmes between 1936-1976, and my findings, in subsequent chapters.

Thick Descriptions have been found to be of relevance in case study research, aiding a narrative story to be supplemented by paying particular attention to matters of history, context, and physical setting (Denzin 2011), providing, as Geertz did in his study of Balinese Cockfights (1973), a detailed description and interpretation, presenting an informed and thoughtful account of the experience (Dawson 2012). Denzin (2011) classifies a full, or complete, Thick Description as ‘biographical, historical, situational, relational and interactional’ (p. 9) covering the biographical, historical, situational, relational, and interactional. I use this as a

starting point for my own analysis of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain.

Abu-Lughod (1997) discussed the need for Thick Descriptions in media studies, reflecting upon the relative 'thinness' of many studies of popular culture, particularly to trace the 'enmeshment of television in other social fields' to place 'television more seamlessly within the sort rich social and cultural context' in our interpretation of history (pp. 112-113). Researchers have noted that the concept of Thick Description can often be confusing, because of terminology, understanding and conceptualisation (Ponterotto 2006 and Holloway 1997). Geertz said that a 'good' Thick Description was an interpretation which 'takes us to the heart of what is being interpreted' (p. 18). Thick Descriptions and the associated interpretations attempt to uncover the 'conceptual structures that inform our subjects' acts' (p. 27) to construct a system of analysis and understanding that is meaningful within the worlds of lived experience (Denzin 2011).

The intention here is for this thesis to form a Thick Description and interpretation of television food and cooking programmes in Britain between 1936-1976.

Overview of current literature

Television food and cooking programmes have increasingly been the topic of academic discussion, with research focusing on aspects of gender (Charlesworth 2022), class (Tominc 2017), celebrity (Hollows 2022), and audience (Moseley 2008). Thematic research has attempted to place television food and cooking programmes into various categories of television, with historical assumptions made and omissions overlooked. The early television food and cooking programmes in Britain have been left particularly untouched. Significant research has considered television food and cooking programmes to be categorised as 'ordinary' or 'everyday' in nature.

Ordinariness

‘Ordinary’ television (Bonner 2003) is a term used to describe factual television which is intended to be both entertaining and informational but concerned with the mundane (Bonner 2003, pp. 44-46)) and may involve ‘ordinary’ people within the programmes themselves, underlining the domestic concerns of ordinary life and lifestyles (Bell and Hollows 2005). Others have considered television food and cooking programmes to be ‘light entertainment’ (Dyer 1998) where performers were products of television itself, usually fronted by ‘star’ presenters. Langer (1981, pp. 165-67) differentiated between ‘celebrity’ when referring to a cinematic star, who play ‘parts’ and personalities who appeared on television playing ‘themselves’ (Bonner 2003, p. 44).

Researchers have considered the scheduling of ‘ordinary’ programmes, looking at programmes aimed at women broadcast in the afternoons or ‘daytime’ from the earliest period of broadcasting (for example, Leman 1987, p. 7). However, although food and cooking programmes were broadcast in this slot (in the afternoons around 3pm initially), as I demonstrate in this thesis, it is also true that television food and cooking programmes were broadcast in the evenings, the entire programme was ‘repeated’ in the same way as theatres hold matinee and evening performances, (although also broadcast live) in evening slots around 9pm on the same day. In their analysis of the *Nationwide* programme from 1970s Britain, Brunsdon and Morley (1978, p. 73) identified the ‘everyday’ nature of programmes which were informal in presentation and involved the audience as participants in the programme. They categorised the presenting team as ‘real people’ as opposed to ‘stars’ in relation to the audience, mirroring the themes of home, leisure, consumer activity and domesticity contained within the programme itself which became pivotal to its identity (ibid. p. 74). This included food and cooking slots. Silverstone (1994, pp. 18-23) wrote about television and everyday life, situating television centrally in the discourses of everyday life, as a medium of ‘considerable power and significance.’ The notion of cultural power and domestic leisure was discussed by Morley (1986) with relation to audiences and how they watched television as a family, with further research by Petrie and Willis (1995) regarding the changing relationship between household audiences and television.

The Spectacular

Others have suggested that television food and cooking programmes operate in the 'spectacular' end of the entertainment spectrum (for example, Wheatley 2016, p. 14), whose study builds upon the notions of the 'spectacles of society' (Debord 1967) and argues that 'spectacular' television may contribute to the elimination the limits between the self and the world; in other words, purely an escape. Others have argued that the simple spectacle of being able to 'see by electricity' to watch fantastical images transmitted on devices (Galili 2020) in domestic households would be spectacular in itself. Previously, media researchers have focused on genre of programmes for women, and the limits the process of constructing the medium (for example, Leman 1987, p. 223) may have had. Were television food and cooking programmes then a marginal area of television (as Leman established), part of the afternoon broadcasts only, aimed entirely at an audience of women, or something more complicated?

Gendered Histories

Much has been written about the BBC itself, and its history and development, however, broadcasting histories often focus on institutions (e.g., Briggs 1985), and are told from a male perspective (see Hendy 2022 as an example), so programmes considered 'ordinary' or 'for women' are often neglected. Although there are moves to re-instate women's histories to the wider story of the BBC (see Irwin 2022, Murphy 2022, and others) the stories of the BBC as an institution remain predominantly male in focus, and outline a strict, professional 'boys club' culture to the early days of television in Britain. Exceptions to this do exist, with the recent publication by Jamie Medhurst (2022) which is based on a new evaluation of archival documents relating to the pre-war years of BBC television, and the memoir written by Grace Wyndham Goldie (1977) which provides a less institutional, less 'masculine' and, more experimental history of early television.

Holmes (2008) published the seminal work on British television in the 1950s, particularly focused on the BBC, where she considered the programmes produced and broadcast in the decade as a move towards being 'entertaining', popular, and diverse in variety to appeal to as many households as possible. Holmes challenged the perception and assumption that BBC television of this period was 'staid, elitist and paternalistic' while independent television was 'populist and appealing'.

Holmes challenged this view, drawing links between genres and topics which were broadcast in the 1950s by the BBC, but have been marginalised or ignored in other early histories of British television. Holmes herself does not discuss television food and cookery programmes of the period, nor include them as 'entertainment', however, as others have noted (most notably DeSolier (2005) and Strange (1998) as examples) entertainment became a major part of television food and cooking programmes which followed.

This thesis investigates the early television food and cooking programmes using the frameworks established by Holmes to shine a light on 'entertaining' aspects of early television food and cookery. Food and cookery programmes are however included and mentioned in the exploration of 'spectacular' television by Helen Wheatley (2016) as a spectacle in themselves. This thesis further expands on Wheatley's call for additional research using her framework to establish the spectacular elements, programmes, and presenters of the period.

Most commonly, researchers have sought to place television food and cooking programmes as part of 'women's' or 'daytime television, which were considered to have been established in the 1940s and 1950s. This is understandable, with housewives, working women and females in general being the audience which the BBC themselves considered to be interested in cookery 'demonstrations' on radio, and then on television. Scholarly research, naturally and rightly, has focused on the activities of the housewife and her role, and of topics which might interest women (Creeber 2001, p. 48) including easing the burden of domestic work and therefore earning leisure time (Spigel 1992, p. 22). However, this thesis explores if there are additional aspects of the early television food and cooking programmes which were designed to appeal to different genders, either through direct representation or production. In doing so, I add significantly to the existing jigsaw of research rather than eliminate what already exists.

Significantly, this thesis shows that presenters of television food and cooking programmes were themselves not housewives as defined by Oakley (1974, pp. 1-9) and others, and not always women, not always heterosexual, nor in 'traditional' gender relationship dynamics. The reality reflected a wider representation of domesticity, genders, sexuality, and professions. The presenters were not usually

‘chefs’ (the concept of the celebrity chef’ is linked to television, and is considered later) and often had no formal training in kitchens, or as cooks. They were not contracted as employees of the BBC, but instead worked on a freelance basis, asked by the production teams to submit pitches and proposals for programmes which enabled them to think innovatively, connecting some of their other business interests outside of broadcasting to their work on-screen.

However, the role and contribution of the presenters themselves in creating the programme content, establishing filming techniques and other innovations, and the connections they made to other interests, which in turn developed their own ‘brand’, has not been considered fully in current literature. While not suggesting that the presenters worked alone to create the programmes, I am mindful that Auteur Theory (as established by Truffaut in the 1950s and discussed in Staples 1966) has been less well developed in television studies than in film. In television, ‘the person who typically is regarded as the most influential creative force - that is the person who is typically regarded as the auteur’ is the executive producer (Vande Berg 2004, p. 69) but, obviously television programmes are made by many people collectively, and the early television food and cooking programmes were no exception. The work of Sellors (2010) has been particularly useful to me here, clarifying the distinction between the author and the producer. Although, as the thesis demonstrates, the presenters of the television food and cookery programmes devised the scripts, the way of communicating, what should and could be seen on screen (and by people at home) and what foods were included or excluded from broadcasts. However, their contribution does not negate the professional work of the studio crew, camera operators, producers, and sound engineers. This research focuses on whether the presenters (as established in previous research looking at Cradock) have more of a ‘spectacular’ role in the design and development of the programmes than simply the ‘ordinary’ role of presenting.

Terms and Scope

This thesis considers the selected the period of between 1936 and 1976. My reasons for doing so are many, but primarily it is because this period is under researched in television history generally, specifically regarding television food and

cooking programmes. The first television food and cooking programmes were broadcast during the first few weeks of television transmissions in Britain, in November 1936, so it makes good sense to begin an analysis there. Although some experimental television programmes were produced and broadcast before this date (see Weber 2022), no listings for any programmes on food, preparation of food, or even a discussion of food were among them (Alexandra Palace Archive 2019). So, they appeared 'as if by magic' at the same time as regular broadcasts were established, with no obvious blueprint or trial.

This thesis splits naturally into three time segments: the pre-war from 1936-1939; from 1946-1956 when broadcasts resumed after a seven-year hiatus because of the war; and then a period when Fanny Cradock dominated (on the BBC but also ITV) the broadcast schedules as a television cook, from 1955-1976. This thesis expands, adds to, and develops arguments connected to the central tenet of this research, and includes additional research to demonstrate her original contribution. Her period also introduced an element of competition for the BBC, with the introduction of a second broadcast channel in ITV, with commercial aims. Although extremely interesting and valuable to investigate the contribution of ITV, space and access to archives dictates that the focus is less on this.

The pre-war period was perhaps entirely experimental in terms of output, design, technology, and audience reaction, and as such holds a great deal of interest for me. The BBC television service was broadcast only to residents living in London within a thirty mile radius of Alexandra Palace, and who were able to, and could afford to, receive the signals in their homes. The staff at Alexandra Palace, although skilled and experienced in radio broadcasts, were in new and unknown roles, and relied heavily on the expertise of technicians and presenters to establish the new television service (see Wyndham Goldie 1977).

After the war, the television service had a new determination to make its mark and recover lost ground from the seven years without television broadcasts. Technologies and ideas had developed, and access to the television signal and sets were becoming more widespread, just as the population searched for something to help lift them out of food rationing and thoughts of war. The period between 1946

and 1955 was one of significant change and development in Britain, and on television (Kynaston 2007, pp. 304-5).

Although, on reflection, it was tempting to limit the scope of my research to perhaps 1936-1956, I have expanded into the subsequent twenty years to allow for some discussion of Cradock and others, further changes in television and society, and to consider what happened to television food and cooking programmes after the more traditional ‘golden age’ of television broadcasting in Britain. This period (1956-1976) remains, in a similar way, under-researched, and my aim here is to fill a gap which exists until the 1980s and beyond, paving the way for more research and documentation of the period, but at the same time considering it as a period of transition between the pre and post war periods, and the television food and cooking programmes which we enjoy on television today.

Television in Britain changed after 1977 as a result of the Annan Committee (Briggs 1985, p. 358) and establishment of licences for a fourth channel (initially) which in turn led the way for even more channels, as well as cable and satellite broadcasters. It is also more likely that example programmes exist in the archives after 1977 because of changing technologies for institutional and home recording. This contributes to the research possibilities for television food and cooking programmes post 1980, which other researchers have taken. This also makes research of what came before even more connected to and relevant upon the archival methods of written materials which are outlined in this thesis.

Lastly, I have selected the period of 1936-1976 to mirror the timeframe considered in the memoirs of pioneering female television producer Grace Wyndham Goldie (see Irwin 2022), who helped to unlock key ideas of ‘ordinariness’ and ‘spectacular’ programming for me. Goldie describes, at times, a chaotic, experimental, and almost risk-seeking institution in the BBC between 1946-1976 that appealed to me and my research. This thesis echoes that feeling of the new, the bold and the brash, alongside the mundane and everydayness, which television food and cooking programmes embody.

Original contribution to knowledge

This thesis provides new perspectives on a seemingly 'ordinary' form of television, which is often overlooked but is now accepted as part of television schedules but was indeed part of them from the very beginning. This thesis explores the balance of knowledge, looking at original primary and secondary archival sources, analysing them with an interrogation of the reality of the time in which the programmes (mostly lost to the archives) were created.

The main findings of this thesis, and therefore the significant original contributions to knowledge which I present, are: the history and timeline of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain – this has often been mis-represented and incorrectly presented - the timeline of broadcasts and presenters I outline here provides a solid historical basis for research and discussion; that the assumed 'ordinariness' of television food and cooking programmes in the early years of broadcasting overlooks the more 'spectacular' aspects and also the extraordinary work of the presenters, working freelance, who created and developed the format and genre including innovations and external relationships with advertising and promotions, connection to celebrity, class and gender, queer domesticities; the use of the frameworks of 'ordinary' and spectacular' television which I apply to early television food and cooking programmes is itself unique, having previously been implied rather than applied to the written archival primary sources which form the basis of my research; similarly, the application of Winston's Social Sphere of Development as a framework for innovation not in technology but in genre and progression of early television cooking programmes is unique here; overall, this thesis employs unique uses of previous methodologies and frameworks from Jacobs, Winston Wheatley and Bonner, applying their previous research to the topic of early food and cookery programmes in Britain and exploring the primary archival sources of the BBC Written Archive Centre to do so, and as such with a unique mixed methodology.

Overall, this thesis presents unique and significant ideas which we can see in television food and cooking programmes today, placing them much early in time and significance. The presenters of early television food and cookery programmes were contracted to provide a programme, almost as an irrelevant time filler, a programme viewed by the BBC as merely 'for women' which enabled them to develop ideas, content, and innovations in camera techniques which later the BBC

and other broadcasters would use as templates for commissioning of future television food and cooking programmes.

Early television is a ripe area for media research, despite some concerns that it has 'already been done', which became evident during the recent *100 Years of the BBC* celebrations. While academics relished the opportunity to promote and prod the archives of the BBC in their research, the BBC itself somewhat shied away from 'looking back.' Several books were however published providing new and enlightening histories of the BBC. Medhurst (2022), in his book on *The Early Years of Television and the BBC* was able to use the written archive material held by the BBC itself to shine a new light on its past. Hendy (2022) told a personal story, a people's history, of a publicly owned organisation under threat. Other titles have considered the BBCs place in media history more generally (Seatter 2022), viewing the organisation reflectively from a greater distance than Briggs, Scannell and others perhaps had the opportunity to. The story of the BBC continues to evolve, but so does the history of the BBC. Research can add significantly to the body of work which already exists, with original contributions, such as this thesis, analysing areas of interest, such as television food and cooking programmes, which the valuable, but necessarily focused, catch-all titles can only suggest at.

Research question

My hypothesis is that television food and cooking programmes have been an overlooked example of presenter-driven innovation in television, and that the collective contribution of the individual presenters in the years 1936-1976 should be better reconsidered as significant in the development of television food and cooking programmes. By considering elements of 'ordinary' and 'spectacular' television contained within the collective examples of television food and cooking programmes between 1936-1976, I consider the path of innovation which occurred, using the Winston's Social Sphere of Technological Development (Winston 1996, pp. 1-9) in a new way – as a framework for televisual development in the form of television food and cooking programmes.

This thesis provides a balanced perspective on television food and cooking programmes, considering 'ordinariness' and the 'spectacular' and also answers the

question of the contribution of the television food and cooking programme presenters, as more than 'passive presenters' – taking an innovative and entrepreneurial lead role in defining the programmes, establishing the connections to personality/celebrity, product placement and advertising, class, genre and format, and a more varied representation of gender and gender roles than has been previously recorded, analysed and assumed. I argue that the seemingly incongruous mix of 'ordinariness' and 'spectacular' in one format, genre or 'type' of television was the catalyst which allowed innovation, risk and change to happen, develop and consolidate. This thesis considers whether the same freedom of development was then suppressed and disrupted by the BBC, before being reinvented as 'new' in what we see in television food and cooking programmes today.

Methodology

For this thesis, I have used a variety of methods, approaches, and frameworks to help to answer my research questions. This mixed-methods approach has evolved over the time of the thesis as I have remained responsive to the archives, materials, and situations I have been faced with.

To provide a background to the research in terms of culture, society, technology, and food, I have used the methodologies of Geertz (1973) in developing a necessary context to the discussion and analysis through a Thick Description, although I am aware that the entire thesis becomes a 'thicker' description than this section alone. For the historiography section, which I believe is essential to set the scene for the analysis to follow, and also as a significant contribution to knowledge, I have used an approach to archival documentation based on Content Analysis. I have collected, coded, and categorised available factual information from the *Radio Times* archive, *British Newspaper Archive*, and other associate materials, to ascertain who was involved, what was broadcast, how they were advertised or promoted, and when they appeared on the schedules, in the early television food and cooking programmes on the BBC. In the main finding's sections, where I consider 'ordinary' and 'spectacular' notions of early television food and cooking, I have followed the framework of Thematic Analysis established by Jacobs (2000) to interrogate the BBC Written Archive primary source materials and connected

resources. These archival materials have been analysed thematically, using a research framework based on the works of Bonner (2003) and (Silverstone 1994) for 'ordinary' and 'everyday' television, and Wheatley (2016) and Holmes (2008) for Spectacular and Entertaining Television. For the analysis chapter, I have used the thematic framework of Winston (1998) to consider the structure of the innovation cycle which he proposed for the development of technology, including media technologies, in relation to ideation, prototype, social necessity, invention, suppression and diffusion of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain.

In using these mixed methods, I provide a unique contribution based on insights which form the basis of this thesis from a range of primary and secondary sources relating to the early television food and cooking programmes and their presenters, which increases greatly the current understanding of the development of early television.

Thesis layout

This thesis contains several chapters which are key to illustrating my unique contribution to knowledge with relation to early television food and cooking programmes in Britain between 1936-1976. Initial chapters cover the abstract, contents, acknowledgements, and this introduction.

Chapter Two considers the literature which is currently available to provide a picture of and background context to society and culture during this period, and a review of the current research covering television food and cooking programmes which were broadcast. Beginning with the notion of celebrity and food, which appear to be connected I consider the main academic works which argue that celebrity and food were connected before mass communication technologies such as radio and television were developed (see Scannell and Cardiff 1991). Considering radio broadcasts in Britain, established by the BBC in 1922 (ibid.), I review the construction of food and cooking 'advice' given on broadcasts prior to the establishment of television services. I briefly outline the development of television itself, with particular interest in food, cooking and the transfers of knowledge that broadcasts were able to provide. This leads into an examination of

current literature which considers global television food and cooking programmes before looking at European examples and more prominently writing which looks specifically at British television cooking programmes. To provide a complete context for the thesis, I briefly outline literature which focuses on post-1980 television cooking programmes.

Chapter Two also considers the wider context of Britain at the time of the introduction of television, and specifically television food and cooking programmes. Following the Thick Description (Geertz 1973) approach, I focus in turn on the social, cultural, and technological aspects of British society during the time under consideration. This context enables me to place the original research in time and place, avoiding the temptation, whether deliberate or unintentional, to read the resources selected for analysis through a modern lens. Television obviously did not develop in isolation, and television food and cooking programmes as part of that development were similarly part of 'that time.' By demonstrating an understanding of the changing 'world' in those early days of television and laying out the context in which these programmes developed, I can proceed to consider the archival materials from the BBC and others with more certainty. The methodological process for which is outlined in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four provides a history for television food and cooking programmes in Britain between 1936 and 1976. Outlining the information, primarily researched from the listings within the *Radio Times*, The BBC Genome Project, and the Programmes as Broadcast records of the Alexandra Palace Television Society; a timeline of programmes, presenters, and personalities. This provides a backdrop to the analysis which follows. In addition, a history of this nature has not previously been established and provides a new contribution to the understanding of the development of television food and cooking programmes.

Chapter Five forms my analysis. During the initial stages of my thesis, one of the significant writers I encountered was Brian Winston, and his 'social sphere' model of technological development (Winston 1996). This resonated with me and my very early analysis of the contribution of the television cooking presenter Fanny Cradock, research completed as part of my master's degree (and subsequently published as Geddes 2017), as it seemed that his outline of the process of

development, from 'ideation' to 'diffusion' matched the journey I had encountered and, in some part, described for Cradock. It became more interesting to me to consider if this disruptive model (Winston 2006) could be used as a framework for the analysis of my own research question, supporting me to consider issues of class, gender, celebrity, and innovation, transferring the Winston model from technological change to development of television food and cooking programmes as a genre and accepted form of television.

In the Ideation section, I discuss the idea of television food and cooking programmes which emerged from the social sphere which Winston outlined - the intersection between science and technology. It is obvious that the idea for television food and cooking programmes had to begin somewhere, however this chapter outlines the aspects of early television food and cooking programmes which together form the 'idea'. Through looking at the very early ideas and delivery of them, on television –focused mainly on the pre-war and very post-war eras – I discuss how presenters were mainly contracted for their 'celebrity' and ability to create ideas for presentation and delivery. This leads to a wider discussion in the following section of the 'prototypes' of early television food and cooking programmes. Returning to the social forces of the time, I consider the 'social necessity' of the pre and post war period in Britain which helped to transform the ideas and prototypes into an 'invention', taking Winston's principles of technology to describe the 'invention' of television food and cooking programmes.

The final section of this chapter examines how the institutions involved in the broadcast of television food and cooking programmes in Britain during the period of 1936-1976, namely the BBC and ITV, sought to harness the emerging idea of television food and cooking programmes, suppressing the 'radical potential', as they perhaps saw it, and inventiveness displayed by the pioneer presenters before diffusing them more widely. Winston argues that this process helps to explain the complexities of the history and development of the technology which enabled television broadcasts, and in parallel I use his model as a framework to explain the complex picture of this thesis which argues that instead of dismissing or explaining the early television food and cooking programmes as 'ordinary' and 'everyday' they were instead extraordinary and 'spectacular' examples of presenter driven innovation and production.

The next series of chapters focus on the thematic analysis of the primary and secondary resources which I have interrogated to answer my research question. I analyse 'ordinary' television in Chapter Six, and then 'spectacular' television in Chapter Seven. Both these chapters form my findings.

The Conclusion provides an overall discussion of the evidence included in the research, leading to a final conclude that the contribution of the early television food and cooking programme presenters was indeed significant and overlooked.

Conclusion

Although food and cooking on television are popular areas for scholarly analysis, the evolution of television food and cooking programmes in Britain is less well researched. This 'gap' in knowledge is my starting point and I thus develop an analysis which compliments the current literature and shifts the focus from an assumption of 'ordinariness' and the 'mundane' in those early television food and cookery programmes, to a more balanced perspective to include 'spectacular' and 'entertaining' food and cookery programmes. Crucially, this included the requirement for the establishment of innovative approaches and contributions from the presenters of these programmes which has not been well understood or discussed. This thesis re-establishes a picture of the early food and cooking programmes in Britain, and re-inserts this into the historical context of media history.

Chapter 2: A Review of Literature

Overview

Before establishing a timeline of television food and cooking programmes between 1936 and 1976, which remains an under-researched area of media history, I consider the background to this period, including the social, cultural, and technological changes which were happening in Britain at that time. This section leads into the historiography, so will naturally lean towards the aspects of that, which are discussed in the next Chapter. This chapter is not intended to be a general 'social history' of Britain, or even a 'social history of British television', but rather a focused 'social and cultural history' to give a background and context to the television food and cooking programmes which were produced during 1936-1976 in Britain.

Introduction

Television food and cooking programmes are now ubiquitous, whether on the established institutional television channels, dedicated food channels, online and across social media. However, little has been documented about their history or development in Britain, with many assumptions being made (and incorrect information being shared), based on research carried out looking at programmes broadcast from the 1990s onwards. In Britain, public broadcasting of television began in November 1936, albeit to a limited audience who lived within the reach of the single Alexandra Palace transmitter in London, who could not only afford the expensive new equipment required to receive moving images and sound in the home, but additionally possessed the trailblazing qualities needed to become an early adopter.

As television food and cooking programmes are an established part of our 'modern' or at least 'recent' lifestyle and broadcast schedules, the format, style and presentation of food, and cooking, on television can appear to have been 'fixed' with established ideas, audiences and commercial ties accepted (see Bonner 2009 for more discussion). What is less well known is the extent to which this was

always the case. How were early television food and cooking programmes created, viewed, and consumed? In what ways did they mirror society, culture, and taste in Britain at the time? Were they responsible for the innovation of ideas and concepts which became part of society, culture, and the 'norm'?

Aim of the analysis

The aim of this analysis of literature is to support a Thick Description of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain, with a particular focus on the first forty years of broadcasting from 1936 – 1976. A Thick Description of early television food and cooking programmes from this period does not currently exist. At best, currently there is a 'glossed' description present in many pieces of research and publication, which does not capture the detail of the topic, nor the context. Much of the information can be seen as 'thin' in that it deals primarily with information, lacking the interpretation of the changing social, cultural, and economic context of the decades being discussed. It is this aspect which adds to this discussion, enriching what follows in terms of findings and analysis, and the unique contribution to knowledge which this thesis contains.

Briefly, to summarise here, where television food and cooking programmes are discussed, scholarly literature tends to focus on broadcasts following 1990, with only 'thin' mentions of historical 'fact' prior to this. The same can be said for literature which discusses a range of 'lifestyle programmes' (Bell and Hollows 2005) or 'ordinary television' (Bonner 2003). While this is not intended at all to be a criticism of current analysis – the authors themselves had not aimed to discuss in any detail the history, nor of setting this out. My aim is to widen out the knowledge base to include the first forty years of television broadcasts and the role of television food and cooking programmes within that. From this wider, deeper, denser, more detailed analysis of the period, it is my aim to not only provide a description of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain which is 'thicker' but also that the analysis more clearly highlights the key areas for further research and evaluation, as well as any gaps in knowledge and understanding.

This research is not intended to replace or render redundant a full review of the current literature on television food and cooking programmes in Britain, but as

with the contextual framing of the topic, to provide a platform and focus for future review, based on a current understanding of the literature around early television food and cooking programmes in Britain. A systematic review of current literature on early television food and cooking programmes in Britain between 1936-1976 yields very few results, with available articles and papers focused on aspects of those programmes which interests the researcher most. What I add here reflects the wider period, enabling my own interest in early television food and cooking programmes to be more clearly outlined, discussed, and analysed. As noted already, as an assumption, most of the available scholarly literature and research necessarily concentrates on more recent decades (see Bonner 2003 and Strange 1998).

Approach

For this contextual review of literature, I focus research, evaluation, and interpretation on individual decades on British life, from the 1930s until the 1970s. Within each decade I consider briefly what early television generally looked like/appeared to be alongside some of the dominant social and cultural notions which may have defined the time. These notions are necessarily subjective but based upon recognised areas of research in media and television studies (see Miller 2010; Ellis 2002; McQueen 1998; and Bignell 2008). They have been chosen as a frame for interpretation. Just as I am not able to view a full visual record of television food and cooking programmes of the period (see Archives section), I am equally unable to do the same analysis with early television programmes more generally. This approach echoes the intention to explore, identify and begin to interpret the significant aspects of early and pioneering television food and cooking programmes in Britain.

The focus is on class and lifestyle, gender, authorship, audience and celebrity (traditional and well established areas of media scholarship), linking these concepts to developments and broadcasts within each decade. This is not to say that these frameworks could and should apply, perhaps in different ways, to discussions in different decades. When looking at examples of television food and cooking programmes in each decade, I follow a Content Analysis approach (see Methodology chapter), examining in detail the content of the written archives,

other written and published materials and the few examples of visual resources which have been preserved, which is echoed in the historiography of television food and cooking programmes which follows, looking for manifest and latent content, combining the actual with the underlying, to suggest a message system of what was represented (Fiske & Hartley 2003, pp. 21-36). This enables some interpretation of what was represented in the 'television world' and how that may be similar or different from the 'real social world', as well as the relation between the two. Content Analysis of this nature, looking at television messaging systems have been said to be a representation of underlying values in society (Gerbner 1969).

As others have recognised, Content Analysis can tell us much about television (Fiske and Hartley 2003, p. 21) but not everything. The analysis contained in later chapters within this thesis looks in more detail introducing mixed methodologies including textual analysis and consideration of semiotics, following Barthes (1972) to discuss the signs, signifiers and signified meanings and codes specific to television food and cooking programmes and the archival materials selected.

1900-1930 – a brief social history

The twentieth century began with Queen Victoria still on the throne, Britain in the Boer War and technological advances which enabled motorised buses to travel around London and the first tentative flights (Carnevali 2007). Living standards were diverse, dependent upon wealth or lack of it. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, people continued to move from the country to towns and cities in search of employment, and when the expected riches did not materialise, many of these people found themselves living in slums (Benson 2005).

The Edwardian Era saw Britain again involved in war, with the first world war ending, and peace in Europe beginning, in 1918. The Suffragette movement was beginning. People in positions of service began to leave their employers, causing the 'servant problem' (Lyon and Ross 2016), to join the services and to seek employment in factories. By 1915, over fifty thousand women were involved in 'war work' (Patten 2015). In 1916 the Prime Minister urged people to be economical with food and to let their servants go to other employment. One in

three women were in paid employment as servants in 1901, dropping to around one in four in the inter-war years (Todd 2009).

Rationing began in Britain in 1918 (Mennell 1985), following years of unrest over food, with the rich often buying and hoarding food, leaving the poor without even basic commodities (Gazeley & Newell 2013). Rationing continued until 1921, installing a 'make-do' attitude to food among lower classes in times of austerity (Dickson-Wright 1999, p. 221). Higher classes embraced luxury food and dining experiences, such as the Savoy Restaurant in London (ibid., p. 173). With money becoming tighter for everyone, women in particular sought new opportunities, in parallel with changes in fashion and optimism. Magazines and books which gave ideas on making the most of war-time food were published (Andrews 2012). *Vogue* magazine had regular food articles, focused on French cuisine, seen at that time as the 'culinary capital of the world' and the 'home of chic' (Dickson-Wright 1999, p.81). The BBC launched in 1922 (Briggs 1985) and became an independent national organisation in 1927 (Branston 1998), broadcasting a range of radio programmes. The BBC broadcast the Empire Exhibition in 1924 (Radio Times 1924a) to bolster spirits across the country.

Development of cooking advice (pre television)

Advice about cooking, food and the transmission of recipes, knowledge and skill was well established by the BBC via radio broadcasts by the 1930s (Lyon and Ross 2016). Programmes about food and cookery were aimed at housewives, transmitted at times which would be suitable for them to tune in and covered a range of topics primarily to educate. Programmes appeared popular and were often bundled into the *Woman's Hour* slot traditionally broadcast in the afternoon (see BBC Genome 2023).

Most cooking talks, as they were known, were broadcast live (Lyon and Ross 2016) and sought to give a practical cookery demonstration to listeners, who could not see the demonstration happening, obviously. Most contributors to this format were themselves women, with a range of programmes discussed in the following section, offering time-saving and other household hints.

Prior to the establishment of radio talks and advice, much of the transmission of knowledge was by book, or in the home from generation to generation (Humble 2005). Cookbooks and Manuals of Household Management were often gifted as wedding presents or passed from Mother to Daughter (Patten 2015, p. 12). With the advent of cooking talks on radio, new ideas, new techniques, and new knowledge could be shared, created, and discussed. Recipes could be noted down and attempted in the home. Samples of recipes were published in the *Radio Times* (Humble 1988, p. 58) and *The Listener*, and magazines aimed at women, such as *Good Housekeeping*, featuring 'up-to-date' recipes became popular (Patten 2015, p. 70). A common theme was of making basic ingredients go further to sustain hunger and nourishment in times of little – especially after the first world war, before rationing ended in 1921 (ibid., p. 75). Programmes made the most of local, seasonal, and available produce. The programmes themselves reflected the social situation in Britain at the time, where most household tasks were still the domain of women. Some cooking talks did branch out to appeal to men, but these were not frequent and were seen as experimental or perhaps entertaining to some (Radio Times 1929).

The BBC had a complicated history in terms of publishing its own materials. Despite (or perhaps because of) starting out as a commercial organisation before becoming a public service broadcaster (Briggs 1985, p. 37), the BBC often at least outwardly eschewed activities such as publications that would be seen as money making enterprises. As the BBC moved from being a private company initially formed to counterbalance the 'unrestricted' development of the broadcast medium seen in America (Kavanagh 2004), to a public service corporation, with 'considerable idealism' (p. 78) the resistance strengthened in a reaction to what some saw as an Americanisation of the media (Camporesi 1994) where commercialisation was king, deemed to be terribly un-British and not a great use of public money.

The BBC established a charter to 'inform, educate and entertain' its audiences, initially on radio and beginning in 1936, through television (Briggs 1985, pp. 367-373). This objective to cover all subjects on which the BBC wanted to broadcast on, reaching as wide an audience as possible. The BBC began to publish companion resources to accompany broadcasts, beginning in 1923 with the *Radio Times*

magazine (Briggs 1983, p. 365), which gave details of programmes and provided a discussion forum for promotion and debate. The establishment of the *Radio Times* was met with a great outcry from the established press, who feared for their own sales figures (Kavanagh 2004) and for advertising revenue (Lyons and Ross 2016). A similar level of complaint was recorded in 1929 when the BBC began to publish *The Listener* magazine (Briggs 1983, p. 369) with programme reviews and published versions of talks which had been broadcast (Lyons and Ross 2016, p. 83).

The BBC did, however, publish some standalone books and pamphlets containing information from their talks. These were sold to readers mainly as an educational aid, but they did raise some revenue for the corporation in the same way as the *Radio Times* and *The Listener* magazine did. Early publications included operatic librettos (BBC 1920) released prior to broadcasts as accompaniments, poetry analogies (BBC 1928), illustrated synopsis of forthcoming broadcast plays (BBC 1928) and transcripts of national broadcast lectures (BBC 1929).

The publication of BBC yearbooks, pamphlets on selected talks and lectures, and educational resources aimed at schools continued as the BBC developed into the 1930s. These yearbooks were advertised for sale or to access in local libraries in the *Radio Times* (1928a, p. 534) alongside adverts for new radio components (ibid. p. 540), batteries (ibid. p. 544) and marmalade (ibid. p. 551). A weekly page 'of special interest to the housewife and the home gardener' (ibid. p. 542) printed recipes for home-made potted meats, sausage rolls (covered in breadcrumbs) and cheese and potato 'blocks', as well as hints for completing odd jobs around the house, how to care for your cats, and that week's jobs in the garden. The page also featured a 'call-out for readers' contributions for the listeners household talks. Readers sent in recipes and household hints which, if selected to be part of the programme, a fee of 10s 6d would be paid to 'cover publication in either the *Radio Times* or any future Household Booklet if the BBC wish to use them for this purpose.'

In 1929, the BBC published a volume of extracts from their series of 'household talks' (BBC 1929), reprinted with illustrations, diagrams and notes supplied by the Empire Marketing Board, with the aim of encouraging housewives to purchase

goods from across the Empire overseas, in preference to other foreign produce (ibid., p. 7). Described as a pamphlet, it ran to one hundred and seventy-six pages, with twelve photographs and several illustrations. At the time it sold for one shilling and contained information in separate sections covering talks on furniture and furnishings, cooking and recipes, on keeping fit, dressmaking and renovations, in the garden, the charm of bee-keeping, poultry keeping and on keeping rabbits. Each section contained several talks supplemented by listeners recipes, in the case of the cookery section.

The published pamphlet, or more accurately paperback book, appears to contain some write-ups of individual talks, although recordings do not exist to verify this, (such as *Household Talk* regular Mrs Clifton Reynolds discussing Kitchen Stoves and Cookers (BBC 1929, p. 36) which may have corresponded to the broadcast on 'Alternative Ways of Cooking' from December of 1928 (Radio Times 1928b) and also some which were composites of several talks (such as Mrs D. D. Cottingham Taylors section on 'Making Preserves' (BBC 1929, p. 39) which featured recipes for summer and autumn jams and also marmalades (all containing ingredients grown within the Empire). The inclusion of a coloured, illustrated cover and several pages of black and white photographs to accompany each talk, indicate an elevated, more spectacular publication than simply a reproduction of educational talks. The format, published only a few years after the formation of the BBC itself, additionally suggests an early attempt to innovate a link between broadcasts and audiences.

Celebrities began to emerge through the radio cooking talks, with two notable names gaining popularity. Xavier Marcel Boulestin was French and owned a restaurant in London. He aimed to encourage listeners to be more 'continental' in their cooking. By contrast, Mrs Arthur Webb, notable for using her husband's name professionally, was more traditional in her approach, focusing on British fare. Both Boulestin and Webb released cookbooks throughout the period of broadcast, which did not only follow the recipes on radio, including as well others not discussed during broadcasts.

I discuss Boulestin in detail in later chapters; here I focus on Mrs Arthur Webb as a 'case study' of radio cookery. Famous for her demonstrations on preserving and

bottling later, Mrs Arthur Webb first appeared on radio at the BBC in 1932 giving a talk about Marmalade (Radio Times 1932) in a format which presented Webb as an established cook, passing her hints to other housewives listening in. Webb appeared as a popular BBC radio cooking personality on radio until 1951, where she presented a talk on making good use of an abundance of rhubarb (Radio Times 1951c), before her death in 1957 at the age of 83 (Internet Movie Database 2020).

In 1933, Webb published a short series of two pamphlets to accompany her series *Economical Cookery* (Webb 1933). The listing in the *Radio Times* urged listeners to purchase the pamphlets to make it easier for them to follow recipes and to help Webb as she would know that listeners had the written instructions too. The listing claimed 'Listeners to these talks will find their value doubled if they have by them the penny pamphlet, *Economical Cookery,* obtainable from the Publications Department, B.B.C. and all B.B.C. Offices (price Id., 2d. post free), in which the recipes referred to each week are printed with full directions. If the talker can be certain that all listeners have the pamphlet, he or she can devote the limited time to really important details.' (Radio Times 1933c).

The pamphlets included 'Recipes and illustrations for the new series of cookery talks to be broadcast by Mrs Arthur Webb at 10.45am every 'Tuesday from 3 January to 28 March 1933' and 'Tuesday from 4 April to 25 July 1933' respectively. The covers clearly stated that they were 'Published by the British Broadcasting Corporation' and sold for one penny (BBC 1933). They contained printed versions of talks covering topics such as Scrags of Mutton from January 17th (p. 9) and The Necklace Pudding from March 14th (p. 24) over thirty pages, although almost every second page was a full-page advert, for items such as Belling Electric Cookers (p. 4) and Fyffes Bananas (p. 25). The pamphlets were illustrated throughout with cartoon style drawings.

The *Radio Times* boasted that Webb sold close on 160,000 copies of her talks in pamphlet form (Radio Times 1935a). Additionally, they reported in 1933 that 'there is a mistaken notion, often given wide publicity, that the time at which morning talks are given is an unsuitable one for the audience for which they are intended. The most recent proof that this is not the case is the arrival at Broadcasting House of 20,000 odd applications for recipes as a direct result of the

autumn cookery series. Letters support this. Paradoxical as it may sound, the people who really work are quite ready and able to afford fifteen minutes to listen to something they really want to know' (Radio Times 1933a). This was an increase on previous printed talks, which the *Radio Times* noted 'the autumn series of cooking talks by Miss Helen Simpson proved almost embarrassingly popular and resulted in nearly 16,000 requests for recipes (Radio Times 1933b).

The following year, Webb published a book of the same name, *Economical Cookery,* published by George Newnes Ltd (Webb 1934). The book is not branded as connected to the BBC at all, but a short mention is given by the author ahead of the contents page; 'I wish to acknowledge the courtesy and generosity of the British Broadcasting Corporation in giving me permission to include in this book some of my recipes which have been given in my broadcast Talks.'

The book is quite different from the pamphlet published to accompany the talks. It was divided into recognisable sections covering different kinds of recipe – such as One-pot Cookery, Cakes and Cookies, Soups that Satisfy and Jellies and Jelly-making. Each chapter contained a short narrative to introduce the topic, a selection of recipes and Webbs' own tips and tricks for success, and there are several black and white photographs included. However, where Webb herself is shown it is only her hands at work in the kitchen, and never her face. The tone of the book remains instructional and although her name and reputation from the radio broadcasts are highlighted, her personality is not at the forefront. A review from the time described Webb as 'talking to her readers in a friendly way… about very simple methods of cookery' (Birmingham Gazette 1934). The reviewer could 'almost imagine her addressing a group of pupils in a cookery lesson' but ultimately dismissed the book as 'boring', with reference to the preliminary chats which would leave the reviewer thinking, as she returned to the book time and time again 'yes, I have read that before, now let me have the recipe.' Additionally, she found some of Webb's recipes lacking in sufficient detail to ensure success, stating 'It is no good giving exact quantities for some ingredients and not for all' in relation to a controversial recipe for Horseradish Sauce, where the quantity of horseradish was not specified.

Webb published several other cookbooks with themes which connected to her many radio broadcasts. *Farmhouse Cookery* compiled recipes for traditional dishes from her talks on farmhouses of Britain (Radio Times 1935b), which Webb discovered by travelling round the farms of Britain (Webb 1935) while *Doctor in the Kitchen (Invalid Cookery)* gave several health boosting recipes (Webb 1935) some of which had previously featured in BBC broadcasts (Radio Times 1933c). As the second world war broke out, Webb published a volume of recipes for *Wartime Cookery* (Webb 1939) similarly linked to her radio broadcasts of *Making The Most of A Wartime Larder* (Radio Times 1939c) and *Cooking in Wartime* (Radio Times 1939d).

Development of Television

As we have seen, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) was established in 1922 (as the British Broadcasting Company), with a strong set of public service principles – namely to inform, to educate and to entertain (Briggs 1985). These principles informed the BBC's remit on radio, and then on television when the service was established.

Television test broadcasts began in 1928, using two different technological systems (APTS 2019). One was developed by Baird; the other by Marconi. Initially both systems were in competition with each other, in a race to establish the first public broadcasts (Crisell 1997). Although the name (John Logie) Baird is the one that remains linked to 'television' today, the Marconi system became the system used by the BBC after 1936 (Leggatt 1986).

The first television broadcasts were received by only a few hundred homes in London; those who were fortunate enough to have the necessary money to purchase a television set. At that time, sets cost around twenty-six guineas; in today's terms around four thousand pounds, equivalent to eight months wages for an average Londoner that year, or the price of a small car (Hilmes 2003). As such, only a small proportion of households could afford the new technology. In addition, early adopters were naturally low in number. Some people were suspicious of television generally, and of its sustainability (Briggs 1970). Commentators at the

time wondered if it could really take over from the beloved wireless sets which sat in homes up and down the land.

Baird had been promoting his television in places like Selfridges, the London department store, since 1925, to attract new sales ahead of the first planned public broadcasts (APTS 2019). During this time, he established a series of test broadcasts, directly to the owners of these sets. Although a full record of test dates and locations exists in the Alexandra Palace Television Society Archive, details of the exact broadcasts were not always recorded.

After 1936, the BBC decided to establish a consistent broadcasting system for Britain, ending the initial competition, moving towards collaboration to find the best system which could be available at that time (see Medhurst 2022 for more detail).

Experimental broadcasts

Just as research on early television history has increased in recent years, so have the number of titles which help to expand our knowledge of how and why television became to be such a presence in our lives. Social Historian Asa Briggs (see Janes Yeo 2017 for background details) was invited to research and write a major series of five volumes plotting the institutional history of the BBC, this was published beginning in 1961 and can be seen as the beginning of not only the study of television, and the creation of the BBC Written Archives (Taylor 2020). Briggs documented the dual broadcasting roles of radio and television, which covered the experimental phase of early television. More recently, and often counter acting the notion that somehow television simply 'appeared' in our homes, studies by Galili (2020), Medhurst (2022) and Weber (2022) have paved the way for a robustly researched discussion on the history of television before established television broadcasts themselves. Galili considers the emergence of television, from 1878 and to 1939, placing the genealogy of televisions' own historiography into context, looking at the development of televisual technologies, and how they should be understood in relation to the development of cinema and film, moving the discourse and debate between the two mediums further back in history than the often-researched periods. Medhurst (2022) provides a contextual understanding of

developments in early television from 1927 to the first official public broadcasts of 1936, as a context to his wider discussion of the subsequent first three years of BBC television production and public broadcasts. Medhurst outlines the experimental stages of the early television technology and service, from 1929 to 1932 (p. 56) and then a more focused experimental phase between 1932 and 1935 (p. 77) prior to the launch of the 'high-definition' service in 1936 (p. 109). To further widen the experimental nature of these early tests, Currie established in the introductory chapter of his *Concise History of Broadcasting* (1995) that early performers (1929/1930) stood in what looked like a telephone kiosk to be 'televised' to only a few experimental homes (p. 10).

Weber (2022) sets out to provide detail of the important history of how television as a domestic concept as well as a commodity for mass audiences was promoted, publicised, and demonstrated to the public, using a range of archival research focusing on inter-war public displays of television to these large and 'first' audiences (p. 28) from countries that were key in the development of early television – namely Britain, Germany, and the United States - to clarify the entangled histories of interwar television and its symbolic, cultural, political, and social implications. Weber demonstrates how these early exhibitions initially drew, and eventually fixed perceptions of what television would become in domestic settings after World War II. By outlining how television was staged as an attraction at exhibitions, Weber also plots a framework to aid understanding of what happened after television became accepted as a domestic medium, connecting her research to various other strands of television historical research such gender, class, technology, audience, advertising, and entertainment.

Weber demonstrated that television was wisely promoted as a 'modern miracle' (p. 114) which 'nourished a culture of astonishment' not through spectacular content, but public display (p. 137). She then further explores the domestication of television from outside the home, tackling the complexities involved in showcasing a private, domestic medium such as television through promotion in public spaces (p. 255) and the connected gendering of television on and off the screen, through the establishment of television sets as desirable 'feminine objects' as well as respectable objects for family entertainment (p. 313). Weber provides a conclusive

epilogue collecting experiments in television past and present which led to a normalisation of television as a domestic medium (p. 348).

The strength of Weber's argument lies in the central notion that to explore 'Television before (broadcast) TV' a wide range of interconnected research methodologies need to be employed. While other researchers have chosen to look primarily at institutional records, aspects of material culture, technological developments, or accounts of those involved, Weber makes a positive case for connecting all of these and more together. Her central thesis is that images, advertisements, and illustrative publications from the time are critical to understand that 'television before TV was not without content' (p. 348). Instead, the rich information and associated images presented demonstrate the commodification of television as a domestic consumer good (p. 314), a symbol of harmonious family life (ibid.) and interestingly as a double commodification, an object for purchase and an advertising feature (p. 323) often featuring images of women operating the sets. The book itself contains one hundred images, used deliberately to underline the visual medium of television before TV (p. 38).

Weber introduces some key and unexpected ideas, cleverly illustrating the concept of participation of 'ordinary' people and audience participation in early exhibition broadcasts. People were encouraged to 'come and be televised' (p. 173) at Radio Olympia by the BBC if they felt they had interesting stories to tell. This performed the dual function of establishing familiarised audiences for the television broadcasters and at the same time creating 'free' content to fill airtime (p. 176). Weber introduces the alternative idea that exhibition spaces, and indeed department stores (p. 265), were used to trial and demonstrate different but similar technology, television sets and formats (p. 196) adding greatly to the established histories of 'testing' which are ordinarily presented from an institutional perspective, such as the BBCs trials of Marconi and Baird systems.

The Alexandra Palace Television Society holds the Programmes as Broadcast records for early television in Britain. Alexandra Palace became the home of early television in Britain. These records detail the programmes which were broadcast between 1936 and 1939, and an earlier volume of records documents the experimental programmes from 30th October 1928 onwards, which the Society

classifies as ‘30th October 1928: Inauguration of experimental television transmission of still pictures by the Fultograph process from Daventry; ended 31st October 1929; restarted 8th April 1930 and ended finally 25th June 1932’ (ATPS 2019). The records detail the dates and times of any experimental transmissions, including test transmission of still photographs. Many recorded details are technical, but where information on what was included in the experiments is available, these records document that. On Monday 30th September 1929, an experimental broadcast took place at 11am, including a comedian and a singer, and a letter was read out; a typical example. Other entries show that planned transmission did not happen and give the reasons. Most entries detail comedians, singers, impersonators and entertainers, and occasionally other features such as fashion parades and art exhibits were broadcast too. Similar Programmes as Broadcast were subsequently recorded by the BBC once public broadcasts commenced. The records contain no note of any experiments relating to food, cookery, kitchens or indeed of any of the personalities who would later appear on the early television food and cooking programmes.

The first broadcasts

By November 1936, the new television system was ready to ‘go live’ and the first official public broadcast was scheduled for Monday 2nd November. The BBC publicised the schedules in the *Radio Times*, now expanded to include listings for television (Radio Times 1936a). Prominence was still given to listings on radio, however. A day of celebratory broadcasts were planned (ibid), although the service only broadcast between the hours of 3 and 4:30pm, and then again from 9 until 10:30pm.

Viewers were enticed by programmes which initially told the story of the development of the television system, how television programmes were put together and the technology that lay behind broadcasting in general. Interludes by orchestras were planned.

During the 1930s the BBC remained ‘experimental’ in terms of television broadcasting, leading the world. Programmes for women, and in particular housewives, appear to have been part of this wider experiment, showcasing a

range of types and styles, which covered the aims to 'educate, inform and entertain' in programmes which appeared to speak to different audiences. While television services were closed down during war-time in Britain, from 1939, considerable debate occurred within the BBC about the 'claim on resources' that television could have (Briggs 1995). When television services in Britain resumed in 1946, Britain was already seven years behind in the development of regular, mass-audience television broadcasts.

Mary Adams, Head of Television Talks at the BBC, gave a lecture in 1949 about Television and Entertainment, focused on the future of both (Adams 1949). During the talk, Adams noted that early television programmes, although covered by the remit of the BBC to be informative and educational, were mostly entertainment based and 'for the relaxation of viewers' primarily (p. 195), suggesting that 'educational values of an informal kind' (p. 196) were less prominent.

The collected resources of institutional and public archives, and digital archives, provide a clearer picture of what was broadcast at the time, although we cannot view it directly. Though some of the programmes were pre-recorded on film for broadcast, the vast majority were presented live, and therefore not recorded or preserved for future audiences to view.

1930s – Education

The 1930s were considered to be a 'decade of drama' (Patten 2015, p. 101). Prior to the breakout of war, Britain saw unemployment levels rise to over two million (ibid., p. 102). The 1930s was a decade of massive, and at times, contradictory, social changes, with large-scale unemployment in older heavy and extractive industries (Lyon 2018). The Government began a 'Buy British' drive to encourage home grown industry and farming. Evacuation of children from the large cities began ahead of the War. Domestic science classes began in schools (Patten 2015, p. 103) and a slimming craze resulted in a drop of the sales of potatoes (ibid., p. 102).

Class

Social Class and concepts of ideology are central to any history of twentieth century Britain and the understanding of social change (Carnevali 2007). Scholars argue that cultural beliefs held within distinct social classes drive forward our societies or hold them in place. Food and class are connected – whether we view food from a functional perspective (we must all eat to survive) maintaining the system (Goody 1982), or from within a structuralist perspective (we strive to use food to elevate ourselves from the social class we are born into) as Marxists view this, linking identity and society. Benson (2005) argues that in seeking to understand social developments, attention needs to be paid to the material circumstances of day-to-day life. Food can be an important marker in society of class, from availability and security of food, to knowledge and skill in the preparation and consumption of food.

The food system today is shaped by industrialisation and mechanisation of process, supply, and provision of food. Global companies have seized responsibility for food, ending a previous reliance in society of growing, sharing, and trading in food locally (Tansey and Worsley 1995). This social change can be analysed through Marxist theories. Prior to the War, traditional dishes were popular and canned foods, packet mixes and 'modern' kitchen equipment such as quick boiling kettles and electric toasters were beginning to appear in kitchens just as households looked to stockpile canned goods in readiness for a return of rationing (Patten 2015, p. 102).

Bourdieu (1972), himself a structuralist, discusses the concepts of 'taste' and 'distinction' as members of society attempt to differentiate themselves from others within their class structure to emulate a higher class and elevate their status. Elements of distinction are collected as 'capital' to demonstrate differences, whether actual or perceived. In terms of food, 'culinary capital' can be demonstrated through the acquisition of new skills, through the ability to discuss and use the 'higher' language of culinary differences. Adopting culinary capital into everyday lifestyles has been a way to demonstrate upward social mobility. Bourdieu established distinction as an explanation for self-identity between different classes using food as an example of aspirational mobility.

Television can be seen as a vehicle for the transport of knowledge across class divides, with the normative paradigm assuming the audience to be a 'mass' (Morley 1980) and television food and cooking programmes have been no exception. In recent years, discussions have focused on whether food and cooking programmes have been 'education' or 'entertainment'. As already stressed, early broadcasts were received by very few people (Medhurst 2022) who could afford to install an expensive television set in their homes, suggesting a spectacular 'entertainment' function rather than a more mundane ordinariness. At that time, those homes tended to have staff responsible for sourcing and preparing food for consumption by the household (Benson 2005).

Scannell (1996) establishes that before the war, the working classes were marginalised as both an audience and a subject, only receiving recognition on regional radio. However, after the war, the working classes became a major centre of attention in terms of both morale raising and propaganda, despite this period being difficult as a broadcaster for the BBC (Briggs 1979). People became 'obsessed with food' and also the 'art of eating' during the war, as food was restricted and limited (Dickson-Wright 1999, p. 289).

Following the post-war flurry of programmes sponsored by the Ministry of Food to encourage housewives to make good use of available produce, food and cooking programmes began to introduce, or reintroduce, concepts of distinction and eating out-with class restrictions. DeBord (1994) proposed the notion of post-war society entranced by spectacle as a leisure activity, as a central notion of situationist theory, a social dream, which transfers to people watching food and cooking programmes solely for entertainment, and to support 'distinction' discussions. Barthes (1973) looked at the transmission of values and ideologies, and was among the first to connect these to television (McQueen 1988). Ellis (2002) saw television as a 'witness to reality' in the modern consumer era, with leisure programmes developing in the space between talk and documentary. Television has been seen as a 'cold' medium (McLuhan 1964) with food and cooking programmes at the chillier end of acceptable viewing messages, allowing viewers to 'do more' following watching a cooking programme. This mirrors views outlined by Goody (1982) on differentiated cuisines, exploring 'high' and 'low' cuisines in society.

Tominc (2018) looked at the construction of class and lifestyle through the lens of food and cooking programmes and advice, arguing that the consumer audiences let themselves be both educated and entertained while watching others transform their lives; ultimately food media were thus a representation of taste positioned as a means of acquiring cultural (and culinary) capital.

1940s – Information

The 1940s were dominated by war. Many lives in Britain consisted of hard work, voluntary service and sheltering from bombings which devastated the country (Patten 2015, p. 128). Food rationing was again introduced in 1940 and extended into the 1950s, despite the war coming to an end in 1945. The Ministry of Food was established and began to encourage people to be creative and imaginative with food, as a necessity (ibid., p. 129).

The foundations of the NHS were established (Carnevali 2007). Radio programmes aimed at women, such as *Woman's Hour* on the BBC, began, (Patten 2015, p. 128) with an estimated one thousand one hundred and ninety-six wartime broadcasts on the topic of food (Briggs 1970).

In the early 1940s, there were divergent views about class and culture. As Britain emerged from the war, people hoped for a better standard of living (Kynaston 2008, p. 41), some felt that the BBC was guilty of broadcasting 'too many post-war plans' (p. 42). Kynaston documented however that the working classes hoped for changes in employment and indicators of standards of living before the NHS was established (p. 43). In 1947, Kynaston put forward the view that the 'first generation of television personalities' were also emerging; including Philip Harben on his list (p .212). Kynaston suggested that Harben was famous for 'using his own family rations' at first on screen in 1947 (p. 212). Picture quality and signal strength were still limited at this time, especially when compared to the 'extremely high standard of sound broadcasting' (ibid.); television sets were 'still expensive and difficult to get' (ibid.). Audience research at the time reported that 'the picture itself still seems very primitive' (ibid.) when compared to cinema; watching television for 'as much as an hour is liable to give one the same kind of headache as

going to the early cinema did' (p. 213). Already, disputes among viewers over the appeal of 'variety' based programmes, as well as demonstrating the appeal of television (p. 214), were balanced with reports that most viewers at the time switched their television sets on for at least an hour an evening (p. 215). So television was not yet 'the people's medium' (p. 214).

Writing in 1949 early television producer Mary Adams noted that 'Cookery demonstrations are frequent afternoon fare, and it has been remarked that television might possibly succeed in urging British housewives along new paths of culinary adventure. There are also programmes on home management, house decoration and other domestic arts. Most of these programmes are specifically directed to women viewers during afternoon transmissions' (Adams 1949p. 198).

Gender

Arnold (2023) provides an in-depth analysis of women's role in early television, in both Britain and America, before and including 1950, examining gender roles with relation to the technology of television, consumerism, television production and general experiences of early television. Like many recent explorations, Arnold begins by looking at a 'pre-television history' (pp. 21-46), before looking at television's earliest years (pp. 47-67) and then, directly, she examines the roles women played in early television, and the role television as a domestic medium played in aspects of gender. The BBC which Arnold documents is a gendered one (p. 69), despite their own view of themselves as an egalitarian institution. Arnold revises media historiographies from a feminist perspective, linking the pioneering work of Murphy (2016) and Irwin (2011) to reinstate the history of women at the BBC. Arnold argued that the BBC used female expertise on early demonstration-based television programmes, including cookery, in 1936, which drew some criticism from audiences over their 'carefully constructed representations of female expertise' and led to a 'steer away' from instructional programmes in 1937 (p. 82) during the BBC's 'experimental years' (p. 87) before entering a more 'professionalised' period of television in the 1940s (p. 93).

This early professionalisation of domestic labour was addressed by Adams at the time (1949). 'When we consider the more formal aspects of teaching by television,

two considerations come to mind. The first concerns the personality of the teacher… Television has not yet developed personalities in the same way [as radio], but in my opinion its capacity for doing so is even greater' (p. 202).

Arnold established gender as an 'important category in (this) emerging consumer economy' (p. 133) with women as 'central participants' reflected in the language of the 'housewife' to refer to female consumers, which does not have a male equivalence (p. 135). Arnold demonstrated a paradox in the assumption that female consumers had 'some form of masculine rationality and agency through their purchasing power' (p. 138).

Audience research took longer to become established in Britain than America (p. 189), partly Arnold argues due the absence of advertising on the BBC. In her talk, Adams (1949) clarified that 'Advertising is not permitted, so that sponsorship, which in America determines the nature and purpose of programmes, is absent from our screen. But the rules which are followed successfully in sound broadcasting are less easy to interpret in vision. The viewers cannot shut his eyes to posters, or products, if they stare back at him from the screen' (p. 199). This led the BBC itself to choose what to provide based on what they felt was in the 'public interest' (p. 189), prior to any competition, resulting in the BBC ultimately giving female viewers not what they wanted, 'but what the BBC thought its female audience wanted' (p. 190). Early audience feedback showed that programmes including Moira Meighn's *Quarter of an Hour Meals* - discussed in later chapters - and other broadcasts categorised as 'women's programmes' had high disapproval ratings, mainly as demonstrations of household tasks were 'of little interest to those who could afford television sets' (p. 197). Arnold concluded that the 'female audience' was not a 'social fact' (p. 207), there was no cohesive female audience, but rather many female viewers.

Arnold concluded overall that early television in Britain was founded on 'gender segregation' (p. 217) in both production and consumption, leading to an 'institutional model of gendered television' in the 1950s which left its trace on television which followed (p. 219). In research on television cooking programmes, much of the focus has been on the 'performativity' of particularly female presenters, looking at their clothes, their style, their sexuality and how they engage

each of these to perform a role for the cameras and the ultimately the audience (Lawson 2011, p. 350; Andrews 2012, p. xii).

As in all decades, in London during the 1920s and 1930s, just as television emerged, Matt Cook (2007 pp. 150-154) showed that London was thriving with homosexual culture. Many scholars have taken a set of values which are heteronormative, assuming that women are expected to spend most of the time in the home, and therefore engaged and interested in food, cooking and health, leading to an exclusion of domesticity and homosexuality (Houlbrook 2005, p. 110). The establishment of television services in Britain in 1936 coincided with a shift in gender roles with World War Two. Expectations and roles changed again following the war with societal pressures to excel in domesticity, and with the promotion of the concept of 'housewife'.

In consideration of how 'other' non-heteronormative domesticity might have entered the picture, Bourne (2019) outlined the representation of specifically gay male people on television in the 'golden age' of the 1950s to the 1970s. Bourne began by arguing that when the BBC was established, homosexuality was not a subject fit for public discussion (p. 29). But the BBC broadcast programmes featuring Douglas Byng, a drag artist (p. 34), from 1938 onwards, crediting him as 'the first female impersonator to appear on television' (p. 35). Byng was gay himself (p. 36), and so probably the first homosexual person to appear on television as such – albeit coded as drag - in Britain (see also BBC website LGBT Timeline[1]).

Alongside the history of food, cooking and communication, scholars such as Thumin (2004) and Arnold (2021) have discussed notions of sex and gender. Some foods have been seen as 'masculine' and some 'feminine'. Discussion of cooking has followed the same divisions of gender and gender identity. As discourse on feminism increased throughout the twentieth century, parallel discussion about 'food roles' in society have been argued, developed, and addressed.

[1] https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/lgbtq/lgbtq-timeline

Sanderson (1995) described the British population of the 1930s as part of the 'generation of silence' regarding homosexuals (p. 6); portrayals of homosexual people in the media were rare, and rarely positive. Moran (2013) argued that 'comic homosexuals' were a staple of the TV screen' (p. 213). Sanderson suggested 1954 as the year in which the first British television programme to 'tackle the subject of homosexuality' was broadcast (p. 16), and then the 1970s, 1980s, and beyond that, open representations became more common in soaps, dramas, and films on televisions (p. 21) (see also Howes (1993) for an encyclopaedia format history). Howes' aim was to ensure that homosexual representations on television did not remain invisible, or stereotyped as an important contribution to homosexual culture, and not hidden or secret (Bourne 2019, p. 19).

Broadcasters were part of the propaganda of the housewife, from radio programmes which targeted women such as *Women's Hour,* focusing on issues of the home during their talks. When television emerged, food and cookery programmes were soon established based upon the demonstration style of radio talks and housed within Women's Departments or generally under Education. Food and cooking programmes were not seen as 'important', as they were aimed at women and work done within the home.

1950s – Entertainment

The 1950s saw further societal changes in Britain. Generally, feelings of elation following the end of the war had ended, but levels of employment were good. The Festival of Britain in 1951 attempted to celebrate with a sense of pride in all things British (Briggs 1979). Queen Elizabeth was crowned in 1953 (Patten 2015, p. 156).

Housewives were reportedly working fifteen-hour days, with longer hours recorded at weekends (ibid.). As more women returned to work outside the home, the popularity of labour-saving gadgets increased. Erstwhile servants of the 1940s did not return to their previous employers (ibid.). The 1950s was the era of the 'teenager' as well as an increase and interest in holidays abroad (ibid.). Immigration was high, as Britain attracted increased numbers of people from across the Commonwealth. This brought about changes in food with Coronation Chicken featuring prominently in the Coronation celebrations in 1953 (ibid., p.

157). People looked 'abroad' for ideas of more 'continental' (opposed to simply French) culinary ideas were promoted by the popular food writer Elizabeth David (Dickson-Wright 1999, p. 11). Also, convenience foods were popular, with an increase in frozen products as well as items such as teabags (Patten 2015., p. 158). Britain saw a divergence in cooking preferences, with a return to pre-war 'traditional' food, and looking abroad for inspiration (ibid., p. 160). Cooking demonstrations, which combined food knowledge with new kitchen equipment, became popular in towns and cities across Britain (ibid., p. 158).

When Jack Hulbert, an entertainer and television producer, gave a lecture in 1949 on *Television and Entertainment* (Hulbert 1949), he predicted that television would 'revolutionise the whole of the entertainment world' (p. 204) and particularly noted that the 'inordinate enthusiasm' of the producers and heads of department at the Alexandra Palace, suggesting 'it is this enthusiasm that is developing a new-born art so rapidly' (ibid.). Hulbert called television a new medium which brought 'into your own home every form of stage art, and film art, as well as talks and interviews, and topical and sporting events at the very moment they are happening' (ibid.). He went on to describe the 'creative art' of television as 'new and exciting' (p. 207). 'It is quite amazing how that little picture in that little frame grips your attention. The picture compels attention whereas radio or sound merely invites it' (p. 205). Hulbert predicted that entertainment on television would 'raise the standard of taste' (p. 213), and that 'television will make new stars, and the established stars of stage will receive greater publicity than they have had before.' Television had not yet reached all of Britain, but Hulbert suggested that 'when television is established all over the country, the public will flock to the theatre to see in person the stars who have made a success on the television screen' (p. 213).

By 1951, television watching was still not a majority pursuit (Kynaston 2009, p. 51) although things began to shift a little by 1952, with reports that it was now 'much more fun to stay in…' for entertainment with one person reporting that 'my father has recently bought a television set' (p. 51) meaning friends and family gathered to watch television. Later in 1952, changes in television changed the habits of working people, 'I no longer listen to the radio. I rarely go out in the evenings' (p. 108).

Audiences

For a television programme to exist, and to be popular, it requires an audience. Producers of early television programmes were increasingly aware of their audiences (which will be discussed later in this thesis), as they developed and broadcast programmes. In large-scale studies of audiences and audience reaction became common in the 1970s (see Morley 1980 for example).

In the 1950s, the BBC began to take increased note of 'audience reaction' (some research had previously taken place on pre-war television, and within the BBC through Listener Research), explaining to viewers how and why they monitored viewing habits (TV Mirror 1953c). In the article, *What the BBC knows about you*, they explained the process of audience research, including how they spoke to three thousand people every day on what they thought of television and radio. They used this to compile an 'appreciation index' – programmes such as *What's My Line* scored between 90-95. Television meant changes in home life, also recorded in the research. 60% of viewers went to the cinema less often than before they had a TV set. 40% cut down on book reading. Less than 10% listened to radio during television hours, of those that had both. The BBC recorded that those who bought television sets were not exclusively the wealthy; only one tenth of viewing audiences earned more than one thousand pounds a year. Half earnt between two hundred and twenty-five and four hundred pounds. The BBC said that this showed that television was 'worth the money' (ibid.).

Small screens were not a problem, if home audiences were close enough to them to view the screen as if it was the same size as a cinema. Moran demonstrated that domestic audiences were 'middle-class, though not exclusively so' (2013, p. 43). Not all audiences were happy, however. One viewer wrote to the *TV Mirror* to ask the BBC's newly appointed Editor for Women's Television to consider 'more stimulating fare for us' (housewives) instead of filling our already woolly brains with more recipes and household hints – give us politics and wider fields to think about' (TV Mirror 1953g).

By 1953, television was becoming part of the 'weekly ritual' of working people (Kynaston 2010, p. 338), Moran concluded that the 'social make up' of most

viewers probably accounted for evening programmes beginning at 9pm, ‘late-dining middle classes would finish eating about fifteen minutes beforehand’ (p. 43).

By 1956, radio was still dominant over the still expensive television. Only forty percent of middle-class households had a television set (p. 464) and only twenty-six percent of working-class households. 1957 was the first time that television listings were set out *before* radio information in the *Radio Times* (Kynaston 2015, p. 11) indicating a shift in dominance, and as recognition of the recent competition element which arose from the establishment of ITV. New food products were coming to the market, but still economical hints remained a staple of many publications, including those from Harben (ibid., p. 62). By 1960, food consumption had increased steadily (p. 472), and tastes widened. According to Patten, increased food advertising on television (p. 471) ‘to match the gay, practical kitchens of today and bring a sense of adventure to cooking’ (p. 472).

Independent Television was founded in 1954, broadcasting from 1955, which broke the monopoly previously held by the BBC (Sendall 1982). This was matched by a growing sign of consumer affluence after the war, which promoted a modernisation of society (Ellis 2002).

To establish patterns of audience reaction, Morley (1980) and others developed methodologies to encode and then decode the messages which audiences received when watching particular programmes. This allowed more than a simple stratification of noting what was watched and when, but what was popular and why, and what different messages were received and understood by different audiences and classes. Which parts of a programme were most engaging – the content, the format, the presenter, or the style. Research shifted from what was the most popular programme at any given time (primarily a ratings analysis) to which programmes were most successful within genres and between genres.

If television is to be viewed as an expression of social reality and the world in general, then the development of television food and cooking programmes can provide a window to view this more sharply. Food and cooking programmes feature and play heavily upon idea of consumerism and social integration. It was

suggested that the personalities featured on screen became experts at selling 'things' and selling a lifestyle which audiences could aim for. This kept viewers coming back as well as an increase in sales of items featured.

Celebrity

The perception of programmes led to a new discourse analysis in media and television studies looking at notions of ideology, power, history (of genres) and media fandom. Was it possible to create an audience, to manufacture fans? Analysis of why audiences watched and became 'fans' of programmes and personalities has been considered through looking at para-social interaction and relationships. Audiences felt connected to people that they saw on television, either through representation, aspiration, or imitation. Moran (2013) argued that early 'television could still not decide if it was a public spectacle or a domestic hobby' (p. 40). Looking back to 1939, a time when speakers calmly addressed the individual speaker, and the sound of frying fat on food and cooking programmes would be 'so convincing' (ibid.). Moran (2013) later demonstrated that television food and cookery programmes had long provided vivid proof of the power of television to transform daily habits' (p. 311).

The history of celebrity is closely linked to the history of communication technology (Schickel 1985), with the search for the authentic person behind the 'manufactured mask of fame' as a signifier of the 'star persona' (Dyer 1998). Dyer suggested that the 'celebrity persona' consisted of everything publicly available about them with their 'authentic selves' rather than their 'fabricated personality' often uncovered in newspapers and magazines (Scannell 1996). Turner argued that the authentic individual which lay behind the public persona made their celebrity more potent (Turner 2004). Studies of later television celebrities uncovered a desire from audiences to establish para-social relationships with their on-screen favourites as an important analysis of fame (Horton and Wohl 1956) and as a surrogate function standing in for absent or non-existent friends (Schickel 1985).

1960s – Infotainment

The 1960s could be categorised by innovations in Space travel and futurism generally (Dickson-Wright 1999, p. 85), as well as international movements such as 'flower power' and hippies, rallying against the system (Patten 2015, p. 191). Technology brought a wealth of kitchen appliances to ordinary homes. Eating out began became popular for those able to afford it. Supermarkets brought 'new' foods, such as pasta, Garlic, and Olive Oil, to the attention of shoppers (Patten 2015, p. 192). The 1960s also saw a decline in the traditional family meal, with a rise in more informal dining and 'TV dinners', while some households threw dinner parties to impress (ibid., p. 193). Cookery lessons in schools were renamed Home Economics, and lessons extended to older adults too attending day or evening classes (ibid., p. 195).

1970s – Edutainment

The 1970s was a decade of unrest. Britain joined the EEC (Patten 2015, p. 227). The voting age was lowered to eighteen (ibid., p. 228). Decimalisation was introduced. Strikes gained national support, resulting in national shortages and a 'three-day week' (ibid., p. 218). Television shut down each night at ten-thirty. Spanish holidays were popular, as were freezer, microwaves, and pressure cookers (ibid., p. 228). Moran (2013) reported that in 1976, Fanny Cradock was known as a 'personality' who was spoken about with more familiarity on the Outer Hebrides than the people living in the outlying farms' (p. 203). Mrs Thatcher became the first British female Prime Minister in 1979. Cookery courses such as the *Cordon Bleu* (Cordon Bleu 1970) appeared in print, and Delia Smith launched a series of simple cookery lessons on television (Patten 2015, p. 231).

Early Television Food and Cooking Programmes in Britain – a review

Food and cooking on television have been connected since the very first television broadcasts and glimpses of food (see Medhurst 2022), just as writing about television food and cooking programmes have been connected as part of the discourse in television studies. Books such as *Food and Cooking on Early Television in Europe* (Tominc 2022) have sought to deepen the discussions beyond a post-1990 focus of readily available examples of television programmes from recent decades by looking back to those early days, raiding written and scant visual

archives to reposition and re-write pioneering presenters and programmes back into history; and to make comparisons across different broadcasters, countries, and perspectives. Two recent titles examine connections between television cooking programmes, celebrity, national identity, and political cultures, which I discuss alongside others in the next section.

Overview works

Towards the end of this PhD research, Tasha Oren's book *Food TV* (2023) was published. Oren begins the book by arguing in 1975 a change occurred in food television (in America) with 'cooking shows' becoming more entertainment based, than before, suggesting that 'virtually all cooking on U.S. television for most of its first 50 years was that cooking was a lesson, a first-person instruction, directly addressing a predominantly female viewer with an invitation to watch, mimic and repeat' (p. 2). Although Oren demonstrates that 'by 1949 cooking shows were so common' on TV (p. 3) they were a 'lesson' and implies they were unremarkable and 'ordinary' (p. 5) (in her brief historical introduction) until the establishment of the Food Network in the 1990s in the United States, which forms the basis for her book. Cooking on television outside of the United States is not mentioned by Oren in this title, unlike her 2013 paper looking at the format of television food and cooking programmes, which briefly mentions the early days of television cookery in both Britain and America (Oren 2013), with reference to Moira Meighn as the first to cook on British screens, followed by Boulestin and then Harben after the war, with Oren pointing to similarities in appearance between Harben and James Beard, who appeared on U.S. screens.

Also published towards the end of this research period was a volume by Joanne Hollows looking at *Celebrity Chefs, Food Media and the Politics of Eating* (Hollows 2022). Hollows begins with an acknowledgement that the topic of 'celebrity chefs' may seem frivolous following recent world events but positions her book as part of the fabric of contemporary life in which these celebrity chefs on television inhabit a high-profile media presence, and therefore have secured a key role in shaping contemporary foodscapes. Hollows outlines an important and often missing outline discussion, interpretation, and clarification of the term 'celebrity chef'. Hollows argues the term is 'problematic' (p. 2) as not all presenters of television

food and cooking programmes are chefs, never mind celebrities, leading some scholars to reject the term completely as it indicates an exclusivity. Hollows argues that as the term is used to indicate a reputation on screen and as it is widely used, has some validation. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, Hollows uses this to set out her exploration of celebrity chefs, food media and politics by drawing on celebrity studies, media history, cultural capital, and gender to uncover the role of celebrity chefs as lifestyle experts who aim to democratise food knowledge.

Hollows includes a 'very brief history' of television food and cooking in her book, summarising the tensions between informing, educating and entertaining audiences and pre and post war television cooking programmes, leading into the more gendered distinction in the 1940s and 1950s of 'slow and careful demonstrations', more entertainment in the 1970s, and variety in the 1990s and beyond (p. 36). Hollows herself cites my own research (Geddes 2022), and others such as Charlesworth (2022), but warns that her introduction to this history is 'brief, and by necessity, incomplete' as an 'exploration of the development of food and cookery programming and celebrity chefs on British television' which she then expertly uses to 'help understand patterns of development from the 1990s onwards' (p. 36) which is the focus of her research. However, her brief history provides an illuminating context to her discussion of 'celebrity chefs' and the changes, and tensions, between 'ordinary' and 'entertaining' television cooking programmes in Britain, which this thesis explores.

In 1998, Strange published a pivotal chapter in the study of television food and cooking programmes in Britain (Strange 1998), recognising that they as a genre had been 'absent from the academic menu' (p. 301), and categorising them into 'Cookery Educative', 'Personality', Tour Educative' and 'Raw Educative' programmes. Strange illustrated four example series to consider, *Delia Smith's Christmas* (1990), *Far Flung Floyd* (1993), *Rhodes About Britain* (1994) and *Madhur Jaffrey's Flavours of India* (1995), with the aim of beginning a discourse into television food and cooking programmes, genre, personality, and style, positioning her research as an 'aperitif' for others to add to. While she makes no mention of television programmes pre-1990 in Britain, her work remains influential to me in this thesis, and many researchers in television food and cooking programmes around the world.

Less successfully, Smith (2020) in her exploration of 'the evolution of food-centric tv', uses conversations with recent television producers as her sole research source, and even more briefly, outlines a history. Smith proposes that Moira Meighn was 'Britain's first Celebrity Chef' (p. 19) followed by some (often incorrect) details on Philip Harben, Marguerite Patten, and Fanny Cradock, describing early television food and cooking programmes as 'teaching' which was 'instructional but dull' until the 'theatre' of Cradock (who she cites, inaccurately, as starting on television in 1949) and others such as The Galloping Gourmet came along in 1969. Smith explores the evolution of television cooking mainly during the past thirty years of British television, from 1990 onwards, with scant mention of what came before.

If the history of television food and cooking programmes in Britain is under-researched, by contrast a similar history and analysis in the United States by Collins (2009) is outlined in her *Watching What We Eat – The Evolution of Television Cooking Shows*. Collins describes three timescales: the first she categorises as the 'early period' (p. 7) between 1946-1962, dominated by 'cooking instruction'; followed by the 'middle' period of 1962-1992, defined by the first appearance of Julia Child (covered in more detail in Polan 2011) until the advent of the Food Network in 1993 (as Oren (2023) also discussed); and lastly the modern period of 1993 until the present day. Collins chooses the term 'evolution' carefully to describe her research, arguing that she is not describing 'an encyclopaedia' (p. 8) but a historical development over time. This historical arc covers the shifting role of women as homemakers to co-workers; the role of food in expressions of creativity and culinary capital; a cultural shift in America from conformity to diversity; and a change of focus from a social life inside the home to one outside the home, and then a desire to have both. Collins does not discuss or mention television food and cooking shows outwith America.

Although Humble (2005) primarily considers the role of cookbooks in the transformation of British Food, she does touch on the connected role of television. She cites Boulestin as the 'first ever television cook' in 1937 (p. 62) which she says is a title often mistakenly given to Philip Harben (p. 150), whom she describes as 'the first after the war' instead, while referencing others such as Moira Meighn,

Marguerite Patten, and Mrs Arthur Webb, only for their cookbooks. Fanny Cradock is described as 'an act' (p. 150) and 'a rather poor cook' who demonstrated 'bizarrely grand' food as domestic entertainment, leading to a period, she argues, in the late 1950s of the 'culture of the gourmet' (p. 151).

The Cultural Historian, Maggie Andrews, considered broadcasting, domesticity, and femininity from a British perspective (2012), used the BBC Written Archives as one of her sources. Andrews took a chronological approach to her historiography, and included the broadcasting celebrities of 'M Marcel Boulestin and C H Middleton' from the BBC in the 1930s, suggesting that Boulestin had an established celebrity (see Figure 1 as an example) reputation (p. 57) which led to his inclusion on television, the 'first really successful television cookery series' (p. 63). Offering Boulestin as a 'performed personality', Andrews sets him against the 'very ordinariness' of the gardening expert, Middleton (p. 79), and later 'the celebrity cook' Marguerite Patten (p. 141) in the 1950s, described in television listings as 'an old friend' (p. 138) alongside the 'daytime cook' (p. 143) and 'TV cooking personality' (p. 144) Philip Harben (p. 143). Andrews discusses the contribution of Fanny Craddock (sic), whom she described as 'the most famous television cook of the 1950s and 1960s' (p. 145) and her role in consumer culture in the 1950s (p. 144) as well as 'gendered power relationships in the domestic sphere' (p. 146) which she also described as 'campness' (p. 147). Andrews draws subsequent evidence for her social history of domesticity from other television genres, such as documentary, soap operas and reality television programmes before returning to television cooking programmes in the 1990s with Nigella Lawson (p. 227), a period she categorises as a shift to 'fantasy and escape' on television.

Tominc (2022) argued that previous research on early television food and cooking programmes, based on archival research, was 'rare' (p. 4), across Europe, aiming to collectively critically examine the role which food programming had on early television, and its subsequent impact. My own chapter in this collection, adds research on Boulestin and Harben (Geddes 2022), while Charlesworth (2022) considered Marguerite Patten. Tominc herself stated that most food television is 'ordinary television' (p. 5) but that through the documentation of the everyday and mundane, television food programmes have affected social and cultural change (p. 5), to 'educate' (p .6) somewhere between education and entertainment (p. 8).

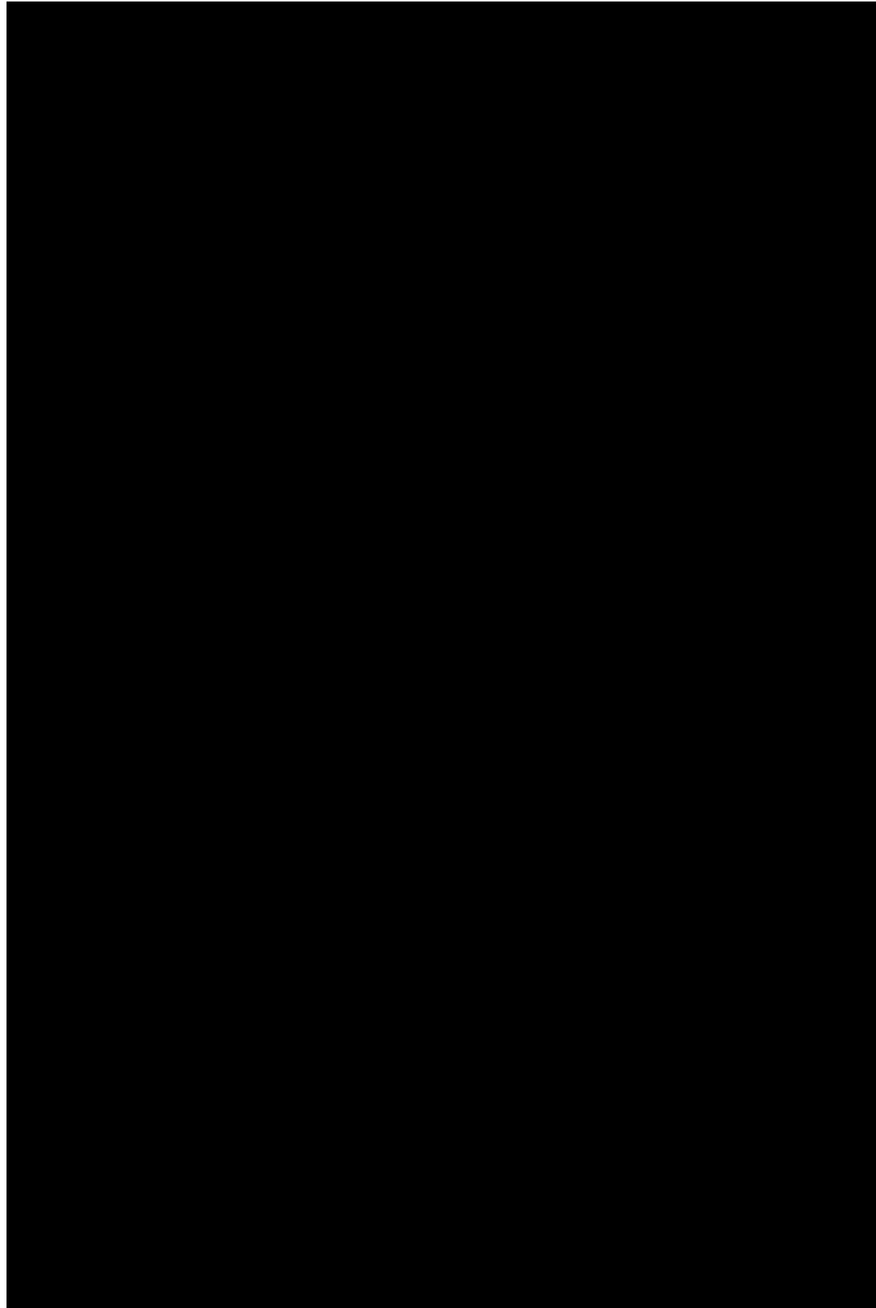

Figure 1. X Marcel Boulestin, advertising material, Regulo Gas

Deepening the European focus, Buscemi (2023) highlighted a similar shift in food culture in Italy, brought about by early food travelogues which reinforced notions of 'sacred' foods (p. 40), dominant Catholic values and the regulation of women in a passive role connected to food and cooking. Taking a more linear approach, Buscemi outlines a period of radical change from the 1970s onwards, both societal and within television where changes to food television were mirrored in progressive changes within Italian politics. Buscemi explores a more conservative approach to food television, arguing that the Berlusconi period of the 1980s and 1990s matched the proliferation of television food programmes and the

development of a (minor, not yet fully developed) genre of television, where happiness and social status could be represented as being found within the home. The 'political history' of food television in Italy Buscemi documents shows that audiences were encouraged to develop culinary capital through food and eating, while a gender shift in presentation of food programmes was prominent.

History Specific

In 2009 Moseley (2009) researched Marguerite Pattens' relationship with television food and cookery and post-war British feminism, using files and records from the BBC Written Archives, the *Radio Times* and collecting oral histories featuring Patten herself. Recognising the return of television in 1946 as a 'key moment in the history of this television genre' (p. 17) she examines daytime television food and cooking programmes, and in particular Patten, who she describes as 'one of the first British television cookery presenters', particularly her role in the feminist agenda. This relatively early documentation of early television food and cooking programmes remains significant, and influential, showing a variety of programmes and features of these early programmes. Moseley demonstrated that while some files at the BBC showed that Patten did sometimes talk about 'entertaining', the focus of her work was on the practical skills working women needed to 'manage everyday cooking' (p. 19). Moseley additionally details some Ministry of Information food films, which could be analysed alongside television work (p. 21), ultimately showing the television scripts to have a 'slow and detailed demonstrative technique' (p. 22) with education to the fore, but with the addition of housewives to the presentation. Moseley demonstrated that Patten often had twenty minutes to demonstrate one recipe (p. 22) and presents this as a contrast with programmes hosted by Harben which were 'suitable for evening transmission' (p. 23). Ultimately, Moseley charts the decline in 'advice to the housewife' as a focus of early television programmes in the late 1950s and 1960s and outlines tensions and differences of opinion between Patten and the BBC at the time, mirroring a shift in society around the 'figure of the working woman' (p. 27) and the 'citizen housewife', a simultaneously public and private figure. Moseley argues that television food and cooking programmes, their presenters and other key production personnel are missing from the key histories of broadcasting in

Britain (p. 28) urging future researchers to enable the re-writing of their contributions back into history (ibid.). This is a key motivation for this research.

Building on this research, Charlesworth (2022) also considers Patten's contribution to the development of early afternoon television food and cookery programmes from the BBC, also making use of the BBC Written Archive materials. Charlesworth considers the housewife audiences, establishing that the preference of the production team at that time was for presenters, especially Patten, to talk 'with' rather than 'at' the (housewife) audience at home (p. 42). Charlesworth pays particular attention to the *Cookery Club* segment which Patten hosted, part of the *About The Home* afternoon magazine programme (p. 44). *Cookery Club* featured recipes sent in by ordinary viewers, as well as a small number of selected viewers invited into the studio to cook once a month (p. 44), which eventually led to some legal issues for the BBC and Patten over copyright and credibility (p. 48). *Cookery Club* ended in 1961 (p. 48) leading, Patten herself felt, to the BBC ending 'make do and mend' programmes and instead moving to feature personalities such as Cradock, who were more glamorous and more akin to 'variety stars' (p. 49).

In Mennell's (1985) volume on eating and taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the present, only Philip Harben is mentioned as significant in relation to television food and cooking programmes. Patten is mentioned for her work in magazines in the 1970s (p. 260). Harben is referred to as 'the celebrated British 'TV Chef' of the 1950s and 1960s' (p. 17) who used his 'celebrity as a TV Chef' (p. 258) and 'vision' (p. 281) to 'create a sense of excitement about cookery in Britain' (p. 258). However, in a small footnote (p. 360) Mennell maintains that although Harben was 'probably still the most famous TV Chef, he was not the first.' Mennell instead suggested that this was Boulestin, but that his 'fame and influence could hardly rival those of Harben' as he only appeared in the very earliest days of television.

The anthropological approach of DeSolier (2013) includes television food and cooking and celebrity television chefs (p. 15), discussing broad concepts focused on later television food and cooking programmes and personalities. She refers to 'Craddock' (sic) as a personality with an emphasis on entertainment broadcasting 'soon after television began' (p. 37).

Bennett (2011) described television food and cooking of the past, with reference to Delia Smith and Fanny Cradock (although he also incorrectly adds an extra D to her surname) as 'staid delivery' compared to the 'performance of pleasure' in more recent presenters such as Jamie Oliver (p. 132), although there is a discussion of Patten and how her 'domestic femininity' shaped her television personality in the 1950s (p. 85). This 'pleasure of the presenter's performance' (p. 118) is given by Bennett as an equal reason to watch, for example, food and cookery programmes, as the information, relating to the work on 'vocationally skilled' (p. 130) performance previously noted by Brunsdon (2005), Moseley (2001) and Hollows (2003).

To further her research into 'ordinary' television, and linked to the notions of para-social relationships, Bonner (2011) looked at 'personality presenters' described as 'television's intermediaries with viewers' speaking directly to viewers, as intermediaries between audiences and 'those who are interviewed, perform or compete on screen' (p. 10). Still looking at 'ordinary television' (p. 4), and primarily at programmes from the 1990s onwards (p. 5), Bonner does consider some earlier examples to illustrate the 'sociable relationship with television' which Scannell (1991) discussed, basing her research in domestic situations where, at the time, most television was consumed (p. 10). Although suggesting that 'few would have thought to describe the well-known figures from the early days of television as celebrities' (p. 75), Bonner does point out that some were featured in magazines aimed at 'fans' which led to the growth in celebrity culture. Widely regarded as the first 'celebrity' on television (Medhurst 1991), Gilbert Harding, at the beginning of the 1950s, Bonner contends that Harben, Boulestin, Patten and Cradock (p. 79) were equally 'productive of celebrity' in the early days of televised food and cooking programmes, considering in more detail personality presenters of 'instructional, informational and infotainment' programmes (pp. 133-154), including domestic programmes on 'practical matters' (p. 133) such as food, she also references the decline, as she asserts, on instructional television in favour of more entertainment based programmes, with Cradock and later Kerr, describing instructional programmes in the earlier days of television as mostly 'daytime, low budget and focused on food preparation alone' (p. 135). Bonner concludes that personality presenters 'perform a valued function across television, guiding

viewers through their programmes, directing them to matters of interest, introducing them to new products and services and attracting viewers to watch in the first place' (p. 177). Further, she argues that watching the 'performance of the presenter' is a key pleasure of television viewing. Bonner argues that often 'personality presenters' perform their roles for a long time, noting spans of five to twenty years as not uncommon (p. 178) linked perhaps to their predictability as part of our 'ordinary familiar lifeworld' of television (p. 179).

Bennett (2011) also discusses the issues of 'ordinariness' with relation to television personalities, regarding the terms negative connotations, particularly regarding mass media and culture (p. 27), suggesting as a term it is problematic and complex (p. 30) disregarding the presenter's authenticity (p. 30), intimacy (p. 32), and expertise (p. 35) as part of the 'television personality system.'

Adding further confusion to the historiography, Norman (1984) credits Boulestin not only as 'The Television Cook', but also first (p. 174) in a 'long and continuous line of television cooks' (p. 157), noted, with C.H. Middleton 'The Television Gardener' for both becoming 'extremely popular personalities.' Norman proposes that the television 'became quickly aware that the 'performer' is as important in 'talks' as in variety and that who presents a subject is as important as the subject presented.'

Institutional works

The development of 'personality presenters' is considered by Asa Briggs in the fourth volume of his institutional history of the BBC (Briggs 1979). He stated that 'only a few completely new television personalities emerged', however, during the first months, among them Richard Hearne, 'a very good television comic', Philip Harben, 'a master of televised cookery', Annette Mills, complete with `Muffin the Mule', a new announcer, Gillian Webb, a RADA student who took the place of Jasmine Bligh when the latter resigned, and the gardener Fred Streeter, television's `Mr. Middleton'. He concluded that they all made life easier in Alexandra Palace.' Briggs went on to discuss audience feedback, clarifying that 'for McGivern [BBC Television controller 1950-1957], who had no information available to him about

audience ratings, it had been 'a good thing to have done' even if it was not `majority viewing' in relation to early television entertainment-based programmes.

People and Personalities

The book, *Cooking People* (Bateman 1966), collected a series of interviews with 'the big names in cookery today' including in the section titled 'Popular Cooks' (pp. 1-64), interviews with Philip Harben and Marguerite Patten. Bateman was interested in what made a cook 'popular', suggesting it may have been publicity from television, a push from a publisher or the cooks' own personality (p. 1). He defined both Harben and Patten as having 'the common touch, with the ability to make people 'sit up and say, 'that's me.' Harben, he said, provided science, cooking vocabulary and 'know-how' while Patten rolled out recipes with 'computer-like precision' He argued that 'the little box exalts ordinary people, turns them into gods. Philip Harben has been such a god" (p. 3) and continued 'in a quite astonishing way, the great god Television lifted him up, as it lifted people like Eammon Andrews and Gilbert Harding. He became a personality. A star, in fact' (p. 10). Bateman adds that other chefs (not working on television) called Harben a 'TV Advertiser' (p. 12).

Bateman interviewed Patten, and begins this section with her own assertion that she was a 'home economist' (p. 18). 'I'm a housewife', he reported, clarifying that 'I write for the very vast readership of housewives. You've got to think of ordinary Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Jones reading it' (p. 18). The interview makes passing reference to her BBC career, naming *Designed for Women* as one of her appearances, focusing on her career as a cookbook and cookery writer. Patten herself discussed her television career in her part-autobiography (Patten 1992), the publicity for which described her as 'the cookery expert for the first TV women's magazine programme, *Designed for Women*.' Chapter Five, *On The Box!,* deals with Patten's television work (pp. 38-45). She refers to her first appearance in *Designed for Women* in 1947 as 'one of the most exciting events of my career' admitting that she had only watched television herself twice previously (p. 40). Patten reported that she was left to choose the demonstration for that appearance – doughnuts - which she said became 'very popular' (p. 40), adding 'I look back on those early days of television with great pleasure – they were such fun and we felt

like pioneers' (p. 40). Patten established that she 'joined forces' with Philip Harben in 1947. She only mentions television much later in 1950 (p. 48) about which she writes that the BBC 'decided that cookery would take on a new look' with the *Cookery Club*. Patten confirmed that none of her television appearances in those early days were recorded (p. 49). She suggested a shift in mood in television with 'media cooks' such as herself; Harben and Cradock more in demand at demonstrations outwith television (p. 49), with variety shows also.

Patten was included in the 1993 BBC published book *Out of the Frying Pan* (Castell and Griffin 1993), described as a social history charting 'seven women who changed the course of postwar cookery' outlining that Patten joined the television service which was 'still in its infancy' (p. 12) cooking in a basic set-up studio kitchen, with an old BBC cooker, performing live (p. 12). The Patten chapter outlines that she 'began to work with another pioneer of cookery on television, Philip Harben' (p. 13) in the 1950s, who is then (incorrectly) described as 'a trained chef from a theatrical family'. Patten's basic studio kitchen was given a 'facelift' with the *Cookery Club* programme, which she became President of (p. 13) presiding over viewers' recipes, and likened to *MasterChef*. He also claimed that 'In spite of the lack of archives… Marguerite's broadcasts have gone down in television history' (p. 14). The chapter concluded that Patten's style of food and cookery programmes were less fashionable in the 1960s, with a shift from afternoon programmes to the evening and entertainment (ibid.) brought around by the Cradocks, suggesting 'they were treated like Variety Stars. I was considered more strait-laced' (ibid.).

Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the social, cultural and technological changes of the period of this thesis. I have outlined some key aspects of the decades covered, including the development of cooking advice before television, and then a discussion of the changes which have already been documented, with the arrival of regular public television broadcasts in 1936. Considered experimental, early television broadcasts touched on aspects of education, information and entertainment. I have also considered aspects of class, gender, audiences,

advertising and celebrity in connection to television food and cooking programmes in Britain.

The themes of ‘ordinary’ television versus ‘spectacular’ television are present in different scholarly works of early television in Britain, and, often with an assumption of one or the other, within early television food and cooking programmes. A detailed analysis of these concepts regarding early television food and cooking programmes has not previously happened, which forms one of the unique contributions to knowledge contained within this thesis. Further, the aspects of both the ‘ordinary’ and the ‘spectacular’ which allowed innovation to occur have not been fully documented, and form a further unique contribution to knowledge in this thesis, which I consider in later chapters.

Summary

In the next chapter, I outline the methods I have used to explore the concepts and issues to do with differing views of ‘ordinary and mundane’ broadcasts, ‘spectacular and entertaining’ television, and the contributions to innovation.

Chapter 3: Methods

Introduction

This chapter connects the previous chapter's focus on the current literature and thinking on the topic of early television in Britain, and early food and cooking programmes, and seeks to apply a methodology to enable the research question to be answered. This chapter provides an outline of my methodology, together with the rationale for the choices I have made in selecting materials to analyse. I consider the place of different methodologies which have been used in archival media research, and discuss their application to my own study.

Television and Media

The history of television is often based on accounts in primary archival sources, oral histories from people who worked for specific institutions, such as the BBC (Briggs 1985) or focused on audiences and television content (Vahimagi 1996). In Britain, there is a distinctive history of public service broadcasting, the associated culture of television (Fiske 2011) and the subsequent changes to this since the 1950s (Williams 2003) which have favoured the contemporary agenda (Corner 1999). Initial studies of the generic development of television in Britain in the 1950s and 1960s (Corner 1991) led to a small increase in the number of historical studies, categorised in phases of public service broadcasting, commercial competition, and increased availability (Ellis 2000). Thus, though the history of television in Britain has been established, it is not extensive, and the focus is broad.

Wheatley's (2007) key criticism of historical television work has already been addressed through the Thick Description approach. Wheatley suggested that the removal of research from the context of the broadcasts was often lacking in historical research. This next section further adds to this by, as Wheatley suggested, engaging with connected ephemera around television – newspapers, magazines, and crucially, the materials contained within the BBC Written Archive.

Archives

Programmes broadcast before the 1990s have traditionally been more difficult to research 'accurately' (in terms of visual content), as, unlike their more recent counterparts, they are not routinely and systematically stored or archived, and so rely on the archival written materials and paperwork which have been. The first British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) archives were only created in 1981 (Kavanagh 2004; BBC Charter 1981), following recommendations from an Advisory Committee on Archives. Prior to this there had been no regulatory or legal requirement to do so. Since then, the programmes 'missing' from these archives have increasingly become the focus of research (Lison et al. 2019). Programmes may be classified as missing simply because they were no recordings made of live broadcasts; recordings were initially very expensive and were intended for short-term repeat broadcasts and as such were not preserved. The initial policies of the BBC did not factor in the values of re-using materials or that they might have a future commercial value (Gorton and Garde-Hansen, 2019).

Where the programming does not survive, Collie et al (2013) followed the innovative methods proposed by Jacobs (2000) to use the written archives of television production companies, in an attempt to 'try to reconstruct the programmes from the available documentation: from, for example, studio floor plans, shooting scripts and the logs of programmes as broadcast, supported by correspondence and memos in the files between television personnel.' This enabled them to analyse the address and aesthetics of the programmes (that were designed for a female audience) in the early period. Recognising that their research period was large, they concluded that it would be an impossible task to cover every aspect of the production and reception of women's television, instead they selected 'sampling 'moments' from them focusing on key moments (Collie et al. 2013).

Jacobs and Ghost Texts

Jacobs (2006a) outlined an approach to using the BBC Written Archives to map out a history of early television drama programmes; significant for this thesis as well as for other scholars of television history. His approach challenged the assertion that early drama broadcast by the BBC constituted 'photographed stage plays' copying

the ‘legitimate’ theatre. Although initially unsure how the BBC Written Archives could be a useful resource, Jacobs was able to develop a framework of understanding, making sense of the disparate letters and memos, to show how creative practitioners were able to deal with the new medium of television practically and intellectually. Jacobs cites Barr (1986), Corner (1991), Boddy (1990), Hilmes (2003) and Thumim (2004) as key works which present and analyse television history through primary archival research. This research enabled him to ‘map the minutiae’ of policy, production, and critical currents of the time (Jacobs 2006a, p. 14). Jacobs used the BBC Written Archives to ‘sort, select and categorise’ information to ‘make and refine judgements’ about their relevance and significance, and argues that access to the physical archives (over online searches) was crucial to this (ibid., p. 18). Jacobs saw the BBC Written Archive Centre as the ‘resting place’ (Jacobs 2000, p.14) for the remains of programmes, waiting to be found my historians. His intention was to reconstitute or reconstruct, using the written materials he found, of the ‘ghost texts’ in order to ‘approximate the visual constitution of early television drama’ (ibid).

In a similar way to Jacobs, I believe that ‘ghost texts’ of early television food and cooking programmes have been mis-categorised and misunderstood by current reflections of history (see previous chapter). They have been rarely preserved in archives, perhaps deemed to be too ‘ordinary’ (Bonner 2003) to preserve and as such complete sets of broadcast outputs from the 1930s to the 1970s are almost impossible to find. The BBC began to formally introduce an archival policy as late as 1981 and even then, only selected programmes (often examples) were marked for preservation. Currently, the BBC Visual Archive is not available to researchers, despite containing ‘matter of great public interest’ (Kavanagh and Lee 2010). Access is restricted to BBC personnel and those commissioned to produce content for the BBC. Any available programmes are often the ‘first port of call for historians and programme-makers to find material with which to construct a narrative about the past’ (Brennan 2022). However, in 2022, towards the end of my own research period, to mark the BBC’s one hundred years of broadcasting, academic access was given to the entire visual archive through the Box of Broadcasts initiative, provided online by Learning On Screen. While researching for this thesis, I located several examples of television food and cooking programmes from the specified period (held in uncatalogued archives such as the Alexandra Palace Television Society

Archives and the Huntly Archives) which I consider in my analysis. I cross-referenced potentially available programmes and requested that they be added to the Box of Broadcasts resource. I discuss this in more detail later in this chapter.

Influential work by Jacobs (2000) used the BBC Written Archives to reconstruct 'ghost texts' to show how early television drama, in the absence of an audio-visual record, and how it was considered by producers and critics, as well as giving some critical examination of rare surviving examples of drama. This is my 'template' here. Jacobs wanted his research to be a 'bridge' outlining possible ways of 'thinking and writing about early television which would genuinely 'open the (historical) box for further work' (p. 4), such as this. The lack of audio-visual material shaped Jacob's methodology. He used instead the BBC Written Archive materials to recreate a 'visual sense' of early television drama. Jacobs also used other written materials, such as the *Radio Times*, *The Listener*, and other publications. Jacobs rejected still photographs for his research, arguing that they were usually production stills taken during camera rehearsals for publicity, with the cameras in view. Jacobs uses other published anecdotal and interview-based writing to provide valuable insights. For Jacobs, 'early television' meant programmes made up to 1955 (p. 5); so his research was 'single-channel', contained within the realm of the BBC, and not considering aspects of commercial television which followed after 1955. As a result, he restricted himself to 'live' programmes and also to programmes not recoverable from television history (p. 14), a period which shaped the development of television dramas which followed (p. 15).

Jacobs outlined the technical and institutional reasons why live drama broadcasts were either not telerecorded or preserved in any great number prior to 1955, though the technology to do this was available from 1953 (p. 10). He suggested that 'television programmes themselves were not perceived as valuable' and only 'some were thought to be worth preserving as historical records', usually national events which had a resale value abroad (p .11). Even where television dramas were telerecorded prior to 1953, very few were archived (ibid.). Jacobs also outlined copyright and other policy reasons why certain programmes were neither recorded nor preserved.

Without the necessary primary materials available, Jacobs urged a reformulation of 'traditional notions of textual analysis' for texts which do not exist in their original form, but instead as 'shadows' in the dispersed (and perhaps buried) files contained within the BBC Written Archives (p. 14). Jacobs intention was to use the BBC Written Archives to in some way reconstruct these 'ghost texts' of early television drama.

Jacobs ultimately uncovered a 'surprising' history of early television drama in Britain (p. 156), which went against traditional perceptions that early television dramas were essentially 'photographed stage plays' to show a more 'self-conscious' (p. 160) account of development, innovation and a 'culture of professional excellence' (p. 15). This established a justification for researching and writing about early television, early television drama and early television drama production as a solid part of 'the medium of television', or 'television as television' (p. 160).

For Jacobs (2006), 'Archival research, whether in written or audio/visual archives, represents the ontological opposite of surfing the Internet, instead requiring the researcher to 'proceed at a slow steady pace', to consider the 'webs of decision making' found in the creativity from the past. Jacobs encouraged a process of sorting, selecting and categorising, making and refining judgements about relevance and significance in way which online searching cannot. It is this approach to archival analysis which appealed most to me, bearing in mind a further warning from Jacobs that 'the danger here is that television history gets reconstructed around what survives for viewing rather than what was shown (p. 112).

BBC Written Archives – background

The BBC Written Archives are recognised as one of the most important sources for the study of British society and culture in the Twentieth century (Kavanagh 2004), and obviously for the history of the BBC itself (Kavanagh and Lee 2010). Jacobs, and researchers working in the study of British television have used them for some time, enabling a host of broad histories of pre and post war Britain (Jordan 2011). Kavanagh (2004) writes that they contain 'the planning and production content…

encompassing internal memoranda… financial records, correspondence with contributors, programme records of various types, extensive press cuttings, audience reactions… publicity and publications' (p. 78), stressing that all 'business was conducted by correspondence (Kavanagh and Lee 2010) within the BBC prior to 'the days of telephone and email'. The material can only be accessed at the BBC Written Archive Centre at Caversham near Reading (p. 78). Files need to be vetted and cleared for research purposes (Jordan 2011). No complete list of what is available to researchers (p. 235), so archive staff assist in identifying relevant archive files, from a large list (p. 235), with records surviving in 'great number' (Kavanagh and Lee 2010), prior to any agreed visit. Available files range in date from the 1920s to the 1980s (Kavanagh 2011, p. 78). The archive grew organically (Kavanagh and Lee 2010); files may be organised by programme, or by contributor (among others) (Jordan 2011, p. 238); individual paper-based files can be named and collected in a complex way (p. 248). Each file is also arranged chronologically, depending on BBC policies at the time of collection (Kavanagh 2011). Files can complement one another (Kavanagh 2004, p. 81) with information unobtainable from one source available in another.

Other Archival Resources

There have been recent digitisation projects of associated resources such as the BBC Genome Project (BBC Genome 2023) which makes available for research online the listings of the *Radio Times* magazine; listings for BBC programmes first published in 1923) (Briggs 1985, p. 365). This enabled detailed searches of programme information, and associated visuals of the digitised original magazine listings. I used these to establish listings, with details of planned broadcasts, for television food and cooking programmes between 1936 and 1976. At time of writing, the digitisation of the *Radio Times* magazines has reached the 1950s, with plans to extend this over time. Information contained within the *Radio Times* from subsequent years is included in the data available on the Genome website, but without scanned pages of the individual issues of the *Radio Times*.

Research using Newspaper archives has become somewhat easier with resources such as the British Newspaper Archive (2023) which provides scans of entire newspaper collections from the 1700s onwards. While the newspaper archive is

searchable and vast, it also strives to add new publications and archives to their online repository regularly, which means that any search is a ‘snapshot’ of those available up to that time and not comprehensive. However, it is useful to gain newspaper resources from across the country; for example, ‘local’ titles often reproduced articles written initially for ‘national’ titles, which may themselves not be included. Newspaper archives have been used by scholars such as Lyon (2014) to illustrate the contribution made by the influential cookbook author Ambrose Heath (1891-1969) and then again to analyse radio cooking programmes of the 1920s and 1930s for which no archive of recordings exists (Lyon and Ross 2016).

During lockdown, and faced with the closure of the BBC Written Archives without any potential re-opening date, online archives became even more prominent, and with access to ‘traditional’ libraries and archives limited, I used my time to explore archives I could access. I applied for a year-long subscription to the Adam Matthew Digital resource (Adam Matthew 2021), which I was successful in attaining. This resource includes a variety of curated primary resources, including trade magazines such as the Gas Board magazine.

The *TV Times* archive and Television And Radio Index for Learning and Teaching (TRILT) are both available online through Learning on Screen. The Box of Broadcasts and the ITV Archive aim to provide access to television programmes from the archives. The Box of Broadcasts was added to in 2022 with available BBC visual/digital archive. The ITV Archive is currently very patchy, but some programmes are available to view online, and details of others (including production notes) are available. The BBC Photo Library provides a searchable index of available BBC photographs to licence. Although registration to the Library (recently re-named BBC Photo Sales) is not technically allowed for academic research, I have been granted viewer-access as an author. It makes photographs available previously been found by general internet searches (without provenance) or published in the *Radio Times* and *The Listener* magazines. Access to the BBC Photo Library means that proper consideration and attribution can be provided to any photographs used for research, but without the copyright permissions to reproduce them, unfortunately.

Developing a Historiography

John Corner (1999) established that British television – and the media in general – had ‘suffered from a lack of historical studies’ responding instinctively to ‘a frantically contemporary agenda’, while later suggesting (2003) that ‘For many researchers on television history, the resources are a combination of written documentation, the audio-visual record and oral testimony, brought together in different schemes of priority and of scale.’ Further clarifying, Corner wrote that ‘one important way of getting across both the elements of historical change and of historical context, producing a more comprehensive yet dynamic sense of past conjunctures, is the ‘case study’.

Relationships among television studies, television and historical research is complicated. Ellis (2002) found that ‘Television has a threefold relationship with history: it ‘does history’, it makes history, and it has its own history’, concluding that historical analysis of television is particularly important when not only programmes but also supporting documentation have ceased to exist, which is true for the ITV records however, and different with regards to the BBC archival resources. Corner urged for the study of television to employ both ‘textualist and the historicist approaches’ while being aware of the various frictions between them. The important context for Ellis remained that, for the television historian, the ‘temporary meaningfulness of programmes at their initial broadcast’ was key.

Thumin (2004) researched British television between 1955-1965, which she described as a ‘fertile period’ from which, because of trial and error, television which we would recognise today would emerge. She investigated television culture, using a practical feminist approach to cultural history (p. viii), the development of audiences and the place of women in television. Thumin cautioned the use of evaluating written archival materials due to the ‘legitimacy of twenty-first century concepts in evaluating mid-twentieth century material’ (p. 2) and the ‘benefit of hindsight’ (ibid.). Thumin studied the ‘formative decade 1955-65’ and said it was ‘characterised by speculative experiments with both programme forms and audience address’ (p. 3), she considered the ‘familiar and predictable’ magazine format with programmes such as *About the Home*, as derived from established print and radio transmissions (p. 9), and still successful decades later. Although mainly factual programmes, Thumin established that they were, depending on the

intended audience, ‘enlivened by entertainment’ (p. 4) and scheduled to be broadcast at a time when the audience was assumed to be ‘inattentive’ (p. 5).

Thumin detailed the development of the Talks Department within BBC Television, and the Women’s Programme Unit (p. 51) recognising the key roles of Mary Adams from 1938 (p. 51), Grace Wyndham Goldie in 1950s (p. 51) and Doreen Stephens (Editor of Women’s Television Programmes) from 1954 (p. 61). Producers of Women’s Programmes in the fifties had an audience ‘defined partly by its ability to watch television in the afternoon, partly by assumptions about its interests as defined by gender’ (p. 58), both producing programmes which appealed to conventional ‘women’s interest’ to secure their audience, but at the same time giving rise to the possibility of limiting their horizons. Many programmes focused on the domestic environment of the kitchen and garden (p. 60), with, as Thumin concluded, a ‘didactic tone’ and a shift from the late forties ‘middle-class’ audiences to a wider audience ‘primed to receive the new consumer durables of the fifties’ (p. 60).

Fickers (2012) developed the idea of (re)creating a ‘television historiography’, defined as the changing popular or scholarly interpretations of what television was or meant, proposing a model to bridge the ‘longue durée’ of the phenomenon of television. Fickers wrote at a time when television studies was witnessing a growing interest in history with media historians were moving from a reconstruction of the past based on written archives to a more integral historiography of television.

In her introduction to *Re-Viewing Television History*, Wheatley (2007) reconstructed the key approaches to television history and pleas for ‘a multi-methodological approach to television historiography in order to produce a more rounded, holistic version of television history’ (p. 8). Wheatley reflected on the constant tension between a close reading of a specific television programme as main source to produce an historical argument and a broader embedding of this example into contexts and traditions of television production cultures, broadcasting institutions and viewing habits. Ellis (2002) supported the need for a combination of textual and contextual approaches in television studies and history.

Others, including Galili (2016), felt that 'Traditionally, historiography of early television occupied a fairly marginal place in television studies.' Lacey (2006) particularly referenced a specific account of early television, as good practice, in Janet Thumin's study of the gendered nature of drama and its audiences in the 1950s. Scannell (2010) supported the widening of resources used in developing a historiography, usually considered to be simply written materials. Scannell noted the importance of photography in the history of the BBC, despite the archives then being 'closed to the public and access to them is restricted to BBC personnel.' Scannell powerfully concluded that documents themselves 'are not silent. They speak from the past.'

Textual analysis is favoured by media researchers, Jacobs (2000) urged a wider way of thinking about this, arguing that textual analysis as 'contextual analysis.' Textual analysis, as suggested initially by Barthes, was outlined by McKee (2003) as a way for 'researchers to gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world' (p. 1), a methodology, a data-gathering process, useful to make 'some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text.' Texts can include television programmes, magazines, adverts – 'a text is something that we make meaning from' (p. 4) as a 'sense-making practice' (p. 15). McKee felt that 'textual analysis is about making educated guesses about how audiences interpret texts' (p. 27). McKee encouraged textual analysis as a 'likely interpretation', understanding that the context was crucial to understanding the important parts of a text. McKee suggested that there was no standardised approach to textual analysis, and pointed to content analysis and the use of semiotics to help to provide a combined analysis. Semiotics is the 'science of signs' (Saussure 1974); signifiers such as words and images decode what is being signified; signs relate to the social function (Fiske & Hartley 2003), gaining as much information as possible from the wider 'semiosphere' (Hartley 1996) to provide that 'likely interpretation' McKee mentioned.

Archival analysis can also be problematic. Hilmes (2003) discussed the problems of establishing a history: considering where to begin and end (p. vii); issues of chronology (p. viii): and clarity of the nature of the historiography, or 'writing about the past' (p. vii). Considering the development of programming on television, Jacobs (in Hilmes) categorised the 1950s in Britain as an 'early period of

experimentation' (p. 68) leading towards the 1980s, and a period of 'standardisation and stability' (ibid). Earlier broadcasts were described as a 'period of live transmission' (p. 69). Wheatley (in Hilmes) considers the period 1955-89 as one of 'populism and experimentation' (p. 76).

Wheatley (2007) brought together a series of key scholars re-viewing television history and historiography, to reassess assumptions of television history. This work remains influential in historical research in television studies. She positions television history as a 'legitimate field of study' (p. 1) which can be transformative in re-placing the 'truth, objectivity and the partiality of historical narrative', often selectively presented in writing about television history (p. 6), with the example of the work of Leman (1987) and others to illuminate the 'partiality of earlier histories' to include feminist histories. Wheatley considers: issues of national specificity; the (over)privileging of institutional histories of television; problems with nostalgia and the popular; and access to material which shapes our sense of history. The BBC Written Archives provide access to research materials but skew the television historiography to the BBC, Wheatley suggests supplementing this source with other, more difficult to find, institutional histories (p. 9).

A Content Analysis approach

Initially, to answer my research question, it was important to analyse a range of data and resources from the period, prior to overlaying my own analysis of their contribution which can be gleaned from the information collected. Content analysis, as a contemporary (to my field of studies) method, appealed. Krippendorf defines 'content analysis' as 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use' (1980, p. 18). Content analysis was initially based on analysis of primary resources such as printed texts; it has evolved to be applicable to other media content, such as images, spoken word, visual materials, and material culture artifacts. Krippendorf (1980) explains content analysis as an 'empirically grounded method' which can be 'exploratory in process' and 'inferential in intent' which transcends traditional notions of symbols, contents, and intents (p.xvii).

I explored a methodology covering both qualitative and quantitative content analysis (Berger 2014), adapted, and expanded to enable an analysis and interpretation of the historical contribution made by the pioneer television food and cooking presenters.

Bernard Berelson (1952) used the term 'content analysis,' defining it as a research technique 'for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication' (p. 18). Berelson further encouraged a distinction between 'knowledge' and 'interpretation', focusing on 'manifest content of communication' (p.c18) rather than the 'inferences' which could be gleaned from any researcher interpretation. He did however state that 'knowledge of the content can legitimately support inferences about non-content events' (p. 18). The tension between 'manifest' and 'latent' information (and therefore interpretation) was influentially clarified by Krippendorf (1980), in criticism of Berenson's definition, by arguing that 'Content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context' (p. 21). This less restrictive definition of content analysis still allowed for replicability, systematic approaches, and crucially the combination of qualitative research adding to the quantitative, including the exploration of latent meanings to supplement the manifest. Krippendorf asserted that the researchers own experiences, interpretations and the wider context of the research should be included as valid research outcomes with content analysis, rather than a passive researcher simply 'extracting data' contained within texts (p. 22).

A conference on the methodology of content analysis was held in Illinois in 1955. Ithiel De Sola Pool published an edited collection of essays stemming from the proceedings examining *Trends on Content Analysis* (1959). Recognising that Berelson's work from 1952 had been considered 'the standard codification of the field' (p. 1) De Sola Pool however questioned Berelson's overall 'dubiousness' (ibid.) of the methodology, which led to the conference and publication of the collection. Berelson's doubts are illustrated by the statement that 'content analysis, as a method, has no magical qualities – you rarely get out of it more than you put in, and sometimes you get less. In the last analysis, there is no substitute for good ideas.' This position indicated a common theme to De Sola Pool of disillusionment and disregard for the methodology from those who had discussed it (p. 2). This

appears to have stimulated De Sola Pool, and the other scholars at the conference, to reimagine content analysis for the future, with a particular focus on inference in texts, challenging the assumption that 'one cannot always assume that what an author says is what he means' leading content analysis to be used to decipher the 'real' meaning (p. 4).

The methodology can be descriptive, while others have adapted it to investigate the portrayal of 'mass idols' (Lowenthal 1941), genres (Glasgow University Media Group) and social and political events (for example Halloran et al 1970, Morrison and Tumber 1988). Others have used the methodology to compare media representations with actual occurrences of events within society (Gerbner and Gross 1986 for example). Gerbner (1969) applied content analysis to an analysis of cultural indicators on television. This type of 'parallel content analysis' (Neuman 1989) became important in combining media and public opinion. Krippendorf (1980) stated that content analysis as a methodology allowed the researcher to plan, execute, communicate, reproduce, and critically evaluate their research questions (p. xx).

The use of content analysis in media research has a long and contested history of its own, which has followed the development of media and communication (see Krippendorf 1980, p. 7). Some early social scientists used content analysis to map popular representations of the (mainly newspaper) media, while others used it to map developments (Bruhn Jensen 2012, p. 50). Whether media messages were studied as 'texts' or 'contents', or indeed as 'intertextual networks' concerning the interrelations between media texts (ibid., p. 60), scholars developed from separate to combined approaches using both qualitative and quantitative methods (see for example Janowitz 1966 and White 1950).

Content analysis now is a well-established method that aims at 'a qualitative and/or quantitative analysis of the content of texts, pictures, films and other forms of verbal, visual or written communication' (Sarantakos 1998, p. 279). Content analysis is both quantitative and qualitative when used as a systematic way to analyse historical documents which may be bodies of texts, images, and any symbolic matter (Krippendorf 1980, p. 3). Krippendorf suggested that content

analysis had evolved into a 'repertoire of methods' (ibid., p.17) used to produce reliable, replicable, and valid results (ibid., p.18).

Some researchers such as Bruhn Jensen (2012, p.c122) prefer the term 'textual analysis' or 'discourse analysis'. Others have embraced content analysis and outlined its use in research – for example key titles like *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (Berelson 1952), *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology* (Krippendorff 1980), or *Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities* (Holsti 1969). Content analysis historically moved from analysis of newspaper content (Street 1909) to a range of studies on media topics (see Krippendorff 1980) including explorations of propaganda.

Krippendorf stressed the distinction between manifest and latent information (1980, pp. 19-20) and provided a framework for content analysis as a method. A quantitative content analysis is designed to provide a descriptive account of what a media text (film, TV programme, advertisement, newspaper report, etc.) contains, and to do so in a form that can be repeated by others. In putting together, a content analysis, then, the researcher must work through several stages of measuring and sampling. (Bruhn Jansen 2012, p. 220).

Thematic coding represents an attempt to identify, compare, and contrast meaning elements, as they emerge from and recur in several different contexts. What distinguishes thematic coding from much quantitative content analysis is the emphasis on defining each of these elements in relation to their context. (Bruhn Jansen 2002, p. 252).

Programme Analysis

In addition to archival resources, I include analyses of the limited examples of early food and cookery television programmes which have only recently been added (at my request) to the Box of Broadcasts resource, making them available for research. These were added in 2022, towards the end of my research period.

As previously discussed, only a few examples of early television food and cooking programmes exist in the archive today, since they were either broadcast live

(particularly in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s), or not being seen as important enough to record and preserve once repeats had been broadcast as per the BBC policies of the time (particularly in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s). The BBC Visual Archive is not 'open' to academic research, and it can therefore be difficult to ascertain what does exist and remain intact. However, during my research, to celebrate 100 Years of the BBC a new agreement was initiated between Learning on Screen and the BBC to enable archive programmes to be uploaded to the Box of Broadcasts academic service for research purposes, where available. The process has not always been transparent, and I suspect is still developing, however I discovered a way to add several key examples from television food and cooking history to the Box of Broadcasts service.

This involved interrogating the BBC Motion Gallery website, which is operated as a commercial entity by Getty Images. Access as an academic researcher is not permitted, so the only functions which are available are the basic searches which yield basic information on the resources held within the BBC Visual Archive. No images or clips are available to watch. Once confirmed that a programme is at least 'there' in the archive somewhere, I was able to cross reference to check if this programme already existed on Box of Broadcasts. Where they did not, I again cross-referenced the programme information against the TRILT database (TRILT 2023), also operated by Learning on Screen. This gives details of programme schedules, and other information such as availability of the programme on Box of Broadcasts, or general availability online, to order, or a record only. Each programme on this database has a unique TRILT Programme ID number. If a programme in this database showed to have no available online access through Box of Broadcasts. I then emailed the Learning on Screen team with the programme title, transmission date and TRILT ID, to ask them to contact the BBC Archive and request permission to add the programme to Box of Broadcasts. The results were sporadic and required a great deal of patience; some requests came back positively to say that the programme had been added, and others negatively to say that the programme was not able to be added. No explanation or further information was given. Some programmes were added immediately, others took several weeks, a few examples were added twelve weeks after my request.

Although it remains frustrating to know that some programmes do exist somewhere in the archive but remained unwatchable, it was exciting to finally have some examples uploaded to Box of Broadcasts. During this process I was approached by the Learning on Screen team who asked if I would curate a Box of Broadcasts Playlist on the history of television food and cooking. At that stage, the Playlist would have included examples from the late 1970s and beyond, as well as some 'clip-shows' and documentaries which included short clips of programmes. However, with the addition of these standalone programme examples, I curated a playlist spanning from 1955 onwards, some examples 'seen' perhaps for the first time since broadcast[2].

The programmes themselves are only be 'examples' as, apart from the *Cradock Cooks for Christmas* series from 1975 (BBC 1975), the full run of each series is not available. There are several key examples of programmes and presenters which remain still 'lost' or unavailable officially within the BBC, including those featuring Philip Harben, Joan Robins and Marguerite Patten. I am extremely grateful however to the Alexandra Palace Television Society Archive for making available for my research a telerecording of the 1953 evening of programmes *An Elizabethan Evening*, which featured a food and cookery segment from Philip Harben.

Boulestin wrote about a film recording of one of his television programmes at Alexandra Palace in his autobiography (Boulestin 1948), and this recording is confirmed in the BBC Written Archives materials. Originally this film was planned to preserve an example of the programmes broadcast. Sadly, although the Alexandra Palace Television Society archive has the other films preserved for this reason, as part of the Desmond Campbell Archive, the Boulestin programme is missing, presumed 'lost' from history. I am still hopeful that one day it may turn up in a dusty attic or shed of a private collector. Until then, an example of a cookery demonstration by Boulestin, a film he made in 1936 entitled *A Famous Cook At Work* is available to view as part of the BFI Collection (BFI 2023). This film, when watched alongside still photographs of Boulestin in the television studio, gives a glimpse *perhaps* of what the television broadcasts may have been like.

[2] https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/bob-curated-playlists/history-of-british-cooking-programmes/

A couple of short, uncredited, clips of Harben and Patten are available within the Huntley Archive, again giving an indication perhaps of what the programmes may have looked like. These clips were advertising features not connected to the BBC (see BFI Catalogue for more details). Additionally, the films in which Harben appeared as himself during the 1950s, in particular *Meet Mr Lucifer* (Ealing Studios 1953) and *Man of The Moment* (Rank Organisation 1955), provide an insight to Harben in the studio; both films feature Harben at work and then as part of the action of the film. These glimpses are invaluable but cannot replace recordings of actual television food and cooking programmes produced as intended for broadcast.

Study Design

In my study, I use a range of primary materials. These primary sources included: publicly available archives such as the BBC Written Archives, where I had permission to research and an allocated archivist; the Alexandra Palace Television Society archives; as well as visual material held by the British Film Institute, the National Library of Scotland (newspaper and magazine archives); the *Radio Times* archive (accessed from the BBC Genome website), emerging archival materials from commercial television and privately held family archives such as the Joan Robins Personal Archive and the Zena Skinner Personal Archive, to which I have been granted access. Secondary literature and other historical accounts, especially those of the period, have also been a valuable resource.

Context

To begin my research, and to specifically understand the context of the development of early television and television cooking programmes, as suggested by Krippendorf (1980), I researched the social, cultural, and technological history of the period (1936-1976) on which this thesis is based. To contain the research within a framework, rather than imposing my own interpretation of contextual understanding, I followed the research methodology of Thick Description, outlined in the introductory chapter, with the aim of identifying not only the social, cultural, and technological landscape of the time, but additionally to help identify codes which could be applied to the content of resources researched.

Data Collection

I had planned to visit the BBC Written Archives Centre in Caversham, Reading, during the first part of 2020, having contacted the archivists with a list of requests of files to access. The catalogue of these files at the time of writing was currently not available for researchers to view independently, so requests are curated through the expert Archivists working at the Centre. However, in a move towards more open and transparent access, the catalogue will be digitised and made available online to search. Just as I was finalising my research requirements the global pandemic caused by Covid-19 meant that the Archive Centre suddenly closed to all visitors. It was uncertain when and if it would re-open. In normal circumstances the centre allows for seven researchers at individual desks per day, and waiting lists are as a result lengthy. The BBC Written Archives Centre remained closed completely until September 2021. I was fortunate as I was already on their 'waiting list' prior to COVID, to be offered one day (of the three that I had originally requested) in the archives during a limited and reduced opening in October 2021. During that day I had access to thirty-six files which had been previously requested, and due to their policy on photography was (thankfully) able to take pictures of two thousand, five hundred and thirty-six pages within those files, for my own research.

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown significantly altered my plans and methodologies; however, it also resulted in a significant positive shift in my focus and clarity for the thesis. Originally, I had planned to spend several days at the archive centre, and changes meant this was reduced to an initial one day. This meant that instead of taking time at the centre to read the files, note significant details and begin to form early ideas for thematic analysis, I was instead restricted to spending one day in which I photographed all the file pages for later collation. Although my 'archival' experience had been curtailed, I later realised I was able to re-collate the images into the original file formats, and have them printed off as the original files. This enabled me to: spend more time with each file than the original plan; annotate the pages; code the individual pages for later analysis; and absorb the overall style and context of each file in a deeper way than had I simply been scanning them for notetaking within the archive centre.

The re-creation of the archive files ‘at home’ also enabled me to preserve my won copies for future and additional research.

A second visit was arranged in August 2022, when a further nineteen files, an additional one thousand, nine hundred and ninety-four pages, were also accessed, photographed and collated back as the original files for my own research purposes. I made the decision, having reflected upon the experience of my initial day, to employ the same methodology again; re-creating the files at home following the research visit.

Prior to the commencement of this PhD, I visited the BBC Written Archive Centre in Caversham to access seventeen files relating to Cradock, which I have additionally photographed and re-collated for used in this research. (See Appendix B).

Limitations

My research, inevitably, has limitations; I have been clear about these as part of the research design and data collection. I selected a time period of the first forty years for several reasons: to cover a period not looked at previously; to include in literature a record of the period of television food and cooking programmes which themselves are largely missing from the archives as visual records; to cover the period of ‘early’ development primarily by the BBC, and broadcasts in colour; to end my time period before the Annan Committee report of 1977 which led to the development of further multiple channels broadcasting in Britain; and to end my research before other scholars picked up on developments in their research on television food and cooking programmes broadcast Britain from the 1980s onwards.

My research has focused primarily, and somewhat necessarily, on the BBC, their programmes, and their presenters. The BBC Written Archives are, within the BBC’s own remit to ‘inform, educate and entertain’, established resources for academic research. Despite some access issues during lockdown which led to some delays (and anxieties) on my own part, they happened to be a rich resource available to be scrutinised and encouraged to be used in academic evidence, as demonstrated by

Jacobs and others. The same cannot be said about archives of Independent Television in Britain, partly as no centralised repository of archival materials exists, and perhaps could not exist given the network of independent broadcasters around Britain who came under the umbrella of ITV. I have no doubt that rich information could be gleaned from any such written archive should it exist; the archival policies and practices of ITV have not been as clear or transparent, and therefore not as available for academic research, as those of the BBC.

ITV do have a centralised, online archive of visual material which covers examples of televisual output between 1955 and now (ITV Archive 2023); it is neither complete nor catalogued in a suitable way for research. It is intended to be used by programme makers wishing to licence programmes, clips or available content to be used in subsequent programmes. I have been fortunate however to have access to this resource, and as such viewed a very few examples of television food and cooking programmes unavailable to research elsewhere.

In a similar way to that of the BBC in making archival copies of the *Radio Times*, and a database of information contained within it, available through the Genome website, information from the *TV Times* is available on an online database for academic research. The information at this stage is limited to brief details of scheduled broadcasts but provides a platform for further research based on the brief details contained within it. The National Library of Scotland holds physical copies of the *TV Times* starting from 1965 which could be consulted, with copies published prior to this available in the British Library; not the Scottish regional variations. Regardless, any research of the television food and cooking programmes broadcast on independent television would have a regional slant; no standardised schedule was broadcast across the country.

Conclusion

The methodology which I have employed in the study design for this thesis follows Jacobs, and similarly aims to replace the 'ghost texts' of otherwise unavailable materials (due to the lack of a complete visual archive) to research early television food and cooking programmes in Britain between 1936 and 1976. This methodology focuses on data from the BBC Written Archives. Additional resources,

such as the *Radio Times* archive, other newspaper and magazines from the period and a selection of photographic and other film inserts has been used to supplement the context. Information from these sources has been used in the next chapter, looking at a historiography to provide important context for the findings and analysis which follows. This archival information forms the main findings of this thesis, discussed in chapters five and six. Any available visual resources, acting as examples of television food and cooking programmes from the period, are discussed in chapter 7, which forms the analysis section of this thesis, to consider the innovation and development which took place during my period.

In developing a mixed methodology, linking archival analysis of written (BBC) and published material (such as the *Radio Times*) through a combined approach of content and textual analysis referred to by Jacobs (2000) as 'contextual analysis'), I have been able to interrogate the aspects of early television food and cooking programmes highlighted in chapter two, looking specifically and purposely for latent and manifest information in the archives which supports (or otherwise) the contribution these programmes and their presenters have had in the development of television food and cooking programmes between 1936 and 1976, and then aspects of 'ordinary' and 'spectacular' television food and cooking programmes.

Jacobs (2006) concluded that his account of the 'ghost texts' researched in the BBC Written Archive Centre demonstrated that early television drama could be not only be written about (where full examples of the visual material which was broadcast do not exist) and, crucially, that they were worth thinking and writing about (p. 160). My aim in developing this mixed methodological approach to early television food and cooking programmes in Britain is to follow his lead, and conclude similarly that the early television food and cooking programmes which are also 'ghosts' of the past can be written about, are worth thinking about and have value in being written about.

Chapter 4: Historiography

Introduction

This history aims to provide an accurate timeline of the food and cooking story on early television in Britain. As demonstrated in the review of literature in chapter two of this thesis; this has not been well documented previously. It has also been inaccurately represented; several scholars recognise different personalities and presenters as the 'first' to discuss food or to cook on television.

In addition to a definitive outline of the instances of food and cooking on television, this chapter also aims to provide some biographical information for the presenters involved to reference them in later chapters, and allowing for an analysis of their contribution. A visual timeline to represent this history, including details of 'first' broadcasts and the subsequent number of additional appearances each presenter made on food and cooking programmes, can be found in Appendix B. I have used information from a number of sources throughout the process of developing this historiography; the *Radio Times*, the archives of the Alexandra Palace Television Society, photographic archives, printed and published materials, and existing biographies (where available).

Rosina Dixon – The Singing Cook

Rosina Dixon (1905-1986) featured in the very first glimpse of food on the newly established BBC television channel in Britain, two weeks after the channel began broadcasting in 1936. Listed in the *Radio Times* (Radio Times 1936b) to be broadcast on as part of the *London Characters* segment at nine-thirty-five in the evening of Wednesday 18th November 1936. Dixon was listed as 'The Singing Cook', with an introduction given as 'A woman who can cook well in these days of tin-openers and restaurants is all too rare. And a woman who can cook well and sing well, like Rosina Dixon, is a positive treasure.'

Detailed records from the Alexandra Palace Television Society archive, which recorded information of 'programmes as broadcast', record that Dixon sang two songs during the short performance, *Somewhere A Voice is Calling* and *My Dear Soul* (APTS 2019), and was interviewed by Leslie Mitchell. We can match these details to the only surviving clip of Dixon (British Pathé 2019), though it cannot be assumed that this resembles the interview. It appears to be a recreation, at least in part, filmed just a few weeks later. During the interview, Dixon gave details of her cookery background, and assured viewers that singing 'improves the cooking' and keeps Dixon happy and light-hearted, making the pastry light too.

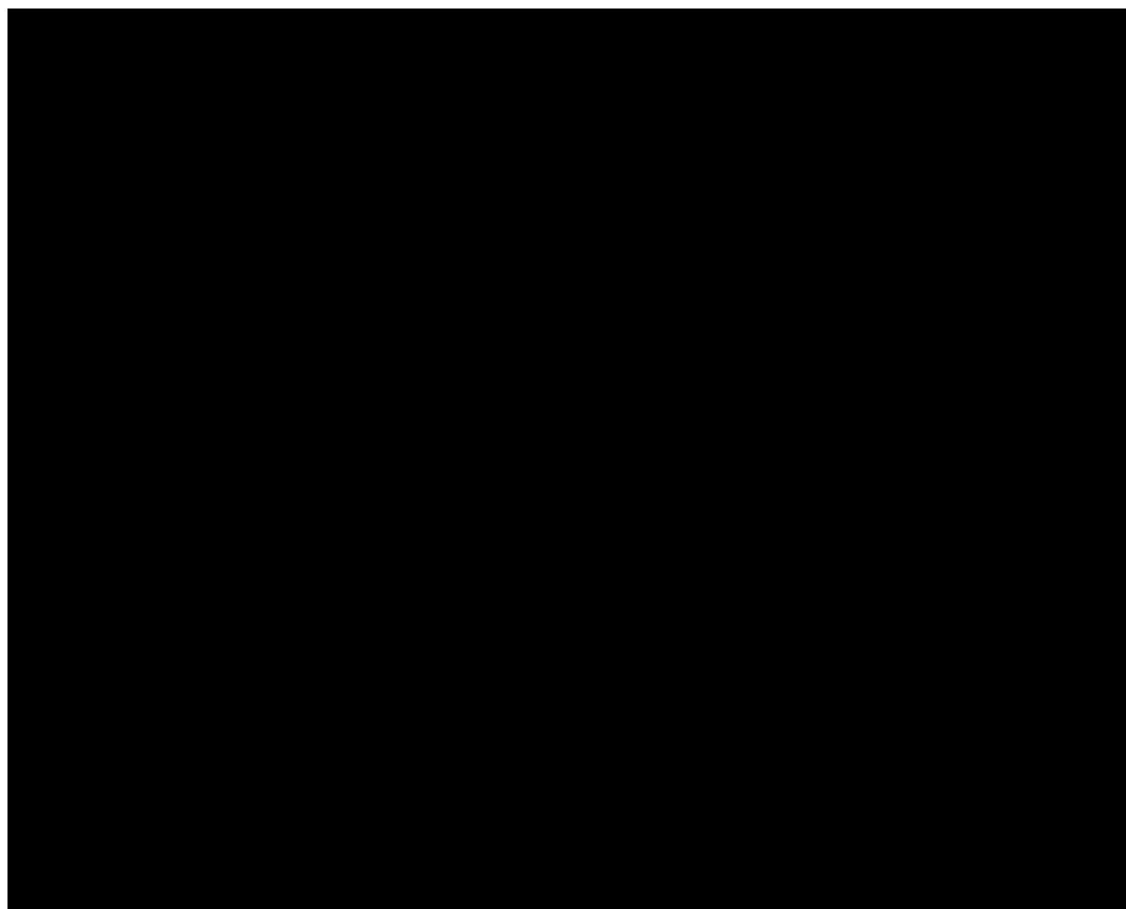

Figure 2. Rosina Dixon, The Singing Cook, screenshot, British Pathé

Dixon is filmed rolling out a square of pastry while singing and answering questions from the off-screen interviewer, dressed in a uniform of cooks' whites and hat; she appears to be at work in a basement kitchen. Dixon also wears high-heeled shoes. The scene shows a simple table with a range of equipment and supplies upon it. Wider shots show a cooker, chairs, a kitchen dresser with more equipment, a curtained window, and a chequer-board floor.

Dixon thus portrayed the role of the domestic servant-cook, assuring viewers, who could afford to employ a similar role, that she was skilled at her role, and also extremely happy; so happy indeed that she liked to sing as she worked. Dixon released a 78rpm record featuring two of her songs (Dixon 1936). Her words and appearance were reassuring to the audience (perhaps watching upstairs while their own cook prepared meals downstairs), as the middle classes faced a looming servant-crisis, with many leaving service for other work (Benson 2005). Possibly Dixon was selected for broadcast to additionally encourage people to enter the profession, although it is unlikely that potential domestic servants would have the ability to watch the broadcast first-hand.

Moira Meighn – Quarter of an Hour Meals

Two weeks after Dixon was shown on screens, the *Radio Times* (Radio Times 1936d) listed the first standalone food and cookery demonstration, billed to be shown at three in the afternoon of Wednesday 9th December 1936, and repeated later the same evening at nine. The *Radio Times* lists the programme as *Quarter of an Hour Meals* promising that Moira Meighn (1887-1957) would 'give an example of what can be done with simple equipment in the preparation of good food.' The Alexandra Palace Television Archive (APTS 2019) records the show simply as *Cookery* with added details 'Moira Meighn will give a talk and demonstration on the subject of good food that can be prepared with simple equipment and cooked on a single heating ring.'

The BBC Photo Sales (2023) includes a still photograph of Meighn in her appearance, and another (mis-catalogued as 'Meighan'). Meighn is shown standing at a covered table as she grates a piece of cheese in front of a curtained window, with a glimpse of an outside streetlamp in shadow. Her table had simple equipment and supplies. She was dressed in heavy overalls with a large shawl tied around her shoulders, again portraying a domestic servant. Two cameramen are positioned to capture Meighn at work, one close, in a fixed position and head on. The second, on wheels, sat to one side at an angle, with an additional figure, presumably the floor manager, standing to one side. In the picture, a microphone can be seen above Meighn, hanging on an extended pole. It is assumed that the two programmes were broadcast live that day; no recorded footage is known to exist.

Meighn was prolific author of a variety of books (see Meighn 1928a; 1928b; 1929a; 1929b; 1930; 1936; 1937) who had previously appeared on BBC Radio (Radio Times 1924b) as early as 9th May 1924, giving reviews of books which would be of 'special interest to women' and later books suitable for holidays, as well as reading from stories she had written herself (Meighn 1929a). Meighn also broadcast under her given name of Phyllis Twigg, and is credited as the first radio dramatist, writing the children's play *The Truth About Father Christmas* (Pepler 1988). Meighn also broadcast on radio giving advice in programmes such as Women's Corner in 1925 on *How and When to send for the Doctor* and later *Children's Hour* programme discussing *Camp Cookery*, providing some hints on a subject the Radio Times thought would be of interest to many during the summer holidays. Meighn made her final appearance on the BBC during the dramatic radio programme *For The Schools* in June 1938, in a programme titled *British History – The Modern Diet: A Dramatic Interlude* (Radio Times 1938b).

Meighn made one appearance on film, as part of the wartime film *Bampton Shows the Way*[3], where she is seen demonstrating recipes using food rations. Here Meighn first wears modern dress (in contrast to her early BBC appearance) and is introduced as an expert on 'old' recipes in the hope that she can inspire others to revive forgotten ideas for making the most of their food. For the food demonstration, Meighn returns to her cooks outfit to show the crowded hall of people her food ideas.

X. Marcel Boulestin – Cook's Night Out

Xavier Marcel Boulestin (1878-1943) began broadcasting on radio, with a series of talks from his own perspective as a restaurateur, connoisseur, and patron of the arts (Radio Times 1927), beginning with *Wastage in the Kitchen* in 1927, and then short series of talks tackling different cooking dilemmas, and preparing menus which would have the maximum effect in the dining room with minimal effort in the kitchen in 1935. The *Radio Times* (1935b) noted that Boulestin was a 'cookery journalist', writing eight cookery books since 1923.

[3] https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-bampton-shows-the-way-1941-online

Boulestin brought his skills to television, recognised by the BBC as a 'great authority on cookery' and a 'great conversationalist' (Sitwell 2012), with an initial series of five programmes broadcast in 1937 dealing with *Cooks Night Out*. Each fifteen-minute programme dealt with an individual dish, which together would make a suitable five-course menu to serve on your cooks' night off. The series began with an omelette on Thursday 21st January at nine-twenty-five in the evening, well after mealtimes, indicating that the programme was intended to be primarily entertainment in focus. Broadcast times varied for the subsequent programmes, although most were shown at similar times each fortnight. Some editions were repeated in the afternoons of the same day as the evening transmission, shown at three-fifteen in the afternoon (Radio Times 1937a), perhaps to encourage viewers to tackle such a dish that evening.

The Alexandra Palace Television Society archives (APTS 2019) detail that in the first programme, Boulestin made both a plain and a savoury omelette. Boulestin previously released a 78rpm recording of *How To Make an Omelette* (Boulestin 1932), so people could play the recording at home and presumably cook-a-long to produce a successful omelette. This recording was revived on television in 1949 by Philip Harben, who followed his voice and instructions to make 'the perfect omelette' (Radio Times 1949c). Boulestin himself continued with several cookery series on the BBC dealing with the *Foundations of Cookery* until 1939.

Boulestin appeared on screen in a smartly tailored suit, with shirt, tie, and matching pocket handkerchief, with his hair slicked back. He did not dress as a 'cook', as Dixon and Meighn had; instead he matched his persona as a restaurateur, perhaps to connect with the privileged audience of the time, who would have encountered such a trusted and recognisable role while dining out. He stood in front of a table laid out with equipment and supplies to demonstrate his dishes, with a typical kitchen set-up in the background (BBC Photo Sales 2019). This bridged the gap in knowledge and experience that an unaccustomed household would have to the direct preparation of food, in a manner that allowed them to learn, enjoy and copy.

Boulestin is often incorrectly credited with being the ‘first-ever television cook’ (see Humble, 2005; Sitwell, 2012; Bonner, 2003 for example), he is also credited as having a great influence on British cooking between the wars. Boulestin came from a theatrical background (Parkin 1981), specialising in set design, and found himself running a restaurant and writing cookbooks about French cooking for British audiences in the 1920s (Boulestin 1923; 1925). Boulestin was not a trained chef. In available footage, he gives an appearance of a ‘Maître D’ in charge of a restaurant kitchen and a team of chefs and waiters (for example British Film Institute 2019), marking him out as more of an ‘equal’ in society, able to offer advice and information which may have been more readily accepted by his audience. Boulestin came to television from a background as an ‘established celebrity’ (Andrews 2012). Boulestin died in 1943 (Sitwell 2012), while the BBC television service was suspended, so never returned to the screen.

Mrs Arthur Webb – Sulphured Plums and Potted Damsons

Mrs Arthur Webb (Mabel Edwards Webb, 1873-1957) made her first television appearance on the 30th August 1938, at two-thirty in the afternoon, in a broadcast demonstrating the technique required for successful *Sulphured Plums and Potted Damsons* (Radio Times 1938c). This was her only television appearance, although she did return to radio. Webb had a reputation at the BBC for having ‘to be stopped with a hammer’ when she began to speak without a script (Clarke 1999). The BBC saw Webb as an ideal ‘expert’ to give ‘ordinary experiences’ which blurred the distinction between broadcaster and listener (Andrews 2012), and contrasted with the other demonstration of food and cooking in the early years of television prepared by ‘staff’ or those in higher levels of society.

Other Pre-War

In the first few years of broadcast television in Britain, the dominant food and cooking programmes undoubtedly featured Boulestin; there were also a regular number of other faces and formats shown. Some were not listed in the *Radio Times* but appear in the Alexandra Palace Television Society archive records (ATPS 2019). Viewers who tuned in for the first programme on Christmas Day 1936 at three in the afternoon were shown a demonstration of *Turkey Carving* by B.J. Hulbert.

Hulbert was filmed dressed in chefs' whites, complete with chef's hat, as he carved a large turkey, raised on a silver domed presentation stand, transferring slices of meat to patterned plates on a linen covered worktable (Radio Times 1936e).

In January 1937, an unbilled special programme called *Art in the Kitchen* was broadcast, featuring a demonstration by M. Dutrey and M. Clafour of culinary art. They introduced the decoration of a boar's head, a 'fancy egg dish', a bandstand made from lobster shells, a turtle, and a wedding cake, all to musical accompaniment (ATPS 2019).

The BBC continued its links between food and festivals during 1937, showing Pancake Percy making pancakes for Shrove Tuesday. In February of the same year, Severino Marenghi, a London Chef, demonstrated how to make models from chicken and turkey bones, presumably left over from Christmas. In March, the Ministry of Health led two debates as part of the *Home Affairs* series discussing Food and Health. This was followed a few weeks later by a lecture on canned foods by Janet Bond (ATPS 2019). Other instances of food and cooking on television at this time including 'ordinary' people who took part in the *Come and Be Televised* broadcasts of 1939, such as Mrs Sterling, who demonstrated her Chinese Food and Customs (ATPS 2019) and an episode of *Picture Page,* which featured Sergeants Carney, Wood, Ibell and Howie who were finalists in the Army Cookery Championship held in Aldershot in 1939 (ATPS 2019).

During the 1930s, the BBC was 'experimental' in terms of television broadcasting, leading the world. Food and cookery programmes appear to have been part of this wider experiment, showcasing a range of types and styles, which covered the aims to 'educate, inform and entertain' in programmes to speak to different audiences. While television services were closed down during war-time in Britain, from 1939, considerable debate occurred within the BBC about the 'claim on resources' that television could have (Briggs 1979). When television services in Britain resumed in 1946, Britain was already seven years behind in the development of regular, mass-audience television broadcasts.

Josephine Terry's Kitchen

Josephine Terry (dates currently unknown), an American food-writer, began work as a newspaper journalist in Britain with the *Daily Mirror* (Terry 1944) and columnist (Terry 1951). She wrote several cookbooks (1941; 1944; 1945a; 1945b; 1947; 1950; 1951) which were jauntily illustrated by Joy Bachelor. Terry made her first broadcast appearance in 1946 with her own television programme, *Josephine Terry's Kitchen* (Radio Times 1946g), in the afternoons and again in the evenings, which ran until 1947 (Radio Times 1947c). Following this, Terry made a few selected appearances in afternoon programmes for women (See Radio Times 1948b as an example); her final appearance was in January 1949 (Radio Times 1949a).

Joan Robins – Common Sense Cookery

Joan Robins (1908-1994) had been working as a home advisor with the Gas Light and Coke Company (later the Gas Board) before the Second World War, before moving to the Ministry of Food to work as an advisor (ODNB 2019b), where she oversaw the Home Service Section (ODNB 2021b) with a focus on 'instruction in the home' (Middlesex Independent and West London Star 1947). Robins rose to oversee 'food advice' (ibid.).

Robins had presented regular talks as part of the *Kitchen Front* series from 1942 (see Lyons and Ross 2016), which had helped to build her experience as a broadcaster (ODNB 2021b). In 1947, Robins was invited to launch a new cookery programme on BBC, *Housewife in the Kitchen* (Radio Times 1947d), broadcast in the afternoons. Subjects centred around making the most of rationed foods, being economical with milk, supplementing rations with rabbits from the garden and how to make the best of a limited ration of fat. The *Radio Times* (ibid.) advised viewers to have a pencil and paper ready during the ten or fifteen minute fortnightly, and sometimes monthly programmes, to take notes.

Robins remained known as the 'afternoon cook' (ODNB 2021b). Philip Harben (discussed later) continued to mainly present cookery programmes in the evenings, presenting similarly themed 'stretching the ration' programmes on the BBC (Radio Times 1947a). In 1951, Robins presented a controversial scientific-based series on slimming, resulting in fifty thousand women writing to complain to

the BBC (Daily Mirror 1951). Robins wrote a series of books linked to her ‘common-sense’ broadcasts on cooking (Robins 1954), preserving (Robins 1957) and slimming (Robins 1952) before returning to industry, eventually becoming the president of the National Council of Women (ODNB 2021b).

Robins became the President of the National Council of Women, representing housewives and their families in areas such as clothing standards (County Times and Gazette 1953), shopping improvements (Birmingham Post 1962), education (Belfast Telegraph 1976), world hunger (Coventry Evening Telegraph 1962) and electoral reform (Harrow Observer 1977).

When Robins died in 1994, her obituary barely mentioned her television career, describing her incorrectly as ‘the first television chef’, and, more correctly as ‘an early television personality’ (The Times 1994). The tribute focused on her substantial body of work ‘furthering the cause of women in industry’ which had earned her an OBE in 1972. Robins was, as her obituary noted, ‘unusual in her own generation’ for her work as an executive, campaigner and ‘early feminist’ (The Times 1994). Her work on television was a major part of that but has been under-recognised and forgotten in the decades since her first BBC Television appearances in 1947.

Philip Harben – The Television Cook

Philip Harben (1906-1970) was not a trained chef. He was self-taught (ODNB 2021b), eventually running the Isobar restaurant in the brutalist Bauhaus *Isokon* building in London (Daybelge and Englund 2019). There, he cooked for celebrities, artists, and media executives. Harben’s parents were actors, and he followed them on to the stage (Bateman 1966), before discovering food. He was able to merge the two with food demonstrations, which caught the attention of the BBC.

Harben began his broadcasting career giving a radio talk for the BBC about his experience as a catering adviser during war-time, broadcast on 26th September 1943 (Radio Times 1943a). This led to a regular series of talks for the *Kitchen Front* (Lyon and Ross 2016) programme, and others, then a series entitled *Cookery* for BBC television in June 1946 (Radio Times 1946a). Each week, he guided viewers

through a different dish, beginning with Lobster Vol-Au-Vents, homemade noodles and coffee, progressing to the use of dried eggs, 'emergency' bread and how to bottle fruits for the larder (ibid.).

Harben published his first cookbook, *The Way to Cook*, in 1945 (Harben 1945) which he insisted was not a recipe book, but rather a book to explain the ideas and principles of food and cookery, which he would then go on to exploit on television. On screen, he was presented as a 'lively, tubby, bearded little man in a butcher's apron, who makes difficult dishes look simple in his brisk, well-planned demonstrations' (Bateman 1966). Despite his appearance, presentation style and lack of formal training, Harben became a 'personality' (Bateman 1966) credited with turning food into a form of theatre (Humble 2005). Harben cultivated his personality through appearances on variety shows, moving from the BBC to join the newly formed Independent Television (ITV) in 1955 (Andrews 2012). There, he established consumer culture connections with products, industry, and advertising, establishing his own range of cookware, Harbenware, an early example of commercialisation of television cooking beyond books, which had an annual turnover at the time of £100,000 (Bateman 1966). His television cooking programmes, such as *The Grammar of Cooking* and *The Tools of Cookery,* ran regularly on Independent Television until 1969 (TV Times Project 2021), with associated cookbooks published alongside (Harben 1965; 1968).

Harben chose to wear a butcher's apron tied high over his 'substantial' stomach on screen, with a grey shirt and paisley-patterned tie (The Liverpool Echo 1958). His look created controversy, as it was not 'correct' for a cook nor a chef. Harben later called this his 'trademark' and chosen as it was right 'for the camera' (The Yorkshire Evening Post 1953). Reviews of his demonstrations on television drew attention to his ability to bring things 'down to brass tacks' while other presenters maintained a 'quite maddening air of lofty superiority' (The Sketch 1949). By 1951 Harben claimed to have given over one hundred and twenty television demonstrations (Harben 1951a), and over one hundred and thirty in other publications that year (Harben 1951b). He regularly referred to himself as 'the television cook' while other publications referred to him as 'the television chef' (Harben 1951c). This may indicate a level of cultural capital attached to the growing ownership and consumption of television.

Marguerite Patten – For The Housewife

Marguerite Patten (1915-2015) described herself as a housewife and a home economist (Bateman 1966) who became a cookery writer and broadcaster (ODNB 2021c). Her first broadcasts on the BBC were on radio, giving cookery talks about cakes (Radio Times 1946b), becoming a regular on *Women's Hour.* Her first television appearance was on the afternoon magazine programme, *Designed for Women*, in November 1947, as the expert on cookery, demonstrating the preparation of meals for those 'in a hurry', those wishing to stretch their rations and introducing 'foreign dishes' such as Apple Strudel, Ravioli and Moussaka. Her appearances continued on *Designed for Women* until 1950, when Patten joined Harben as an assistant presenter on his *Cookery Lesson* series, as well as fronting her own series, *Cookery*, in 1951 (Radio Times 1951a).

On screen, Patten performed the role of a typical – or citizen - housewife (Moseley 2008) wearing fashionable, flower-patterned dresses with her hair short, curled and framing her face, in a performance of domesticity, intimacy and friendship with viewers (Andrews 2012). However, her popularity only became great following a resurgence in her career in the 1990s and beyond, when she was seen as an antidote to the 'celebrity chefs' on television (ODNB 2021c).

Patten became associated with labour saving devices and kitchen equipment, such as pressure cookers, building on her days as a Senior Demonstrator for the Ministry of Food (Bateman 1966) and her work in department stores such as Harrods, where the Ministry of Food had an advice bureau (ODNB 2021c) and for whom she produced cookery books (Patten 1947). Patten had originally trained for an acting career which led her to take a 'role' of food demonstrator between theatre roles (Patten 1992). Patten became a prolific writer, publishing over 170 cookbooks (ODNB 2019c), many focused on war-time food and rationing (Patten 2002), establishing her later in life as an icon of second World War cooking (Andrews 2012).

Cooking, and discussion about cooking, began to play a more prominent role in the scheduled programmes aimed at women, such as *For The Housewife* (Radio Times

1948a). Alongside 'straight' demonstrations of cooking by Patten and others, segments were devoted to theatrical sketches featuring established stars of stage and screen, such as Yvonne Arnaud. In one sketch, *Cooking with Tears*, Arnaud found herself with the dilemma of having to cook a last-minute meal for a distinguished guest. In another segment, Rosemary Hume, from the Cordon Bleu Cookery School, discussed 'cooking as a career' before demonstrating a simple chestnut dish from France (Radio Times 1949d).

Jacqueline Rose – Children's Cookery

Jacqueline Rose (dates currently unknown) trained in Domestic Science at the University of London. She was a qualified teacher and wrote for magazines on the topic of food and cookery. Rose also studied Dramatic Art and Voice Production at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. She started with some early cookery talks on *Woman's Hour* on radio for the BBC, discussing the recipes and ideas for Brandy Snaps, in January 1950. Rose went on to make a few appearances on the afternoon magazine programme *About The Home* making cakes without baking and attractive sandwiches during their food and cookery segments. In 1953, Rose started a series of food and cookery segments as part of the Children's Television early evening programme, asking children; 'Do you Cook?' Rose published a cookery book in conjunction with the Co-operative Wholesale Society with her recommended recipes for *Family Fare* (Rose 1953).

In 1958 Rose contacted the BBC, this time keen to audition for dramatic roles, following months of experience in theatre, including at the New Shakespeare Theatre in Liverpool with Sam Wannamaker (BBC WAC Rose RCont1, 26 February 1958). She changed her name from June Irene Ross to Jacqueline in order to join Equity (ibid.). In her BBC application, Rose had crossed out the section which asked for previous broadcast experience, and instead highlighted details of her dramatic experience (ibid., 1 October 1957). Her audition reports noted that she was a 'sweet, bright little thing' and 'quite sweet, jolly' and although she 'shows promise' she required a 'lot more experience to be considered (ibid., 1 April 1958). Undeterred, she contacted various Dramatic Producers at the BBC, and received many letters to explain they were too busy or had too many 'on their books' already to see her (ibid., 7 May 1958). Rose continued to appear in Summer Season

at Skegness (ibid., 29 June 1958) and updated her business card and headed paper to claim the profession of 'Character Actress' (ibid., 5 November 1958). She later gained a small part in the film *The Leather Boys* (BBC WAC Rose RCont12 File 2, 2 December 1963).

During the 1960s, she performed another career reinvention, as a journalist for the *Hackney Gazette* (BBC WAC Rose RCont12 File 3, 21 October 1968) looking for some work at the BBC. She did secure some 'research' work, for a modest fee (ibid., 6 March 1969), but not the regular contributor work she had hoped for. Rose then became a Public Relations Consultant, in her own company, promoting other ventures and possible presenters (ibid., 21 September 1972).

Other 1940s and 1950s examples

Men began to be featured on programmes such as *Designed for Women*. In 1949, Alexander Moyes, described as a 'bachelor cook who has learned his way around the kitchen' demonstrated, from his own collection, three savoury dishes which would appeal particularly to a man's taste (Radio Times 1949e). Raymond Bush was shown on screen giving advice on how to store and preserve apples before Patten demonstrated how to make a hot apple cake, using them as an example (Radio Times 1949c).

In the 1950s, the number of presenters of food and cookery programmes on the BBC increased, appealing directly to the housewife. A diverse collection of people were used, often only once or twice, to demonstrate a diverse range of foods from around the world, described as 'foreign cookery'. In 1953, Signora Vera Calderoui showed how to bring a characteristically Italian taste to food. Mia Vandenberg cooked some typical Dutch dishes. Hedi Schanbl showed how to make a 'genuine' Viennese Steak. Else Forster showed how to make traditional German dishes such as Rippchen and Bienenstich. Kamila Tyabji demonstrated the traditional way to make curry. Jytte Hardisty brought the delights of a Danish Egg Cake, Aeggecage, to the screen, while Georges Dertu oversaw French dishes (Radio Times 1955e). (see timeline in Appendix B).

Similar magazine programmes aimed at the housewife appeared on ITV (Sandall 1982) during the 1950s, such as *Home with Joy Shelton*, giving advice about gardens, home management and cooking (TV Times Project 2019). ITV began to look abroad, especially towards the United States, for fresh ideas and talent. British-born American pioneer television cook (Collins 2009), Dione Lucas, filmed some programmes for the British audience, demonstrating roast turkey and plum pudding ahead of Christmas 1955 and Mousse de Bananes Marlborough in 1956. Lucas brought her experience as author of the *Cordon Bleu Cookery Book* (Lucas 1946) and years in-front of the camera stateside (her first programme had been in 1947 in New York), paving the way for American television cooking pioneer Julia Child (Collins 2009).

Fanny Cradock – Kitchen Magic

Fanny Cradock (1909-1994) began her career as a food activist, campaigner, author, children's book writer and journalist (Geddes 2017). She found her way onto BBC radio giving food talks about European destinations (Radio Times 1952), which in time led to her establishing an act with her 'husband' Johnnie (Humble 2005) for their first television appearance together on the BBC in February 1955 with *Kitchen Magic* (Radio Times 1955b). They performed in evening gown and dinner suit (Geddes 2019) leading many to describe them as 'entertainers' (Dickson Wright 2012) instead of food educators. Cultural Historian Maggie Andrews linked Cradock's exaggerated performance (Andrews 2012) to the 'rise of the gourmet' (Humble 2005).

Cradock introduced live outside broadcasts on food. She cooked from The Royal Albert Hall in 1956 (Radio Times 1956b) and on cooking competitions broadcast across Europe (Geddes 2018b). Initially with the BBC, on radio and television, the Cradocks transferred to ITV in 1956, where they stayed until the mid-sixties (Geddes 2019), forming career-long commercial relationships with producers, advertisers and industry (Geddes 2018a). Unusually, they were able to appear occasionally on BBC at the same time (Radio Times 1958).

Cradock built her reputation as a glamorous, society-accepted 'celebrity', appearing on chat-shows, gameshows, and other television programmes distinct from food

and cookery (Geddes 2019). She appeared on television in fashionable clothing, never with an apron (which she believed marked women out as domestic slaves) and usually with a young assistant by her side. She cooked steadily on television for over twenty years, developing her own programme ideas and formats. Many of these would not be copied until decades later; connected food and travel programmes, cooking in real homes with home cooks, and cooking outside the studio (Geddes 2017).

Cradock was not trained in either food or theatre, however she did come from a theatrical family (Geddes 2019). She devised several personas related to different aspects of her career, choosing different names and styles for stage, television, print and business. Cradock made her television persona into a 'brand' linked to her celebrity, which she used to promote her career and popularity (Andrews 2012).

Zena Skinner – Mainly for Women

Zena Skinner (1927-2018) began her career as a food demonstrator, for the Electricity Board, touring Britain, Jamaica, and Africa as well as extended demonstrations at the Ideal Home Exhibition (Skinner 1989). Skinner was often described as a 'rival' to Cradock (Luton News 2013). Her programmes were styled rather to appeal to a 'family fare' audience, with a 'efficient, quiet, undemonstrative and competent' style (Best of British 2016) and 'cleanly competent' (Bakers' Review 1967).

Skinner made her first appearance on television as a cook in 1959, during the food and cookery segment of the afternoon magazine programme, *Mainly for Women* (Radio Times 1959). Skinner continued with these guest slots until 1966, when she became the resident cook on the London 'news and views' evening programme, broadcast at six, *Town and Around*. Skinner established her own food and cookery programmes, *Looking at Cooking*, broadcast after six in the evening in 1967, explaining basic principles of cookery. *Ask Zena Skinner!* was broadcast at midday in 1970, tackling food and cookery-based dilemmas from real-life viewers, such as how to throw successful dinner parties, what equipment to purchase for a smooth-running kitchen and how to slim successfully (Radio Times 1970).

On screen, Skinner was styled simply, dressed in short-sleeved tops, occasionally with pearl necklaces, always with an apron, cooking in a well-equipped home kitchen set-up. She cooked on electric rings, with clean work surfaces for preparation. Behind her, the camera shows ample cupboards, a stainless-steel sink and drainer, eye-level built-in ovens and Fridge-Freezers.

In 1974, Skinner appeared on the *Bon Appétit!* programme (BBC 1974), introducing French dishes. She became the food and cookery expert on *Indoors Outdoors*, an early evening programme which aimed to show viewers how to save money around the home, in 1976 (Radio Times 1976a).

Delia Smith - Family Fare

Delia Smith (1941-present) initially worked as a food journalist (Humble 2005), publishing a book in 1971 on *How to Cheat at Cooking*, promoting convenience over cooking ability (Smith 1971). Smith's broadcast career began as a guest presenter on the BBC radio series *Women's Hour* in 1972, giving talks as part of the *Cookery Club* segment. She moved to television later the same year with her first series (Radio Times 1973a), *Family Fare* (Smith 1973). *Radio Times* listed the series as 'simple and attractive dishes', and shows the broadcast time as mid-afternoon (ibid). A second series in 1974 transferred to 6:45 in the evening, focusing on *Summer Cooking* (Smith 1974). Smith published booklets to accompany each series. Following cookery contributions in afternoon magazine programmes, *Family Fare* returned for a third series, *Spring into Summer*, in 1975 (Smith 1975), broadcast at 7:45 in the evening on BBC2 (Radio Times 1975).

Smith's style has been described as 'all process and little pleasure' (Humble 2005). In her initial food and cookery programmes she is styled as if she were an ordinary housewife, cooking in a simple studio set, with familiar work surfaces, built-in appliances, and equipment. She struck a chord with audiences as straightforward and comforting, in contrast to both Harben and Cradock (Dickson Wright 2012). Her 1970s performances were described as 'genuine' (Humble 2005).

In 1976, Smith began a semi-regular contribution to the Children's programme, *Multi-Coloured Swap Shop*, as cookery expert. Returning to her own series again in November 1978, Smith presented her *Cookery Course* shown at seven-thirty on BBC2 and repeated on BBC1 in the afternoons (Radio Times 1978); repeated again as part of Schools Educational programmes in 1979 (Radio Times 1979). A second series of the *Cookery Course* was broadcast in 1980 (Radio Times 1980).

This phase of her career was a far cry from the success of her later television series, as 'The Delia Phenomenon'; in these she cooked from a specially built studio kitchen in her own home, which established her popularity and influence (Patten 2015).

Others – 1970s

Graham Kerr (1934-present), who became famous as *The Galloping Gourmet*, came to a career in food after joining the British Army Catering Corps (Kerr 2015, p. 63), and then the Royal New Zealand Air Force (p. 73). This led to an appearance on New Zealand television cooking eggs (p. 100) reviewed as 'the best live show to date' by a TV critic. He was quickly offered his own New Zealand television series, *Entertaining with Kerr*, and a connected book with the same title (Kerr 1963) followed by *The Graham Kerr Cookbook* (Kerr 1969). Kerr made versions of his programmes for Australia (p. 122), and then franchised versions in Canada (p. 162) packaged as *The Galloping Gourmet* for America (p. 176). In 1969, the series (made in Canada) was shown on the BBC as *Entertaining With Kerr* (Radio Times 1969), beginning a long careers of hundreds of syndicated programmes per year and multiple series around the world.

Editor of the *Woman's Home Journal* (Telegraph 2013), *The Times* (TV Times Project 2019) and future founder of the Guild of Food Writers (Guardian 2013), Katie Stewart, recorded a series of food and cooking programmes for Grampian Television, *Cooking with Katie*, broadcast on some ITV networks in 1968 (TV Times Project 2019). Three subsequent series, renamed *Katie Stewart Cooks,* were broadcast in 1970 (Stewart 1972). The themes of the programmes were making the most of inexpensive ingredients and eating well. Stewart was joined in the studio by an audience of housewives who would ask for advice on cooking.

Popular broadcaster, Shaw Taylor (Guardian 2015), fronted a short series of outside broadcasts for the ITV network in late 1969 (and early 1970) focused on *Summer Cooking* and linked to the Cordon Bleu cookery school in Marylebone (TV Times Project 2019). Taylor introduced cold dishes, exciting salads, exotic sweets, dinner party ideas and special summer party dishes, all expertly prepared not by him, but by the chefs and demonstrators of the cookery school. Taylor returned later in the year to present suggestions for a Christmas Party.

Vincent Price, best known as the 'horror king' (Price 1971), starring in many horror films in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (Price 1999), also presented a food and cookery series, *Cooking Price-Wise*, broadcast initially weekly from April 1971 at around 11:30 at night (TV Times Project 2019). A repeat of the series was broadcast in July 1971 at six in the evening. Each episode focused on foods from different parts of the world. Thames Television published a companion cookbook, also titled *Cooking Price Wise* (Price 1971) split into six parts, each covered a different ingredient – such as Potato, Meat, Bacon, or Cheese.

Farmhouse Kitchen was produced by Yorkshire Television and broadcast on the ITV network from 1971 until 1990, in an afternoon slot (TV Times Project 2019). The aim of the weekly programme was to re-introduce traditional British cooking and thrifty meals suitable to feed a family on a budget (IMDB 2019). Associated cookbooks were published, written initially by the presenter, Dorothy Sleightholme (Sleightholme 1975).

In 1972, the popular magazine show on ITV, *Tea Break*, moved time slots to an earlier broadcast and changed its name to *Good Afternoon!* providing discussions, items, and guests of interest to those at home in the afternoons' (TV Times Project 2019). Mary Berry, who had previously cooked on *Farmhouse Kitchen*, as well as sporadic appearances guest cooking on the BBC (Radio Times 1971b), joined semi-regular host, Judith Chalmers, in 1973 for several prominent cookery demonstrations (Berry and Chalmers 1977). Berry had trained as a food demonstrator with the Electricity Board and had published several cookbooks (Berry 1976) following completion of the Cordon Bleu Cookery Course, and later became a key presenter on the BBC with *The Great British Bake Off*.

The BBC began a popular and long-running afternoon magazine programme, *Pebble Mill At One*, in 1972 (Radio Times 1972c), which featured regular food and cooking segments, with presenters such as Michael Smith looking at Olde English Food, Lalita Ahmed cooking Indian food, among others.

Conclusion

This chapter gives an accurate timeline of the transition from the very first appearances of food and cooking on television with: Rosina Dixon, Moira Meighn, X Marcel Boulestin and others during the 1930s; Philip Harben, Marguerite Patten, Joan Robins, Josephine Terry and others in the 1940s and 1950s; leading towards Fanny Cradock, Zena Skinner and others in the late 1950s and 1960s; before perhaps more familiar names such as Delia Smith, Mary Berry and others from the 1970s. I provide information here of some programmes on ITV, and some presenters who began in the 1970s – most prominently Delia Smith – but continued to cook on television for several decades following this. They do not provide a focus for this thesis. I have also made the decision to exclude the prominent work of Graham Kerr, *The Galloping Gourmet*, from my analysis; his programmes were made outside the UK and imported to the BBC screens. Although valuable as examples of innovation and development of food and cookery on television, I feel the examples of both Kerr and Smith lie outside the scope of my research question here, and deserve perhaps fuller and more focused attention in future research.

This timeline is itself a new contribution to knowledge and has been established through an analysis of the content of the *Radio Times* archive and other published materials of the time. Although some of the names of presenters have been mentioned by other research, many have been missing, particularly but not exclusively, women. Re-establishing this history and the contributions the presenters made to early television food and cookery programmes is an important step to redressing the gaps in knowledge which this thesis considers.

The following chapters present the main findings of this research. I focus, as previously stated, on the early period of pre-war food and cooking television in

Britain, on the BBC, and the post-war period with a particular focus up until 1955, and end with the personalities and presenters who discussed food and demonstrated cookery on television into the 1970s.

Chapter 5: Innovation (Discussion)

Introduction

Brian Winston contributed greatly to our understanding of the patterns of innovation found within technological change (Winston 1996), putting forward a theory of the disruptive power of new technologies which he found 'utterly transformed' the media world (p. 1). For visual media technologies, he described different phases to show the development cycles involved in transforming communicated images from photography, to cinema, and then to television (p. 9). This work built on his previous research (Winston 1986) which provided an understanding of media as a series of phases and transformations from idea to delivery, counter-acting the notion that new technologies simply appeared fully formed (see later research by Gillis and Weber).

Winston (2005) argued that television was 'the ideal way of sending messages' (p. 332) but that the development of television also had an impact on cinema, and the cinema industry. He demonstrated that the power of television was strong, both in terms of the audience and the institutions who broadcast. In 1946, after seven years without television broadcasts, the BBC resumed transmission, despite Britain's period of austerity, with competing demands on resources and construction priorities (p. 340). By the end of 1952, though, there were fewer than two million television receivers in Britain, seventy-eight per cent of the population lived within range of a television signal (p. 340). Winston illustrated a 'pattern of innovation'; just two years later, with considerable political and cultural opposition, ITV launched, triggering a similar set of institutional developments across Western media, competitive television commercial channels. This proliferation remained a feature of future schedules (p. 345) as television had 'come to stay' (p. 351).

Overview

The innovation cycle for new and emerging media technologies were rooted in the social sphere (Winston 1998) as a constant play between social necessity and suppression, an 'unwritten law' by which new technologies were introduced to society. Winston analysed the history of 'prototypes' and inventions, paying attention to their social impact. His 'history of technology' ran in parallel to the history of television (p. 1). My interest here in his work is to consider this parallel activity and conclude if it could also be seen in the development of a format *within* television, rather than the technology *of* television; in particular, the history and development of television food and cooking programmes in Britain.

In this chapter, I consider the innovation and the contribution to development from the presenters of early television food and cooking programmes, using the phases of the 'cycles of transformation' which Winston proposed, to analyse the 'long histories' (1998) of technology, to illustrate a similar long history between 1936 and 1976 of television food and cooking. Before I consider further archival material from the BBC, and available visual archival material as 'examples' of surviving early television food and cooking programmes in Britain, I provide a summary of Winston's Social Sphere of Development model.

Winston's Social Sphere of Development

Winston set out 'ideation' as the beginning of the development cycle (1998); an 'activation' or 'envisaging of an idea involving the formulation of a problem to be solved, and a hypothesis of a solution. The resulting creativity, intuition and imagination involved, Winston said, were constrained by social forces (p. 4). The subsequent testing of solutions, the 'prototype' phase (p. 5), was informed by the social sphere. Winston considered why some prototype solutions were abandoned, and not others. In the development phase of 'social necessity' the protypes moved into the world at large (p. 6). These were driven by changed social circumstances and a perceived need within society for the developments to succeed, concentrating a range of social forces to work directly on the process of innovation (p. 9).

Winston illustrated the four types of prototypes– rejected, accepted, parallel and partial. The next phase in the development process, 'invention', moved the protypes

into the market place (p. 11). Winston maintained that this transformation was prone to 'suppression' (p. 13), and fear of their innovations radical effect, brake wherein social constraints limited the potential of the technology, slowing its social formation. The final transformation Winston outlined was a 'diffusion' or acceptance of the products, with accepted spin-offs and further rejected aspects becoming redundant (p.14) as the technology was accepted by the consumer. Winston proposed this model of 'the process of change' (p. 15) as an explanation or interpretation to explain and interpret the 'current position' understand and the historical development of technology and communications (p. 15).

It is this aspect which I aim to investigate with regard to television food and cooking programmes here, applying his Social Sphere model of development, analysing the ideation, prototype, social necessity, invention, suppression and then diffusion of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain.

Ideation

As no experimental television food and cooking programmes were produced prior to the official public broadcasts and service in 1936, the first few programmes collectively form the 'ideation'. The two initial broadcasts from Rosina Dixon and Moira Meighn embody the two conflicting ideas of domestic 'ordinariness', Meighn's performance, broadcast during the afternoon and again in the evening; and a more entertaining 'spectacular' appearance from Dixon. This pattern continues throughout the early period of television food and cooking programmes, as is discussed in the subsequent two chapters.

Though the broadcast programmes do not survive; a still photograph of Meighn mid-action in the studio does exist (BBC Photosales 2023). The image shows Meighn dressed in a bizarre outfit, suggesting a more fantasy role of a cook than a direct representation. Two cameras are shown filming the work of Meighn in what seems to be an unusual kitchen setting, A window to the rear shows streetlights outside. The programme used her book *The Magic Ring* (Meighn 1936) as a basis. The Radio Times lists the programme; 'Moira Meighn will give an example of what can be done with simple equipment in the preparation of good food' (Radio Times 1936d). Records at the Alexandra Palace Television Society archive Programmes as

Broadcast provide a little more detail; 'Moira Meighn will give a talk and demonstration on the subject of good food that can be prepared with simple equipment and cooked on a single heating ring.'

Meighn wrote to the BBC in 1936 having heard they would be auditioning for 'cooks' for television, giving her credentials in broadcasting, cookery, and publishing (BBC WAC Twigg RCont1, 27 June 1936). She signed the letter as P.M. Twigg with the name 'Moira Meighn' in inverted commas. The BBC sent her a letter to say she had been mistaken about the auditions (ibid., 29 June 1936). The next entry in her BBC file simply shows a contract for two cookery demonstrations on the newly set-up television service for 9th December 1936; one in the afternoon and again in the evening (ibid., 20 November 1936). No record of the decision or discussion around this remains, at least in her file. Twigg would be paid nine guineas for the two demonstrations and would be responsible for the 'arrangement and supply of necessary food for display' (ibid.), setting a precedent for food and cookery programmes to come, both in time slots and expectations of the presenters. Twigg was contracted as the artist Miss Moira Meighn, and the contract indicates that her programme is called *Quarter of an Hour Meals* (ibid.).

The setting of the domestic kitchen with utensils and equipment was imagined and established during early filmed demonstrations with Boulestin, and may have borrowed elements from early radio 'talks'. The visual elements, together with restrictions at the new television studios which did not have, at that time, adequate gas or electrical connections, perhaps dictated the limited use of a primus gas stove (in the case of Meighn), and an altogether simpler demonstration of rolling pastry, while singing (in the case of Dixon).

Boulestin made promotional films with the Gas Board which could be shown in cinemas across the country (The Mercury 1937), reaching a wider audience than the few homes with television near to the London transmitter. One such film, *A Famous Cook at Work*, also known as *A Party Dish* (BFI 2020). (See Figure 3). This was later glossed as 'most interesting entertainment' (The Mercury 1937) and 'mouth-watering' (Hastings and St Leonards Observer 1937) featured Boulestin as the 'celebrated gastronome and artist of the kitchen' giving lucid commentary and useful tips while he cooked 'with a few scraps.' Boulestin encouraged housewives,

explaining that an ‘elaborate kitchen’ was not required to make ‘elaborate dishes’, especially if they were to use a ‘shiny new gas cooker’ (BFI 2020) as he himself did. Philip Harben produced a few films which similarly toured around the country. *Boiling and Simmering* (in colour, 1950) was produced in collaboration with the Electrical Development Association while *What’s Cooking* was made with the Gas Council (Harben 1951b).

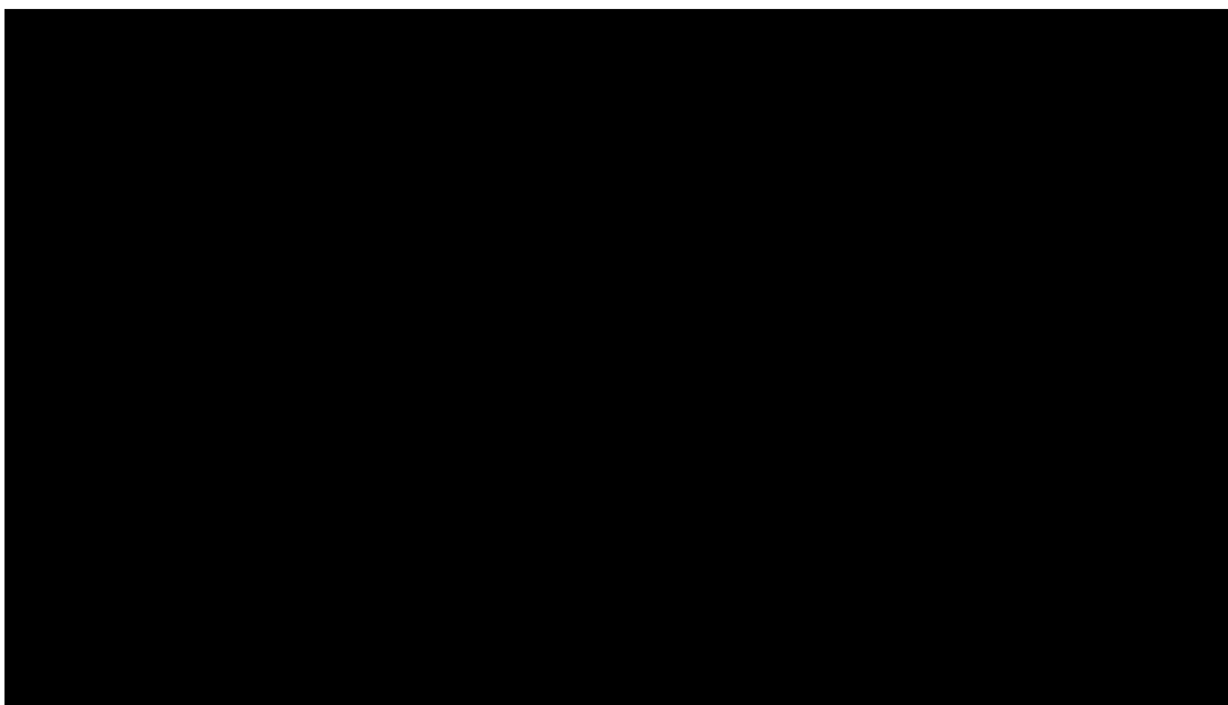

Figure 3. X Marcel Boulestin, series of screenshots from A Party Dish, BFI

During the war, Meighn appears in the film clip *Bampton Shows the Way* (1941), however Rosina Dixon was not seen again. Meighn was billed as an established cook, passing on her skills. Dixon was noted for her entertainment values, and was introduced with the title ‘The Singing Cook’, a convention which became common as television food and cooking progressed.

These films, not intended for television broadcast, developed the idea of a broadcast of food and cookery, and established some of the early ideas of what a programme might include, and look like. They were not made by television, or for television, so they remain examples of ideas. The examples of Dixon, an entertainer linked to food, and Meighn, a fantastical character working magic with food (using simple equipment in a mocked-up domestic environment) were ideas which were taken forward.

Prototype

With the establishment of a regular series in 1937, Boulestin was able to also create a prototype for emerging television food and cooking programmes which followed. Boulestin was adamant that he should not be referred to as a 'chef' but instead as a 'cook'. This followed a mistake on air (on radio) which was an alteration to the already agreed script, referring to him as a chef, which he found insulting and an 'extremely awkward situation' (BBC WAC Boulestin RCont1, 24 June 1935). He wanted a more 'ordinary' presence in people's homes rather than a trained, more restrictive and 'spectacular' persona of a chef. It became a condition of his contract that he would never be referred to as a 'chef' again, including on television (BBC WAC Boulestin TVTal1, 31 December 1936).

Boulestin created a series of connected programmes with *A Cook's Night Out* which laid out skills and techniques which people could follow to improve their knowledge and practical abilities in food and cookery. This format was adopted by Harben in *Cookery Lesson*. Neither of these series survive in the archives. Instead I have found a later example from Cradock's first connected series, *Home Cooking* (16th May 1965 broadcast at 10am (Sunday), demonstrating Casseroles and Roasts). Although much later than the first early food and cookery programmes in Britain, the elements of a prototype remain.

Fanny Cradock – Home Cooking

Home Cooking was presented by Fanny Cradock; a programme[4] intended to be 'ordinary' the result is more 'spectacular'. Cradock focuses on many different recipes, with pre-prepared parts, to ensure the focus was on the essential flourishes and techniques and not on the mundane and ordinary 'cooking', which would make for less interesting television. Spectacular titles, music and studio sets belie the ordinary nature of cooking roast meats. The studio is set up to showcase Cradock's choice of Parkinson Cowan High Level Grill cooker, with different

[4] Home Cooking – Casseroles and Roasts, broadcast on Sunday 16th May 1965 at 10 a.m.

‘preparation’ areas set out so she can move between them to indicate a new recipe, and to allow for her assistant, David, to tidy away and prepare.

Cradock used unusual phrases to lighten the demonstration and indicate a ‘chatty’ conversation, warning viewers to follow her instructions, such as ‘if you don’t do this, it’ll taste like bits of damp flannel.’ She looks directly down the camera lens and says ‘anything which takes less time and produces equally good results suits me down to the socks!’ When Cradock is explaining a technique or an ingredient, close up shots are used. When she is talking to the camera, the oven and especially the high-level grill are prominent in the background (the Parkinson Cowan logo is visible).

With each item, Cradock gives different options using the same techniques. She adds flair to her demonstrations by using, for example, stock decanted into a wine bottle ‘for ease in the studio’ and which marks her out as different. Cradock speaks to the audience at home. Cradock discussed vegetables, claiming that roasting is ‘gloriously suited to cabbage’, passing on some of her secrets, mentioning that all the details are available in the booklet which she has prepared to accompany the series, adding that readers of the booklet can develop, by adding experiments of their own.

The whole twenty-five-minute programme is filmed in one take, with Cradock never faltering or missing a cue. Throughout she refers to previous programmes as reminders for techniques and ideas, suggesting ‘If you think that looks good enough to eat, you should smell it, I only wish you could’ in an inviting tone. Cradock turns to the audience at home and makes a plea for the viewer to join her again next Sunday, reading the details obviously from a card for the first time in the episode, and quickly mentioning again the booklet before the closing credits roll, with a repeat of the spinning whisks and the familiar tune for the beginning of the programme.

Further prototype development

Phyllis Twigg (a.k.a Moira Meighn – see Figure 4) had been a semi-regular contributor to radio broadcasts with the BBC, credited with among other things

writing the first broadcast radio drama in 1922 (Pepler 1988). Her main job was as an author, compiling various anthologies on subjects as varied as quaint old cookery, garden lore and cats (Meighn 1929). Her file at the BBC Written Archives is bulging with letters from her with suggestions of broadcasts she could make, if welcome, for the BBC, using her professional name, Moira Meighn (the BBC notes this is how she preferred to be announced) (BBC WAC Twigg Rcont1, 8 December 1931). Her first billed performances included talks on *Christmas Stories* (ibid.), and *Books of Special Interest to Women* (Radio Times 1924c).

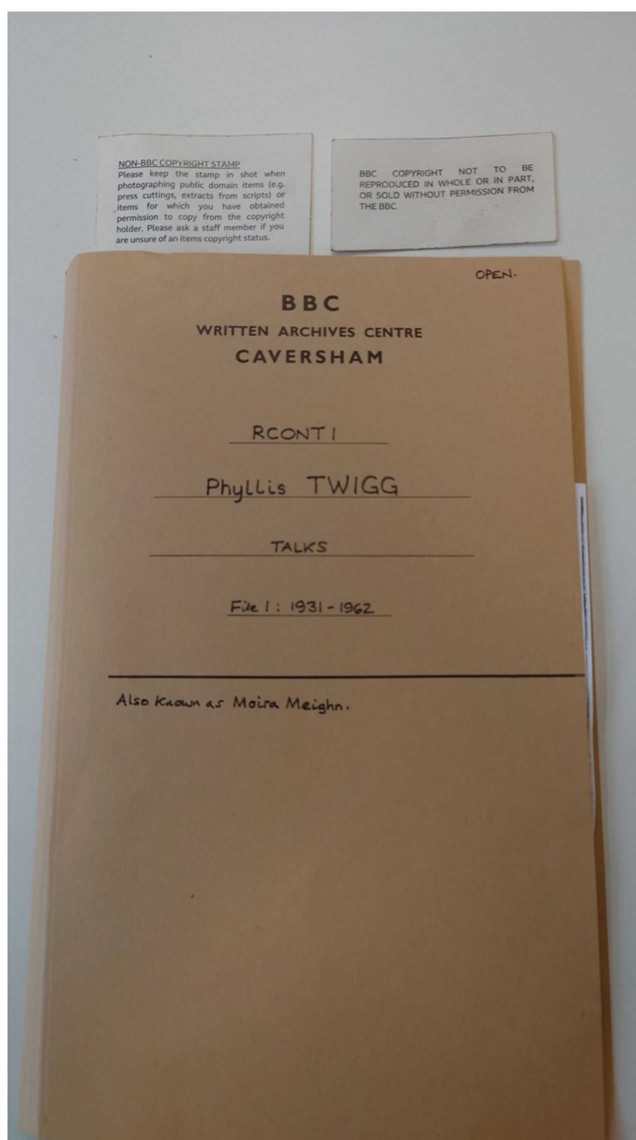

Figure 4. Moira Meighn, cover of the WAC file, Phyllis Twigg

Her BBC file contains almost as many letters of rejection as letters with suggestions. This did not appear to put Twigg off, with the scope and variety of suggestions increasing, including in 1935, an idea for a talk on food and cookery

connected to the Queen Mary (BBC WAC Twigg Rcont1, 30 December 1935). Her persistence paid off. The BBC recorded in an internal memo that although she was 'not a particularly good broadcaster' (ibid., 1 January 1936) they felt compelled to follow up her persistent letters and enquiries. Mr Eckersley (BBC producer) did not have any objection to including her talk, 'a straight talk to housewives' (ibid) and Twigg was offered a five-minute talk (ibid., 18 March 1936).

Reading between the lines of the letter sent to Twigg, it seemed as if the BBC offered her this opportunity hoping that she would not accept it; 'I am sorry to have to send such a discouraging reply' for her to consider (ibid., 5 January 1936). But, she accepted, and continued to pitch ideas for food and cookery, promoting her published cookbooks (ibid., 27 June 1936) and her abilities to cook well for her family. 'I couldn't bear ill-cooked food' (ibid.). Twigg had heard somewhere along the line that the BBC were 'giving interviews' (ibid.) to cooks who 'really know the practical side of this work' which she felt should include her (ibid.). The BBC tactfully wrote back to say that she had misunderstood the report of auditions, which only included people who had never broadcast before, but would keep a note of her name without any need for her to attend such an audition (ibid.).

A similar pattern of suggestions and brushed-off rejections happened in correspondence between the BBC and Josephine Terry in 1946. In the intervening months between the experiment and her projected series (see earlier discussion), Terry spent some time in Ireland (BBC WAC Terry TVArt1, 19 September 1946) but wrote to Adams to say that she could not free her mind of ideas for television (ibid.). Terry prepared a detailed 'Memorandum on Equipment for Television Set' (ibid., 25 October 1946a) which she felt would make a successful food and cookery programme for television, complete with photographs to illustrate as examples (ibid., 1946). The aim of the Memorandum was to show 'the technical side of my television performance' from Terry, and she sent it to BBC Producer Mary Adams with a note asking if it would be 'of help?' (ibid., 25 October 1946a) ahead of a time to 'show you my present choice of dishes' after completing another book (ibid.). The Memorandum indicated, in addition to being a 'performance', that 'variety' was essential as well as useful information. Terry noted 'one difficulty in particular' to overcome, which was the time it takes for things to cook or boil at home, versus how to replicate this in the kitchen given the time constraints of the broadcast.

Terry noted that at home, housewives would busy themselves with other tasks while, for example, water boiled. She suggested the installation of a 'boiling water appliance' in the studio, which would be 'invisible in the television picture' but would allow Terry to prepare quickly; demonstrate modern methods of cooking and preserving; focus attention without distraction; avoid potential disasters; save a few extra minutes which she could devote to her 'performance' instead (ibid.).

Terry requested a small wall cabinet 'for keeping things hot', providing an example photograph of this in action, Terry demonstrating how it might look, and appear on television (ibid., 1946). The design inspiration came from Terry's time working in hospitals, where such a piece of equipment was frequently used. Terry says that she would like to see this kind of system in ordinary homes too. She stressed it would be useful for busy housewives, reluctant cooks – stressing that 'modern' housecraft should involve convenience and practical suggestions for working throughout the day easily and quickly can be 'promoted to culinary integrity' (ibid., 25 October 1946b)[5].

Further script treatments by Terry developed linkages between 'performance' and 'presentation' more strongly. Her outlines resemble the written form of a play (ibid., 8 November 1946). Terry headed up the outline for her first programme on 11th November 1946 with the word 'Scene' and used phrases such as 'on the table is displayed a medley of kitchen utensils of all kinds. There are also bags and packages with food.' The landscape outline is then split into two columns – one showing 'Action' and one 'Talk'. The action instructions took the form of a stage direction – for example 'JT at the cabinet turns round towards the audience with a smile which is a wordless; 'hello, friends'. She would put on her apron with the visible pleasure of a woman over something dainty that makes her home-proud. The 'Text' shows that while this was occurring, Terry would be reassuring the audience that all the things laid out are nothing to worry about, and do not mean a lot of work (ibid.).

[5] This cabinet was later installed in Alexandra Palace, on loan, from the Tottenham and District Gas Company (ibid., 3 February 1947a). Revised studio diagrams showed where this 'hotmeal cabinet' should be positioned (ibid., 3 February 1947b).

This script treatment showed that Terry considered all aspects of the programmes to be made, including camera angles, close-ups, priority shots and tone of presentation. She sent it to Adams at the BBC with a clarification saying it was merely a 'rough sketch' of her 'performance' and recommendations on what the 'kitchen cabinet' set should contain. A sketch of the studio kept in the BBC Written Archive file showed the expected layout and this is confirmed in the photograph used in the *Radio Times* to promote the programme (Radio Times 1946h).

The Programmes as Broadcast show little excitement, and barely reflect the 'performance' which Terry crafted, recording only that 'Miss Josephine Terry gave practical advice to the busy housewife, and showed various articles she had bought recently' (BBC WAC Terry TVArt1, 12 November 1946). Subsequent editions of the series prompted similar script treatments from Terry (ibid., 15 November 1946). Terry wrote to Adams after the broadcast to say that she had heard such good feedback on it, even if it was 'indirect and second-hand', clearly hoping that Adams herself would add to the compliments (ibid.). Terry raised the fact that her 'rehearsal time' for a future booking was early afternoon (1pm), while the 'performance' was late evening (9:30pm) and asked if it were possible to move the rehearsal to 7pm ('as Philip Harben had when I visited him') to make it more worthwhile and less restrictive for her. Terry had her secretary write to the BBC to ask for permission to use the 'kitchen set' ahead of her 'performance' to stage some press and publicity photographs she wanted to arrange (ibid.).

A script treatment indicated that at the beginning of a particular performance, Terry would on camera take a flower from her lapel and place it on the countertop. Terry felt this would indicate that she had just returned from an evening at the Theatre; to demonstrate, and talk about, the preparation of an After Theatre Snack (ibid.), elevating the broadcast from 'ordinary' to spectacular and immediately ensuring the programme had been designed to be 'stared at'.

Social Necessity

Linkages to consumer culture, product placement and advertising developed after Boulestin and Harben were on screen, as part of social changes in the 1950s. This next section considers if they had a role to play in the early development of 'multi-

platforming' (Bonner 2009) and how these linkages were exploited by later television food and cooking programmes.

Both Boulestin and Harben toured the country to promote their food and cooking skills, and the products they linked to, to households who may not yet have had the opportunity to see them on television (due to the slow expansion of transmitters as well as the relatively slow uptake of television as a 'new technology'). Boulestin became the Director of Cooking for the *Evening Standard* (The Times and Guardian 1936) and gave public lectures on cooking for them, sponsored by the Hendon Electricity Supply Company, and talks on BBC radio on 'the art of cookery' (Staffordshire Sentinel 1931). Harben toured the country late in his career, 'entertaining and provoking' audiences (The Liverpool Echo 1958) with his 'variety' performances (Hampshire Telegraph and Post 1954), building upon his celebrity established through television.

Boulestin lent his name, and caricatured image, to advertising pamphlets for stores across the country, selling furniture and providing recipes for suitable fish dishes, for example, to pair with new dining-room and bedroom suites etc. (Boulestin 1933). Harben became more and more associated with the products he was using on screen and used media reports to underline the connection. Trusted as the giver of expert advice and the man who had taught housewives 'so much of the art of cooking', Harben claimed 'it is false economy to use cheap saucepans', recommending the 'tools' he uses at home for every housewife in Britain (Coventry Evening Telegraph 1954). Harben produced cookbooks for other manufacturers, where they matched his 'brand' recognition, for example *Imperial Frying with Philip Harben* for the Prestige Group Limited (Harben 1960b).

Harben invited reporters into his home to view his 'dream kitchen' (The Liverpool Echo 1957). Harben opened food fairs and demonstrated his range of 'harbenised' cookware (Western Mail 1958) which was also available through mail order (Harbenware 1958). Harben turned his back on television (at least for the BBC) as there 'was no money in it' to set-up his 'pots and pans business' (The Journal 1970b). In the 1960s, Harbenware, Harben's extended brand of kitchen equipment had an annual turnover of £100,000 (Bateman 1966).

Although the style of Harben's programmes cannot be seen in the archives, a memo from Cecil McGivern acknowledges that Harben did not like his programmes to be 'jazzed up'. The producer nevertheless was urged to differentiate between 'interesting' and 'dull' presentations (BBC WAC Harben TVTalks2c, 6 August 1952). Suggestions included an unusual opening caption, a few bars of 'gay music', some audience participation, a competitive element – indeed anything which may 'give the series an extra importance' despite it not being a 'major series' and lend itself to publicity. The memo suggests beginning with Harben saying the opening line 'Should any ladies be viewing now will they please switch off as I wish to speak only to the men… Now chaps that we're alone…'; to include male 'artists' from television or possibly the husbands of female artists (ibid., 13 August 1952). The BBC were anxious that Harben should be accompanied by a 'male helper' in each programme. They put out an internal call for suitable performers whom different departments may 'wish to have before the camera more often?' (ibid., 25 August 1952).

Further advertising and product placement links are evident in Harben's career, and those of the other presenters which followed, for example links to Kenwood mixers. Kenwood made a request to use an image of Harben dressed as King Henry VIII in a forthcoming recipe book which Harben was working on (ibid., 5 June 1952). The company wished to use the image on the front cover of the book, an image previously shown as part of the *Country Dish* programme, Harben photographed standing in front of - described as the TV Cook (ibid.). S.E. Reynolds. BBC Producer for Women's Programmes, wrote an internal memo in response to the request; 'this is one of the things over which we have little control' recognising that they could neither refuse nor endorse this (ibid., 2 June 1952). Mary Adams also saw no objection (ibid.). It was clarified that the BBC itself did not own the copyright for the picture, and instead directed *Kenwood* to the original copyright holder who would 'no doubt be glad to arrange suitable copyright fee' for its use (ibid., 6 June 1952).

Invention

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the presenters gained confidence to insist on higher fee payments, and as we have seen, establish rates for repeat performances,

as others on television did. Skinner campaigned successfully for higher rates (BBC WAC Skinner TVArt3, 10 September 1965 and BBC WAC Skinner TVArt5, 27 August 1974 as examples); as early as Boulestin internal negotiations on fee levels were common (BBC WAS Boulestin Talks File1, 14 December 1936).

Files at the BBC Written Archives show that Patten always accepted the suggested fee of ten guineas per demonstration without any negotiation. However, when Philip Harben was offered the same fee for a ten-minute slot on *Designed for Women*, where he gave a demonstration on how to carve a joint, he refused and negotiated it to 18 guineas (BBC WAC T32/125/2, 25 October 1948). Harben attempted to negotiate 'telefilm repeat fees' and fees for his wife whose expenses were queried, as she did not act in any way as an assistant on the programme. Letters show that the BBC attempted to appease Harben with an assurance that they would 'discuss the matter' of official recognition for Mrs Harben in future (BBC WAC Harben TVTalks2b, 4 July 1951a). Harben claimed that his wife was his 'active and indispensable' assistant, she seems to have been also considered as such by the producer (ibid., 9 July 1951). Harben felt that this recognition should be forthcoming and only appropriate for his wife (ibid). Harben's wife is mentioned in one contracted appearance giving a demonstration of carving a turkey and a goose with her husband (BBC WAC T32/125/2, 10 December 1948).

When Patten included ordinary viewers' recipes, such as for a Malt Loaf*,* on screen on *Designed for Women* (ibid., 16 December 1948) in addition to one of her own, the fee for her broadcast remained the same. Production notes show that Patten 'provides most of her own equipment' (BBC WAC T32/125/3, 2 February 1949) speaking and being on screen for at least 10 minutes. One internal evaluation of the fees involved compares to that of Heal (now thirty-five guineas as compere), Yvonne Arnaud (as a comedienne got 30 guineas), other guests including a toy designer who 'did all of his own research and provided photographs' got a fee of twenty-five guineas (ibid.). Harben's notes for *Designed for Women* included a line to 'please negotiate' his fee between twelve and fifteen guineas (ibid., 18 May 1949). Patten's fee was increased to twelve guineas as she continued to demonstrate, for example, interesting ways to cook cabbage (ibid., 15 November 1949). Joan Robins became part of the programme occasionally too, and records suggest she attracted a much higher fee, though producers felt this should not be

‘more than fifteen or twenty guineas’ when acting as a compere, if she did not do additional work on the content (BBC WAC T32/125/4, 22 June 1951). As budgets tightened in 1951, and viewers reports were analysed, a suggestion was made to standardise fees for contributors at a rate of one guinea per minute for those with experience, and less for newcomers (ibid., 14 August 1951).

Patten conducted demonstrations into items such as pressure cookers on the *About The Home* programme (BBC WAC T32/1/1, 17 December 1951). Robins considered sizing of clothes (both for fifteen guineas), leaving Jacqueline Rose to do a short cookery segment (for ten guineas) (ibid.). Scripts began to be used, which detailed the spoken words in the left-hand column and the accompanying visuals in the right-hand column. The spoken words were given in short note format, and not long-form conversations (ibid., 10 January 1952), but still gave some indication as to what these unrecorded programmes may have sounded and looked like. As an example, in a script outline for a discussion on clothing sizes, Robins clearly gave her own experiences, consulted a panel of other experts, and asked the viewers at home to consider requesting their exact size when going shopping (ibid.). This format is the same for Patten discussing pressure cookers (ibid., 17 January 1952); including a segment about the nutritional value of meats cooked using one, and for items on ‘safe food’ and their associated public information campaigns, endorsed by the Ministry of Food (ibid.).

Discussion is preserved in the archive about placing the Cradocks under some kind of ‘exclusive contract’ (at their own suggestion), otherwise they would continue working, as they were, for the BBC and ITV simultaneously. The memos reveal that Cecil McGivern had no intention of securing them under ‘any contract’ calling them being ‘very difficult to deal with (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt1, 31 March 1958), so their freelance, individual broadcast, contract by contract, continued.

Payment for activities connected to television but ‘off-screen’ were also negotiated. In the 1960s, Skinner requested that she be given five hundred copies of the book for private sales herself, at meetings and demonstrations. Skinner would let the BBC know each month how many she had sold from the total, and she would be invoiced for them, presumably realising no profit at all (BBC WAC Skinner F121-3, 1 March 1965), but using them as promotional materials. By 18th March of 1965, a

fourth reprint had been ordered, making one hundred and five thousand copies printed in total, in just two months (ibid., 18 March 1965). The BBC team noted that the book had exceeded all their expectations (ibid., 19 March 1965) and they agreed to increase the agreed fee to Skinner from fifty guineas to one hundred and fifty (ibid.). This triggered the BBC to consider a more robust contract and agreement, to include royalty payments for sales more than ten thousand copies, retrospectively viewing the initial payment as an advance (ibid., 2 April 1965). A draft contract was circulated (ibid., 12 April 1965), amended and reissued (ibid., 23 April 1965). Plans were circulating within the BBC for a second, larger book with around one hundred recipes. For this second book, new terms were agreed in advance, including no advance payment and a considerably higher royalty rate (ibid., 13 August 1965).

The first royalty statement Skinner received, for a half year, with the initial rate of one penny per copy sold, was for four hundred and ten pounds, after her advance had been deducted (ibid., September 1965).

Following the renewed contract for producing associated cookbooks, the BBC received a query from Skinner about 'exclusive control for the copyright period' – asking for clarification on what that 'full period of copyright' was? (ibid., 16 September 1965). The BBC clarified that the copyright period was as the Copyright Act 1956 and would be fifty years (ibid., 21 September 1965). The files held at the BBC detail royalty payments of various amounts for both books in the proceeding years. By 1968, four books had been published, and Skinner had received a cheque for over two thousand pounds in royalty payments, prompting her to note that the books 'are selling well while they continue to be in print' (ibid., 16 June 1968). Subsequent contracts listed a percentage royalty fee instead of a penny, or two, three or four pennies, per copy (ibid., 30 September 1971). By 1972, sales had declined on all Skinner's books, and the BBC proposed putting the remainder and returned stock 'to waste', however offering Skinner them on a complimentary basis beforehand. Skinner requested one hundred copies of each to be sent to her and had 'no objection; to the remaining stock being destroyed (ibid., 20 January 1972).

Following a fifth book, marketing plans were drawn up for a hardback book, which would be sold at an increased price but published in a reduced print run, aimed at

the Christmas gift market (ibid., 14 February 1968). The proposal prompted queries internally as to why this would be considered for Skinner, and not for Fanny Cradock who would (the BBC thought) generate higher sales (ibid.).

Skinner's books, contracts, sales and so on appear to have been used by the BBC as benchmarks for publishing cookery connected books, paying particular attention to sales volumes, promotion in the *Radio Times* (ibid., 24 April 1970) and feedback. Sales declined on each book (ibid., 30 September 1971) although royalties to Skinner maintained. In 1977, Skinner wrote to the BBC detailing all the books published, and put 'to waste' asking if she could retain a licence to publish all or any part of these herself? (ibid., 17 September 1977). The BBC confirmed that they had no plans to publish these again and agreed to revert the rights to Skinner (ibid., 22 September 1977).

Inventions on-screen were initiated by the presenters. Joan Robins was naturally innovative and assumed that the BBC would welcome ideas to progress the 'ordinary' television cooking broadcasts, demonstrating her view that food and cookery were not to be seen in isolation in the lives of women and their families. She submitted ideas for varying the types of food that was shown by the BBC, keen to show foods and cooking specialities from other parts of England rather than just London and encouraged the BBC to consider foods such as 'foreign dishes', for example curries (BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 19 January 1948). Robins suggested making cooking items more interesting by introducing elements of competition, encouraging viewers to submit, directly to her, recipe ideas to help with the potato ration, which Robins would test and deal with all aspects of the administration required to bring them to screen (ibid., 3 February 1948). The idea of a competition was eventually welcomed by the BBC, with suggested prizes of no more than £1 in value, in line with BBC policy (ibid., 19 February 1948). Robins suggested ideas such as the Housewives Forum which had proved to be popular in America in relation to having opinion pieces, representing a broad range of 'real' housewives' views, and at times from a single expert, where appropriate (ibid., 13 February 1953). Robins had a 'nucleus of women to join the panel' - the Housewives Forum -from her other activities (ibid., 2 December 1952).

The kitchen equipment used in the studio was a fertile area for invention from the early television food and cookery presenters. The archive files detail internal discussions on the 'ideal' oven (BBC WAC Harben TVArt1, 3 January 1956b). Specifications included a glass door, and further suggestions attributed to Mrs Harben. Aspects of electricity versus gas was debated, with a report prepared on electric and gas cookers and their suitability for television. The BBC were considering plans for the 'new' kitchen for the *Cookery Lesson* series after the war.

Robins involved herself in innovation for practical aspects of broadcasting too, suggesting ideas for a more natural and useful sets for televised food and cooking programmes, with the placement of (and provision of) a suitable sink in *For The Housewife* for example (ibid., 13 March 1950). Robins proudly claimed to invent a 'Glass Cooker' to allow the television cameras to capture her putting cakes into an oven and then seeing the cake rise while it was baking through a glass back, placed in easy view of the camera operator (Robins, 1950). Robins arranged for her invention to be trialled by cameramen at the studio to see how it would operate 'under the blaze of light' (BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 26 June 1952). This she suggested she may be 'allowed to cook with' to show sponge cakes and pastries during a broadcast the following year (ibid., 21 October 1953) (see Figure 5).

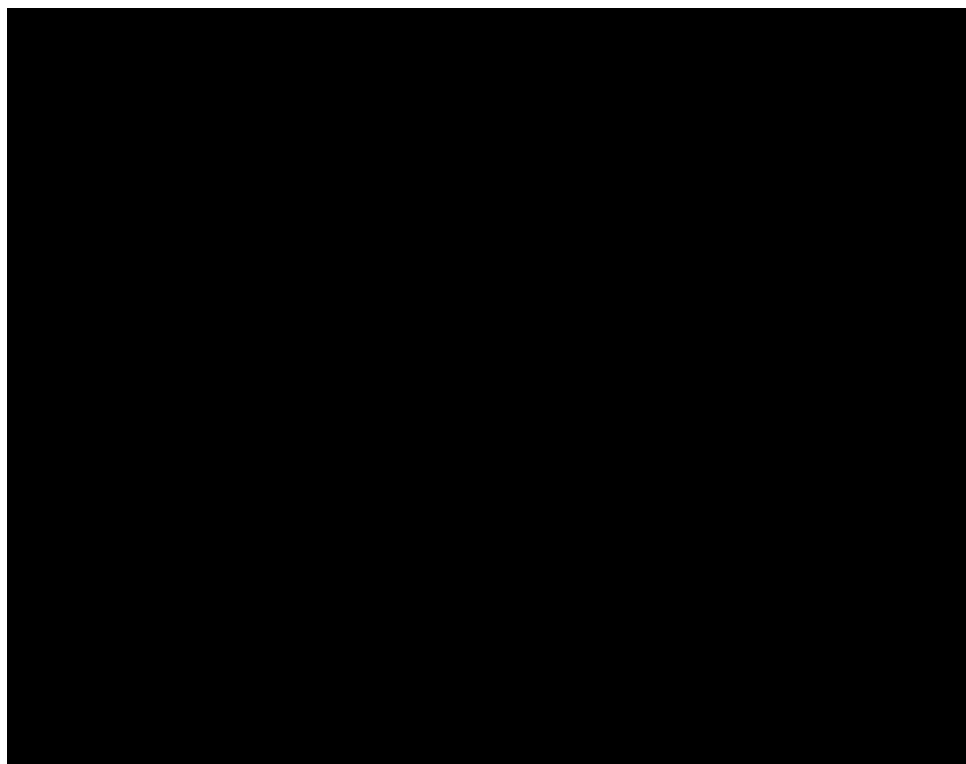

Figure 5. Joan Robins, publicity photograph showing her Glass oven, Joan Robins Personal Archive

Robin's persona, and her position within industry and her connections with external institutions and politics, were all able to give her, in her view, a unique insight into what housewives at home would be interested in seeing on broadcasts intended for them. She took these insights and transformed them into ideas for programmes connected to food and cookery. These ideas involved nutrition, diet, well-being, exercise, consumer affairs as well as new techniques for showing audiences at home how the process of 'cooking' happens. Robins' ideas were not often appreciated by the management of the BBC themselves, who held different views on what should be included in programmes, the role of the female presenter and indeed how presenters such as Robins should be portrayed. These tensions, as we have seen, eventually led Robins to become disillusioned with television and broadcasting, focusing her efforts instead on other, successful, ways to influence policy and practice in ordinary households.

Fanny Cradock – Adventurous Cooking

As an example of invention, I analyse several available episodes of Cradock's food and cookery programmes to illustrate how she was able to build an idea across several years and series, reinforcing her own persona and developing the studio setting. I discussed *Home Cooking* earlier. A year after the initially 'ordinary' *Home Cooking* was broadcast, Cradock suggested a follow up series. This became the first of many. In the more 'spectacular' *Adventurous Cooking*[6], Fanny Cradock would introduce more adventurous ideas. The set was similar to *Home Cooking*, with a pie slice shaped semi-circle allowing Cradock to walk to a workstation from the centre while she gave many recipe ideas for each dish. She described these as an 'enormous arc of variation on simple themes'. For example, she discussed a simple recipe for crêpes, devised by her and her husband, named Crêpes Bon Viveur, to celebrate their stage name together. Cradock said this 'makes a delicious dish for entertaining purposes' and quickly sets about demonstrating it. The crêpes had been pre-prepared, as had the mussels, 'so you don't have to watch it over and over' and the broth has been saved for soup. After the crêpes have been prepared, Cradock moved on to show how to fry fish, first showing how to skin and fillet it,

[6] Fanny Cradock Adventurous Cooking – Fish – broadcast originally 24th April 1966 Sunday at 10am

with the statement 'we housewives should be independent of fishmongers who charge for this, if we can do it ourselves, we can save a lot of money.'

Cradock's programme[7] on 'cakes and puddings' had the same format, this time with a Kenwood Mixer in the opening credits to signify baking, modernity, speed, and ease. Cradock is again aspirational, starting the episode with a tale, 'So many people come back from holidays abroad with an absolute longing to make the delicious pastries and cakes and puddings they've eaten on holiday, with confectioners' custard…' which she had almost ready made, to be finished off.

Cradock created historical dishes, such as Henry VIII Shoe Buckles, in contrast to the ones from abroad she mentioned, these are 'Olde English' which allows Cradock to show her authority as a cook with links to history, while alluding to luxurious foreign travel. She placed custard and jam in the centre of a pastry square and folded it to resemble 'those paper windmills we held up as children and blew in the wind' provoking nostalgia and innocence in her audience. Cradock showed them uncooked, cooked and then sieved over with icing sugar, so the viewer can see all stages complete.

Similar opening credits were used for a programme[8] in a later series, in 1971. They showed illustrated pieces of equipment and ingredients, spinning quickly along with a jaunty theme tune. This time, the setting is not the television studio, but instead an outside broadcast from Cradock's own home kitchen. She showed the outside of her house, the mill stream, her dog sitting at the door – all to give a warm and homely feel, inviting the viewer to come inside and see Cradock herself at work in her real kitchen. She began by giving a tour of her newly modelled kitchen, designed for ease 'Welcome to our kitchen, at last, and not the Studio one in which we've cooked all these years' she explained, having a dig at the BBC with 'at last' and at the same time reminding the viewers of her legacy as a television food and cooking presenter. Cradock walked round pointing to every cupboard and piece of antique and modern equipment. Two young assistants work at a central

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[7] Fanny Cradock Adventurous Cooking – broadcast on 29th May 1966 at 10am – seventh in the series – cakes and puddings

[8] Fanny Cradock Invites – broadcast originally in Colour on 22nd July 1970 at 10pm. The preserved version is in Black and White only.

island with refrigerators and ovens underneath. The space was not an ordinary kitchen at all, but she described it as such, with everything at easy reach to enable successful cooking. Cradock mentioned that the kitchen came into its own 'for buffet parties when we have lots of people to the house' but suggested that her kitchen should still be familiar to viewers at home, with cookers, work surfaces and tiles.

The episode was, like the previous examples, filmed in one take, with Cradock wandering round to different areas, as she did in the studio. The assistants brought things to her, and took them away, and did not speak. She intertwined stories of France into her dialogue and prepared a variety of dishes including a Cold Green Omelette, Fondue Frites and Camembert with Pretzels, mostly all semi-prepared and finished off 'to demonstrate how.' Cradock referred to the accompanying booklet, suggesting that viewers will recognise the dishes from that programme from the front cover, as all the recipes were in there. At the end of the episode, she said that next week she would be joined by Johnnie to discuss wines but in the meantime, she said 'it has been lovely being back with you, I do hope I will have the pleasure of you joining me next time' as the credits closed.

Suppression

I discussed Meighn's appearance on television in 1936 earlier, as a 'prototype' programme. Her follow up idea was for a spectacular programme aiming to raise the standards of cookery, nationally, called *Combating Cookery Crimes*. The idea was to a form a club to 'detect' the crimes (with amusement) involving a doctor, a detective, and a comedian as well as Twigg/Meighn herself (BBC WAC Twigg Rcont1, 6 March 1937). The idea was felt to be 'too complicated' for the BBC and Meighn was encouraged to try using it for some other purpose rather than broadcasting (ibid., 10 March 1937). Meighn was encouraged to do more straight forward and ordinary talks for radio, including one for children on historical perspectives on 'diet' with the suggestion that a pamphlet would be published to accompany it, should she be able to suggest an illustrator (ibid., 20 September 1937). Letters back and forth from Twigg and the BBC suggest some frustration at keeping her 'on message', and within the time suggested for the broadcast (ibid., 19 November 1937), with feedback that the script she prepared was 'too discursive'

and with a tone of potentially talking down to the children who were the intended audience (ibid.). Various letters over months were sent to Twigg to chase the script ideas, prior to a contract being issued (ibid., 31 December 1937).

Around six months of chasing followed, and then a letter explaining that Twigg would need to audition for the talk, as it was tailored for the Schools Department, and this was their policy (ibid., 4 April 1938). The audition records show that Twigg had a cold on the day of the audition, leaving her voice croaky and not as clear as it was normally. Reading from her own script for the audition led the BBC to remark that it was 'full of literary form' and 'not written to be spoken' leaving the BBC with difficulty in assessing her performance, and what she might sound like as part of a schools broadcast. They concluded that 'one bad thing' which she suffered from was 'social inflections' leaving her sounding like 'Lady Bountiful opening the village fete' (ibid., 22 April 1938). In May 1938, the BBC wrote to her to reject her script which they said was not suitable to be adapted for broadcasting (ibid., 27 May 1938).

In subsequent letters to the BBC, for this rejection did not stop her trying, she mentions her food and cookery books, and the fact that she gave the 'first television demonstration of cookery from Alexandra Palace' (ibid., 30 November 1938) among other broadcasts. Memos state that she was 'badgering' the BBC again and refer to Meighn with the nickname 'the human elver' (ibid., 4 June 1941). As the years rolled on, so her letters became longer, with claims to be a European authority on food, and then well-respected in America. Meighn continued to make suggestions for talks and programmes she could offer, often based on her own feedback after listening to BBC Broadcasts (ibid., 4 May 1944). Polite rejections and outlines returned (ibid., 8 May 1944). Meighn lived on the Isle of Wight, and attempted, in 1954, to connect herself to the opening night of the local transmitter for television switch on, by including her poem called Lumps of Pudden (ibid., 16 July 1954), referring again to her previous broadcast, a post-war Ministry of Food film and her inclusion in the *Story of Broadcasting* (Burrows) on page 74 (ibid.). This was Meighns' final communications in her BBC file.

In 1953, journalist Raymond Postgate gave his views on what food and cooking on television should be like. 'What can we expect – what ought we to expect – from the

television kitchen, which also reflected the internal confusion in the BBC at the same time, conflicted between the ordinary and the spectacular, and the perceived audience. He suggested that the current presenters broadcast under certain limitations – leading to criticisms. Despite this, 'only fair to say that a smooth performance such as Philip Harben has given a remarkable piece of work when you consider the conditions in the studio.' The conditions in the studio were distracting, and designed to alarm you, with hot lights, floors covered with tubes, cameras, and worst, you have no idea what can be seen – whether yourself or the food. (TV Mirror 1953b).

Postgate refers to Heidi Schnabl, a 'dark young Austrian girl… going to make a great success' who prepared a Schnitzel (the BBC says it was a Vienna Steak*).* Her demonstration made it seem simple. Postgate felt that she moved 'gracefully and cleanly' and was attractive to look at. Going on, he said 'some excellent cooks look like frumps, and the best chefs have faces like fiends' which would not do on television. She arranged her materials well, avoiding confusion. Postgate recalled an 'even more striking instance of coordination' in Marguerite Patten. One of his first experiences of television, it left him 'pop-eyed with inquisitiveness' as she demonstrated an 'enormous variety of small things' leading to 'much admiration' from him. He did suggest, somewhat strangely the addition of small, printed labels so he as a viewer could see what things were. His idea was that the BBC did not do this as it would make the scene look less like 'an ordinary kitchen' before continuing that 'But really that doesn't matter. Everyone knows the TV kitchen isn't an ordinary kitchen in fact; the pretence isn't worth making.'

Later *TV Mirror* features an article about S.E. Reynolds himself, which illustrated how qualified he was – despite being a 'man of six feet two and a half' with broad shoulders and a rugged face – to understand what women wanted from television (TV Mirror 1954e). In another edition, author Barbara Cartland wrote a column discussing what she thought women really wanted from television, describing the men in charge as 'highly paid experts' who devised a 'queer mixture' of programmes for women (TV Mirror 1953e).

Viewer Feedback – used by the BBC to shape future research

Harben noted that he had received well over one hundred requests for his recipe for Maids of Honour, broadcast in 1951 (BBC WAC, Harben, TVTalks2, 31 May 1951). Harben considered his success in terms of 'box office' due to his theatrical background (ibid., 27 June 1951); this prompted the BBC to analyse his popularity, noting that he had received 'fan mail' which had been forwarded to him totalling eighty-six letters in five weeks (ibid., 26 June 1951).

Harben's performances were monitored using the Viewer Research report system at the BBC. For his series, *Country Dish* (ibid., 6 July 1951), Harben received a Reaction Index of 63 for a particular programme, which had been less favourable than previous talks in the series (65, 67 and 67) (ibid., 11 July 1951). This was matched with complaints that Harben had failed more than once to give exact proportions of the ingredients used in the recipes. Viewers stated that they found the historical information (such as how to make mead) 'interesting' but that this was not what they wished to make at home. As an example, one husband was keen to make cakes 'as good as his wife's' but the failure of Harben to give accurate quantities, and to not give the correct temperature, disappointed him. Viewers generally enjoyed one section which was described as a 'sketch-cum-recipe' combination, highlighting the tension between expectations of 'evening entertainment' and straightforward cookery lessons (ibid.). On the question of Harben appearing solo or unsupported, versus needing a 'supporting cast' as suggested by the production team (ibid.) viewers' letters questioned his techniques and demonstrations of tripe and custard.

A preserved example of a Zena Skinner programme[9] highlights the suppression of previously entertaining and spectacular ideas, introduced to early television food and cooking programmes. The programme was broadcast in black and white and focused on the theme of 'is it ever too late to learn?' with eighty-one-year-old recently widowed Mr Barratt being shown how to cook for himself by Zena. Other programmes in the series looked at cooking cheaply for a large family, a recently married woman who threw dinner parties, buying equipment for a new house, how to slim sensibly, how to cope with casual guests, how to feed children, freezing food at home, cooking in a bed-sit and cooking with children in the kitchen. The

[9] Ask Zena Skinner – broadcast 1st November 1970 at 12midday (Sunday)

opening credits showed Zena Skinner sitting at a kitchen table, in a living room set-up with open fire, but in a television studio. She was accompanied by an elderly gentleman, who we find out is a widower of two years and is himself eighty-one. Zena spoke directly to him, asking him if he liked eggs, and showed him how to cook the, She shares tips on avoiding black rings on yolks. Skinner asked him what he had for breakfast, which he replied that he always included an apple. Skinner asked him, 'Do you find it helps you constitutionally at all, an apple?' to which he replied 'I don't have any signs of constipation' before discussing the support which the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS) is able to provide on diet and food. Skinner asked, 'What did the *WRVS* do for you?', "How do you get on with shopping?', 'What sort of things would you like to eat?' and other mundane questions while photographs of Mr Barratt were shown going about his daily activities. He would like to eat stew. 'If you watch me, do you think you'd be able to go home and do it?' Skinner asked, and 'Why at your age do you want to learn to cook?' Her voice was patronising, and she often leant down to speak to Mr Barratt.

In the second half of the programme, Skinner put on her apron and explained what the equipment was around the kitchen. 'Here is the oven you see' as she opened the door. She ran through the simple ingredients for the stew, coating meat in flour and asked, 'Do you see what I am doing?' while passing on tips such as 'I use a wooden spoon as it won't pierce the meat and break the seal' All her discussions and actions are directed towards Mr. Barratt and Skinner never addressed or showed the audience at home what she was doing.

Once Skinner has made a very water-y stew, she asked Mr Barratt (while bending down to be near his face), 'would you like to try some?', also 'tell me exactly what you think about it' prompting him to say 'it's just how I would like it anyway' Skinner also fed him a kipper which had been poaching in a bath of boiling water, asking 'is this like yours at home?' although she did not have time to take it out the water. Skinner also showed grilled herring and a fruit crumble, again asking 'Will you remember everything, or have I given you too many things' before reassuring him that 'I've prepared some notes for you to take home.'

Housewives in the Kitchen – how Robins was viewed by the BBC.

Robins maintained her assumption that she had been asked to broadcast on television because of her industry experience and ability to connect with housewives at home through the screen. Initially, Robins was praised for her abilities, with memos showing that having seen 'Mary Adam's new cook' in action, Cecil Madden (then producer) reflected that 'I think she is good' (BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 23 September 1947). Others described her as 'competent and sympathetic' on screen (ibid., 1 October 1947) and passed on the views of 'experts' who considered her talk to be 'easily the best to date.' (ibid., 13 November)

Robins prided herself on 'not using a script' (ibid., 6 February 1948), which occasionally prompted positive feedback from S.E. Reynolds, 'I have never known you to give a better performance and offer you my heartfelt congratulations' (ibid., 29 March 1950). However, when required to provide script outlines, it was noted that 'she is not considered a good enough writer' (ibid., 18 January 1951). Reynolds commissioned a report looking at audience research for her *Housewives Forum* programmes, which highlighted, in his words, that 'Joan Robins has not proved popular' with ratings between 65 and 67% on the weeks she appeared, versus a range between 66 and 74% when other presenters were featured. Reynolds accepted part of the blame for the items not 'being better' which he attributed to his inability to discuss the items beforehand with Robins. His assessment was that 'members of the public assisting Joan' (as members of the Housewives Forum) had 'never been vital' and went on to describe Robins herself as 'somewhat bossy' which he vowed to 'speak to her about' (ibid., 9 December 1952).

When Robins published her book on slimming, discussions on how she should be reasonably described on the cover were floated around the BBC, despite them not being involved in the publication, and the book not mentioning the BBC at all (ibid., 19 February 1952). BBC management attempted to undermine her professionalism by stating that 'JR is not a dietician; she is a cook!' with the word 'cook' double underlined for emphasis. Mindful however that good sales of the book would also benefit the BBC in terms of viewers, Reynolds noted that there was 'nothing about Television to which exception can be taken' suggesting that the book should include the words 'as Televised' on the cover, instead of a term used by Harben on his books 'the Television Cook' (ibid., 25 February 1952). This signified that the

BBC held at least an equal, if reluctant, recognition of her position as they held for Harben.

Robins never recognised that the BBC were her employers. She worked on a freelance basis (in the same way as other television food and cooking presenters of the time) with each appearance being individually contracted with an appropriate fee, ranging from 30 guineas initially to 15 guineas as the 1950s progressed and budgets tightened. Reynolds also worked as a freelance producer, attracting a much lower fee of just 4 guineas per edition however (see for example BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 24 October 1947). The archive does not detail the reasons for this. If Robins wasn't sure about doing something when asked by the BBC, she would reply that the Gas Coke and Light Company would need to be consulted as 'they will need to give me permission to be associated with programmes of this kind' (ibid., 3 October 1952) or she would 'need to have a word with my Masters' (ibid., 1 January 1955). When asked to attend a rehearsal for a programme, Robins wrote that she could not attend at the scheduled time as she had been asked to attend an important meeting at the House of Commons about Consumer Protection which she added 'this is my "business" I feel I must go' as justification for placing this other meeting ahead of the BBC rehearsal (ibid., 28 June 1956). At other times, and often, she wrote to BBC producers and staff on Gas Light and Coke Company headed paper indicating her own authority to correspond, confirm ideas, make suggestions, and decide on her own workload (see for example BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 16 September 1947).

Ultimately, Robins did not seem 'at home' within the BBC for several reasons. When Doreen Stephens (see Irwin 2013) took on the role of Head of Women's Programmes in 1953, Robins wrote wishing her all the best with the new regime, suggesting an understanding of the demands she would face as a woman in such a position (BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 31 March 1954) When corresponding with Adams following her decline of a party invitation due to work commitments, Joan recognised the internal demands with 'I know how terribly involved one gets with work particularly anything to do with the BBC which is an 'all demanding' service' (ibid., 24 June 1952) During an interview later in her life she explained that 'I was asked to stay on, but it was a toss-up between getting ulcers or going back to the *Gas Board'* even though she had clearly never left their employ while at the BBC.

She elaborated that ‘Television takes people and saps them dry, and I’ve never regretted leaving it’ (Nelson, 1970).

Robins revealed her thoughts about the internal BBC view of what housewives wanted to see on television in the postscript of an otherwise mundane letter to Reynolds with an outline of a programme Robins proposed. Robins noted that there had been a suggestion of including in December’s broadcast the ‘more frivolous subjects’ such as Christmas presents, men’s ties and socks and children’s toys. Robins added ‘What about including a nice little rubber cosh!’ (BBC WAC Robins TV Art1, 17 November 1952) indicating her view that these suggestions were demeaning to the housewives who would be watching.

Diffusion

The ideas and innovations introduced by the pioneers of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain are today accepted and present in the variety of food and cooking programmes produced and broadcast. Initial ideas and prototypes created mainly pre-war which set the place of television food and cookery programmes firmly in the familiar setting of a home kitchen, and then to the social constructs and inventions of ‘food and cooking’ on television after the war. The BBC appeared to have an uneasy relationship the freedom and control which the freelance presenters exerted over the development of the programmes, who spotted opportunities to connect their work to products which could be ‘placed’ on screen and promoted using their influence on audiences as well as developing their own products and connected cookbooks as separate income streams from their BBC contracts. The presenters generated ideas for single programmes, focused series, types of programmes (such as histories and travelogues) and sequences of connected series which built relationships with the audiences, and furthered the presenters own personas and personalities as ‘celebrities.’

This led to a sustained period where the BBC attempted to suppress and constrain the very ideas which had been popular, well-liked and enjoyed by mass audiences. Sensing that their audiences would benefit more from more ordinary and mundane examples of instructional food advice and cooking techniques, which gave them

time as an institution to (re)develop a range of formats for food and cooking television, such as those highlighted by Strange (1998) and others which have been used to categorise the plethora of food and cooking programmes now available. This included 'spin-offs' and some ideas being rendered redundant. The suppression and subsequent diffusion by the BBC as an organisation has contributed to the contribution of the early pioneers being masked and hidden from scholarly work, and general discourse.

Conclusion

The stages of Winston's Social Sphere of Development model been used here in to make sense of the overall development of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain, and in particular to highlight the contribution (which had previously remained hidden) of the pioneering presenters in helping the BBC; establishing formats, developing equipment and proposing filming techniques to connect to audiences through food.

This establishment of contribution in production is important before proceeding; in the next two chapters, the files of the BBC Written Archives are analysed for content which demonstrates aspects of 'ordinary' and then 'spectacular' television.

Chapter 5: Ordinary and Everyday (Findings)

Introduction

In chapter two, I outlined the scholarly work on early television food and cooking programmes in Britain; discussing assumptions made therein. Then I addressed the timeline of development in chapter four. Now I present some key findings from the archival research conducted at the BBC Written Archives, especially the files listed in Appendix A. This chapter focuses on the concept of 'ordinary' television, using the information I found in the archives, supplemented by additional primary sources where appropriate, whether latent or manifest, which relate to the ordinariness and everyday nature of the early television food and cooking programmes, their presenters and those who made the 'missing' ghost-broadcasts. Written resources, and some photographic examples, are primarily all that remain. This chapter looks collectively (rather than chronologically) at the archive materials and provides information using the characteristics for 'ordinary' television which Bonner provided as a framework.

Overview

It was Frances Bonner who in 2003 coined the phrase 'ordinary television', and since then it has been adopted by others. I see my research as following her framework. Bonner (2003) establishes in the introduction to her book on *Ordinary Television*, and as has been shown throughout the analysis of current literature on television food and cooking programmes in Britain, most cultural analysis focuses on the 'spectacular and the unusual', which risks forgetting the relationships between the genres and audiences of television that appear as 'ordinary'. Ordinary television – such as lifestyle programming, magazine programmes and programmes which give 'advice' - can be disregarded as unimportant (Bonner 2003, p. 3). This neglect and failure to recognise the importance of certain types of programmes, that may be 'too trivial to be studied', may also lead to a failure to recognise aspects of real life and the relationship audiences create with programmes which feature the ordinary and mundane.

This Chapter looks directly at the concepts of 'ordinariness' and the 'everyday' represented through early television food and cooking programmes, leaving the spectacular and entertaining aspects to chapter 6. Scholarship on television food and cooking programmes tends to assume that all food and cooking programmes are indeed 'ordinary' (Tominc 2022) by default, and this is further interrogated when considering 'early' broadcasts. Later chapters consider the same early television food and cooking programmes through a lens of the spectacular, and consider innovation. The present chapter provides a valuable contribution to current knowledge on the ordinary aspects of television food and cooking programmes, drawing on BBC Written Archive materials and other primary resources, to clarify assumptions about the ordinary and mundane in television food and cooking programmes.

This chapter closely examines the archive materials on several early BBC television food and cooking presenters and their programmes, considering different aspects of 'ordinary' television as initially considered by Bonner herself. By applying this framework of 'ordinariness' to the material collected, the assumption of ordinariness that currently exists, is examined before moving on to apply the alternative framework of the spectacular. Are these ideas indeed 'mythologies', as Masterman (1984) considered, that led to changes in programmes and schedules either focused on 'relentless domesticity' or a celebration of the ordinary, as Bonner herself considered the commonalities between programmes across genres, this research considers early television food and cooking programmes from the standpoint of 'everyday, familiar or routine', as a ritualistic part of everyday life (Silverstone 1994), built around a sense of security and importance. Considered mundane by many, because they focus on aspects of domestic life. The differences in class, gender and the mundane are considered here. How were they tackled by the presenters and programme makers? Why were they important to the schedules? How were ordinary and everyday lives represented on screen, in the studio and did this representation matter? Ultimately, how did they become ingrained in the ordinary and everyday lives of those who tuned in?

It is often assumed that ordinary television is cheap to produce, and therefore used to fill television schedules quickly and without much consideration. Without the

prestige of more 'serious' television formats and genres such as drama, debate and even comedy, these ordinary television programmes have been rarely considered to be important enough to preserve or commercialise, especially in the early days of television in Britain. Bonner argues that, for ordinary television to succeed, ordinary people are required to collude to produce the appearance of being ordinary. Often considered under the banner of 'Light Entertainment' (Dyer 1973), such programmes are not given the prestige that other genres and formats are, and, perhaps by default are labelled as 'unimportant'. There remains a discrepancy in thinking on importance: are the programmes important to the institution who broadcast them, in this case the BBC; important to the people involved who make them; important to the audiences who consume them; and indeed important to the overall development of television?

This research focuses deliberately on the presenters of the early food and cooking programmes, often labelled 'celebrity chefs' (see Hollows 2022 for a full discussion), when the less spectacular reality perhaps is that they are neither celebrities nor chefs. They did become (or perhaps initially were) personalities and perhaps even celebrities through their work on so-called ordinary television. This aspect of ordinariness is considered throughout, building on the work of Langer (1981) and Dyer (1973) through their lenses of personality and celebrity. Can an 'ordinary' presenter create a persona which transcends the mundane and captures the audience's attention? This research considers the aspects of ordinariness that presenters have used to create and maintain that connection with people at home. The television food and cooking programmes considered here have all been 'presenter led', a crucial reason Bonner establishes for audiences watching, or not, ordinary television.

If ordinary television is aimed at 'helping' people through advice and instruction, then television food and cooking programmes, or aspects of them, may well be ordinary and useful. Bonner considers aspects of everyday life such as consumption, the family, health, sexuality, and leisure in her analysis of ordinary television and its transformative power to enable viewers to become better educated, more informed and more cultured people. Bonner further explores some aspects of discourse which may be 'disguised, quarantined or absent' as a result, such as education, economics, ethics, work and employment, law and order, race,

class, and societal values versus individualism – all of which can be traced through the aspects of so-called 'ordinary' television programmes such as food and cooking programmes (Bonner 2003, p. 136).

Bonner concluded that far from being 'too trivial' for investigation, ordinary television can provide a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, and even political operation of television (p. 211). Whether programmes can be categorised as 'education', 'entertainment' or 'information', or indeed as blends of some or all of these (as in Bonner's own use of the term 'edutainment'), Bonner suggested that ordinary television, and its key characteristics of mundanity, can reduce the gap between the viewer and the viewed, incorporating ordinary people themselves into programmes. Bonner argues that this became prominent in the 1980s with the rise of 'people programmes' and 'infotainment'. This chapter considers her characteristics as a framework, a tool to consider this conclusion in relation to the decades before the 1980s, looking at evidence and examples from the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, 1960s and briefly into the 1970s to consider ordinariness in early television food and cooking programmes.

The work of Brunsdon and Morley (1978) on *Everyday Television*, in particular the magazine programme *Nationwide*, and their analysis encoding and decoding the information contained with these seemingly ordinary broadcasts, is important to consider here. The aim of *Nationwide*, as they reported, was to construct a 'close and homely relationship' (p. 3) with regionally differentiated audiences, resonates with the aims of early television food and cooking programmes, particularly as they spread around the country during the 1950s as transmitters and services increased. Considered 'light', *Nationwide* proved to be a fertile ground for research, with a close examination of the style of direct communication, used to build a relationship with audiences who might recognise themselves on the screen, with items focused on 'everyday life' which were normal for people 'like you and I' to encounter. The seemingly ordinary presenters became personalities, in the world of home and leisure which *Nationwide* fostered, leading to an informal presentation style and persona which Brunsdon and Morley concluded became part of a wider professional style of presenting later (pp. 7-9). It is these aspects of informality which are investigated in this chapter with relation to the early television food and cooking programmes, and their presenters.

When considering television food and cooking programmes, particularly from the 1950s, scholars reference the rise of 'housewives' and the connected aspects of the domestic lifestyle, in relation to the traditional role of women in the combination of a feminine, family-based role which is also a work role, of homemaker and housewife (see Oakley 1974). Linking the role itself as a 'performance' (Butler 1990) based upon a primarily economic function, the contradiction of being both 'work' and 'not work', Oakley considered the low status and social trivialisation of menial housework, which has parallels with the ordinariness of television lifestyle programmes, linking the work housewives did in private and isolated from society with others in the same position. Lawson (2011) considered this aspect with relation to television food and cooking programmes, placing, for example, prominence on the appearance rather than the ability of the presenters.

Bell and Hollows (2005) have considered closely the connection between ordinariness and lifestyle, and making sense of that ordinariness, focused mainly on television programmes and examples from the 1980s onwards. They use the term 'lifestyle' as an indicator which is central to the understanding of contemporary consumer culture. I use their characteristics to interrogate archival resources from the decades before this, paying attention to Bell and Hollows subsequent work on 'historicizing lifestyles' (2006) to ensure that the information analysed is contextualised in history and not merely a reflection of more recent thinking on the impact of gender and nation and their impact on lifestyles. This work demonstrates the way that ordinariness was conferred, through a 'transformation' in the status of the expert and the expertise crucial to the television food and cooking programmes, making 'expertise ordinary.' Sullivan (2005), established that lifestyle programmes which began by 'instructing and mobilising' particular and restricted lifestyle aspirations, such as status, style, distinction, and identity (as detailed by Brunsdon (2003)) argues that the initial assumption that early lifestyle programmes (such as television food and cooking programmes) were 'instructional' in nature, shifted dramatically towards the spectacular and entertaining later in television history.

Bonner (2003) considered presenters of television food and cooking programmes as 'cultural intermediaries' tasked with sharing lifestyles, which were perceived as

highly segmented and artificial. She made a strong and compelling argument that food and cooking programmes speak first of the presenter themselves and their lifestyle, encouraging audiences to emulate and aspire to the 'desirable' consumption patterns they display.

Bonner concludes that only more recent food and cooking programme presenters such as Nigella Lawson and Jamie Oliver, take the viewer into their real domestic lives by showing a version of their working lives as an 'art of living' demonstration. The discussion which follows considers the aspects of ordinariness and lifestyle which Bonner, and others, have highlighted as crucial to that description of 'ordinary' and everyday television, by looking closely at the BBC Written Archive files for the presenters of television food and cooking programmes before this period – from the 1930s – 1970s. The next section considers these primary sources as evidence of 'ordinary' aspects of these early television food and cooking programmes, with the context and framework of Bonner as the guide, paying particular to the ordinariness of audiences, the inclusion of ordinary people, the portrayal of the mundane and of domesticity, with an underlying 'aspirational' question of whether there is a 'better, more exciting ordinary' to be had.

Ordinary People - Everyday Television – audiences/housewives

One of the key criteria Bonner concludes as a marker of 'ordinary television' is the inclusion of ordinary people within programmes themselves, with members (traditionally) of the audience becoming part of the broadcast. She outlined how this reduced the gap between the viewer and the viewed, while still maintaining a mundane style. This next section considers examples of where 'ordinary' viewers became part of the early television food and cooking programmes.

The assumption within the discourse of 'ordinary' is that there was one type of across-the-board ordinary viewer throughout the early days of television. However, as shown in earlier chapters, the television audiences of pre- and post- WW2 were very different. If we are to assume to that all audiences are in themselves 'ordinary' viewers, there should be a marked difference between an 'ordinary audience' before the war, and an 'ordinary audience' after the war. This situation is mainly due to economics; before the war very few people had access to the technology of

television (only those living within a certain radius of the transmitter at Alexandra Palace in London) and within that population only those of considerable means with funds to purchase television sets could be considered viewers. These wealthy Londoners were the first audiences. They are not traditionally identified as 'ordinary' people, watching 'ordinary' television, but this research argues that they should be. At that time, in that location, they *were* the 'ordinary' audience, and so the evidence about how and why they were viewing early television food and cooking programmes should be considered as part of a history of 'ordinary' television. After the war, as television signals and sets became more widespread around the country, and different sectors of society, so the 'ordinary' audience shifted.

As such, this section considers examples of how 'ordinary' audiences became part of broadcasts in pre-war television food and cooking programmes, before looking at shifts in 'ordinariness' after the war, as television, and audiences, grew and became more established.

Pre-war – Boulestin - context

'Ordinary people' in this sense were part of television food and cooking programmes from the very beginning. As noted in the history above, programmes such as *Come And Be Televised* performed the dual role of encouraging participation and engagement with television, and also encouraging ordinary people to share their skills and talents on screen. These broadcasts included sharing of food and cooking ideas, features on food and cookery competitions and the general sharing of household tips. This next section, however, considers the 'other' ordinariness of the food and cooking broadcasts of Boulestin, which took place between 1937 and 1939.

In 1936, producer Cecil Lewis, wrote an internal memo to propose that X Marcel Boulestin should be asked if he would consider presenting a new 'talk' for television about cookery. Lewis thought this talk would work well on the newly established television service and would particularly be interesting to women while also having wide appeal (BBC WAC Boulestin TV Art1, 24 November 1936). Lewis had seen a film which Boulestin had made (BFI 2019) on cookery only a few

days before and was impressed how Boulestin was able to 'come down to the ordinary home level' and not merely appear as a chef with expensive dishes. The memo suggested keeping the broadcast on similar 'simple lines', again considering the general public (the audience) and their interest in seeing Boulestin deliver such a 'talk.'

In May 1937, Boulestin wrote to Mrs Mary Adams (by this time the producer) in response to her request that he prepare a demonstration of a dish which involved milk. Boulestin expressed his concerns that the dishes he could consider using milk would be limited to puddings and custards only, and noted that these were 'things which any English cook knows' and it would be very dull for them to see him do on television (BBC WAC Boulestin Talks File1, 13 May 1937). Boulestin suggested an alternative recipe to show – a sauce. He felt that the 'public' would not complain about seeing this, citing his experience prior to television of giving cookery classes, where participants were always keen to see a sauce demonstrated, to understand their previous failures in this technique.

Boulestin had been engaged in giving talks for BBC radio since 1930 (BBC WAC Boulestin RCONT1, 31 October 1930), at times as part of a small team including Mr Wickham Steed (referred to as an 'amateur cook of distinction') and Mr Evelyn Wrench (who looked at what was 'wrong with English cooking') (ibid., 10th November 1930) while Boulestin was free to suggest something suitable to complement their talks. Boulestin was encouraged (in a letter to his literary agent) to not use actual recipes (as these had to be given at a very slow pace and reduced the time available) but instead to talk on 'general lines' (ibid., 17 November 1930). Boulestin was asked to prepare a manuscript, of around one thousand and six hundred words, which would lead to a talk of around fifteen minutes. BBC producers felt that this was 'long enough' for a cookery talk (ibid., 7th March 1935), indicating even then the low status of cookery in their broadcasts.

Boulestin used his partner – in life and business – A.H. Adair (also known as Robin) thereafter as his business secretary, occasionally writing to the BBC on his behalf to make arrangements, requests, and suggestions. When Boulestin received a contract for a radio talk in 1935, it was Adair who wrote back to the BBC to query the fee, reminding them of the fee paid – ten guineas – in 1930, and that it would be

detrimental to Boulestin's reputation to accept anything lower, especially as the previous talk was for only ten minutes and he had in addition received a further fee when the talk was published in the 'Radio Magazines' (ibid., 21 March 1935) – later clarified as *The Listener*. The BBC raised the fee to twelve guineas. His future fees for television broadcasts range from ten to twenty guineas.

Ordinary Audiences – pre-war

Here I use, as a case study, the single broadcast of *Talking of Wine – Polite Wine Drinking*[10], where 'ordinary people' appear alongside the presenter.

In late 1937, Boulestin proposed a broadcast on television dealing with wine (BBC WAC Boulestin Talks File1, 10 November 1937) for approval by the BBC. He submitted an outline treatment for the programme. This was vetted by the BBC, and found to be 'defensible on policy terms' and 'quite harmless' especially if no mention was to be made of any wine merchant's name, although they recognised that various wine vintages would need to be referenced. The programme was set to make a change from Boulestin's usual flow of *Dish of the Mont*h programmes. Boulestin suggested including his friend, the socialite and actress Miss Nesta Swayer in the broadcast, as someone to sample wines with him, discuss their characteristics and how they should be served (ibid., 23 December 1937). The programme would be named *Polite Wine Drinking* and broadcast on the 23rd December 1937 (ibid.). Boulestin was paid fifteen guineas for the fifteen-minute broadcast (raised from twelve initially ibid, Contract 23 December 1937), and to supply the wine and glasses (ibid., 30 November 1937), while Sawyer was paid five guineas for her contribution. The proposed broadcast attracted some negative publicity. The *Evening Standard* reported accusations from the Commercial Temperance League that the BBC was encouraging artists to be involved in the publicity of 'liquor' (ibid., 5 December 1937).

The announcement prior to the programme introduced Monsieur Boulestin, and Miss Sawyer, and set out that they would talk about 'polite wine drinking'. This would include wine with dinner parties, which wines to serve, how they should be

[10] Presented by Boulestin, broadcast on 23rd December 1937 at 9p.m.

served and decanted, how to use the correct glasses, and would conclude with a light-hearted joke at the expense of wine connoisseur's (ibid., Announcement 23 December 1937). This announcement was a little longer than usual, presumably to counteract the negative press. The BBC was additionally nervous, it would seem, about having wine in the studio ahead of the transmission. Producer Mary Adams wrote a memo detailing where it would be stored, and that Boulestin's partner, Adair, would collect it and transport it to the studio for rehearsal and transmission (ibid., 22 December 1937).

The script treatment for the programme stressed that a 'talk' atmosphere would be avoided, and as 'much action as possible' would be shown, 'almost like a sketch' (ibid., Outline, undated). Miss Sawyer played her role as in ordinary life, acting as an interlocutor, arriving with a menu for her dinner party, for which Boulestin would advise the wine, glasses and so on. Mention would be made of drinking 'barely and too much' (hence the title including the term 'polite'). Boulestin suggested that initially the 'wrong' table setting could be shown, with the 'wrong' glasses, and then a corrected version with the 'right' ones. Boulestin also noted that he would be dressed for dinner, and Miss Sawyer would wear a suitable evening frock. Miss Sawyer would be schooled in the correct phrases to use to describe wine (such as 'soft', full bodied' and 'elegant'), and never to describe, for example, the wine's 'complexion', as Boulestin insisted that wine did not have one. Boulestin would show Sawyer how to lift the correct wine glass, how to examine the wine, how to smell it appropriately, how to move the glass towards your mouth, and how to sip it, before how to discuss it. Six different wines and combinations of wines were suggested for the three-course dinner menu (ibid.).

The programme was written up in a full-page article, including photographs taken in the studio, in late December 1937 (The Listener p1417). The photographs show Boulestin and Sawyer at the dinner table with wine bottles, glasses, and decanters. The article praises the conversational nature of the programme, praising the humour and knowledge Boulestin was able to demonstrate, likening the broadcast to a 'one-act play' with Miss Sawyer. The inclusion of Miss Sawyer, as an 'ordinary' viewer of the time enhanced the programme, showing to the viewing audience a potentially real-life situation, wherein Boulestin would impart knowledge as if to a friend, to aid her in a real-life social setting. Although the scene and premise seem

far from ordinary in retrospect, the review in *The Listener* outlines that the reviewer was themself sitting at home watching having just finished dinner, and were able to relate to the discussion as a 'post dinner' conversation, and one which was 'delightful'. This indicates an understanding of 'ordinary' in terms of the 1930s as a representation of the upper middle classes.

Also, in the 1940s, Harben tried to include features on wine to match his recipe suggestions, adding that wine was 'definitely in the news now'. Harben suggested that he could involve a certain T.A. Layton in this, and he himself would be happy to 'work out a continuity' on this if acceptable. BBC producers were hesitant to include wine in features intended for the ordinary household but were reminded in a note from Mary Adams that 'we did this with Boulestin before war' (BBC WAC Harben Talks File1, 15 January 1947).

In 1939, Boulestin pitched an idea for a food-based parlour game type of programme for broadcast on television. Although perhaps more spectacular in design than some of the more ordinary food and cookery demonstrations which he had developed previously, it is conceivable that this too be considered as 'ordinary' entertainment for the audience at the time, recreating a similar game to which they may have played at dinner parties at home. The programme, originally called *Blind Man's Buffet* (BBC WAC T32/68, 16 May 1939a) and occasionally referred to as *Bee For Boulestin*, was suggested to include invited guests who would participate. The eventual guests included food writer and cookbook author Mrs Elizabeth Craig, The Dowager Lady Swaythling, Miss Martita Hunt, Edmund Dulac, P Morton Shand and Norman Davey (BBC WAC T32/68, 16 May 1939b), who represented audiences in Hampstead, Kensington, Central London, and Essex. Boulestin requested a gas cooking stove in the studio for the broadcast, which should be 'practical', which meant at the time that its be connected to the gas and suitable for practical cooking demonstration (BBC WAC T32/68, 17 May 1939). Most of the guests were paid a fee of two guineas for their part, with only Norman Davey receiving three. The 'menu' for the programme – dishes which were presented to the guests blindfolded to guess what they were, included Hot Sorrel Soup, Cold Salmon Trout, guinea fowl, salad with dressing, strawberry tart, Dutch cheese, tongue sandwiches, fruit salad, caviar, butter and margarine, camembert, choices of cigarettes, milk drinks, potato wone and maraschino, and different types of coffee. This indicates a disjoint

between the people taking part in the programme and the featured menu, indicating a more aspirational form of television was being broadcast to the audience watching.

Post-War 1940s/1950s

The BBC Written Archives reveal that the consideration of 'ordinary' audiences was also a concern in the 1950s. Patten has previously been the subject of scholarly research, looking at aspects of her own domesticity, femininity, and relation to ordinary viewers through her own television food and cookery programmes and appearances. In this next section I further consider her through the characteristic of Bonner's framework of ordinariness.

Patten - context

Marguerite Patten began correspondence with the BBC in 1946, enquiring if they would be interested in further talks for the *Kitchen Front* series on radio (BBC WAC Patten RCont1, 3 April 1946) where she also listed her credentials working in a 'large London store' (ibid.) – playing down the fact that this was not an ordinary store, it was Harrods – and underlining her association with the Ministry of Food in providing original recipes and demonstrations, and as someone with 'professional stage experience' and well used to public speaking.' While initial recipes were received by the BBC as suggestions, some were refused by the Ministry of Food for being 'dull' (ibid., 14 May 1946), or not satisfactory (ibid., 30 August 1946). Patten was offered a voice test which resulted in a five-minute talk for which she was paid five guineas, later increased to six.

Patten continued to submit ideas, and some were taken forward. In January 1947, the BBC wrote to her to ask if she would take part in two sessions with The Brains Trust, which would be part of the regular *Woman's Hour*, on radio, looking at 'Answering Your Household Problems' (ibid., 28 January 1947), and would be scripted. Patten was asked to prepare answers for about half a dozen problems based on common food and household matters.

Patten then began to broadcast on television in 1947, originally as a part of an experiment to transfer the radio programme *Woman's Hour* to television, with the draft title of *Television Tea Party*. The programme itself was designed to be a 'comfortable setting' to introduce guests to the viewers and made no attempt to provide a 'dramatic setting' (BBC WAC T32/125/1, August 1947). The archive details of the script outlines the programme. The host of the programme, Jeanne Heal, would move around the studio talking to various invited 'speakers' about different aspects of interest, asking questions from which the audience at home might benefit. Patten was scheduled to demonstrate a 'quick and simple' way to make pancakes and doughnuts for tea. Heal would speak with Patten about the recipes, before leaving her to produce them while she showed viewers the crockery in which tea would be served. Later, Heal would return to Patten to introduce the finished items. Other speakers would discuss domestic items, health, beauty, and fashion. Finally at the end of the hour-long programme, all the guests would gather for their 'tea party'; then they would discuss how to celebrate memories of each guest by adding to a tablecloth with signatures of suffragettes on the cloth. Mary Adams, producer, suggested that the programme should emphasise practical aspects of women's interests, themselves modelled to appear 'ordinary' and 'everyday', given that other interests are catered for during 'ordinary evening transmissions.' The programme was renamed *Designed for Women*, with Patten featuring in the first broadcast on the 6th November 1947 (see Appendix B). Adams suggested that cookery items should focus on 'special dishes' such as icing a cake for a child's birthday, instead of the 'basic principles' of cookery (BBC WAC T32/125/1, 8 August 1947). However, to emphasise the ordinary, or an aspirational version of this perhaps, the studio set design included Danish Wallpaper, a modern fireplace, settees, chairs, large Persian rugs, grand pianos, tea trolleys and 'wing' tables with distinct areas for cookery, demonstrations, and discussion (ibid., 6 November 1947). Due to BBC budget restraints, furniture was hired, and drapes and props used from internal studio supplies.

The BBC were keen to determine if this 'new' type of programme would be as appealing to women as they hoped. To help to analyse this, letters and feedback were collected from ordinary audience members. These were overall in favour, without a 'single criticism', Mary Adams noted that 'it is obvious that we have a readymade audience of women who for one reason or another are tied to the

home' (ibid., 19 November 1947). Adams concluded that woman wanted everyday practical advice as 'housewives, mothers, shoppers, and citizens'. Many middle-aged women were looking for 'short-cuts' in cooking, hairdos, and dressmaking. Down-to-earth cooking was praised. Jeanne Heal was praised for her manner. Audiences liked her to be 'seen with her guests and being natural with them.' Some feedback suggested that viewers' comments could be included somehow in the programme, and it was proposed by Adams that the 'appearance of a viewer with something to show or do' would help to build a relationship with audiences at home, and further continuing feedback and suggestions (ibid.).

Patten – ordinary viewers

Many of the ideas for recipes Patten pitched to the radio producers were selected as good ideas for her to present on television instead. Scripts and archive notes show that subsequent programmes would include Heal introducing the programme with a thank-you to the ordinary audiences at home for their letters and introducing that she was so glad so many had followed her recipes and enjoyed them. Heal would then introduce that day's recipe from Patten, and mention that in the future she hoped to attract some ordinary viewers to come along to the studio to be part of the demonstrations, reading extracts from viewers' letters to support this (ibid., Outline November 1947). Patten would continue with her 'quick recipes' (ibid., 20 January 1948) - designed 'not to bore' the audience (ibid., 6 January 1948) - on *Designed for Women,* as it became, a fortnightly programme (initially it was monthly) from 1948 (ibid., 5 February 1948) with some tweaks as time went on.

Producers sought to change the 'cookery backdrop' from one which 'looked like a section of the passage of a seaside boarding house' to one more 'ordinary' viewers would recognise (ibid., 6 February 1948). Patten was joined occasionally by Josephine Terry, who would demonstrate 'ordinary' (to her) recipes from America, in contrast to the usual British ones favoured by Patten (ibid., 2 March 1948). Some items connected with other features, such as cooking for health. Jeanne Heal was paid forty guineas per edition. Patten received ten guineas for her cooking demonstrations (ibid., 5 April 1948); these included how to use citrus fruits, make mayonnaise, preserve surplus fruits, and other quick, ordinary recipes, often

decided at the last minute depending on seasonal availability of produce, and listed only as 'will give a cookery demonstration' in the schedule plans (ibid.).

In a production memo following poor audience feedback reports on the programme in 1951, Cecil McGivern wrote sarcastically that the content of the programme was 'as likely to appeal to the ordinary housewife (our customer) as it is to a 2-day old kitten' (BBC WAC T32/125/4, 3 August 1951). The memo gave his outline of what the 'ordinary' women was in his, and presumably the BBCs, eyes: someone struggling with rations, clothes, children, difficult housing and the thousand and one complications of the very difficult age. She would be 'harassed, needing help, humour.' He went to say that the 'ordinary' woman would not have much education and would likely be 'too tired to take in much more', as justification for his concerns at the inclusion of historical records, the history of pearls and other 'cloud-cuckoo-land' content, which resulted in 'nonsense' being broadcast (ibid.).

Designed for Women was renamed and replaced by a regular magazine programme called *About The Home*, sometimes *For Women: About the Home*. Patten and Robins both moved to this new series in similar roles as cookery demonstrators. Early episodes returned to the idea of connecting viewers at home to the programme by introducing dramatic recreations of everyday domestic incidents, such as outbreaks of food poisoning (BBC WAC T32/1/1, 24 January 1952), food safety and cleanliness, the effectiveness of home appliances and so on which experts could address, mainly Robins led these segments, while Patten covered items such as making coffee correctly (BBC WAC T32/1/2, 27 March 1952). These programmes were more scripted than *Designed for Women* had been, and described participants as 'cast' rather than contributors. The two who discussed each item with guests in the studio, in a similar way as Boulestin had done with *Polite Wine Drinking*.

For *About The Home*, it was proposed in 1956 to extend the viewer interaction further through the introduction of a 'Television Cookery Club' to feature visiting cooks who were ordinary viewers, often selected as winners of a particular contest. Doreen Stephens, producer, instructed the 'club' to focus on securing viewer participation, for instance by introducing club badges for members. Potential subjects were identified; the memo debated which viewers would be asked for

recipes and the methods envisaged for handling these, as well as policies for eventually publishing them, again to increase participation among ordinary viewers (BBC WAC T32/1/8 22 June 1956).

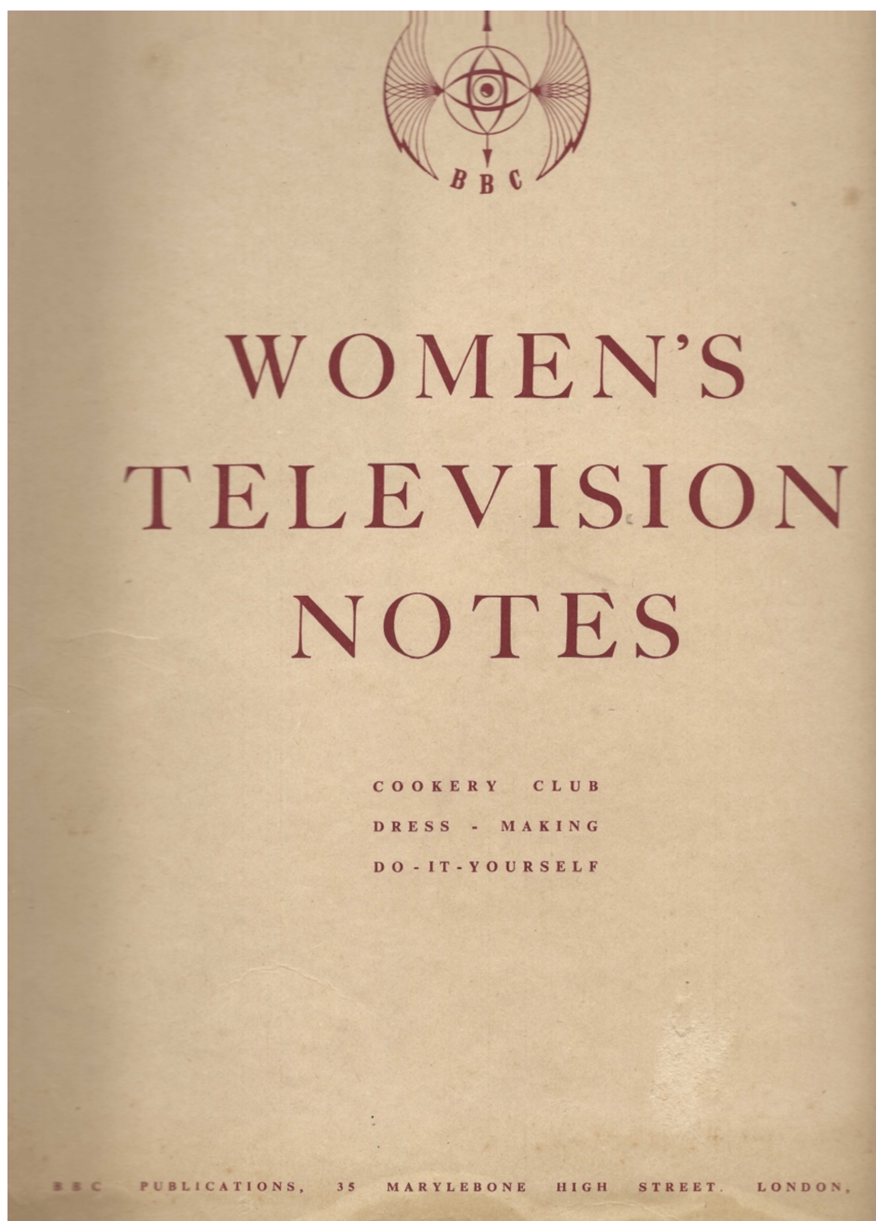

Figure 6. Cover detail from BBC Women's Television Notes folder

Initially part of the *About The Home* magazine programme, the *Cookery Club* began in October 1956, with one or more 'good' viewers asked to demonstrate and discuss their recipe in the studio. To foster the feeling of a 'club', as well as the badges, a Women's Television Folder (see Figure 6) was proposed where printed notes available as pull-out sections in the *Radio Times* could be added, collected, and shared easily among groups of ordinary viewers. Badges would be produced in sufficient numbers to allow as many people as possible to have them, to show their

significance and it was suggested that they have different colours for different grades, in line with the *Women's Institutes* (ibid., 4 July 1948). Those appearing on the programme would have a red badge. If a recipe was printed but no television appearance was made, a blue badge would be offered. Basic level white badges would be provided to as many people possible. The broadcasts were clearly still in black and white, so the proposed colour differences were used by the BBC as a promotional and 'recruitment' technique for ordinary viewers at home.

Auditions were held for new faces to join the *Cookery Club* team, including budget advisors and people responsible on screen for reminding viewers to participate (ibid., 26 June 1956). Patten would launch the club, give the first demonstration, and invite recipes from viewers, and crucially for the BBC, introduce the concept of the folder to collect resources (BBC WAC T32/1/8, 26 July 1956). Around a month after this introductory programme, the first winner of that month's competition ('My Favourite Sunday Sweet') (BBC WAC T32/648/1, May 1957) would appear in the studio alongside Patten. The winner was Mrs M Bench from Lancashire, who submitted her recipe for Daffodil Cream, a pineapple cream recipe with eggs and gelatine (ibid). Plans were made to take publicity photographs of the winners in the studios, and connections established to local papers and other outlets for publicity, all stressing the 'ordinary' viewers involvement in programming. The photos (taken by flash photography) would also be printed large scale, in matt, mounted in 12" by 9" ratio to allow them to be shown on screen clearly (BBC WAC T32/1/8, 26 July 1956).

Although Patten was the main host, and Club President (ibid.), in the fourth of every four programmes a guest cook would be introduced. Audition notes for the *Cookery Club* showed that a variety of people were considered, and their differences noted. Dorothy Sleightholme (who would later present the popular ITV food and cookery programme *Farmhouse Kitchen*) made Wholemeal Bread, and was considered excellent to watch. Vera Calderoni (noted to be Italian) performed well making a Pizza Pie. Others, including Indian, Russian, and Belgian cooks were noted to be hesitant, and under-prepared, instructing that they should only be used in collaboration with other more experienced presenters (ibid., 4 July 1956). These segments on 'Foreign Cookery' became an established part of the programme, arguably widening out the profile of the 'ordinary' viewers to include different

nationalities and cuisines to suggest an ‘other’ which was not ordinary at all. (see Chapter 4 and Appendix B for more detail).

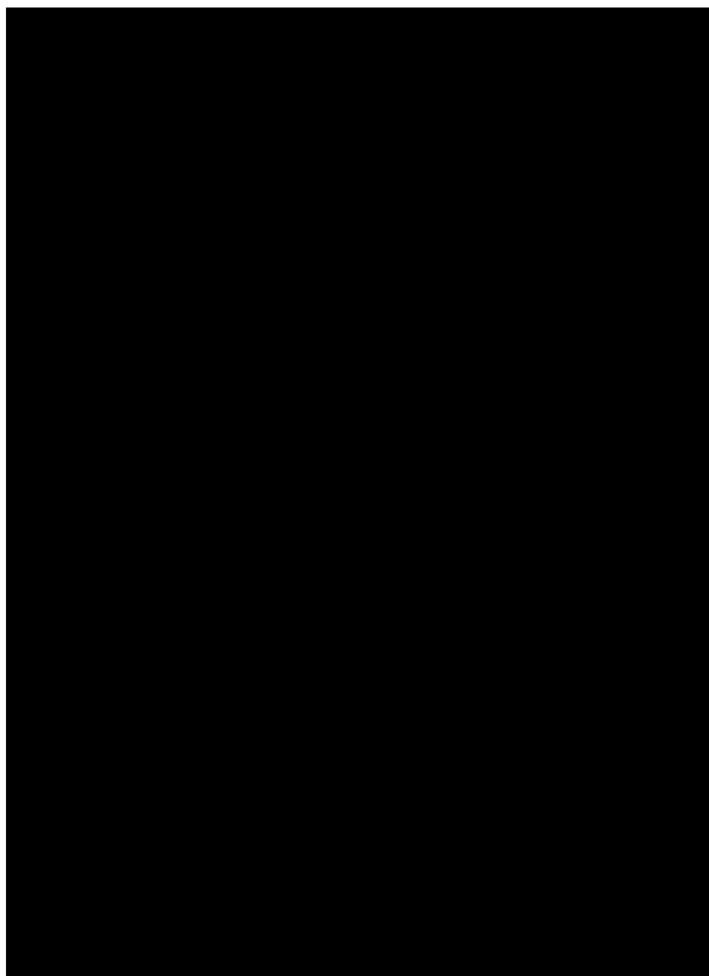

Figure 7. Marguerite Patten, page from the Women's Television Notes folder

Plans were made to either have Patten travel to a ‘regional’ studio if a competition winner was from ‘one of the regions’ instead of London (ibid., 26 July 1956) or alternatively to link the regional studio with Patten in London if easier. Recipe submissions would be checked to ensure they were free of copyright, and not ‘lifted straight out of a standard cookery book’ (ibid.). To counteract this, and in recognition of the legal position towards copyright infringement or lack of on television, viewers would be asked to sign a declaration to say that the recipe was entirely their own work and has not been previously published (ibid., 27 July 1956). The idea of badges was replaced by the idea of the folder to collect resources, with competition winners receiving a photograph of themselves with Patten in the studio, which could additionally be used for publicity (ibid., 26 July 1956). Additional plans were made to produce similar pamphlets of information to

include in the folders for dressmaking, exercise, and other aspects of the *About the Home* programme (ibid.). As the television segments were such a success, in 1960 *Cookery Club* became a standalone, fifteen-minute programme which ran until the following year.

The pamphlets for the folders were designed to accentuate the BBC Television Cookery Club Recipes (see Figure 7), and that they had been chosen by Marguerite Patten. Text included 'advice from the guests' and more calls for contributions from ordinary viewers (BBC WAC T32/648/1, May 1957). Recipes were presented with the viewers' name and address prominent at the top of each recipe (ibid., p. 1), often with additional side-notes from Patten to clarify necessary skills or introduce new cooks to an established idea, such as bottling fruit, which wasn't explicit in the recipe (ibid., p. 3). For example, with the first winning recipe, the Daffodil Cream, the winner suggested substituting real cream for a small tin of unsweetened evaporated milk, which Patten tried. She reported that it was good, but 'not as good' as the original version (ibid., p. 2). Each recipe included a short sentence of narrative to explain why the viewer particularly liked it; this all helped to emphasise the ordinary, an old family recipe, a nostalgic treat, a child's favourite or whatever; adding to the everyday authenticity of the ideas and the sharing aspect of the club ethos.

Patten filmed links and segments for the show 'out and about' at Food Fairs if they happened to be in London (BBC WAC T32/1/9, 30 August 1956) where she was able to introduce additional ideas, and even more supposedly ordinary people, such as a typical 'Scottish Girl' complete with a tartan tablecloth at the Scottish Food stand, discussing Black Buns (ibid.). This all foregrounded the importance of 'ordinary' and not typical studio guests. On one occasion when broadcasting from Manchester, because the presenter (Evelyn Rose) was over-running, the recipe caption at the end for a Manchester Tart was only flashed on screen quickly, resulting in many complaints and requests for the recipe. Although evidently frustrating for the BBC to deal with, the episode demonstrates the level of interest in these recipes among ordinary viewers (ibid., 21 January 1956).

Items broadcast from the studio included regular instructions to 'plug' the *Cookery Club* pamphlets, and encourage fresh ideas based on previous recipe suggestions

(BBC WAC T32/1/7, 30 May 1956). The studio would also feature photographs of the six winning recipes as a 'further plug' for the pamphlets and to act as a reminder for presenters to suggest that viewers send in more (ibid.).

Harben was also keen to capitalise on the BBC instruction and policy to include ordinary viewers in food and cookery programmes. Harben suggested that they could announce on his programme which 'Viewer's Dishes' they would like to be prepared to show before the camera. Harben suggested he could then select and arrange them for television, and compère and work with the viewer-cook. It is noted on his suggestion that this was an 'excellent idea.' (BBC WAC Harben Talks1, April 1948). Permission was sought from within the BBC for Harben to solicit correspondence with viewers in this, which the BBC noted had already been a suggestion taken forward by Joan Robins (ibid., 19 April 1948), indicating some tension between the pair, despite great interest in the three, including Patten, and in 'cooking for television' generally. (BBC WAC Harben TVTalks2, 8 September 1950).

Later, in 1976, Cradock ended her long run on television food and cookery programmes with an appearance on the *Big Time* in 1976 (Radio Times 1976b). The Big Time aimed to support ordinary viewers to achieve careers out of the ordinary. Her role was to act as a mentor for Gwen Troake – an 'ordinary' housewife from Devon – with whom in reality Cradock had already appeared on television in 1972, as part of the *Cook of the Realm* competition (Radio Times 1972b). The host of the *Big Time*, Esther Rantzen, was also a part of the *Cook of the Realm* programme, which prompted her to include Cradock and Troake together again in this later programme (Geddes 2019).

Opposite to 'special'

As well as introducing ordinary people as part of broadcasts, early food and cooking programmes tackled ordinary and everyday food and cooking skills. In 1952, Philip Harben began a short series of cookery demonstrations about the uses of flour – based on audience feedback, which the BBC said showed that 'women in particular wanted to know more about' (BBC WAC T32/1/1, 30 January 1952). Each week he would consider a different technique, taking ordinary viewers

through his experience from Short Paste, Flaky Paste, Raised Paste and Danish Paste. Although a departure from the simple and special recipe suggestions initially shown in the magazine programmes, these more technique-based segments were justified from audience feedback, and indeed linked to other discussions on screen. As an example, Robins had previously led a discussion on storing pastry 'safely' in the home (ibid., 19 March 1952). On the 'storing food safely' programme, Robins was joined by an 'ordinary housewife' to enable her to explain how to handle and store different foods, to investigate (and perhaps correct) the housewife on unsafe practices, and to invite other ordinary viewers at home to conduct their own investigation, based on what they notice the housewife doing. Robins would then summarise the correct procedure as a reminder (ibid., 12 March 1952).

Despite the BBCs efforts to introduce and sustain 'ordinary' people in the afternoon magazine programmes, it also received some criticism from media and audiences. In *About The Home*, BBC producers attempted to counter-balance criticisms which insinuated that they favoured 'ordinary' people rather than trained professionals to demonstrate cookery techniques (BBC WAC T32/1/6, 13 June 1955). These criticisms had been levelled mainly at Harben, as someone claiming specialisation in techniques despite having no training. Producers arranged for test recordings to be made featuring a respectable chef, who had until recently worked in the Restaurant Boulestin, George Dertu (see Appendix B), with the view of replacing, or perhaps joining Harben on screen, to act against the accusation of ordinariness. All agreed the test was a success, and Dertu should be used, but only without the 'phoney restaurant setting' used in the test (ibid.). At the same time, another woman was tested, Eleanor Summerfield; it was felt she would be better to try to be more like a 'housewife', not be an 'actress' if she were to be used further, which indicated the confusion within the BBC production team at the time. Dertu appeared on one episode of *About the Home* in 1955 (Radio Times 1955e), Summerfield was used only in several DIY and craft sections instead (Radio Times 1955f).

As well as appearing on broadcasts, the Harben family were contributors to the Viewers Reports for the BBC, so clearly had a television set installed at home which they watched as a family. Their report for the 9th January 1947 included views on: the ballet ('obviously good television'); a programme on cats (which they all found

fascinating), historical films (which they found interesting and 'tantalising'). A quiz show was enjoyed by all the family, however they were divided on the picture clarity. They found a programme on fashion to be 'the best programme in the series yet'; and a programme called 'Serenade in Sepia', 'one of the best television programmes we have ever seen' with 'beautiful pictures, extremely good photography and excellent singing'. These descriptions of the programmes they enjoyed as a family, and the reasons they liked them so much, may have influenced Harben's own ideas for his own broadcasts; viewing other programmes in other genres to inform and improve his own (BBC WAC Harben TV File1, 21 January 1947). Harben also reviewed his own billings in the *Radio Times* and commented when they did not meet his approval; for example if they gave the wrong impression of his intended demonstration (ibid., 27 January 1947). Sometimes, letters about suggested continuity announcements for Harben's appearances were sent to the BBC by his wife, Katherine, who may have been involved in writing them (ibid., 21 October 1947).

Harben was occasionally joined by his daughter, Jenny, on set. She helped him cook when deemed appropriate, and underlined his ordinary family credentials. Harben was asked to attend afternoon rehearsals for his live evening broadcasts; letters to the BBC show that he, from time to time, tried to rearrange these for the early evening, to avoid spending all day at the studio, in his view unnecessarily. When accompanied by his daughter for a broadcast on pancake making, scheduled to be broadcast at eight-thirty in the evening (Radio Times 1947a), he wrote to say that the scheduled time for rehearsal, 1pm, would not suit, due to his daughter being at school (BBC WAC Harben TV File 1, 27 January 1947). Jenny was paid three guineas as a fee for future appearances (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks2, 3 October 1950).

The archives show that some of Harben's broadcasts (and presumably those of other food and cookery presenters too) were interrupted or cancelled due to electricity and fuel crises after the war (1947) (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks File 1, 14 February 1947). Some scheduled broadcasts were 'held over' by a few months rather than abandoned altogether (ibid., 17 February 1947). Harben was paid if contracted, even if a broadcast did not go ahead, usually at the agreed fifteen guineas fee, or if cancellations were well in advance, a 'for your trouble' payment of

five guineas was made (ibid., 12 March 1947). From time to time producers would write to Harben to say that ‘Cookery has been deleted from the programme’ on certain dates and would resume at others (ibid., 6 May 1947).

Harben appeared to be mindful of the ordinary aspects of food and cookery that would have been helpful and acceptable at the time. He proposed a broadcast demonstrating a dish of carrots with a cream sauce. This initially sounds fancier that ordinary, but Harben would underline that his aim would be to illustrate the ‘conservative principle of cooking carrots’ and to show the use of carrot tops in the sauce, reducing food wastage (ibid., 22 May 1947). Other ideas included using ‘lesser-known cuts of meat’, stews and how to make decent gravy (ibid., 23 June 1947).

The archive resources detail the development of a crucial series of ‘ordinary’ programmes for Harben. Harben proposed a ‘syllabus’ of cookery programmes for 1948, intended to raise ‘standards of cooking techniques’ through teaching basic theories of the cooking process, focusing on methods not recipes (ibid., 1 August 1947a). Harben made a plea for an increase to his fee in conjunction with this, to compensate his time better, to combat the rising cost of ingredients and transport to the studio, and in recognition of his solid years of television commitment (which at that time had only been a year) (ibid., 1 August 1947b). Producers agreed, and sought clarification from the accounts department, who agreed to increase his fee to eighteen guineas, asking for Harben to be made aware that the agreement had been made primarily to reflect his rising costs, and not due to his other justifications (ibid., 9 August 1947). The change was implemented in August 1947 (ibid., 27 August 1947). By 1950, Harben was again asking for an increase – to twenty guineas – to match the rise in food costs (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks File2a, 10 August 1950). This was agreed as a supplementary fee for festive programmes only, pending further discussion (ibid., 11 August 1950).

Harben’s files give the detailed outline he proposed for his twelve lessons in cookery for ‘ordinary’ housewives; the basic principles of cookery, and how they could be adapted to other dishes (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks File1, July 1949). Harben proposed to include Robins and Patten in ‘some’ of the broadcasts, positioning himself in the lead role. Harben had the idea to produce a pamphlet,

which could be made available before the course so that housewives could be 'ready'. He proposed that the lessons ended with an 'exam paper'. Then he would invite the ordinary viewers as prize-winners into the studio to prepare dishes, for sampling by Harben, Robins, and Patten as the final judges. The outline sketched the series as thirty-minute programmes, ten minutes of which would be given to an ordinary housewife to repeat what had been demonstrated, emphasising the means of repetition as a 'lesson', and to identify the programme more closely with 'ordinary' housewives (ibid.). The pamphlet idea also had a few suggested 'advertisers' from Harben, including food companies, tourist attractions, equipment suppliers, winemakers, and associations (ibid.). Later, the idea of the 'examination of victims' was dropped in favour of other ways to include the ordinary audiences (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks File2a, 14 April 1950).

Scripts for the *Cookery Lesson* series were annotated with reminders to say, 'well done!" and other such encouraging phrases throughout, aiming to keep things positive for viewers at home (ibid., January 1950). The script stressed that 'here we are in an ordinary kitchen…' using ordinary equipment but promising a balance of 'practical and interesting' as well as 'thrilling' those at home (ibid.). Newspaper reports at the time commentated that 'TV cooking is not like ordinary cooking' (Daily Express 1950), but Harben was quick to clarify that he could help with common problems and issues, while showing real cookery (with perhaps a revealing comment of 'no paper mâché pies') despite the limitations he faced in terms of studios, lights, and cameras. In the press, Harben is reported to have no written scripts for his food and cookery programmes, simply and positively making up the words as the work progressed, backed-up, of course, with rigorous rehearsals so that camera angles could be decided upon. All this added to the appearance of ordinariness of the programme, though the scripts were in reality written in advance by Harben for approval. Harben further likened his television demonstrations to real-life cooking, explaining that a meal must be planned, executed, and delivered at the time which is expected. In 1950 the BBC recorded in their files that Harben was now also under contract to the *Daily Express* and that he was pushing his 'timetable' method of cooking, which had received praise from leading women's journals (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks File2a, 24 January 1950); this was not referenced on screen.

Later in 1950, producers asked for support from the *Radio Times* to promote the weekly series with Harben, Robins and Patten to ordinary viewers. They suggested that Harben should have a written feature (as 'Editor' of the series) and that photographs of all three be included, with a small 'box' of space given over each week to a description of that week's lesson (ibid., 27 January 1950). It was decided that the *Radio Times* would commission Harben directly to write the article and agree a separate fee from his television duties (ibid., 6 March 1950). The fees for the series were unequal from the beginning, with Harben receiving twenty-two guineas, and Patten and Robins eighteen. Later, memos from the *Radio Times* asked why fees were asked for, as surely this work should have been part of the original contract? (ibid., 7 December 1950). This prompted a response from the *Cookery Lesson* production team; concluding that it would be 'unwise for us to interfere' (ibid., 12 December 1950).

The series was broadcast in the afternoons (Radio Times 1950a) and although a suggested 'repeat' performance was requested by the BBC management for the evenings; this was turned down. Instead, a counter suggestion of a further daytime series was proposed; more evidence for the BBC controllers view that food and cookery were not suitable for evening broadcast (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks File 2a, 25 May 1950). The producer S.E. Reynolds made a case for more evening programmes or Harben to Mary Adams, who asked for further evidence directly from Harben that an evening programme would be helpful. She was particularly keen to understand if there were any supportive viewer correspondences. So, clearly consideration for evening programmes was there at production level at least (ibid, 1 June 1950). The series was to include more 'tools of cookery', skills such as deep frying, sauce making as well as a continued focus on 'planning and timing' in the run up to Christmas; also an opportunity to include ordinary viewers as guests in the studio (ibid., January 1950).

The *Cookery Lesson* series ended with an 'exam' or a final test after all, in July 1950, involving ordinary housewives and a general quiz designed to involve all viewers at home (ibid.). Demand for the printed syllabus 'exceeded all reasonable expectation' (BBC WAC Harben TVTalks File2b, 8 March 1953) indicating both the popularity of the series and its connection with ordinary viewers at home.

For the second series, it was proposed that Harben be allocated a fee of twenty-two or twenty-five guineas, to include work from him to revise the syllabus. Robins and Patten would remain at eighteen guineas. An additional request from Harben to Mary Adams for an increase to fifty guineas (ibid., 2 January 1951) prompted an internal memo asking 'just how good is he?' The memos also noted that Robins felt resentment at her billing as his 'assistant', and offered as an alternative the suggestion that each should receive an equal amount of thirty guineas. The discussion reveals some frustration behind the scenes; for instance, an instruction that the production team should consider if 'further cooks might be introduced from time to time' (ibid., 5 January 1951). Harben introduced a further idea for travelling out of the studio and around the regions for the proposed programme, this made the production team 'tremble at the thought of his fee', prompting, for example, the question 'possibly Marguerite Patten might be prepared to devote time to this', insinuating that she would be cheaper and would not complain (ibid.). The resolution was to agree to the increase to thirty guineas for each presenter. Notes on file reveal that Harben had agreed to charging no additional fees if he could travel first-class, with his wife (he wanted her also paid for), and not to be away from home for more than a day (ibid., 4 July 1951b).

Harben received letters from ordinary viewers with comments and complaints, including one in which a viewer requested that he give 'actual temperatures' for cooking as well as Regulo (Gas) numbers, stressing that 'people in the country either use electric or solid fuel and rely on thermometers' (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks File 1, 26 November 1947). The feedback seemed to puzzle Harben, and he asserted in his response to the BBC producers that he never gave Regulo numbers, and always gave temperatures on screen (ibid., 1 December 1947). Harben also forwarded other letters, or more usually typed extracts, which included support for, for example, wine in television programmes, in accordance with his own ideas (ibid., 16 May 1949).

Harben campaigned to be kept on as an 'evening cook' in addition to his afternoon appearances, but the BBC Scheduling Department considered the addition of a regular food and cookery slot too much, and counter-campaigned for his place to remain in the afternoons. Mary Adams responded 'WHO cooks in the afternoons?!' pointing to evidence that ordinary viewers (and not only women) liked to see him

in the evenings (ibid., 31 May 1948a). Norman Collins, the BBC Television Controller, accepting that Harben was 'one of the best artists who have ever appeared in Television', would not change his mind that 'cookery programmes in the evening are just about as wrong as they can be', and that restoring Harben to the evenings would be a 'retrograde step' (ibid., 31 May 1948b). In 1949, Harben proposed additional evening programmes which he felt would be more 'documentary' in nature (ibid., 10 Jan 1949), rather than purely instructional. His ideas, he maintained, would enable more ordinary people to be involved, and a certain amount of dramatisation, including some filmed inserts (ibid.). Harben's 'story of Tea' was accepted for broadcast (ibid., 17 February 1949), using his ideas about film and music, as a twenty-to-thirty-minute programme (ibid.).

Mundane and Domestic

Zena Skinner introduced food and cookery items on the children's programme *Blue Peter* in 1965, suggesting a topical Simnel Cake for Easter celebrations. She was paid ten guineas for developing the idea and presenting it on screen (BBC WAC Skinner TVArt3, 1 February 1965). Skinner invoiced the BBC for the cost of ingredients separately; in a change from the previous arrangements with television food and cooking presenters in the 1950s, who received a fee inclusive of all ingredients and preparation time (ibid., 12 June 1966). These expenses in themselves could be between two and seventeen guineas, as examples.

Some correspondence between Skinner and the BBC depicts a view of her as 'ordinary' and reveal that she viewed her role as appealing to the ordinary housewife. In 1967 Skinner sent in a proposed series idea to the BBC, entitled *What's Cooking?* which she thought could be broadcast on Sundays on BBC1 between 2 and 3pm. Skinner's idea was to provide a 'cookery service' to the 'vast audience' of ordinary housewives and working women, who wish to improve their cookery techniques and those 'learning belatedly to cook.' To help women to make the most of their budgets, Skinner suggested a 'sensible, practical attitude towards cooking' to be demonstrated to help them not to waste their money on 'unfamiliar foods.' This would involve quickly prepared and 'attractive' foods for the 'average housewife' using fresh foods which are available 'in this country' combined with tinned foods, frozen items and prepacked ingredients which would be attractive to

families. Skinner argued that although cooking was an ‘art’, it was constantly changing, and housewives need to be kept up to date (ibid., 31 March 1967a). By way of justification, Skinner cited her sales of the *Town and Around* booklet, which at that time stood at three hundred and eighty thousand copies, and the many letters she has received from audiences asking for this type of programme, especially a longer programme than usual, and at a time when women (housewives and those working) could watch and prepare. Her idea prompted a response from her editor, A.C. Fletcher, to recommend and support her proposal. He pointed out that, although Skinner did not have the ‘sophistication’ of some of her contemporaries, there was no doubt that she had an enormous following, including the audiences she mentioned; and, strangely, the Queen, appreciated her ‘own kind of cooking’ which did not attempt to be ‘haute cuisine.’ Fletcher put forward the view that her ‘vast unspectacular audience’ were always willing to accept her ideas to bring a ’freshness to the daily routine and they are not too complicated.’ (ibid., 31 Mar 1967b). The BBC however, struggled to find a slot in their schedule for such a programme at that time (ibid., 31 March 1967c) and Skinner continued to appear on the *Town and Around* programme.

The BBC archives contain a memo from 1964 enquiring about interest in a *Town and Around* cookery book, based on the advice given by freelance contributor Zena Skinner on seasonal food (BBC WAC Skinner R43/1, 23 January 1964). Memos were passed back and forth between BBC departments, and it was agreed that A.C. Fletcher would discuss if Skinner was interested. She responded favourably, somewhat naively, to say the book would be completed the following week (ibid., 1 July 1964). By December it had not been completed (ibid., 30 December 1964) causing some frustration to the BBC who perceived the wintertime as yielding their ‘best audience’ to exploit. The BBC highlighted a potential south-east audience alone of one million and had garnered fifty thousand enquiries for the book pre-publication (ibid). When the book was eventually published in February 1965, the BBC received a letter from a disappointed viewer who had purchased the book only to find it ‘only’ contained forty-one recipes and did not include many of their favourite recipes as demonstrated on television (ibid., 25 February 1965). Another viewer who purchased the book wrote to let the BBC know her disappointment at the price, which she felt was not good value compared to other books, in her opinion as an ordinary housewife (ibid, 8 March 1965). Another viewer wrote of

disappointment at a missing recipe for their favourite Malt Bread (ibid., 11 March 1965). I will return to the topic of Skinner's cookbooks in subsequent chapters, because it is additionally relevant to innovation and the spectacular.

Designed for Women – Joan Robins and Gender

The files held by the BBC Written Archives Centre indicate tension between Robins as an executive (as she regarded herself) and as a role model for 'other' housewives (as the BBC regarded her). Robins submitted a publicity blurb for use by the BBC (originating from the Public Relations Department of the Gas Light and Coke Company) underlining her professional credentials there, at Ministry of Food and at home as a mother. Robins is described as 'forthright, optimistic' and someone who 'gives lie to the rumour that women have no sense of humour' (BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 29 September 1947). Mary Adams, a prominent producer at the BBC (Murphy 2016) responsible for Robins' programmes, added her own notes for the BBC publicity team asking them to make no mention of Robins work with the Gas Light and Coke Company, but instead to 'build up her connection with the Ministry of Food and her practical experience at home' (BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 29 September 1947).

It is within these additional publicity notes that Adams suggested that Robins be known as the 'afternoon cook', appearing fortnightly working in 'double harness' with Harben, in an attempt to emphasise her ordinariness. Adams was keen to point out that there would be no duplication of recipes or overlap of methods. She underlined that Harben would continue to cook 'in the evening', concerning himself with cooking methods and demonstrating appropriate recipes to illustrate these, signifying a distinction in status. Robins on the other hand, would provide hints for the housewife 'whose primary job is not cooking', on 'everyday food problems, e.g., how to cope with the milk shortage, what to do for Thursday's dinner and how to stretch the fat ration' (ibid.).

Despite the on-screen appearance of Harben as in charge, with assistance in more 'ordinary' matters of homemaking from Robins, behind the scenes it was Robins who was the more experienced cook and better able to understand the requirements of the British housewife. Later, Robins would claim that she 'taught

Philip Harben how to cook' in this period (Nelson 1970). Memos at the BBC show that she had an 'overview' role, ensuring that his broadcasts for his series of *Cookery Lessons* was accurate and in accordance with Ministry of Food guidance. Robins provided Harben with written comments and suggestions for all twelve of his lessons, indicating to him that she was a more experienced tutor and expert in cookery lessons (BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 25 October 1947). She added a postscript to let Harben know that she had read his recent article in *The Times* in which he paid tribute to the housewives of Britain. Robins added with, tongue-in-cheek, that as she was herself a British housewife, she thanked him for his kind tributes (clearly finding them patronising).

Robins evidently understood the tensions in her role of appearing as a housewife and, at the same time, appealing to housewives watching at home. She preferred to present herself as an expert on housewives, and distance herself from actual housewives. In a letter to incoming producer S.E. Reynolds, who took over as producer of Robins' food and cookery segments, she laid out her credentials as a professional and executive; 'I am by training an accepted expert in all matters pertaining to the home', giving a list of the committees she sat on, and useful contacts she held in the worlds of business, science, consumer concerns, politics and industry – all of which found her representing 'the housewife' (ibid., 20 September 1950). She maintained that she was considered 'authoritative' on housewives, and as a result was 'the perfect answer to your problems' in terms of producing programmes which successfully connected to areas of interest and concern that housewives wanted, and needed, to see.

To appease continual concerns at the BBC, who promoted an impartial stance that she was perhaps too connected to one industry (namely gas) – she also had the nickname 'Mrs Gas' - she reassured Reynolds that even she, from time to time used electric cleaners and lighting, brushing off the label as 'nonsense'. In a further attempt to convince Reynolds that she was that 'perfect answer', she described herself as 'the modern housewife' (although she worked full-time), explaining that to her that meant 'an expert in Home Economics, if you like.' (ibid). In other correspondence, Robins sent outlines of a programme she was keen to pitch on Consumer Councils, in which she suggested she 'take the part of the intelligent housewife' in any discussions, as well as summing up the programme contents at

the end for the benefit of housewives watching at home (ibid., 21st April 1952) further underlining her view that she was a representative of those housewives watching. Robins claimed that 'ordinary housewives' would find it difficult, for example, to know which equipment was best for them to use in the home based on advertising alone. She said 'they' could not possibly be able to judge, 'but we are' when attempting to justify her role in programmes linked to consumer affairs to the Board of Trade (ibid., 21 October 1952). Robins own view of herself as a 'so-called expert' was not shared by Reynolds however, who claimed to hate it, preferring her role to be understood as chair of a discussion, rather than an expert involved. Reynolds stated that he preferred a simpler set of programmes that Robins had suggested, where the information alone is set out, without any opinion or expert input, feeling that this would be more of 'interest to women applied in practice.' (ibid., 21 April 1952). This tension between perceived roles would dominate Robins' television career.

Robins was subject to some negative newspaper reports, which suggested that she was somehow 'setting wives against husbands' (ibid., 30 January 1951) and encouraging husbands to divorce their wives should the food they cook for them result in stomach ulcers (Daily Graphic 1951). Robins wrote a letter to the BBC saying how upset she was by the incorrect and 'obnoxious' press coverage and took the opportunity to reiterate her own views on family life, which were positive and in support of housewives. She pointed out that the reporter had contacted her following a press release which she had been unaware of from the BBC Publicity Department, and kindly asked that if any future releases were to be supplied to the press, that she be informed in advance of them (BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 30 Jan 1951). Later, Robins, keen to reinforce her background, skills, and unique ability to emphasise and to appeal to housewives, would write bluntly in her notes for future programmes that 'there would seem to be a place in a woman's programme for an authoritative person such as myself' to deal with practical issues such as furniture, political aspects of cookery such as the availability of safe and nutritious flour, and purely ethical issues such as the rights of married women (ibid., 31 July 1953). Robins recognised that she could relate to, and emphasise aspects of her own experience to the ordinary viewer at home, despite not wishing to appear herself in that role.

Emphasis of the Ordinary

Joan Robins played a significant role in the delivery and development of television cooking (and food related) programmes on British television between 1947 and 1956. Her contemporaries and colleagues, Philip Harben and Marguerite Patten are not only more familiar names but have been the subject of academic interest (Moseley, 2008; Charlesworth, 2022; Geddes, 2022). Robins was a significant figure in the development of broadcasting aimed at 'housewives'. Robins was a professional, holding an Executive position with the Gas Light and Coke Company (which employed demonstrators to promote gas cooking, and later became known more simply as The Gas Board) and was a champion of women and the 'welfare of the whole country' (Adams 1962) who connected ordinary aspects of the home such as food and cookery to wider issues of equality, fairness, and standards. Robins believed that it was her role as Executive which led to her appointment as presenter on television, at the same time (and from the very beginning) this caused conflicts of expectation at the BBC. Robins' expectations of her role within the BBC, and the views she suspected were held by audiences watching from home, ultimately led Robins to prioritise alternative employment and senior roles (outside of broadcasting) to advance the rights and responsibilities of women as consumers in Britain (Shipley Times and Express 1956).

The persona Robins portrayed matched the reality of her career as an Executive, linking her work in industry, politics, and campaign work on behalf of women. In photographs taken of her television cooking broadcasts, Robins appeared in relaxed clothing styles, smartly dressed in short-sleeved plain and floral outfits complete with a domestic pinafore apron. Her hair was always swept up and pinned in place. In the publicity shots for her substantive position at the Gas Light and Coke Company, Robins wears pin-striped suits, embellished with brooches, and blouses with bows, her hair in the same style. Robins wrote her professional correspondence to colleagues at the BBC on headed Gas Light and Coke Company paper, positioning herself as a professional employee of theirs, and signed off as the intimidating (and perhaps regal-influenced) 'Joan R', which then had to have a pencil addition of 'obins' added by BBC clerical staff before filing was possible (BBC WAC Robins TV Art 1, 3 August 1940).

Post-War – new personalities and cookbook writers emerged.

During the post-war period people known from the publishing world and radio broadcasts were invited to present food and cookery programmes on television. As television resumed after the war, the disruption caused to the BBC generally, and to the presentations of the personas and producers of television food and cooking programmes, meant that a new approach had to be established (Geddes 2022). Food rationing was still in place (as was paper rationing, limiting production of books) and the Ministry of Food - the British Government department responsible for advice and guidance on food, cooking and economising - was prominent across Britain. The advice presented across the BBC matched this. New presenters, with new styles were required to demonstrate new dishes and impart new advice, reflecting the social and governmental shifts of the time. This section investigates these shifts and considers changes that were implemented to connect on-screen cooking presentations, new television cookery personas and the resurgence of cookbook publications.

Harben published his first cookbook in 1945 (Harben 1945); *The Way To Cook*, Harben described himself as an 'expert' aiming to explain the basic principles that form the foundations of cookery, along the lines of his radio talks. Indeed, the first section, *What is a Sauce For?* (p. 15) borrows its name from the first *Kitchen Front* talk (Radio Times 1943b) and goes on to cover many of the same topics as the talks, without referencing them or the BBC, avoiding issues of copyright and endorsement. As a public service broadcaster, with a remit to inform, educate and entertain, commercialisation of connected products was not encouraged. In Britain, the first commercial television broadcaster (ITV) was not established until 1955, and the BBC operated without competition until then.

When television resumed in 1946, following the wartime halt, so did cooking programmes. Harben presented a series again aimed at beginners, *Cookery*, broadcast in the evenings (Radio Times 1946a). Although the series began with a demonstration of Lobster Vol-au-Vents, which did not appear to match the 'beginners' brief, the rest of the series focused on different skills, techniques and simple recipes such as 'how to make do with the flour ration'(Radio Times 1946d) and 'how to make a good omelette from dried eggs' (Radio Times 1946e). This was

his trademark styles suited to those acquiring skills for the first time. Harben, independently from the BBC, published another cookbook a year later (Harben 1946). In 1951, he started to use the connection to television as a direct promotion of his books.

Philip Harben's *Television Cooking Book* (Harben 1951a) shows him on the cover as if emerging from the television screen with a freshly prepared dish of a game flan in his hands. Inside he is described as 'the famous BBC Television cook', The book claims explicitly to feature many recipes 'personally demonstrated by Mr Harben in his popular television programme.' To further enhance and underline his television credentials, Harben is heralded to have a 'host of friends among viewers in Britain' who rely on his recipes. The book cover states that Harben has 'been the BBC Television Cook since 1946 and has given over 120 demonstrations' with many of the recipes featuring in the book. Indeed, the recipe section of the book (which also contains section on techniques and kitchen know-how) has the title Television Dishes to make the connection firmly and solidly, providing recipes for the dishes cooked on screen.

Harben published a cookbook entitled *Entertaining at Home* in collaboration with his wife in the same year (Harben and Harben 1951); her picture and her name do not appear on the cover, only his. Again, Harben is shown as he would appear on-screen in his butcher's apron, looking very pleased with himself, holding a vandyked tomato (a technique of spiked cuts to the tomato to separate it into two halves, illustrating technique, skill, and a flair for presentation). Below the author's name, in bold, black lettering is written 'The TV Cook' (again without reference to his wife), inside the cover it is stated that Harben is 'perhaps best known as the Television Cook.' Unlike previous books, this volume focuses on menus for entertaining, signalling a shift in Harben's audience from beginners to hosts, with sections on wine and cocktails too, and does not follow the pattern of recipes Harben was creating on television at the time.

A third cookbook entitled *The Pocket Book of Modern Cooking*, published that same year, declared Harben to be 'The Television Chef' on the cover (Harben 1951b) alongside an illustrated picture of Harben at work in the kitchen, dressed as he was for television. This gave a short synopsis inside of the ingredients that made a

‘Television Chef’; his extensive CV, cooking on television since 1946 and having fronted 130 television demonstrations, as well as number of ‘entertainment’ appearances. The introduction informs readers that the ‘vast and ever-growing numbers of televiewers’ (ibid., p. 1) need no introduction to Harben as he is the ‘Television Chef’ despite the limited range of television at that point across Britain, due to the slow roll-out of transmitters and therefore transmissions in some parts of the country.

None of Harben’s books were published by the BBC. By the time Harben moved from the BBC to host cooking programmes on the newly established (in 1955) Independent Television (known as ITV) his celebrity was fixed to such an extent that the accompanying pamphlet for his *The Grammar of Cookery* series (TVTiP 2021) not only did not contain the phrase ‘The Television Cook’ or ‘The Television Chef’ on the cover, it did not bear his name at all; only a photograph of him in the television studio, tasting a sauce directly from the sauce boat. The pamphlet, and the series, was described by Harben (Bateman 1966, p. 9) as a reworking, and an update of his first book, *The Way To Cook* and contained information on the different methods of cooking, as before. Harben continued to develop links between his cooking and publishing enterprises. He created his own range of kitchenware, sold as Harbenware (Harbenware 1958). This brought him a greater income than his previous appearances on the BBC (Bateman 1966, p. 3). His range of kitchen equipment was marketed in a similar style and appearance as his cookbooks. Harben, despite joining the rival television network, continued to make occasional appearances on the BBC throughout the sixties (see BBC Genome 2023 for examples) before his death in 1970.

The uneasiness within the BBC about these publications and the potential clash with BBC policy is clear in the information from Harben’s BBC files (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks File 2b, 18 July 1951). Harben was about to publish the Odhams television cookery book (Harben 1951a). This led to queries from Mary Adams about its similarity to the television series; ‘I have seen advance notices and had certainly been asked if the book reproduced the substance of your television demonstrations.’ Harben responded that the idea perhaps originated from within the BBC, as ‘two or three years ago’ there had been an idea from the producer S.E. Reynolds to have a cookery book written by Harben, Robins and Patten, which

never materialised. The BBC, at that time, provided their 'blessing' to the book, and with a Foreword from Norman Collins (Controller of BBC Television 1947-1950), but 'the other two' (Robins and Patten) had 'not been interested'. Harben claimed that Odhams (the publisher) approached him for the project, and that he had first mentioned the three-way collaboration, but Robins and Patten had not been interested (ibid., 24 July 1951).

Marguerite Patten published over one hundred and fifty cookbooks; ten between 1947 and 1960 (British Library 2021) when she initially appeared on BBC television. During the 1960s, Patten produced for almost fifty books, just short of fifty-five by the end of the 1970s. In the decades that followed over forty additional cookbooks were published under her name. Patten, who described herself as a 'home economist' and 'a housewife' (Bateman 1966, p. 18), began her broadcasting career in 1946 with a radio talk discussing the correct method for making a sponge cake using only one egg (Radio Times 1946b), on *Woman's Hour* (Patten 1992, p. 39). She came to the BBC with a background in food demonstration, joining the British Government's Ministry of Food in 1942 (Patten 1992, p. 28) as a senior demonstrator (Bateman 1966, p. 20). Her first demonstration on television was in November 1947 as part of the *Designed for Women* afternoon magazine programme, where she made 'easy doughnuts' without yeast and with dried eggs (Patten 1992, p. 40). Patten continued to cook on television intermittently until 2009, when her final demonstration was broadcast as part of the *Ready Steady Cook* programme on the BBC, where Patten featured alongside Prue Leith in a special 'cookery writers' episode, underlining her legacy as a television cooking presenter (BBC Genome 2023).

Patten described her books during the early 1950s as lacking 'excitement' (Bateman 1966, p. 21), but these stressed her connection to television, in a similar way to those by Harben. Harben was able to produce books with a more entertaining slant, matching his on-screen persona, Patten was more constricted by her own role and on-screen persona as a housewife and supportive friend, encouraging basic cooking and other skills for housewives. Still, the cover of her 1955 book *Learning to Cook* prominently displayed the strapline 'Famous TV Expert shows how to cook simple appetising meals' (Patten 1955). The blurb on the back declared that 'Millions of housewives – particularly young 'newly

marrieds' – have blessed Marguerite Patten's TV demonstrations.' The only photograph of Patten is also on the rear of the book, is taken in the BBC studio, showing her demonstrating a recipe while looking directly down the camera lens, the camera itself visible in the picture. On publicity versions of this photograph used by the BBC (BBC Photo Sales 2023), the BBC logo is clearly visible on the camera. For the book, this was removed and replaced with a statement that 'BBC Television viewers pressed her to write this book'. The book had not been endorsed by the BBC, as per their policy at the time.

Similarly, her publication *Cooking for Bachelors and Bachelor Girls* (Patten 1958) includes the information 'in 1945 Marguerite Patten started broadcasting [for clarity, on radio], and was the 'resident cook' in the first television *Women's Magazine Programme* in 1947. Since then, she has been continually demonstrating cookery on TV'. The book otherwise does not mention the BBC, as the book was not officially endorsed by the BBC. Later, Patten's cookbooks sold more than a million copies a year (Bateman 1966). Only one was published in connection with the BBC, a pamphlet containing notes from some of her cookery talks on television for the *Mainly for Women* programme on which Patten hosted the *Cookery Club* (Radio Times 1956a) broadcast between 1957 and 1959 (Patten 1959).

Changes to television and cookbooks from 1955 onwards

Until 1955, the BBC maintained a monopoly as the sole broadcaster in Britain, then the Independent Television (ITV) was established and acted as a rival. ITV followed the model of the commercialisation[11] (although restricted to six minutes of advertising per hour of programming) that the BBC had so far resisted (Holmes 2008). They showed advertisements before, after and within programmes, as well as featuring recommended products on screen, endorsed by the programmes and their presenters, which could be purchased. ITV made profits and helped to advance consumer spending, as well as providing programming distinct from the public service broadcasting of the BBC (Dickason 2000 p.32). Often on the BBC, great care was taken to disguise or obliterate product names and logos for items shown on screen.

[11] seen by some contemporary commentators as an Americanisation of broadcasting – see Camporesi 1994

After 1955 the connection between cookbooks and the presenters on screen became stronger. I previously discussed at the work of Cradock, considering in detail at her contribution to linking her on-screen food and cookery demonstrations with domestic cookbooks, directly associated and explicitly published and marketed to act as connections to her television programmes, and also as an essential part of the many series she broadcast in those twenty years between 1955 and 1975 (Geddes 2017), which remains important to mention here without repetition. During the 1960s, with the spectacular *Kitchen Magic* series, when Cradock was a constant topic of discussion within the BBC, her 'style' often caused conflicts and differences of opinion. She was described in memos as complicated to deal with, but that 'her gimmick of cooking in an evening dress without any protective clothing is amusing' and that she was 'good value really (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt3, 16 October 1963). In 1965, Cradock had submitted an idea for an 'adult education programme' more of a 'straight teaching programme on basic cookery' with the addition of an accompanying book (ibid., 15 May 1964).

Summary

In this chapter, I have considered the key elements of Bonners characteristics of 'Ordinary Television' as a framework to explore the files of the BBC Written Archives for early television food and cookery programmes in Britain. The files show that the aspects of ordinariness which Bonner outlined were clearly part of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain. Food and cooking programmes formed part of the everyday television schedules and daily routines for audiences, which were mainly (but not exclusively) housewives. Some of these ordinary viewers were included as part of the programmes, both on screen cooking in the studio, and in features which contained their input, recipes and feedback. The changing nature of the perception of an 'ordinary' viewer has been outlined, using examples from: the 1930s with Boulestin; the 1940s and 1950s with Patten, Harben and Robins; and the 1960s and 1970s with Skinner and Cradock.

It is clear that the BBC had a desire to create food and cooking programmes which were 'the opposite of special' to appeal to ordinary and everyday audiences, emphasising the ordinariness of food and cooking in their viewers lives. This

'mundane and domestic' focus of the programmes was followed through with the creation of instructional cookbooks, linking the television food and cookery programmes viewed in the home to the additionally ordinary domesticity of instructional cooking. This changed with Cradock, and the success of her series which followed, although she too wanted to be seen as an educator in the mid 1960s.

Conclusion

The aspects of 'ordinary' television which Bonner referred to, formed an assumption of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain is present in the archive materials of the BBC. The next chapter takes a similar approach to look for latent and manifest information to interrogate aspects of spectacular television, using the characteristics suggested by Wheatley, in her study of *Spectacular Television*, and how they were featured in the same early food and cooking television programmes in Britain.

Chapter 6: Spectacular and Entertaining (Findings)

Introduction

In reviews of literature focused on early television food and cooking programmes in Britain, the majority of scholars either assumed or demonstrated elements of ordinariness in the programmes now 'lost' to the archives. There were some indications of 'other' programmes which were perhaps far from our understanding of ordinary. These suggestions of a more 'spectacular' television, merely from a short description, are also present on the factual information of the timeline in Chapter Four. This chapter analyses the same set of archival files and information as for the previous, 'ordinary' television focused, chapter (see Appendix A).

This time, the archival materials have been coded and decoded against the characteristics of *Spectacular Television* discussed by Wheatley (2016). Wheatley primarily examines the 1950s for her evidence, which she strongly argues was the period of 'spectacular' television. However, these characteristics have been mapped as a framework to investigate the entire period of this thesis – from the 1930s to the 1970s.

Overview

In her exploration of televisual pleasure, *Spectacular Television* (Wheatley 2016), Helen Wheatley considers the visual impact of television from its earliest days, illustrating how television offered spectacle and diverse forms of visual pleasure. Her 'history of television as a spectacular attraction' forms the basis of this chapter where 'spectacular' and 'entertaining' aspects of early television food and cooking programmes are considered, providing a contrast to the previous chapter and its focus on the 'ordinary.' Wheatley's characteristics of spectacular television are taken as reference points to discuss different aspects of early television food and cooking programmes, and their presenters, and to demonstrate that in addition to being 'ordinary' and 'mundane' these early television cooking programmes were also 'spectacular and 'entertaining'. In chapter five, I have already analysed early

television food and cooking programmes, their innovations, and innovators, and how the BBC (in particular) sought to constrain and control their development. Thus, firstly it must be considered, what does it mean to characterise such programmes as 'spectacular.'

Wheatley first calls 'spectacular' television something which: has been designed to be stared at (p. 1); are visually striking performances or displays (ibid.); has visual impact (ibid.); and is visually striking (ibid.). To link food and cookery programmes, and early food and cookery programmes especially, to 'spectacular' television is not in itself new in television history, after all Wheatley herself makes reference to them in her book, albeit briefly (ibid., p. 40). Instead the unique contribution I give here is the application of Wheatley's thoughts and research more broadly to an in-depth examination of archive materials from the BBC Written Archives which relate to the early television food and cooking programmes, and their presenters, as 'spectacular' television.

I draw also on Holmes's *Entertaining Television* (Holmes 2008), which considers the BBC and popular television culture of the 1950s, challenging previous views that early British television was 'staid, elitist and paternalistic' particularly when compared to the commercial television from 1955. Holmes makes less reference to early television food and cooking as part of her exploration of entertainment, but it is useful to examine these from the same perspectives. The prevailing assumption in previous work around early television food and cooking is that it was perhaps staid and 'ordinary'. Holmes' characteristics are used as a framework to examine: early television food and cookery programmes 'well-liked and popular' (such as competitive programmes, quizzes and programmes considered to be light entertainment) (p. 1); programmes which 'connect the past to the present' (p. 6); the development of 'celebrity' (p. 13); and programmes with ' mass appeal', beyond the expected audiences of housewives, to include men, children, and an expanded notion of British culture (p.11).

As previously outlined, some recent scholars (e.g., Weber and Gillis) argue that *all* early television was 'spectacular'; new, unexpected, and seen for the first time by audiences who talked of it, shared their thoughts on it, and looked forward to watching more. My findings here are based mainly on information found in the BBC

Written Archives, supplemented with other sources, such as newspapers, and crucially, the emerging television 'fan magazines' from the 1950s, to establish audience reaction and feedback.

Spectacle – a pleasure to watch

As we have seen, Philip Harben began to cook on television in 1946, having successfully given talks on BBC radio for three years previously. Harben submitted a typed page of dry and succinct suggestions which he thought 'might possibly make television subjects' to the BBC production team, ranging from noodles and ravioli, mashed potatoes and demonstrations of coffee making (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks1, 16 May 1946). Harben invited the television team to dinner at his home to discuss ideas further (ibid.). In May 1946, Harben made an experimental broadcast (similar to an audition) and was paid five guineas for this (ibid., 21 May 1946). Initial, 'real', on-screen demonstrations were paid at fifteen guineas, which included all ingredients and materials required (ibid., 3 September 1946). Harben is seen in a photograph from an early broadcast (Radio Times 1946d) dressed in a short and tie, with a butcher's apron tied round his waist. His short sleeves are rolled up and he is explaining a dish to Winifred Shatter, an announcer at the BBC, in a kitchen setting with a brick effect background and a table full of food and cookery equipment. Harben's programme was broadcast in the evening, at 9:35pm, already setting him apart from the 'afternoon' programmes on food and cookery broadcast by the BBC. Production notes outline that Harben was asked to demonstrate *Making Bread in an Emergency* as his next assignment, followed by (a suggestion from a viewer) the technique of bottling fruit (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks1, 9 August 1946). Harben himself did not think the bottling would make a suitable broadcast (ibid., 16 August 1946); reasoning that people who live in towns have little opportunity to practice it, so assuming that most television viewers were themselves urban dwellers, suggesting he understood the spectacles which the audiences would have preferred to see. He also admitted to knowing very little about the process (ibid.).

Harben devised detailed programme outlines for his demonstrations; including music and announcement scripts. For other people's demonstrations, this was taken care of by the production team. Harben devised his own 'usual signature

tune’ (ibid., 8 November 1946) – which was Hansel and Gretel – and an end-tune of *Fingals Cave* by Mendelsohn. For musical suggestions as inserts throughout the programme, Harben proposed topical tunes, such as Tu Verras Montmortre for a piece on French cooking. Hansel and Gretel was also used as an end tune at other times (ibid., 5 November 1947). The announcement he wrote for himself in 1946 was typically bold, self-congratulatory and spectacular;

> “Before he left for his 1000-mile tour of France, Belgium, and Holland, to study food conditions, Philip Harben promised viewers that he would bring them back a new dish. So, tonight, Mr Harben will show you how to make a dish which is found in a little Paris restaurant, which has been famous to many generations of gourmets.” (ibid., 8 November 1946).

Harben sent notes to the producers to complain that the BBC’s own choice of music was at times ‘not necessarily appropriate’ simply because it happened to mention the name of the dish being prepared. He cited the Sugar Plum Fairy and Chicken Reel as examples, underlining that it was the ‘musical appropriateness which matters.’ (ibid., 5 November 1947). When Harben’s favourite Hansel and Gretel tune was later taken out of his programmes, he appealed to the BBC for its return, saying he found it both ‘delightful and appropriate’ (ibid., 12 February 1948).

These announcements served to underline Harbens credentials as a gourmet and expert on food; at least how he would like to be perceived. They tied in neatly the desire from the BBC to appeal to the more spectacular interests of the ordinary viewer at home, mentioning that he has been requested to make this dish, and alluding to the hope that viewers unable to travel to eat and explore as he could be inspired by and aspire to make it. Harben understood the theatrical nature of broadcasts from his own family background, his own professional career and from working previously with the BBC. The BBC seemed to find this useful, marking Harben out as distinct from other ‘performers’ in providing a ready developed food and cookery demonstration which only required them to implement; believing him to be not only a personality, but also ‘good value’ (ibid., 27 May 1948).

Harben seemed aware that he had to design his evening programmes, for which he had many ideas, to be more spectacular and pleasurable to watch, than any

afternoon broadcasts. His ideas 'for more entertaining production' included an evening programme about food poisoning and hygiene, programmes focused on *Dishes from Overseas* – which eventually became Continental Cookery - *Cookery for Men* – which was accepted (and is discussed in more detail later), and some special programmes on *Festive Cookery* (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks 2a, 11 August 1950).

Harben was asked to send the BBC producers a list of ideas for 'evening programmes' in 1952 (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks File 2c, 21 February 1952) – some of which (such as slow cooking meat, Yorkshire Puddings under a joint and Preparing and Dressing a Salad) were marked as 'not recommended' by producer S.E. Reynolds (ibid.). Others, such as Omelettes, Soufflés, Swiss Rolls and serving Tea and Coffee appeared to be suitable 'generally' for fifteen-minute programmes (ibid., 22 February 1952). Later, the ideas were refined to two distinct kinds of programmes by S.E. Reynolds, *Dishes from Overseas* and *Cookery for Men* (ibid., 11 March 1952). It was suggested that Harben interview experts on various overseas dishes but warned that he was not a 'clever' interviewer, especially not when doing so while cooking. The 'cookery for men' idea was favoured by Harben himself, as it gave greater scope for him career-wise, with possible links to books. A detailed synopsis was requested by the programme controller (ibid., 6 August 1952). A request was made to see how this programme could be 'jazzed up' to encourage more men to be brought in to the BBC as viewers (ibid.).

Harben proposed a series on *Continental Cookery* (ibid., 6 October 1953) where he would tour Europe in search of exceptional dishes, beginning with France (ibid); this was accepted. Initially, the promotional material announced that Harben would 'pay a visit to France' but producers changed this to be 'Harben brings from France… La Soupe à l'Oignon' to clarify that he was not actually broadcasting from France, but instead the studio as usual (ibid., 7 October 1953). The viewer reaction index report was favourable, around the average for Harben, although a little lower than previous programmes. Some viewers objected to the use of cheese and onion in a recipe; they personally detested those ingredients. Most viewers were pleased to see something 'entirely new' on screen (ibid., 11 November 1955). Approval (from the reaction reports) was given for Harben's use of three simple ingredients and for the variations on the recipe he was able to give. One family tried it and found it very satisfying for supper, while another (a teacher) said he would make it

for his wife, who happened to be out at the time of the broadcast. A minority found Harben to be 'fussy' and 'talkative'. Others mentioned his warm and infectious enthusiasm, his mouth-watering descriptions and 'dramatic little gestures' which marked him out as a 'real artist', making the whole process vivid; viewers believed they could smell and taste the food, leaving them 'positively drooling' at the end (ibid.).

Entertaining Television

Only slowly after the war did the BBC begin to connect and categorise food and cooking with entertainment again, as they had done with Boulestin. The evidence for this is the different way which 'entertainment' departments of the BBC commissioned, and paid, the presenters who were asked to appear in purely 'entertainment' programmes.

Zena Skinner had 'Broadcaster and TV Demonstrator' as the description in bold at the top of her headed paper, which she used to write letters to the BBC (BBC WAC Skinner RCont15, 12 November 1977). Clearly proud of her role, she was keen to promote herself as 'well-known television face.' Zena Skinner appeared as a guest on the panel food-based game show *Know Your Onions* (Radio Times 1966), paid forty guineas for her appearances, plus travel expenses of six guineas to attend filming in Birmingham, considerably higher than her fee for food and cookery programmes. In 1969, her fee increased; broken down, as an appearance fee of thirty-five guineas, twenty guineas for preparatory work, travel of five guineas, an overnight stay of three guineas.

Skinner appeared on the *Generation Game* with presenter Bruce Forsyth, in 1972 (Radio Times 1972d), to demonstrate pancake making for a game, and to act as a judge. For this, Skinner was paid thirty-five pounds, a fee of 5 guineas for travel costs (BBC WAC Skinner TVArt5, 2 October 1972). For comparison, for a radio broadcast on the BBC World Service in 1975, Skinner was paid fifteen pounds for an interview and a demonstration of pancake making. Later, in 1979, Skinner was paid almost one hundred pounds including equipment and ingredients for an appearance on the *Innes Book of Records* 14th Sep 1979 (ibid., 3 September 1979),

plus forty-one pounds for mileage. Skinner was also a regular guest on the Children's television programme, *Crackerjack* (BBC 2023).

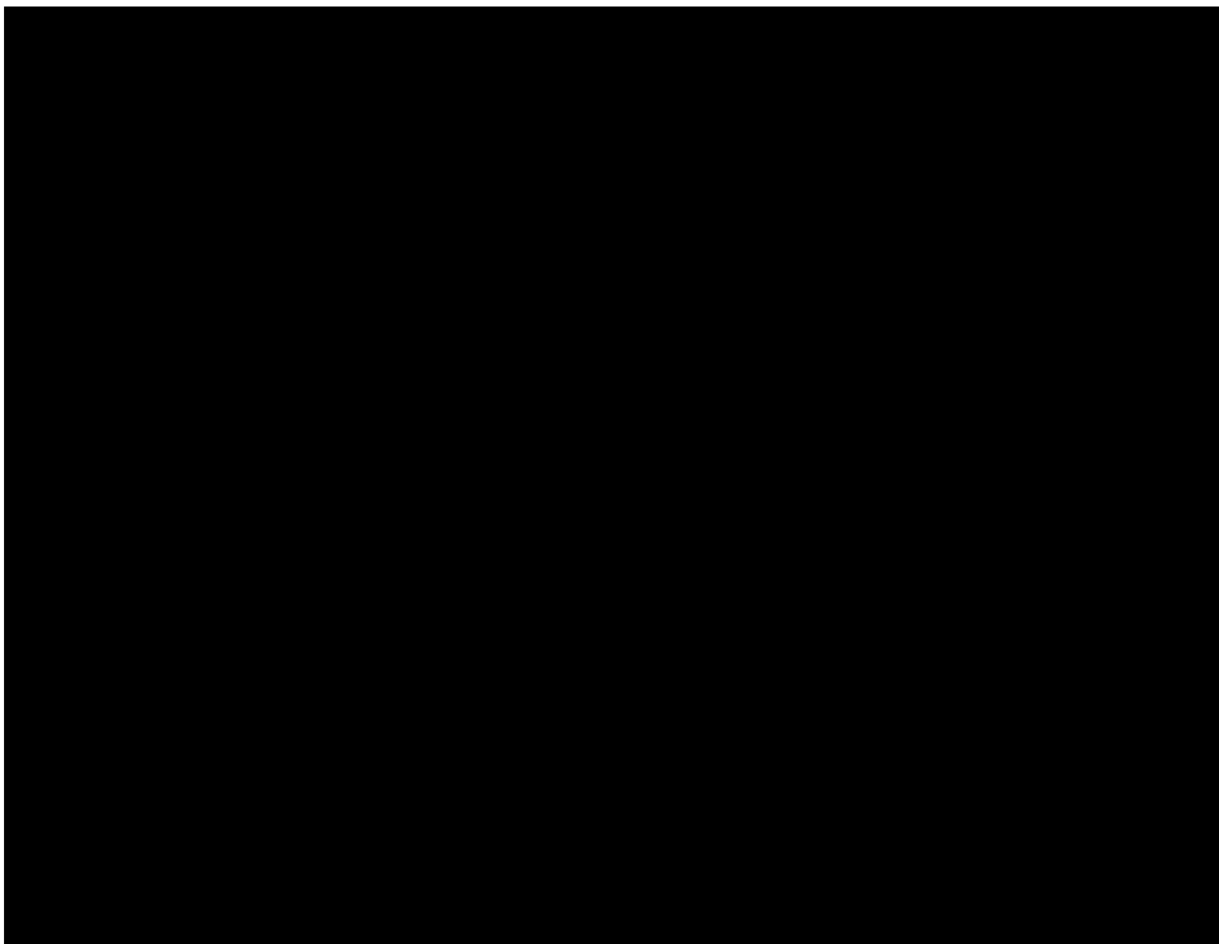

Figure 8. Zena Skinner, sitting front left, in a publicity shot from Know Your Onions, alongside Nicholas Parsons at the top, and Judith Chalmers to his right. Zena Skinner Personal Archive

The BBC had a request for Philip Harben to appear on *Picture Page* in a Burns Night skit in January 1952, making fun of television and cooking, giving facts and figures about the origins of Haggis. Harben was concerned about the viewer reactions and 'repercussions' (BBC WAC Harben TV Talks 2c, 21 January 1952) and so turned it down. Around the same time, Harben was planning his series, initially pitched as 'Regional and National Dishes' (ibid., 17 January 1952) which included a programme on Haggis.

During the 1970s, Cradock appeared on *The Generation Game* (Radio Times 1971a), in the Great Omelette Race Challenge, and then again in 1973 as a 'surprise guest' (Radio Times 1973b; IMDB 1973) challenging contestants to make large mince pies, as she herself had done in her food and cookery series. She also

featured on programmes such as *What's My Line* in 1974 (IMDB 1974) and *Celebrity Squares* in 1976 (ibid.). However, Skinner's appearances on *Know Your Onions*, which became regular, firmly connected 'food' and 'entertainment' in one programme. This development in some ways imitated the path broken by Boulestin in 1939 with *Bee for Boulestin*.

Designed to be stared at

In the present century, scholars such as Moseley and Charlesworth have studied the representation of 'traditional' domesticity in early television food and cookery, with a particular focus on Marguerite Patten. This in part led to the spread of the assumption that all early television food and cooking programmes in Britain had a so-called 'ordinary' focus. I would like in this next section to focus on 'alternative' representations of domesticity, gender roles and lifestyles, outlining queer domesticities, 'gender-bending' representations and 'other' presentations on screen from the early years of television food and cooking programmes in Britain. The aim here is not to dismiss the previous focus on the predominantly 'expected' female domesticity, particularly in the 1950s 'housewife' period, but rather to add to it, and so demonstrate a more diverse, experimental, and 'spectacular' history of programmes which were designed to be stared at and had visual impact through unusual, striking and unexpected performances, than that which has currently been recorded.

The pre-war BBC television appears to have been a liberal organisation than the radio, perhaps due to the informal and 'unimportant' culture of the fledgling television service, compared to the established and family-orientated radio service (Wyndham Goldie 1977). BBC television was of course inherently 'theatrical'. The television service based at Alexandra Palace attracted those from theatrical backgrounds keen to 'perform' on television; television itself was 'culturally dependent' on theatre (Hochscherf 2010). Although Lord Reith (Director General of the BBC 1927-1938) was reported to have high moral standards (Spann 1950), he himself was the subject of rumours about homosexual affairs based on letters found in the BBC Written Archives[12]. Homosexuality was at the time still a crime,

[12] https://www.bbc.com/historyofthebbc/research/john-reith/reith-in-love/

and there is no suggestion that it was ‘encouraged’ or tolerated within the BBC but, inevitably, some staff and some performers were openly gay. As mentioned, in 1938, Douglas Byng became the first documented female impersonator to appear on television, as entertainment. In the 1950s, the topic of homosexuality was discussed on the BBC, following proposed changes to the law (although these took ten years to materialise). Terry Sanderson, in his important ‘treatment of Male and Female Homosexuality in the British Media’, *Mediawatch* (Sanderson 1995), locates 1954 as the first-time homosexuality was openly discussed on the BBC; later still (1957) a programme was devoted to the subject, on Granada/ITV. There is some research on the portrayal of homosexual people in television broadcasts (see Bourne 2019), however, the archives I have accessed at the BBC Written Archive Centre show that the first appearance of a real-life homosexual, and indeed a real-life homosexual couple, broadcasting as a reflection of their own domestic life, pre-dates all these other ‘firsts’.

Boulestin was homosexual and led an open homosexual life with his partner, Alec Henry Adair. Prior to appearing on the BBC, first on radio (Radio Times 1927) and then television (Radio Times 1937a). He had written a homosexual novel, under the pseudonym of Sidney Place (Place 1911) and had crafted homosexual stories for the French literary ‘factory’ of Willy and Colette (see Colette 1900; and 1904 as examples). Boulestin himself appeared as a homosexual character in books by Willy and Colette. In *En Bombe* (Willy 1904), which featured posed photographs to illustrate the words. Boulestin is prominent. The Restaurant Boulestin was a well-known (although not exclusively) hang-out for homosexuals, enabling safe interactions between same-sex individuals, such as dining and conversation, in public without fear of reproach (Bryant 2020). It would be incredibly unlikely if the BBC generally, and the producers of television food and cooking programmes more particularly, were unaware of his sexuality, and indeed his domestic situation. The files at the BBC Written Archive Centre make no mention of his sexuality, explicitly, but do suggest that the BBC neither cared or were concerned about his appearances on television, with and without his partner by his side, at times addressing the pair clearly as partners.

Boulestin’s partner was known professionally as both A H Adair and Robin Adair, acted as Boulestin’s secretary, corresponding with the BBC for Boulestin’s

television work. Written on headed paper from the address which they shared (although were careful not to disclose on Census returns – see Census England 1921), Adair responded to the BBC, following enquiries to Boulestin about television broadcasts, to negotiate terms (BBC WAC Boulestin TV Tal1, 7 December 1936). A second letter outlined the terms Boulestin would prefer and suggested a visit to the Alexandra Palace studios to have a look around. Adair added as a P.S. to this letter; 'would you be able to lunch with us and show us the way to Alexandra Palace afterwards?' indicating that they came as a pair (ibid, 8 December 1936). They met at the Restaurant Boulestin (ibid., 9 December 1936) as discussed, recorded in a letter afterwards summarising the agreements. This letter described the lunch as 'excellent' (ibid., 14 December 1936) and otherwise remained professional, followed by contracts for the first five programmes (ibid., 21 December 1936a). These contracts were of course in the name of Boulestin only (ibid., 18 December 1936). An internal memo confirming arrangements refer to Adair's relationship to Boulestin as 'his representative' (ibid., 21 December 1936b); further letters describe him as the negotiator for arrangements (ibid., 5 January 1937a). Following Cecil Lewis (founding executive of the BBC and Producer of Television Programmes 1936-1937) leaving the BBC to work for the Paramount Film Corporation in Hollywood (ibid., 5 January 1937b), and ahead of the scheduled food and cookery programmes, Mary Adams took charge of the broadcasts with Boulestin. Boulestin was reminded that he would know her from his talks on radio (ibid.). Lewis told Boulestin that Adams was 'coming fresh' to television and she would be 'at first under a small handicap', flattering Boulestin by asking him to assist her with her transition (ibid.).

A letter from Adair to the BBC in connection with a radio broadcast in 1932 had a note attached to it which asked for correspondence from Adair to be placed in Marcel Boulestin's file, explaining that Adair was 'his secretary, and we're not likely to have much correspondence with Adair' (BBC WAC Boulestin RCont1, 17 November 1932). Adair wrote letters in his own name to confirm arrangements and to make additional queries, including invites to luncheon. He explained in one letter to Miss Wace in 1935 that 'We are always in about 12:30 in the morning. By the way, we have moved from Portisdown Road, above is the new address and telephone number (Holmefield Court)' (ibid., 21 February 1935). Miss Wace sent a

letter, as was the etiquette at the time, confirming that she had ‘pleasure’ in lunching with them ‘the other day’ (ibid., 7 March 1935).

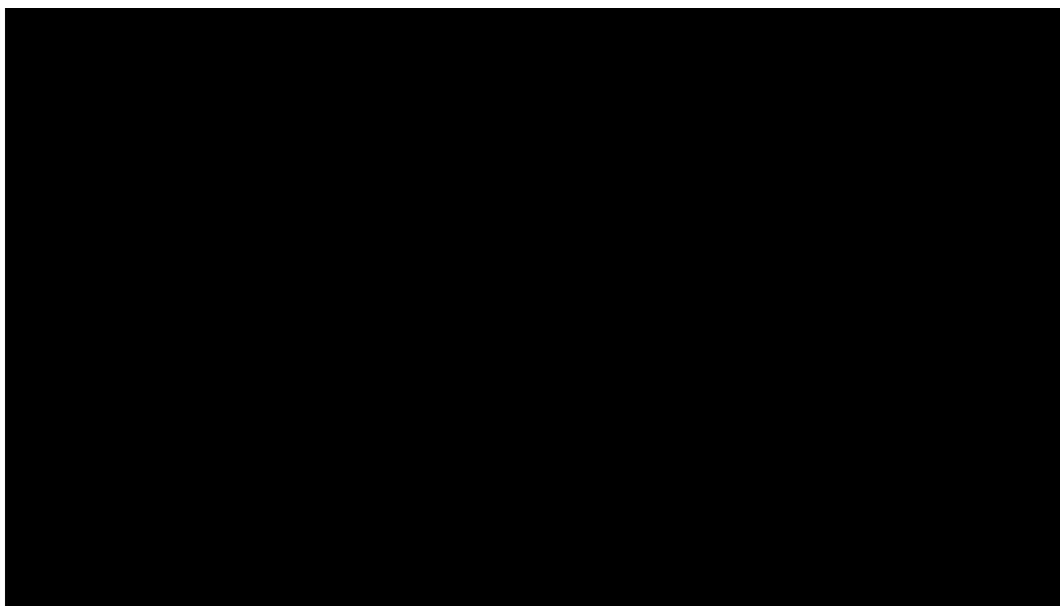

Figure 9. X Marcel Boulestin, underlining his status and celebrity on a postcard written by Adair to the BBC, WAC file

When timings were required to be changed for one of the first series of broadcasts, Adams wrote to outline the changes (BBC WAC Boulestin TVTal1, 1 February 1937), and often received a note back from Adair written on a postcard from the X M Boulestin School of French Cookery Simple and Advanced at which Adair and Boulestin demonstrated together (ibid., 3 February 1937) (see Figure 9). Letters addressed directly to Boulestin were answered by Adair, ‘Monsieur Boulestin has asked me to thank you for your letter…’ (ibid., 22 February 1937) - without any explanation as to Adair’s role. Adair once asked Adams if she could ‘possibly get away for luncheon one day soon’ to ‘sample the cooking’ with them (ibid.). Adams responded favourably, although she clarified that lunchtime was ‘difficult’ for her to get away from Alexandra Palace (ibid., 23 February 1937). Adair persisted with his invite, responding with correspondence confirming arrangement for Boulestin to broadcast; with the line ‘we do hope you can manage to get down to luncheon’ again indicating the invite was from them both, and not simply Boulestin (ibid., 25 February 1937).

When Boulestin was approached, by letter, about an appearance on another television programme described as ‘light entertainment’ (ibid., 15 March 1937), Adair responded and signed it as ‘Private Secretary’ (ibid., 16 March 1937). The

request also prompted Boulestin himself to reply from his holiday home in France (ibid., 3 April 1937). Adair wrote to Adams afterwards to say that 'we returned safely last week from our little holiday which was a great success, and we remain in London til the end of July' (ibid., 14 April 1937). He reminds Adams to come and 'dine one night' with them, clarifying that 'we don't mind in the least' dining late as especially 'during Opera season it is the only peaceful time in the Restaurant' (ibid.). Adams acknowledged the request to 'dine with you and Monsieur Boulestin' (ibid., 21 April 1937). As a further example, In January 1938 a letter arrived from Adams inviting Boulestin and 'yourself' [Adair] up to Alexandra Palace to meet Mr Middleton about a joint programme on vegetables (BBC WAC Boulestin TVArt1 File2, 17 January 1938).

For the 1939 programme, *Bee for Boulestin*, Boulestin alone was contracted to 'act as MC, to provide food and to invite the guests' (BBC WAC Boulestin T32/68, 5 May 1939a). However, the letter from Mary Adams to Boulestin about the programmes reassures that 'You and Robin will think of all the things you want to do, and we'll get together to discuss it' (ibid., 5 May 1939b) so Adams was aware that they would be both be involved. The suggested listing prepared for the *Radio Times* read 'With the help of Marcel Boulestin, Robin Adair and a company of well-known gourmets' (ibid., 21 May 1939a). In the outline sent to Adams, Adair made it clear that the ideas came from them both, including phrases such as 'we suggest…' and 'will you let us know…?' (ibid., 14 May 1939) while in the script treatment this is further underlined by phrases such as 'will you leave this to us?', 'we will have a good well-known one', 'we think cigarettes more practical', 'we think Champagne..', 'we think it would not be a very fair test to have stale coffee heated up' and 'we think the jokes would be better…' (ibid.).

Adams requested a buffet supper (at the expense of the BBC) following the programme, with Adair listed as one of the guests along with the others from the broadcast (ibid., 16 May 1939c). Though Adair is not listed among the teams taking part (ibid., 16 May 1939d) nor on the list of contracted expenses and fees for the programme (ibid., 16 May 1939e). Each guest was paid two guineas (ibid.) Boulestin was paid eighteen guineas (ibid., 19 May 1939). In addition, a chef (named Bronson) 'to be supplied from the Restaurant Boulestin' was budgeted with a fee of one guinea, plus cars to and from the studio, to 'help cook and serve in

the studio' (ibid., 18 May 1939). The script treatment shows that Adair was given the role of making 'cocktails in a close-up position' (ibid., May 1939). The Programmes as Broadcast show that Adair was the 'score-keeper' (ibid., 24 May 1939a). The fee to Bronson was later increased to two guineas in recognition of the work being greater than Adams had anticipated (ibid., 24 May 1939b). A later contract amendment increased Boulestin's fee to twenty guineas with the name Robin Adair in brackets, suggesting that the additional two guineas had been allocated for his performance (ibid., 21 May 1939b). This is the only contract agreement in the archive files to have added Adair's name, however it is an indication that the BBC were aware that he was connected to Boulestin, as any spouse or partner may be, but not contracted as a separate performer, and therefore not requiring a separate payment.

Adair appeared only once in the listings of the *Radio Times* alongside Boulestin, for the *Bee for Boulestin* programme (Radio Times 1939b), but did go on to make several solo appearances on radio only following the death of Boulestin. In 1945, he gave a talk for *Woman's Page* about his 'restaurant' he established in an internment camp (Radio Times 1945) when he was captured during the war, while on holiday in France with Boulestin. He would later give short contributions to *Woman's Hour* on, for example: cooking vegetables (Radio Times 1947e); household problems (Radio Times 1947g); culinary triumphs (Radio Times 1954a); Christmas fare (Radio Times 1954b); Hints for Housewives (Radio Times 1955a); cooking 'Pancakes Again' (Radio Times 1955c); giving a dinner party 'on your own' (Radio Times 1955d); the art of making omelettes (Radio Times 1955g); 'What shall we have for dinner tomorrow?' (Radio Times 1955h); and suggestions for stuffing for a turkey (Radio Times 1955i). All these topics had been previously covered by Boulestin on television.

In one letter, written on August 20th, 1938, from France, Adair referred to 'pottering in our garden' (BBC WAC Boulestin TVArt1 File2, 20 August 1938). In another letter outlining ideas for a Christmas broadcast Adair wrote 'we have one idea… but will tell you when we meet' (ibid.), and changed his sign-off to the more informal 'Robin' (ibid). In a later response, (ibid., 9 February 1939) Adams began by saying 'Dear Marcel, (and Robin), what a saint, or rather saints you are…' suggesting she thought of them as a double and again in another reply (from

Adams to Adair addressed to him at the Boulestin home) 'you will be glad, I know, to hear that I have managed to make the suggested adjustment with regard to your dates' (ibid., 12 May 1939).

The appearance by Boulestin and Adair indicates a more spectacular than ordinary representation of gender and domesticity, and they were not the only presenters of early television food and cookery programmes in which this happened. I discuss these in this next section: Harben appeared with his wife and daughter; Cradock's 'act' initially featured her husband as an assistant, Both Harben and Cradock had complicated 'images' and personas (discussed later), and this section considers those with reference to gender roles as displayed in early television food and cooking programmes in Britain. I begin with Cradock.

Visually Striking - Cradock – image and gender roles

In 1954, Cradock wrote to the BBC with, essentially, a manifesto of what she would like to achieve on television, her (not quite yet) husband, Johnnie, was the double-act (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt1, January 1954). Headed as 'Bon Viveur Cooks in Evening Dress' the document was typed by Cradock, it outlined what they would do, how and why. Cradock proposed cooking in 'evening dress' to demonstrate that 'cooking is cleanly and a creative art and not a grubby chore'. This marks out her ideas as far from an ordinary food and cookery demonstration, more familiar to the BBC. Instead she imagined a 'visual fact' that both her ballgown and Johnnie's satin cuffed dinner jacket would remain unmarked after 'strenuous cooking sessions' which would not imply extravagance or cooking 'above the heads' of viewers. Cradock proposed that there should be an audience to watch them cook, which they would invite on the 'stage' to cook, linking some elements of ordinary television participation with their more 'spectacular' plan. They proposed that the beginner's dish would in the end be identical to Cradock's, demonstrating the art of cookery Cradock was able to 'teach.' Cradock outlined over twenty dishes which could be demonstrated in this way, and confirmed that they were able to adapt their 'superfluous spiel to current customers' to 'exact production and approach to TV audiences' (ibid.).

BBC management appeared to like the idea; Assistant Controller of Television Cecil Madden established that Philip Harben had ‘dropped out’ (ibid., 7 January 1954) of television, or more accurately the BBC, so now was the time to bring Cradock in. Others noted that she was ‘an awful person on the screen’ following an appearance on the BBC programme *Press Conference* where ‘Personalities who make the news face questions from the men who write the news’ produced by Grace Wyndham Goldie (ibid.). Others felt the Cradock’s together could be an effective ‘stunt’ (ibid., 22 March 1954) suggesting they would be ‘amusing and good’ (ibid., 29 March 1954). It was agreed that a trial programme should be made, complete with the suggested ballgown (ibid., 7 January 1954). However, after attending a stage performance, Doreen Stephens delayed things a little to allow them to ‘tighten up their demonstrations’ (ibid., 29 September 1954) aware that the reality of their performance was not quite as spectacular as they had promised, and required additional work to make it so. The press at the time referred to the Cradocks’ demonstrations as ‘an act’, with the title *Kitchen Magic* (ibid., 9 April 1954). Cradock was pictured in the press wearing a ballgown, with Johnnie in his dinner suit, rescuing a dish, ready to taste, from the oven in a well-stocked kitchen. To underline her commitment to appearing on television, spectacularly Cradock altered her nose with plastic surgery and sent Doreen Stephens photographs to show how ‘extremely pleased’ she was with it (ibid., 10 August 1954).

After the first of their *Kitchen Magic* programme (Radio Times 1955b), Cradock sent the BBC extracts of glowing letters she had received from an appreciative audience, insisting it had been ‘too marvellous’, that they had been ‘held so spellbound that we did not want to leave’ and encouraging others to reach a ‘big decision in my life – to keep my TV’. One viewer compared Cradock to Harben, the former they found ‘too long winded for cooking’ despite being ‘obviously a showman’ (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt1, 18 February 1955). Another said they always watched Harben, but that they had never been ‘seen anything I can afford or anything I would like to make’ stating that the Cradock show had made them want to cook everything (ibid.). All the letters asked for the recipes. Later memos showed that Stephens was having ‘considerable difficulty’ with Cradock who ‘seems not able to appreciate the BBC point of view’ (ibid., 14 November 1955) – suggesting instead that they be dropped in favour of ‘keeping matters straight’ (ibid.) – a more ‘ordinary’ approach as opposed to featuring them in more

‘spectacular’ evening programmes. In 1958, Cradock wrote to the BBC to outline the items she would arrange to bring into the studio (essentially everything) for her programmes (BBC WAC Cradock TVART1, 16 June 1958); a pattern continued throughout her career.

Doreen Stephens, producer, found herself to be ‘slightly disappointed’ in their ‘show’ expecting them to be ‘better than they were’ with one or two ‘irritating mannerisms’ despite being correct in their methods and fool-proof, she felt their cookery was ‘trick cookery’ (ibid., 6 April 1955). The Cradocks proposed a second episode of *Kitchen Magic* – subtitled *We’re Frying Tonight* – and submitted their ‘schedule’ (ibid., 29 July 1955) which included working times for each recipe segment, in minutes and seconds, with thoughts for garnishes should any extra seconds become available in the broadcast.

This was not the Cradock’s first attempt to introduce the ‘spectacular’ to early food and cooking programmes. In 1956, Cradock planned a huge food and cookery spectacular in the shape of a demonstration at the Royal Albert Hall in London, linked to the work of the great chef Escoffier (ibid., 19 June 1956, but also shamelessly an opportunity to showcase herself and Johnnie in front of a large audience, including many celebrities (ibid., 18 June 1956) in a spectacular setting. The two-hour performance was offered to the BBC as an outside broadcast (ibid.), where Fanny and Johnnie would present two ‘acts’ – the first a Christmas Dinner ‘performance’ using uncovered recipes from Escoffier’s archives, which they hoped would garner a great deal of publicity (ibid.). The second half would be an entertaining ‘scene’ (ibid), later also described as a ‘comedy show’ (ibid., 18 September 1956), devised by the Cradock’s where they played patrons of a French bistro which attracted an international clientele, preparing dishes from around the world, culminating in the ‘the most spectacular dish of all’ (ibid) the towering Croquembouche. Cradock stressed her ability to work to ‘split second timing’ during any broadcast or performance, which she hoped would be a hook for the BBC to accept the invitation. The opportunity was ‘agreed in principle’ by the BBC (ibid., 22 June 1956), although Doreen Stephens wrote to limit expectations that the BBC envisaged a quarter of an hour segment rather than the full two hours (ibid). The Cradock’s emphasised the segments which she felt would be ‘visually

most effective' (ibid., 18 September 1956), as well as noting the evening timings which would enable this to happen.

For this broadcast, a detailed script with meticulous timings was indeed drawn up, including an exciting announcement that the BBC would be joining the Cradocks at the Royal Albert Hall, and commentary which would let the audience at home know that the performance was live, underlining the broadcast as a 'must-see' event. The commentary stated 'we have arrived just in time to see…' excitedly asking the audience to join the spectacular. The script showed camera positions and directions, where close-ups of the Cradocks were required. The announcement at the end suggested 'there are lots more wonderful things to come, but unfortunately we cannot stay any longer' before the transmission was drawn to a halt (ibid., 6 December 1956). After the broadcast, Cradock wrote to the BBC to congratulate them on the 'splendid way' they coped with what was 'clearly a madhouse making many difficulties for you and your team' but underlining that both her and Johnnie had greatly enjoyed working with them on it (ibid., 14 December 1956).

Cradock had ideas which were deemed to be too spectacular for television at the time. In 1955, they submitted a 16mm colour film home-movie footage from a recent holiday in Naples, with scenes of local food, live volcanoes, local people, the ruins of Pompeii and other ruins, fishing villages and craftspeople making ceramics. They proposed a travel programme which would be introduced by them, using the footage as a studio backdrop for them to prepare food in front of, to look as if they were on location (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt1, 19 September 1955). Stephens had to admit in a memo that 'there is no doubt that their cookery act is popular' (ibid., 18 March 1957). Another idea was to offer an outside broadcast programme to the BBC following them as they transformed their entire house, a large old Georgian dwelling in Blackheath, and area which they thought would 'soon be a residential area again' (ibid., 16 September 1958). They described the venture openly as a 'business promotion' (ibid., 3 October 1958). They wanted to connect the series to magazine articles and a book. Cecil Madden's preference was for them to remain 'cooking, they are not easy to handle' (ibid., 16 September 1958), again showing an indication from the BBC to tame more 'spectacular' ideas in favour of the 'ordinary.'

Cradock submitted an idea to the BBC which would involve her cooking with ordinary people in their real-life kitchens at home, to show how to handle cooking with what the housewives had at home in terms of equipment and space (ibid., 8 November 1962). Cradock said she 'tested' the idea with a crowd at the *Food Fair* in Olympia in 1962 and was rewarded with a 'roar from the crowd' which was repeated at subsequent demonstrations and always found to have the same 'overwhelmingly enthusiastic' reaction (ibid.). Although an outside broadcast would have been her preference, Cradock also suggested that the programme could be faked in the studio, again proposing the use of 'back projection' to make a 'reasonable reconstruction' of the viewers home kitchens (ibid.). Stephens thought the idea to be 'really impracticable on many counts' (ibid., 13 November 1962) as an outside broadcast, still uncommon at the time, and rejected the idea. The idea indicated Cradock's own ambition to elevate the 'ordinary' aspects of food and cookery in television to be more 'spectacular.'

Seeking again to include ideas which were more spectacular in nature featuring food and cookery at the BBC, Cradock submitted an idea for a 'parlour game' she had devised which could be adapted for children too (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt3, 10 June 1964), but this was not welcomed by the BBC, suggesting it would be 'difficult to adapt for children (ibid., 16 June 1964).

Cradock proposed a spectacular 'Anglo-French Cooking Contest' between herself and the French television cook and noted 'famous French chef' (BBC WAC Cradock T32/486/1, 1 April 1955) and 'grand personality' Raymond Oliver (ibid., 3 January 1956a). The programme idea was accepted by the BBC, and production started in 1956 to bring it to life. The programme was set as part of the blossoming *Eurovision* broadcasts linking broadcasters, programmes, and presenters across Europe (ibid., 10 December 1955). Drawings were made of floor plans for an elaborate stage platform to be housed at the Café Royal in London (ibid., January 1956), with separate food and cooking stations, and separately promoted cookers, for Cradock (Cannon Cooker) and Oliver (Flavel). Oliver stipulated his cooker must be as he chose, in contrast to the style and design of Cradocks, which featured a design by Cannon with an eye-level grill (ibid., December 1955). In previous correspondence, Cradock had underlined that although she would arrange for

Cannon Gas Cookers to be delivered to the studio, she stated (which had not been the truth) that they were in no way sponsored by companies producing cookers (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt1, 9 October 1954).

The stage backdrop was designed as in a theatre, with high columns and striking illustrations, including the logo for the Gas Board, Mr Therm, holding flags for France at one end, and Britain at the other (BBC WAC Cradock T32/486/1, January 1956). This design was carried through to the programme for the evening which featured a highly stylised illustrated versions of both Oliver and Cradock 'fencing' with a giant set of kitchen utensils (ibid., 9 January 1956). Inside, Cradock inserted the photograph with her new nose, and Oliver was pictured with a passing resemblance to Harben with a stern, bearded face (ibid.). The *Challenge in the Kitchen* programme was heralded with a great deal of press publicity positioning the contest not only as Anglo-French, but also a gender war; with Oliver claiming that 'men can cook better than women' (Shields Daily News 1956). Letters in the BBC Archives show that both Cradock and Oliver were tricky to work with, with Cradock throwing 'her weight around' (BBC WAC Cradock T32/486/1, 12 January 1956) and Oliver having 'temperamental exuberance' (ibid., 20 January 1956). The programme was under consideration for a further more regular broadcast, using the 'grand personality' of Oliver and Cradock (ibid., 3 January 1956a), but this never materialised.

Letters in the archive reveal that spectacular stage sets were used in the performance such as 'backless cookers', clarified to be, by the Gas Council, 'nothing new'. They outlined that 'Harben, Patten et al have from time to time used a backless job; and, on one memorable occasion, an ovenless one as well!' (ibid., 3 January 1956b). The BBC clarified that their priority was to produce a programme which interested viewers, and as such they were not interested in promoting a product or making it look good (ibid., 2 January 1956). The Gas Council did their own publicity for the programme, calling the programme a 'duel to defend the honour of women's culinary skill' (ibid., 17 December 1955), focusing on Cradock and the perceived questions about the abilities of a women, also an untrained cook, against a man, a professional chef. The programme ended with Oliver indeed the winner (the judges were two men, and one woman), further press coverage was

generated from a suggestion from Cradock that the contest was biased and fixed (Newcastle Evening Chronicle 1956).

Cradock submitted a proposal treatment for 'Television Cookery for Children Without Hearing' (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt1, April 1961) which emphasised 'colourful no-cooking cookery' using visual recognition and cues to teach deaf children to cook. This was met favourably at the BBC in 1961, and Cradock was offered one spot in the *For Deaf Children* programme (ibid., 2 May 1961) in the Autumn of that year. When the programme was broadcast, Cradock sought any feedback that the BBC may have received in the hope of securing more slots, but Ursula Eason, the Assistant Head of Children's Programmes, wrote back to say that she had 'so far had little outside reaction' despite her own feeling that it 'seemed to flow well' (ibid., 22 November 1961). She did go on to say that 'as you can imagine, I get very little reaction, except possibly through their teachers, from deaf children themselves.' Undeterred, Cradock herself said that she 'had quite astonishing reactions to the programme' including letters from viewers, television crews at ITV (indicating a notion of rivalry) and parents (ibid., 24 November 1961) Not all viewers appreciated the spectacle however, or at least found it confusing. One reaction noted that the BBC itself had been inefficient in 'spoiling your beautiful programme, my dear, by forgetting to put in the sound' apparently unaware of the expected audience (ibid.).

Cradock proposed a television food and cooking programme along the lines of a cooking 'pic-strip' which they had recently been commissioned to do on a weekly basis in the *TV Mirror* magazine (TV Mirror 1957a). The television proposal would be 'elaborate' and require a kitchen-dining room set to be devised, in a theatre setting where a live audience could be seated to watch and participate (BBC Wac Cradock TVArt1, 13 February 1957). Cradock wanted to include a 'celebrity spot' to introduce famous faces, but with a misleading (to the audience) and spectacular build-up before they were revealed, as an element more akin to a game show (ibid.).

Another letter to Cecil McGivern in 1959 stated that, although they were 'desperate' to have a series on the BBC, 'one thing we do not want is afternoon cookery programmes' (ibid., 23 December 1959); citing feedback and letters from

viewers who did not want ‘straight, cold-blooded, how-to-cook-it programmes’. Instead favouring the Cradock’s own more spectacular propositions for a programme appealing to men and women ‘even when they neither cook nor want to cook’ and that they found the Cradock’s ‘performance Oliver Twist entertainment’ (ibid.). So, there was a clamour for ‘more’ from their audiences. Cradock was, in 1962, contracted to appear in one edition of the afternoon magazine programme *Home At One Thirty*, showing an ‘elegant presentation’ (Radio Times 1962a) of an egg dish (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt1, 8 March 1962). On the afternoon programme *Living Today* later that year (Radio Times 1962b), doing some cookery basics (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt1, 4 September 1962). Cradock proposed another challenge type programme where ordinary housewives would cook ‘against’ her (ibid., 5 September 1962), but the BBC preferred instead a plain feature on potatoes (ibid., 9 October 1962).

In 1964, the Cradocks were contracted by the BBC to make a series of six programmes which they had proposed with the title *Kitchen Party*. The programmes blended food, cooking, celebrity and an element of ‘chat show’; two guest star ‘friends’ per episode (BBC WAC Cradock T32/1169/1, 15 May 1963) such as Barbara Cartland (ibid., 31 May 1963). The idea for the programme was to recreate the ‘atmosphere’ of the Cradocks own home kitchen, and to include some of her ‘friends’ as guests they would entertain (ibid., 15 May 1963) in their natural, spectacular style. The draft text for an accompanying leaflet shows the recipes demonstrated included Homard Melanie (Lobster), Pommes Anna, Roast Chickens and Beef Fillets, with accompanying wines such as Château Neuf-du-Pape (ibid., July 1963). All six programmes were recorded. In July 1965 Cradock wrote to the BBC to ask why only three had been shown, saying she felt responsible for the celebrity guest stars involved and had been left unsure as to what to let them know about the broadcasts (ibid., 8 July 1965). The BBC appeared to view the programmes as suitable only as fill-ins when the schedule allowed (ibid., 18 September 1964), Doreen Stephens disagreed, feeling that the programmes were ‘fresh and different’, evoking a great deal of mail and enquiries, and that the series would stand a chance if given the opportunity to build an audience (ibid., 11 September 1964). Again, Cradock and her ideas met with polarised reactions at the BBC, just as she herself polarised people personally.

In 1965, the BBC began auditions for a new series, *Home Cooking*, for which they sought a suitable presenter. They auditioned twenty-five potential presenters (BBC WAC Cradock T57/103/1, June 1964), but 'none of them are as suitable as Fanny Cradock' referencing her mix of 'personality plus demonstrating ability' and her 'enthusiasm for the subject' and her 'sense of fun' being of particular interest to viewers (ibid., 24 June 1964). The BBC considered some 'cookery experts with television experience' but ultimately concluded that: Marguerite Patten was 'too much like a lady demonstrator'; Philip Harben was currently working on ITV and 'his content is poor and often incorrect'; Zena Skinner did not have 'enough personality'; and Jacqueline Rose was 'too quiet and ladylike' (ibid., June 1964).

Cradock, in the end, was employed as the host (ibid., 17 September 1964), despite concerns at the BBC. They established a companion booklet with the recipes from the series, which was felt would 'sell like hot cakes (ibid., 18 December 1964). The eventual series attracted sales of 150,000 copies of the booklet (ibid., 24 September 1965). '*Home Cooking – a personal approach'* was broadcast on Sunday mornings from ten until half past in the morning (ibid., 25 April1965a). The *Radio Times* article blurb urged 'every member of the household' to watch in their dressing gowns and learn to be a cook (ibid., 25 April1965b). The series, was billed then as 'ordinary', intended to be for beginners with no background knowledge of cookery, as well as the more competent, so that they could 'revitalise family meals' (ibid.). The booklets contain basic information and recipes. Cradock was joined by an assistant, David Auty, for one programme only initially, then he was added to all programmes in the series (ibid., 10 February 1965). The producer, Beryl Radley, felt that Cradock needed someone to help relieve her of certain chores as she demonstrated, and to soften her (ibid.). Radley was keen to stress that she did not wish them to become a 'double act', and that Auty should not speak, as this would become light entertainment rather than education (ibid.). (see Figure 10).

Cradock, recognising the 'ordinariness' of the premise of the series, also saw the potential for it to be more 'spectacular'. Cradock was keen to have the programme repeated in the evenings, certain that that was when audiences would prefer to watch. Not convinced, and keeping their options open, the BBC said plans may happen the following year, depending on its success (ibid., 24 September 1965). The series was repeated in 1966 at 7pm on BBC2, against broadcasts of the World

Cup Semi Finals (ibid., August and September 1966) and later popular comedies and dramas such as *Steptoe and Son* on BBC1 and *Emergency Ward 10* on ITV. Audience Research documents in the archives show, despite the competition, the series grew a steady audience when repeated (ibid.). When a review of the 'current library' of programmes was conducted in 1967, it was decided to 'retain one episode of Home Cooking for archives and junk the other nine' (ibid., 2 May 1967).

In 1965, capitalising on the success of the *Home Cooking* series, Cradock proposed a follow-up series to elevate the ordinary aspects of the first series, and allow the audience to see, and to try, more spectacular dishes. *Advanced Cooking* was accepted by the BBC (BBC WAC Cradock TVArt3, 27 August 1965), again with an accompanying booklet. Cradock queried the payment structure for the programmes, planned to be recorded and then repeated. Her freelance contract at the time only allowed for a one-off payment, Cradock made a case for payment of repeat fees at a higher level than the BBC were prepared to pay (ibid., 15 November 1965), likening herself to an actor who would receive a fee when a recorded performance was repeated, and indicating that she herself saw herself as a 'celebrity' as opposed to merely a presenter.

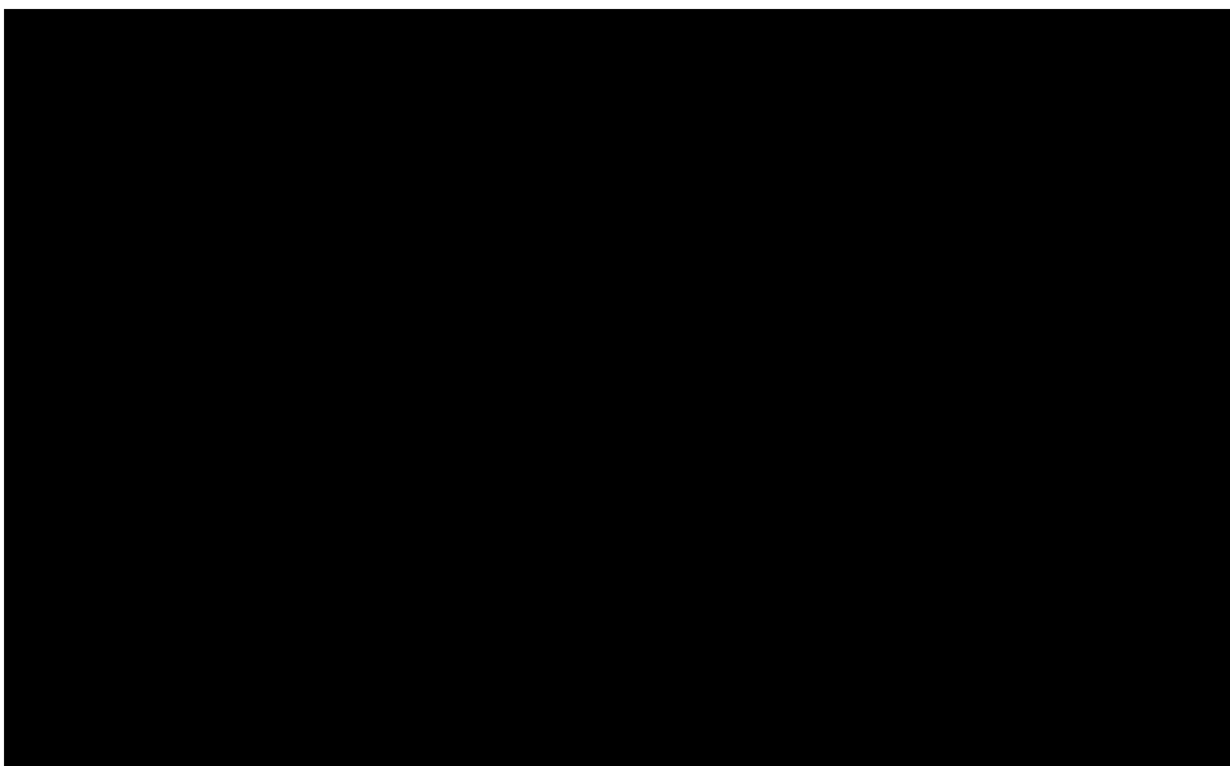

Figure 10. Fanny Cradock, series of screenshots from Home Cooking, showing Parkinson Cowan oven

The BBC continued to be puzzled by the spectacular presentations Cradock brought to food and cooking. In 1967 they received an idea from Cradock to introduce her young apprentices, such as Auty and others had previously, on screen (ibid., 30 June 1967), this was not well received. To the BBC, the idea seemed to 'underline a snobbery', which they were not keen to emphasise, and they would rather have a more entertaining approach to evening cookery as the 'ordinary' style of programme with Zena Skinner had not been a 'great winner' (ibid., 6 December 1967). Cradock continued to send in letters in which she outlined 'sizzling' ideas (ibid., 18 March 1968) to the then Controller of Programmes for BBC2, David Attenborough.

Connecting Past to Present - An Elizabethan Evening

History in itself was a popular subject on television from the very beginning, whether part of the broadcast or a subject within it (Hilmes 2003). Gray and Bell (2013) studied the representation of history on television, considering gender, ethnicity and race as well as social status and regional identities, and concluding that representations of history can be problematic. From the earliest broadcasts in 1936 on the BBC examples of 'history' were shown. History featured in drama, such as *The Mask Theatre* in 1936 (Radio Times 1936c). Musical programmes with a historical background were broadcast, such as *The Orchestra and Its Instruments* (Radio Times 1937a). History featured in comedies focused on important historical events, most notable was the early screening of a version of events from 1066 (Radio Times 1939a). Documentaries followed subjects such as the fire service and provided a historical background to the development of these services (Radio Times 1938d). Educational programmes such as *Living History* pioneered using models and miniature figures to bring the teaching of history to life (Radio Times 1937c).

As Bonner (2011) established, dressing up for cookery was very much a 'special event' (p.134). So, when Harben was asked to think of food and cookery ideas for the Coronation, he considered dressing in historical clothing and recreating historical dishes, first for a special programme in April called *Elizabethan Kitchen* (Radio Times 1953a), where Harben would go 'back to the age of the first Elizabethan for culinary inspiration' with historical research by Dorothy Hartley

(BBC WAC Harben TVTalks2c, 29 April 1953). The programme was a success. The BBC planned a subsequent Coronation celebration linked to it later in the year (Radio Times 1953b). In this section this programme is considered as a spectacular and visually striking food and cookery programme, as a pioneer of food history programming.

On Tuesday 7th November in 1953 the BBC devoted its entire schedule in one evening to one subject, *An Evening's Diversion*. This transported viewers to an imagined studio in Elizabethan times, as if there had been television at that time (ibid.). In 1953, the Coronation of Elizabeth II - a new Elizabethan era - brought with it interest in Tudor times. Costumed announcers explained that the evening was 'Proffered On The Anniversary Of The Session Of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth I', setting the scene with the words "Now we ask you to imagine that in 1596 the Elizabethans had a television service of their own, and join us as we put back the clock....." inviting those at home to engage with their imaginations to view events and entertainments presented historically and for modern eyes simultaneously. The 'News' became a 'Chronicle of the Times', entertainment was provided in the form of song and dance, documentary-style information was presented on 'new inventions' of the time, and 'concerts' were given, purely for leisure, featuring fashion, shopping, comedy, and song.

Befitting such a historic and Royal occasion, the entire evening was telerecorded. This was unusual at the time, of course it now means that the programme still exists in the Alexandra Palace Television Society archive today. This allows us to see directly how the television of the time in the 1950s sought to portray history, and this early example of food history.

The cookery segment of *An Evening's Diversion* was provided by BBC resident 'television cook' Philip Harben, styled as 'Master Harben' 'the cook', who contrives a Conceit of Coney. The BBC studio set contained one grand kitchen where Harben swapped his usual cooking outfit for something more Elizabethan, and talked the audience through a cookery demonstration, as he imagined it would have been presented in Elizabethan times. Next, I consider his broadcast in the context of the first glimpses of food history on television in Britain, and what, if anything, this innovation meant for television food history programmes today.

The Mistress for the evening, the usual Alexandra Palace continuity announcer (who would normally appear on screen, in the studio, to provide live links between programmes), Jeanne Heal, dressed as a courtier (or perhaps as an imagined Elizabeth I herself), introduced Master Harben, following the usual Interlude. Harben invited the audience to suspend belief, and imagine they were watching him as an Elizabethan cook, holding a pair of rabbits high in one hand. The scene was set for an instruction in food history, blending the familiar vision of Harben with an unfamiliar setting, dress, and ingredient list.

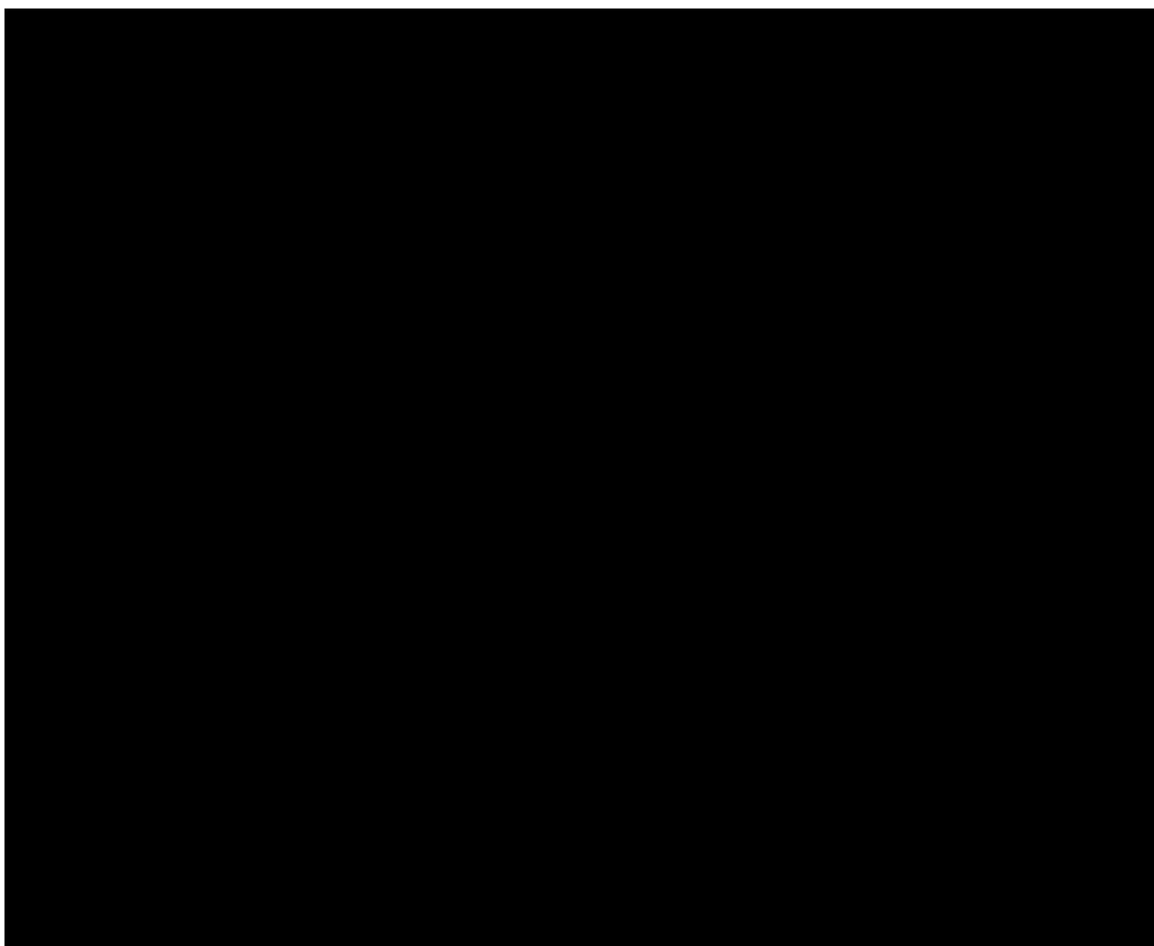

Figure 11. Philip Harben from An Evenings Diversion, BBC. Telerecording held at the Alexandra Palace Television Society archive.

Harben set up his cookery table in front of a grand brick fireplace within the studio, to resemble the imagined kitchen of a palace or castle in which he might have been cooking and broadcasting from, had this really been Elizabethan times. Behind him and across the table are an array of cooking equipment, wooden bowls, pewter plates, and apothecary bottles, placed more to conjure up the times than for any historical accuracy or reference. Harben dressed in an Elizabethan ruff and outfit

more suited to court than kitchen, with puffed sleeves and a tightly tied apron; not his usual striped butcher's apron he wore on television (see Figure 11).

The cookery segment was broadcast live, like the entire evening was. Harben was skilled at presentations, and worked between two cameras, often directing a camera to focus on details by signalling 'if we look closely here' while completing a task. Harben modulates his language and voice throughout the demonstration, using scripted phrases such as 'bear with me my fair gentles if I seem ware of this work', 'mark you gentles' and 'this pie crust is as frail and insubstantial as a young mans' vows'. This illustrates the entertainment value.

Harben ultimately created a castle from pastry to encase his coney, or stew. Building the castle walls from pre-prepared pastry cut to resemble turreted walls with windows and doors, Harben admitted 'this work is fraught with possibilities of danger.' Although at one point it seems as if 'disaster has overwhelmed' Harben with a breakage, he reassures the audience that he has spare parts prepared just for this occasion; fear not, I have another yet' (in place of 'here is one I prepared earlier').

Harben could not resist including a few trademarks of his own style and persona in the demonstration. From the outset, he was honest with the audience that this 'conceit of coney' was by his 'own devising', swapping the instruction to 'take four chickens' from the supposedly real original recipe, declaring boldly 'I am using coney' without any given explanation.

Viewer reaction study of *An Elizabethan Kitchen* (1953) gave a combined reaction total of 67% which was recorded as 'a good figure' (BBC WAC Harben TVTalks File 2C, 25 May 1953), well above the festive cookery programmes broadcast in 1950 (ibid.) and equal to the series of cookery lessons. For the series of *Country Dishes*, 67% had been the highest reaction index score. The report outlined that in the programmes Harben departed from his usual 'straightforward cookery lessons' and that a few viewers did not appreciate this, calling them 'flights of fancy in the kitchen.' Comments included the need for large kitchens, servants, and money to cook in this way, others wrote that 'who cares if the Elizabethans cooked their greens in 2lb of butter – it doesn't help us' (a Housewife). Mostly it was seen as an

enjoyable and amusing programme, ‘a piece of fun most apt to the pre-Coronation Bank Holiday.’ Viewers mentioned Harben’s ‘performance’, and the possibility that it overshadowed the main event – the unveiling of a ‘cockatrice’ – while others were ‘delighted as ever with the vitality of his personality’ and his ‘engaging sense of showmanship’, that he had a lyrical quality ‘he is an artist’.’ By contrast the reaction to ‘Miss Hartley’ was found to be ‘rather commonplace’ as a contribution, with her ‘limited vocabulary’ singled out as an irritant. Additionally, she was found to be ‘inaudible’ at times and poorly lit, prompting viewers to ask if this was an intentional ploy from the BBC to ‘emulate a murky Elizabethan kitchen?’

Visual Impact - History as Entertainment

Like most innovations, there was no blueprint nor example to follow. Harben’s broadcast shared many familiar aspects of television food history today. The set is performance in a credible location, indicating ‘history’. His usual studio and performance setting was replaced with artifacts and items which suggested ‘history.’ Harben’s costume was instantly recognisable as Elizabethan, in a fancy-dress way. He performed using dialogue and phrases which conjured up images of the past, while still connecting himself to, and not alienating himself from, his present-day audiences. Harben referenced books, recipes, and people from history to give his performance some legitimacy and authenticity.

Ultimately, Harben’s performance and demonstration would not of course stand up to scrutiny and standards by historians who may be part of, or acting as consultants, on the programmes we consume today, nor would his broadcast fool ‘serious’ historians watching for a documentary type of food archaeology. This was not the point. The programme was intended to inform, educate, and entertain as per the founding principles of the BBC. It succeeded in firing the imagination of audiences at the time, and subsequent writers, presenters, and consumers of food history on television, who have more to thank Philip Harben for than they realise.

Changes within the BBC

In 1953, S.E. Reynolds wrote an internal memo (BBC WAC Harben TVTalks 2c, 9 November 1953) which indicated another shift in personnel, with Harben

attempting to take control. The memo made it clear that Harben would be starting with Jack Payne (the bandleader) in March and therefore not available for television (ibid.). Harben himself requested at least two months' notice for television work, to be fair to the other artists in the music-hall 'act' in terms of notice. However, Harben wrote a reply in February 1954 to say the 'variety tour' was over; it did not seem to have been a pleasurable experience for Harben – 'the wildest of horses couldn't drag me through the stage door' - it had been misconceived, ill presented and therefore 'died on us' (ibid., 15 February 1954).

This coincided with a change of 'boss' for Women's programmes – Doreen Stephens (ibid., 19 February 1954) – and a change in food rationing restrictions; Harben felt that people under forty had already had twenty years of restrictions to contend with (ibid., 23 April 1954).

Confusion about the direction of food and cookery at the BBC continued. Harben devised a proposal to meet with his French counterpart while in Paris; a male French TV Cook (ibid., 9 June 1954). He asked the BBC to make some introductions for him to the television 'people' in France. On his return, a memo was circulated to document the meeting with George Edet from the Comedie Francais, establishing that he spoke English well. A 'swop' was suggested with each cook appearing with the other 'host' in their country; the BBC thought would be a good publicity idea (ibid., 5 July 1954). Harben himself wrote to the controller following a lukewarm reaction internally (Mary Adams did not like the idea, citing the lack of professional qualifications of the French cook as her main reason) (ibid., September 1954), putting forward the idea, confirming that Edet was a classically trained actor with a 'genius for cookery', in a similar way to Harben himself. Cecil McGivern, the controller, felt it was best not to pursue this (ibid., 27 September 1954). Later, Harben himself was criticised for not being a 'chef' (ibid., 9 November 1954), a claim he found to be 'offensive' (ibid., 11 November 1954). Following correspondence between the critic, things escalated. The Press were informed by the critic that Harben was 'not a professional cook' which he found to be defamatory without proof of special damages'. Harben asked the critic to stop all action out of dignity to the profession (ibid., 2 December 1954).

Popular and Well-liked - Celebrity

Josephine Terry is often overlooked in scholarly discussions of television food and cooking, however in the late 1940s, as television returned to Britain after the war, she had a popular series which she devised herself. As such, this looks in detail at her contribution, as well as providing a discussion on her as a personality.

Josephine Terry's Kitchen 1946.

Josephine Terry had her own series on BBC from 1946 until 1947, called *Josephine Terry's Kitchen* (Radio Times 1946g). From the title alone we can see that it was different to other food and cooking programmes of the time, which were simply named *Cookery* or *Cookery Lesson*, never with the presenter's name in the title. Although there were only a few examples of food and cookery programme before the war, and therefore before Terry, only Boulestin before her occasionally was billed using his name, in special programmes such as *Bee for Boulestin*. Josephine Terry, in the same way as many early television cooks, is largely forgotten as a pioneer of television food and cooking programmes, however her series was significant at the time and she herself deserves to be reinstated.

Terry was American (BBC WAC Terry, 2 March1948) making her perhaps an unusual choice at the time for the BBC to showcase with a standalone series, and also perhaps a brave selection determined to showcase a more spectacular and optimistic global image within the BBC post-war. Terry had been the food and cookery expert with the *Daily Mirror* newspaper since 1940 but had otherwise not had any previous broadcasting experience (Daily Mirror 1940). Terry's original idea for her series was packaged quite differently to the *Josephine Terry's Kitchen* which was broadcast. Mary Adams contracted Terry to do an 'experimental cooking demonstration' in May 1946, paying her just two guineas (BBC WAC Terry, 27 May 1946). Her outline script named the programme 'Terryvision on Food' (ibid., 1946) making a pun of both her name and the re-emerging medium of television. The subtitle of the programme, as Terry herself saw it, was the playful 'Josephine Terry takes the Cabbage by the Horns' to make the preparation of an otherwise humble vegetable, the Cabbage, seem more spectacular.

Terry submitted a three-page script outline for this programme, which was complete with a suggestion for an animated introduction of a cabbage 'like a fat bull' with its horns held by a 'half-frightened, half-valiant cook' (ibid.). Her introductory words to the audience at home were to be 'As I am standing here in front of you, I am trembling in my shoes…' So, this was designed to engage and enthral the audience from the beginning. She continued, 'I am now about to perform a feat of courage…' before describing that she had 'an object' under her table which she slowly begins to reveal. Stage directions show her movements as she discusses the unpopular nature of 'the object' which she promised to 'turn into an orchid' for the housewife (ibid.). The entire script treatment shows the ease at which Terry felt she could demonstrate a seemingly ordinary vegetable in a spectacular way, engaging the 'housewife' viewers, and encouraging them to cook cabbage in the way which Terry herself would recommend. She imparted historical, scientific, and 'everyday' knowledge as she discussed her techniques, and made clear the positives in terms of colour, texture and taste that could be achieved. She littered the talk with phrases like 'It is so good that it would even help you on days when you have no meat to go with it' in line with contemporary advice from the Ministry of Food and BBC policy (ibid.).

Adams clearly felt the experiment was a success; in November that year she contracted Terry to do a series, provisionally titled *Josephine Terry's Kitchen*, with the qualification that this 'may be changed later' (ibid., 25 October 1946a). Her fee was suggested as twenty guineas for two demonstrations on the same day, one in the afternoon, and one repeat 'performance' (ibid.) in the evening. Adams established internally that this fee should be negotiated; the final contract showed that Terry did indeed negotiate it an increased figure of twenty-five guineas, which included 'the cookery demonstration, script and presentation of the programme, ingredients and all necessary materials and transport' (ibid.). Terry presented *Josephine Terry's Kitchen* regularly until May 1947 (Radio Times 1947c) and subsequently made a few appearances on other women's magazine programmes on television.

Adams referred to the programme as a 'performance'. This indicates that she felt that the programme was more than simply a demonstration of food and cookery, and more spectacular in nature. The contract was given in the name Miss Josephine

Terry but also included her married name; Mrs McNulty (BBC WAC Terry, 25 October 1946a). The files at the BBC Written Archive detail some scribbled ideas or alternative suggestions for the programme title; Kitchen Knowledge, Kitchen Know-how, Kitchen Wit, and the titles of some of Terry's published cookery books, *Food Without Fuss* (Terry 1944), *Cook Happy* (Terry 1945a), and *The Key to Cooking* (Terry 1950) (BBC WAC Terry, 25 October 1946b).

The recipes Terry demonstrated were unusual and spectacular for the time; reflecting her American background more than matching the ordinary expectations of the British audiences. Terry made dishes such as corned beef and mushroom savouries, savarins. She devoted an entire programme to dishes from New England, such as Christmas Cookies (ibid., 10 December 1946). Terry was keen to include 'hints' in her scripts lifted directly from her cookbooks, published separately from her work at the BBC (ibid., December 1946). Terry explained that any synopsis in written form could not convey the 'fun and joy' she had when preparing dishes, which she was sure would come out and 'be rather catching' (ibid., 11 December 1946). Her hints often updated wartime food, replacing some sugar with saccharin, re-learning how to make 'proper' jelly instead of wartime jelly, and introducing new ingredients and ideas, such as cutting 'onions without tears' (ibid., 31 December 1946).

For her Christmas programme in 1946, Terry provided an outline. It began 'I am in the same boat as you are – I am enjoying exactly the same 'peaceful' holiday spirit you are in – made extra cheerful by the fact that Jack is going to bring two of his pals when I had provided only one present, for him, and that a few of our friends happen to be in town and are going to 'drop in' (ibid., 11 December 1946). By connecting with the audience on a human level, reassuring them that she was just like them, and illustrating her own domestic challenges of extra guests dropping in, or her sons' friends needing additional gifts, she was able to demonstrate how she handled such a 'crisis' in a calm and reassuring way; introducing her recipe and hints in a natural way as part of the 'performance' (ibid.).

This performance was for a spectacular Christmas party, supposedly impromptu, complete with party food, a Christmas cake, snacks, and Terry's own 'star turn' of any party, Jellipops, which she explained were the 'sister of lollipops' made from

jelly, which trembled when touched (ibid). She also showed a table centrepiece, design ideas, and last-minute presents crafted from handkerchiefs and filled single wine glasses (ibid). The Programmes as Broadcast simply records that 'Josephine Terry showed how to make last-minute sweets and Christmas presents', belying the stage management and 'performance' of Terry to enable these things to be demonstrated (ibid., 27 December 1946).

Terry submitted a long list of suggested ideas for broadcasts, giving a title and a short paragraph of narrative to introduce each one. These were written conversationally as the opening line to each programme (ibid., 31 December 1946); Anniversary Meals, parties, special recipes (Crepes and Choux Buns), Dinners for Grandma, Spring Cleaning Dinners and even Cooking to Win a Bet (ibid).

Terry made suggestions to the BBC for Chinese people suitable to appear on a programme called *At Home Abroad* (ibid., 13 January 1947). She felt they were 'vital and photogenic'; this all indicates that she understood the medium of television and the importance of providing a 'good performance' (ibid.). Another suggestion to accompany techniques used in food and cookery, such as folding, with different synchronised music to underline the rhythm required for each task, from cakes to puddings, whether the actions were gentle or more deliberate movements (ibid., 29 January 1947). Terry felt that some often-used cooking phrases were open to interpretation, such as 'gentle simmering' and 'folding', and the addition of some 'Music While You Work' would only clarify (ibid.). Adams wrote to Terry to say she was un-convinced about the idea (ibid., 21 February 1947).

Terry at times suggested the briefest of ideas to Adams. One such suggestion was for a television feature called Self Maid Hostess; Terry said the three words 'really speak for themselves' (ibid., 10 February 1947). Adams liked the idea, and asked Terry to prepare it for television on Monday March 3rd (ibid., 21 February 1947). Due to an energy crisis resulting in several broadcasts being cancelled, the programme was not broadcast as scheduled; Adams wrote 'the studio staff have gone hungry in your absence… it may be that we shall begin again on Saturday…'

(ibid). The following month Terry completed an evening only performances due to fuel cuts limiting broadcast hours to daytime (ibid., 1 April 1947).

Terry suggested a programme on pineapples, which she acknowledged might be controversial, following her own research (ibid., 20 March 1947). Pineapples are today, of course, 'ordinary', at the time they were still unusual and spectacular, seen as a luxury food, imported into the country. Terry felt all 'grumbles' around pineapples unfounded as they could yield around eight wholesome slices of fruit, from a pineapple costing around eight shillings. Terry had herself been asked by newspaper readers how to deal with pineapples, and how to preserve them, and she felt she could do a 'delightful little show' which would have dramatic actions and 'pretty pictures' involving four ideas (ibid.).

Though evidently Terry viewed Adams as a friend (ibid., 21 May 1947), Adams herself wrote a memo saying she was reluctantly recommending that Terry's television food and cooking programmes be considered for further programmes in the Autumn of 1947, following the finale of the first series in May. She described Terry as 'a tiresome person to deal with', expressing surprise that 'her mannerisms before the camera haven't made most people dislike her' (ibid., 24 March 1947). Contrasting the views of the BBC production team with the viewers at home, Adams asserted that judging from positive letters from viewers, which she received regularly, there was evidence that her programmes were 'increasingly appreciated'; for the sake of continuity she implored that the BBC 'don't get rid of her for good' instead keeping her 'on ice.' The Head of Television Service responded to say despite the favourable letters (indicating she was bound to get a certain amount of positive mail) he still thought she was a 'bad choice', and they should take 'the chance to drop her'. Furthermore, he said she wanted this herself, and that they should instead look for someone less spectacular, who does 'good demonstrations', someone more ordinary, without the particular 'drawbacks' that Terry had (ibid., 25 March 1947). The BBC were clear that they did not want spectacular food and cookery programmes at this time.

The fuel crisis was used as an explanation for not scheduling in more programmes with Terry (ibid., 1 April 1947). They said that they were unable to plan more than three months ahead. They already had Philip Harben booked in for a fortnightly

series over the summer (ibid.). Although the letter outlines that the situation is temporary, it also thanks Terry for all her demonstrations, wishing her a happy holiday and returning various letters she shared with the BBC staff. The letter is signed extremely formally by Mary Adams as ‘Mrs Vyvyan Adams’ for the first time. All subtle indications that this was a farewell correspondence (ibid). Sensing the mood, or not reading it as intended, Terry replied that they should meet to discuss future ideas (ibid., 2 April 1947). Terry continued to send in her stage-play like outlines for the remaining, already scheduled, programmes. She wrote to Adams with ever-more suggestions to improve the kitchen set in the studio, based this time on experience of demonstrations at the Ideal Home Exhibition (ibid., 24 April 1947) and the new products which she was able to view there.

Terry wrote later in April to Adams to say that her initial letter had made her feel ‘rather sad’ and had ‘naturally clouded her enthusiasm (ibid., 30 April 1947). She had now heard that afternoon programmes were back on the agenda, and hoped to share some script idea and features (ibid.). Terry wrote to Adams at the beginning of May to say that a ‘big firm’ had offered to make the new set for television according to ‘our wishes and instructions’ (ibid., 1 May 1947).

Terry wrote to Adams following her final television performance, as she hung up her ‘stage apron for the time being’, to let her know she had further positive feedback from viewers and suggesting a lunch meeting with Terry and her husband at a future date (ibid., 21 May 1947). A memo in September 1947 from Andrew Miller Jones pleaded with the Head of Television Service to write a ‘diplomatic letter’ to let Terry know that they were dispensing with her services permanently, to allow the appointment of a ‘new women cook’ who was the Gaslight and Coke Company’s chief demonstrator’ who they hoped would be the answer to their prayers (ibid., 2 September 1947); this would be Joan Robins. The diplomatic letter outlined that the BBC were taking their food and cookery demonstrations in a new direction, with a ‘number of experimental ways in which cookery can be placed’ leaving their planning in a ‘melting pot.’ The letter again thanked her for all her work to ‘understand the medium’, recognising her role in developing a ‘format’ on screen, and suggested that the studio crew would miss her ‘delicious titbits’, underlining but without saying it directly, that she would to be returning (ibid., 18 September 1947). Terry did not pick up on the subtleties, or ignored them,

responding to enquire if future programme ideas would be welcome, again proposing a 'friendly lunch' meeting (ibid., 30 October 1947). Terry had an idea for a new series based on her travels with the title 'From Josephine Terry's Luggage' complete with the usual synopsis (ibid., October 1947). Terry made a couple of single appearances on daytime magazine programmes subsequently but did not return to a series (Radio Times 1948b). Later, he wrote to Adams, this time enquiring if she had been 'a bit obstinate during the last weeks of our collaboration' to disregard it was 'post-war apathy' (BBC WAC Terry, 7 August 1947).

Further letters to other producers at the BBC with new synopsis ideas were referred to Adams, stating that as Terry was a 'rather difficult subject' they would prefer to get the correct response. It was proposed that Terry could appear alongside Marguerite Patten for one demonstration of American Recipes, which Adams was asked to comment on (ibid., 4 March 1948).

Terry wrote to Adams in March 1948 to say how much she was enjoying working with the new producer, but also to remind Adams that initially when *Josephine Terry's Kitchen* was developed, she had been in 'favour of this feature showing not only straight cookery' and again pitched her ideas for world cookery 'not bound to stove or spoon' (ibid., 24 March 1948). In a memo to S.E. Reynolds, Terry is described as a 'bore to work with' but 'full of ideas and experienced' (ibid., 31 March 1948). Reynolds wrote to Terry to let her know that the programme he produced, *For The Housewife* was 'being rested' until after the summer (ibid., 15 July 1948). Terry replied that she could discuss new ideas with him after the summer, seemingly missing again the subtlety of the original letter (ibid., 17 September 1948). Subsequent letters from Terry to Adams were strictly business-like, pitching an idea and asking if it was suitable (ibid., 1 March 1949).

Terry proposed a feature for television in December 1948, a demonstration of a Quiche Lorraine, which she hoped to elevate by renaming 'Quiche Josephine' (ibid., 7 December 1948). Helena Malinowska replied however to say, 'I think it would be better to leave out the 'Josephine' and just call it a Quiche (ibid., 10 December 1948). This indicated to Terry a shift from the flamboyant and spectacular 'performances' of her own series to the more traditional and ordinary

‘demonstrations’ of *Designed for Women* and the afternoon magazine programmes aimed at housewives. Terry continued to send in more and more ideas, some based on things she has seen in America (ibid., 13 January 1949), others from her own creation. Letters show her frustration at being overlooked by the BBC, and feeling unsure who was making the decisions or who to approach (ibid., 1 March 1949). Eventually, S.E. Reynolds responded to let her know that his programmes were being covered by Joan Robins and Philip Harben ‘alternately’, but should a ‘suitable spot’ (with ‘spot’ highlighted) appear he would be back in touch (ibid., 2 March 1949). When Terry heard that Robins was potentially not continuing with her television work in 1949 (‘for happy reasons’) she wrote to enquire if her television work could be resumed (ibid., 1 April 1949). The formal and brief response let Terry know they would contact her if any opportunity arose (ibid., 4 April 1949).

A note in her file illustrates that Terry had contacted the BBC to ask them to be frank with her, as she had an ‘impression’ that Reynolds did not wish to use her for some ‘personal reason’ (ibid., 17 November 1949). This prompted Adams to contact Terry by phone to let her know that her voice had been criticised because of her ‘foreign accent’ (American) and that it was ‘mainly’ for this reason that she had not been invited back (ibid., 1 Dec 1949). The note reported that although Terry seemed to understand this criticism, she was still keen to give further television demonstrations (ibid.).

By 1951 Terry was still contacting the BBC with ideas. In a letter to S.E. Reynolds to let him know she had changed a little, and on watching women’s programmes under his direction had an idea if he was ready to ‘see the Josephine with whom you would have to cope now’ (ibid., 1 November 1951). The connection was with her new book, *Tell Me Chef*, a dialogue between a chef and a lady – a French chef and herself – featuring some elements of controversy, making the presentation different from anything else (ibid.). Reynolds did not feel that it was right for his ‘particular audience’ (ibid., 14 November 1951). He let her know that they had recently surveyed their viewers and as the vast majority belong to the low-income group, they wanted simple ordinary cookery ‘teaching’ rather than more spectacular dishes associated with chefs (ibid.). He reiterated that the BBC were very pleased with the work of Harben, Robins and Patten and, ‘naturally’, did not wish to change this (ibid.). Terry responded to say that she felt through her

newspaper work on the *Daily Mirror* she was able to ‘sympathise’ with the ‘low-income groups’; she still felt that they would benefit from her idea of sharing tips with a renowned chef (ibid., 15 November 1951). Terry sent Reynolds her usual style of synopsis, which he said he would ‘consider sympathetically’ (ibid., 21 November 1951). The files show no further correspondence on the matter, with only one more final suggestion from Terry to Reynolds in 1954 (ibid., 12 November 1954), which received a short rejection note in return (ibid., 15 November 1954).

Development of persona - Television Fan Magazines – 1950s

In the 1950s ‘celebrity’ was portrayed and developed among television food and cooking presenters, as representations in television fan, and women’s, magazines. The specialist television weekly magazine, *TV Mirror*, was first published in August 1953, featuring a variety of news, stories, photographs, and gossip about the personalities who appeared on (at the time) BBC programmes and later, from favourites across the BBC and ITV. The magazine run extended into the early 1960s, however by that time it had incorporated music news, first becoming the *TV and Disc Mirror* in 1957[13]. In the very first edition, readers were presented with a free insert booklet profiling TV’s Who’s Who complete with photographs and a short biography of the key people. Signalling a prolific future inclusion in the magazine, Philip Harben featured prominently on the photo-collage cover, dressed as he appeared on television, complete with shirt with sleeves rolled up, a tie and his signature striped butchers’ apron, cracking an egg into a small bowl. As well as presenters, producers and ‘behind the scenes’ people were given profiles, including Mary Adams. Harben was the only one of the trio of BBC cooks – Patten and Robins - from the time to be featured. The profile included details of his birth, his family, his education, and a brief career CV.

The on-screen image and persona of early television food and cooking presenters was reinforced by others in the fan magazines and press. Harben’s producer, S.E. Reynolds, wrote a full-page article about the ‘bearded man in the butcher’s apron’ (TV Mirror 1954b), outlining why he thought Harben was so popular with ‘the majority of viewers.’ He detailed his acting background, personally and that of his

[13] https://teletronic.co.uk/out-of-the-box/britains-first-television-magazines

family. He let readers know that Harben's wife, Kathy, was always present when they were planning programmes, and she was a great help. He gave a sketch of the producer's role, but stressed that it is Harben who was the 'voice of authority' because of his 'intensive work' on every programme. He mentioned Harben's extensive collection of historical cookbooks which he used for research and 'extensive experiments' He told a story of Harbens biggest on-screen mistake – forgetting to switch on the oven when cooking buns, and how as the producer, he steered the programme to safety. He mentioned Harbens' series *Man in the Kitchen*, and its popularity with women, and men.

Reynolds emphasised Harben's popularity by mentioning his huge mailbag with letters from viewers and offers to appear at bazaars and functions. The article retrospectively 'explained' the butcher's apron Harben always wore. Reynolds said that any critical letters often ended with 'how can a man in a butcher's apron be expected to know how to cook?' Reynolds said that Harben told him that during the war he had been unable to purchase a 'cooks apron' so he bought one from a butcher, 'liked it' and 'has stuck with it ever since'. The article underlined aspects of Harben's television performances which highlighted his personality and star persona (TV Mirror 1954b). The apron made another appearance in an article in 1955 which showed the personality Kenneth Horne at home in various poses, including one image of him cooking in his kitchen with his wife. Horne is pictured wearing a similar butcher's apron to Harben, with the caption 'Who's that fellow Harben anyway..?' (TV Mirror 1955b), suggesting a connection between the apron and the well-known persona of Harben.

Representations of Harben in *TV Mirror* were not limited to his on-screen persona. In October 1953, Harben had a dedicated two-page spread looking at a 'close-up of the famous chef and his family' at home, complete with images of his own personal kitchen, to give 'hungry' readers an idea of how the Harben household eat at home (TV Mirror 1953d). The article tells that the whole Harben family, including his wife, his daughter, and his son, shared Harben's own enthusiasm for the 'art of cooking', based around a shared interest in 'good food' and, of course, 'skill'. The accompanying photographs show knives of all shapes and sizes hanging on a kitchen wall, and whole wall of pots and pans, indicating Harben's preference for aluminium. Harben was pictured preparing an outdoor meal in his garden, carving

roast meat of some kind, while his wife is by his side, helping with the herbs for 'sauces and seasonings' which she grew herself in the garden. The article stressed his knowledge and expertise, both of fine food, and of how to make the most of 'ordinary' foods such as bloater fish. The 'huge' kitchen contained three modern stoves, a deep-freeze, an oversized refrigerator and all the cooking equipment readers could imagine, reinforcing the idea that this was an expert's kitchen. Harben himself told the interviewer that his 'proudest achievement' was his own developed way of making an early-morning cup of tea, on the stovetop, in a pan, and leaving tea leaves steeping in recently boiled, now removed from the heat, water. This tea demonstration was on television as part of his broadcasts in 1946 (Radio Times 1946f).

Harben would time and time again be featured in the pages of *TV Mirror* in connection with his programmes, and his appearances in films such as *Meet Mr Lucifer* alongside 'well-known TV Stars' (TV Mirror 1953h). He featured in the children's pages, setting quizzes with prizes of Christmas Stockings and Crackers (TV Mirror). *TV Mirror* published a selection of letters each week, including some light-hearted ones about Harben. One reader told the story of his wife recreating a Harben Italian dish, finished off with grated cheese; however, the readers' wife had accidentally used a bar of soap instead of cheese. This letter was illustrated with a picture of Harben's head (TV Mirror 1953i). Other letters urged Harben to cook 'typically English food' instead of giving 'ordinary recipes' French names as if they are in a restaurant (TV Mirror 1954l). The July 24th, 1954, edition printed a series of letters from different readers giving their views on Harben (TV Mirror 1954k). Other contributors re-told their stories of Harben in gossip columns, with one, Postgate, jokingly claiming to know Harben 'before he had a beard' and when he 'was thin' (TV Mirror 1954a), referencing his appearance to underline his persona. He refers to Harben as an 'excellent guide' to food on television, and 'one of the major influences towards good living in this country' and ultimately 'one of the great successes of TV' (ibid). Harben was the subject of illustrated cartoons depicting him cooking on a desert island, in a state of undress apart from his trademark butchers' apron (TV Mirror 1954g).

Cartoons appeared showing Harben being visited by a hungry spider in the studio kitchen (TV Mirror 1954f). The Christmas 1953 edition included a centrefold

poster with a Christmas tree decorated with baubles with television presenters' faces on. Harben was at the top. The tree indicated popular presents for the stars – Harben's was a tin opener (TV Mirror 1953j).

In 1954, *TV Mirror* printed a picture of Harben visiting his own waxwork model at Madame Tussauds, and captioned the picture to show which one was the 'real' star of television (TV Mirror 1954h). The waxwork was dressed as Harben was for television, in shirt, tie, sleeves rolled up and with butcher's apron. The 'real' Harben was shown dressed as he would away from the television studio, in a relaxed suit and appeared to be quizzical of the wax version of himself, examining closely what 'he' was cooking and the techniques 'he' was using.

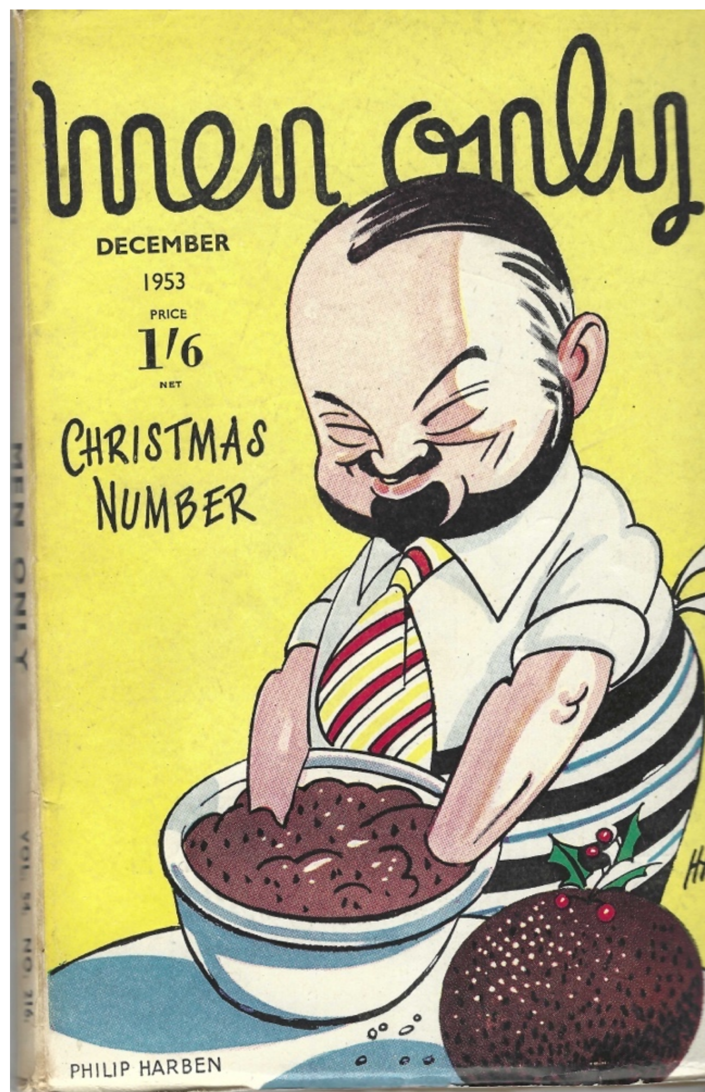

Figure 12. Philip Harben, cover of Men Only magazine

Harben featured, in caricature form, on the cover of the magazine for men, *Men Only*, in 1953, indicating that he was popular and recognisable to men (Men Only 1953). *Men Only* magazine began as a pocket-sized publication with articles of interest to men, and was such at the time of Harben's appearance, before being rebranded as a pin-up magazine, and later still as a soft-core pornographic magazine. (See Figure 12).

Harben's educational and entertainment skills were often highlighted in *TV Mirror*, such as a description of his food history programme *An Elizabethan Evening*, described as an antidote to 'dull' school lessons, using costume and drama to bring history to life (TV Mirror 1954c). One week, a column appeared showing Harben cooking with other invited guests on television. One such column showed a 'telesnap' (for a wider discussion, see Mills and Garde-Hansen 2017) of Harben and Italian born restaurateur Nino Domenico and recounted his time appearing on television with him. The image showed Harben in his usual television dress, with Domenico in an evening suit. The column promoted the *Man in the Kitchen* programme, and Domenico's restaurant, which was frequented by BBC staff, apparently. In the column he revealed some behind the scenes secrets, such as how the crew ate the food once cooked, but mainly revealed that Domenico's appearance helped his business greatly (TV Mirror 1954m).

Some weeks, Harben would appear simply in a picture with a caption, for example tossing a pancake ahead of Shrove Tuesday (TV Mirror 1954d). Other weeks, there would be features on his Mother, the actress Mary Jerrold, who revealed that despite not owning a television set of her own, she could easily watch things she wanted to at 'my son's' which *TV Mirror* clarified by adding 'as you all know by now', Harben (TV Mirror 1954o). As late as 1955, *TV Mirror* asked readers to guess Harben's favourite cooking smell; revealed to be bread baking as it reminded him of a 'happy summer holiday as a boy' (TV Mirror 1955c).

In the Christmas 1955 edition, Gladys Mann was given two pages to showcase her Christmas cookery. Harben was relegated to the 'news' pages, which featured a small picture of him, with the news that after nine successive years cooking Christmas food on television, this year he would not be making an appearance (TV Mirror 1955d); no reason was given. Other television cooks featured very

infrequently, in only in small, placed items. Marguerite Patten had one or two spots (TV Mirror 1954j and TV Mirror 1954n) and later *TV Mirror* trailed a 'new face to television cooking' Gladys Mann, who subsequently never became popular (TV Mirror).

In 1957, *TV Mirror* ran a series of 'photostrips' featuring Fanny and Johnnie Cradock, showing how they created dishes and techniques such as Cooking With Foil (TV Mirror 1957a), Swiss Rolls (TV Mirror 1957b), Deep Fat Frying (TV Mirror 1957c), French Croissants (TV Mirror 1957d), Green Omelettes (TV Mirror1957e), Baking Bread (TV Mirror 1957f) and Baked Ice-Cream (TV Mirror 1957g) on television. This series of photostrip features lasted for seven weeks and was not accompanied by any other features on their (ITV) programmes, nor on them as personalities.

In terms of Harben's public persona and coverage, the *Illustrated* magazine, published in 1951 ran an article trailed on the cover which promised that 'TV Chef' Philip Harben would show you 'How to Grow Fat' (Illustrated 1951). This article was perhaps in response to the television programmes of Harbens rival, Joan Robins, which looked at slimming. Harben instead tackled 'nourishment' for the body and mind, providing a weekly, perhaps tongue-in-cheek menu for the 'Anti-Slim', even though he was quoted as saying that he himself couldn't 'possibly eat (or afford) half this fattening food.' Harben is pictured cooking with writer John Pudney, creating a 'Corpulent Counter Attack, or 'a Slimmer's Nightmare' in his trademark outfit of shirt with sleeves rolled up, tie and butcher's apron. Robins' programme on television was called *Cooking: Corpulency* (Radio Times 1951b).

Harben featured again in 1953, alongside his wife Katherine, in an 'at home' article which included recipe ideas to 'keep cool' with during the summer. The annotated photograph used of the couple was the same one as was used in the *TV Mirror* 'at home' feature, this time with food all labelled (Illustrated 1953). The caption read that Kathy was 'watching' her husband at work and made no mention of her herbs. Harben himself is headlined as 'TV's famous chef' and shows him at work in his own kitchen to prepare a selection of the recipes given. Harben also opened his home to a photographer and a journalist for *Woman's Own* magazine (1956) where

he discussed the parties he and his wife held for their film and television star friends.

Women's magazines

In this next section I consider representations of other early television food and cooking presenters in other magazines. Television cooks had featured in magazines previously. Boulestin had a two-page feature in *Modern Living* in 1939, showing dishes he recommended for cold storage in a refrigerator for housewives and cooks (Modern Living 1939). The magazine was published by the Gas Coke and Light Company, and perhaps unsurprisingly, Joan Robins featured in at least two editions with her daughter, Catherine, on the cover and in articles inside (Modern Living 1953a and 1953b).

Marguerite Patten had semi-regular columns in the monthly publication *Family Doctor,* where she gave recipes for Invalid Cookery, with small amounts of text from Marguerite and her photograph; they did not contain any details of her personal life nor did they explicitly mention her television appearances (Family Doctor 1954a). They occasionally subtitled her 'the expert television cook' (Family Doctor 1954b). Patten did appear in the pages of the *Woman's Day* magazine in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in both advertisement pieces and articles. She was listed as 'TV's well-known cookery expert', she discussed the merits of oats for example on her return from a visit to Scotland (Women's Day 1958a) or Christmas ideas using Frenlite Flour (Woman's Day 1958b) and recipe pages with 'savoury dishes for summer' (Woman's Day 1958a, p.43) or ideas for pressure cookers (Woman's Day 1958c), '20 Family Recipes' (Woman's Day 1959a), Cakes (Woman's Day 1959b), Fish Favourites for the Family (Woman's Day 1960a), Cheap and Tasty Pasta Dishes (Woman's Day 1960b) and Christmas Cookery (the Right Way) (Woman's Day 1960c) as examples. Only one example in the very small sample of *Woman's Day* editions I looked at, featured anything personal about Patten – in the form of an article about 'giving a party for young people' which also included a photograph of Patten's daughter, Judith, in a party dress and captioned 'in Christmas Party Mood' (Woman's Day 1960d). The main part of the article contained straightforward recipes for the party, however.

Clearly, the magazine articles featuring Patten were commissioned columns and pieces by her; the *TV Mirror* articles on Harben were about him, written by others, and in celebration of his television personality. My analysis of these magazines has not been exhaustive; selecting a two-year sample to consider. Fanny Cradock was again featured different in this respect; she featured in several magazine articles discussing her private life, such as *Woman* (1970; 1973), *Woman's Own* (1979) and *My Home and Family* (1966).

Representations of persona as impressions

As Simon Denith shows (Denith 2000), parody is part of culture and everyday literature, theatre, and television. The word 'parody' comes from the ancient Greeks (p. 123); Denith defines it in modern terms as 'a deliberately wide drawn definition, as any cultural practice which makes a relatively polemic allusive imitation of another cultural production or practice' (p. 37). Crucially, he concludes that 'parody can act to preserve the very forms that it attacks' (p. 37), which 'relies on recognition of the parodied original' (p. 39) and can be seen in novels (p. 55), poetry (p. 96) and traditions of burlesque (p. 123) as well as contemporary cultural forms (p. 163) which serve to 'continue the conversation of the world' (p. 189) usually 'accompanied by laughter' (p. 189). This concept that is considered here; how the presenters of television food and cooking programmes have been parodied, primarily on television, and how this has reflected the recognition of them as 'personalities' in their own right, and contributed to their preservation in the minds of the audiences who viewed the impressions on television.

When television began, burlesque was still a popular term and tradition in Britain. Early television programmes featured variety performances of music, dance, and comedic impressions, such as *Cabaret* (Radio Times 1937e) and *Starlight* (Radio Times 1937d) often with Charles Heslop, a popular comedian of the day, 'taking off' well know faces. Heslop first appeared on television in June 1937, the *Radio Times* listing stated that 'Charles Heslop has been continuously associated with the entertainment profession in its every form. His entry into television adds another feather to his well-plumed cap' (ibid.). It was in such a burlesque performance that Heslop did an impression of Boulestin on Friday 1st April 1938. In the *Radio Times*, the programme, *Nice Work*, listed Heslop as a Comedian but gave no details of his

performance (Radio Times 1938a). In the Alexandra Palace Television Society archive Programmes as Broadcast, he is listed as doing a 'burlesque Boulestin' (APTS 2019). No visual record of this performance has so far been uncovered or preserved, but it is easy to see how the impression might have taken shape; Heslop perhaps appearing with his hair slicked back to resemble Boulestin, wearing a similar suit. The setting of the television studio kitchen mock-up would be enough to evoke the 'parodied' original of Boulestin in audiences' minds; the addition of a crude French accent, and comedic cookery performed to underline the impression. If audiences were not aware of Boulestin and his personality from television, the parody would not have been successful, or recognised; so, this is evidence of his celebrity status.

Figure 13. Philip Harben, impersonation by Benny Hill, The Sketch

This tradition continued as television developed. In 1954, *The Sketch* newspaper published a full page of images; tele-snaps from television, with the headline A Man of Many Parts (The Sketch 1954). The fourteen images showed the 'popular comedian' Benny Hill in a selection of his 'TV personality impressions' from his

programme. In the first image Hill impersonates Philip Harben, in a tiled kitchen standing behind a worktop, with an oven to the side. On the counter was a saucepan and various ingredients were laid out. Hill was dressed in a white shirt, with sleeves rolled up, a tie and a dark butcher's apron wrapped around his ample waist, riding high as if almost under his arms. Hill's face had a beard and a wig like that of the real Harben. He looks directly into the camera to the audience at home. The page featured four connected images of Hill's impressions of the *What's My Line* panel; the rest are characters rather than parody impressions of personalities. (Gilbert Harding is one of the *What's My Line* panellists included which Hill impersonated). (see figure 13).

Harben was also pictured in *TV Mirror* impersonated on television by Clifford Stanton in the 8th May 1954 edition – instantly recognisable with his beard, shirt (sleeves rolled up), tie and frying pan. Stanton's impression of Harben added 'wig and whiskers' to capture the 'maestro of the kitchen' (TV Mirror 1954i). Other impersonations by Stanton depicted in the article were Toulouse Lautrec, Charlie Chaplin, and Gilbert Harding. Harben became a popular choice for parody among 'ordinary' people, including children, who regularly appeared in fancy dress costume competitions and fetes dressed as Harben. The white shirt with a tie, sleeves rolled up, a butcher's apron and perhaps a padded stomach were used to recreate the familiar face from television. Also added were false beards, and in the case of one entrant, as an example, four inches of a young person's own mothers' hair was used to fashion the fake beard (Worthing Gazette 1953).

Benny Hill later, in 1971, also parodied television food and cooking personality Cradock. Hill appeared together with his sidekick Bob Todd in sketches titled *Fun in The Kitchen*[14]. Hill played Cradock and Todd parodied Johnnie. Hill was not on his own instantly recognisable as Cradock, but the addition of Todd as Johnnie, complete with monocle and suit, cemented the pair in the minds of the audience. The colour sketch took place in a kitchen reminiscent of Cradock's own from television, complete with tiled backgrounds, and homestyle cookers. In Hills' version, Cradock found herself unable to cook properly; and Todd portrayed Johnnie constantly drinking. A subsequent sketch made Fanny Cradock

[14] https://thetvdb.com/series/the-benny-hill-show/episodes/175365

inexplicably Chinese, and a third appearance later in the 1970s focused on Johnnie, this time sober, with Hill as Cradock attempting to cook in a scene of chaos.

Freddie Starr, the television comedian, gave an impression of Fanny Cradock on television as part of the ITV *Variety Madhouse* programme in 1979 (ITV Archive 2023). By this time, Cradock had all but stopped cooking on television, but was clearly still a recognisable face suitable for parody. The sketch involved Starr dressed in a canary yellow ballgown, a blond wig and his lips smeared with lipstick, wildly throwing ingredients around and speaking incoherently. The sketch took place in what appeared to be a theatre space, with Starr as Cradock on stage as if giving a demonstration in a town hall. This parody bears little representation to reality. Audible audience reaction showed how it works as a visual joke because of her fame and personality,

This was not the first, or indeed the only, time that Cradock had been parodied. She was the inspiration behind the thinly disguised cook on *Round the Horne*, Fanny Haddock, played by Betty Marsden[15]. *Round the Horne* included parodies of other television personalities, such as Eamonn Andrews as Seamus Android, played by Bill Pertwee. *Round the Horne* was broadcast on BBC radio between 1965 and 1969, during which time Cradock had five top-rating evening television cooking series on BBC television. The character of 'Fanny Haddock' shares little in common with Cradock other than a similar sounding name; the connection to her is unmistakeable.

Authenticity, Style and Persona

Style and persona were clearly becoming more important by the 1950s; this had also been the case before the war. Both Harben and also Boulestin were personalities and 'celebrities' on early food and cooking programmes in Britain. The authenticity or otherwise of Boulestin and Harben had an impact on television food and cooking programme stylistics.

[15] https://britishcomedyradio.org/tag/betty-marsden/

Boulestin was not a trained chef, as explained earlier. In available footage, he gives an accurate appearance of a 'Maître D' in charge of a restaurant kitchen (such as the one he fronted in Covent Garden) and a team of chefs and waiters (for example, British Film Institute 2019), marking him out as an 'equal' in society, able to offer advice and information, which thus may have been more readily accepted by his high class audience. Similarly, Harben was self-taught (ODNB 2021b), starting out as a test kitchen supervisor for British Overseas Airways (Western Daily Press and Bristol Mirror 1942) and eventually running the Isobar Restaurant in the iconic brutalist Bauhaus Isokon building in London (Daybelge and Englund 2019) where he cooked for celebrities, artists, and media executives. Harben's parents were actors (The Motherwell Times 1952b). He followed them on to the stage (Bateman 1966), before becoming a fashion photographer (see The Bystander 1934 and Illustrated Sporting and Drama News 1937 as examples) prior to discovering food as a career.

Harben published his first cookbook, *The Way to Cook*, in 1945 (Harben 1945) which he insisted was not a recipe book, but rather a book to explain the ideas and principles of cooking, which he would then go on to exploit on television. On screen, he presented as a 'lively, tubby, bearded little man in a butcher's apron, who makes difficult dishes look simple in his brisk, well-planned demonstrations' (Bateman 1966). Despite his appearance, presentation style and lack of formal training, Harben became a 'personality' (ibid.) who was an 'authority on cooking' (Derby Evening Telegraph 1946) credited with turning food into a form of theatre (Humble 2005). Harben maintained links to other celebrities. He persuaded children's writer Enid Blyton to write an endorsement for his book *The Modern Young Cook*, which she labelled 'the most delightful and instructional book on cooking that I have ever read' admitting 'I am no cook, but this book could make me one' (Harben 1957).

Harben never claimed to be a 'chef' (The Yorkshire Evening Post 1953). The BBC publicity department clarified called him 'an artist. People call him 'the TV Cook' but we have never called him a chef or a cook – just plain Philip Harben' (ibid.). This demonstrates his desire to construct himself as 'ordinary' in the eyes of his audience. Later, his books even celebrated his lack of training, stating 'Mr Harben has never had a formal cookery lesson in his life' (Harben 1960a). As the end of

rationing came about, Harben was able to introduce more flair to his programmes, utilising his 'volatile and enthusiastic' personality to share his 'secrets of cookery' which he regarded as 'fine art and a matter of craftsmanship' (The Mercury 1954). Reviewed as 'much more entertaining and exciting', Harben was able to 'go to town' and 'was obviously in his glory' (The Sunderland Echo 1954).

Both Boulestin and Harben had recognisable on-screen styles and personas, concepts which would later become recognised as staples of television food and cooking programme presenters (Strange 1985). They are often discussed in the studies of celebrity theory (see Turner 2004; Schickel 1985). Because television and media studies tend to focus on the 1980s and 1990s, it is assumed that this was a development of that time. As previously outlined, Bonner argues that, by the 1950s, television was sufficiently established to enable personalities to emerge, citing Boulestin and Harben as earlier examples (Bonner 2011, p. 134).

On screen, both men could not be more different when it came to television appearance. Boulestin was shown in a smartly tailored suit, with shirt, tie, and matching pocket handkerchief, with his hair slicked back. He did not dress as a 'cook', as Dixon and Meighn had, instead he matched his persona as a restaurateur, a professional, perhaps to connect with the privileged audience of the time who would have encountered such a trusted and recognisable role while dining out. His audience at the time were not women cooking at home. He did stand in front of a table laid out with equipment and supplies to demonstrate his dishes, with a typical kitchen set-up in the background (BBC Archive 2020), bridging the gap in knowledge and experience that an unaccustomed household would have to the direct preparation of food, in a manner that allowed them to learn, enjoy and copy. Harben chose to wear a butcher's apron tied high over his 'substantial' stomach on screen, with a grey shirt and paisley-patterned tie (The Liverpool Echo 1958). His look created controversy, as it was not 'correct' for a cook or a chef, coming at a time of change in British society. Harben later clarified that it was his 'trademark' and chosen as it was right 'for the camera' (The Yorkshire Evening Post 1953). Reviews of his demonstrations on television drew attention to his ability to bring things 'down to brass tacks' while other presenters maintained a 'quite maddening air of lofty superiority' (The Sketch 1949a). By 1951 Harben claimed to have given over one hundred and twenty television demonstrations (Harben 1951a), inflated

to over one hundred and thirty according to other publications that year (Harben 1951b), and regularly referred to himself as 'the television cook' while other publications referred to him as 'the television chef' (Harben 1951c), this indicates a level of cultural capital attached to the growing ownership and consumption of television.

Boulestin demonstrated typically French dishes on television, and defended the use of French words for French dishes. He pointed out that French restaurants used names such as 'Irish Stew' which any attempt to translate into French would be ludicrous and meaningless (Firuski 1952, p. xix). His first series, *Cook's Night Out*, which began on 31st January 1937, opened with a demonstration of the Omelette (Radio Times 1937a), both plain and savoury (ATPS 2019). Each fifteen-minute programme dealt with an individual dish, which together would make a suitable five-course menu to serve on your cook's night off. Boulestin had previously released a 78rpm recording of *How To Make an Omelette* (Boulestin 1932), which enabled people to play the recording at home and presumably cook a successful omelette. The disc was marketed to give people at home 'a cookery lesson' from 'the Famous chef', with one side devoted to theory and the other to practice (Portsmouth Evening News 1932).

The *Cook's Night Out* series continued with demonstrations of Filet De Sole Murat, Crepes Flambées, Sabayon Sauces and Moules Marinière (Radio Times 1937b). On October 15th, 1937, Boulestin demonstrated how to make a 'Khebab' (Radio Times 1937f) which he explained to viewers was a 'grill on a skewer' (The Listener 1937). Boulestin was described as having 'skilful fingers' using his experience and 'paraphernalia' at 'unhurried speed' to 'thoughtfully' and 'methodically' show novices watching, 'personally concerned with cooking and housekeeping', every aspect of his 'art' in a short period of time. The programme itself was described as 'instruction first and entertainment second'. Boulestin made everything look 'so easy', displaying his many 'years of practice' to those novices, hopefully inspiring them to acquire some of his skills for themselves (ibid.). Boulestin devoted editions of the series to wine, recommending the French way of enjoying and serving the drink as an accompaniment to food – also described as an 'art' (The Listener 1937b). The article states that Boulestin would indeed be a poor Frenchman if he did not consider wine to be a 'good friend' worthy of being honoured with our

friends. The programme was reviewed as a fantasy 'one-act play' in a seemingly spontaneous and unrehearsed 'entertainment' programme, making the most of Boulestin's skill as a born conversationalist, as well as a born cook (Sitwell 2012). Boulestin balanced the 'light-heartedness' required to be entertaining with 'plenty of sound instruction'[16] for those 'snobs' who wished to 'improve their table manners' with regards to wine. The fun atmosphere was further reinforced when Boulestin recommended the use of an 'elaborate corkscrew'; described as a 'menace' to open wine, which resulted in a broken cork (The Listener 1937c).

Boulestin published a cookbook in 1937 intended to be used by hostesses and cooks, dividing the book into two sections, one for each to use (Boulestin 1937). This was an idea exploited in his previous books, developed at his cookery school, underlining the notion that both cooks and mistresses need to deal with recipes, albeit in different ways (Boulestin 1931). The dishes Harben demonstrated were different in style and content, focusing on the lessons on technique and equipment which he had previously given talks on radio about, despite beginning his *Cookery* series in 1946 with Lobster Vol Au Vents (Radio Times, 1946a), Harben was more explicit in his use of foods intended for the lower social scale (Mennell 1985). Harben, although he would later re-introduce some 'foreign dishes' (ibid.) to the screen, concentrated on traditional British cookery, with programmes devoted to making cakes during flour rationing, 'emergency' bread, how to bottle fruit, jam making, 'stretching the meat ration' (Radio Times 1947e) and 'school puddings' (Radio Times 1947a). Harben too devoted a few episodes of his programmes to drinks, however rather than wine he showed viewers 'how to make coffee' (Radio Times 1946c).

Like Boulestin before him, Harben had a passion for omelette making, demonstrated under different circumstances. Immediately after the War, in 1946, Harben showed how to make omelettes from dried eggs (Radio Times 1946e) in line with contemporary advice from the British Governments Ministry of Food, who aimed to control food distribution at the time through a system of rationing to ensure that each person had access to a supply of essential nutritional produce, albeit reduced. As the years progressed, and rationing relaxed, Harben was allowed

[16] although his recommendation that white wines be served 'ice cold' did not sit well with the reviewer who felt wine should be served cold, but not 'ice cold'

to be more luxurious on screen, reintroducing 'real' eggs for example as they became more freely available and 'off the ration'. In 1949, Harben revived Boulestin's earlier 78rpm recording for television, when he lip-synched to the recording while showing viewers how Boulestin had made the omelette, remarked upon as 'particularly daring' at the time (The Sketch 1949b), following his instructions to make 'the perfect omelette' (Radio Times 1949a). This demonstration was so successful, Harben was asked to later revisit this as a standalone demonstration on the evening of 7th October 1949 (Radio Times 1949d). Harben's lip-synched demonstration would have been a curious broadcast even at that time, mixing education, information, and entertainment, but also possibly underlining to his audience a connection back to the 'celebrity' of Boulestin which may have still been fresh in their minds, even if they had not witnessed Boulestin on their screens personally, or indeed heard the recording.

Mass Audience Appeal

The appearance of Harben in *Men Only* magazine, discussed above, helps to introduce my next topic; aspects of appeal to a mass audience of men as well as women as audiences, other than the 'expected' housewives. The more 'spectacular' rather than 'ordinary' representations of mass audience appeal. Television cooking presenters had this kind of cross-gender appeal.

The BBC started with the view that certain broadcasts were designated 'for women' (The Listener 1938) particularly any programmes broadcast during the day, assuming women were at home where 'the great deal of their work' was completed. Prior to the War, ordinary women were defined in relation to the 'home', and not seen as the main market for television (those who worked). During peacetime, broadcasters accepted women's programmes as a genre (Lehman 1987). Daytime food and cooking programmes were recognised as participatory in the discursive construction of post-war feminism (Moseley 2009). By the 1950s, modern domestic lifestyles were seen as breaking from tradition, playing a role in reformulating class identities as had happened following the servant crisis of pre-war days (Bell and Hollows 2006, Ch2). Together with the post-war transformation in consumer culture and subsequent alterations of class identities (Bell and Hollows 2006), television presented programmes which appeared 'ordinary',

linking class with notions of suburbia and the construction of a 'better way to live' through the mundanity of instruction (Bonner 2003) which television food and cooking programmes were able to offer. But, it was not 'ordinary' for men to lead the cooking at home, nor to be instructing women, or indeed other men, how to cook.

Before the war, newspaper reports of Boulestin's food and cookery demonstrations at events such as the Woman's Fair in Olympia, described how husbands, who had been dragged along against their will, had eventually to be dragged away too, such was their interest in cookery (Daily Herald 1938). Programmes such as food and cookery talks were intended 'for women only' catering to 'women's interests'. Television took visual advantage to show fashion and food directly to women. The BBC recognised sections of the community sought 'worthy instruction' (The Listener 1947), such as 'cookery', which could appeal to a wide variety of tastes. By the 1950s, food and cooking programmes featured routinely on afternoon schedules, often tailored to what were then considered to be the 'preoccupations of the housewife' (Norden 1985).

Television programmes 'for women' were, by the 1950s, 'one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the country' (Britannia and Eve 1950), Harben was rated highest, with some surprise that 'even cookery programmes can be exciting' (The Stage and Television Today 1965). Harben was credited with having 'skill and equanimity', employing his personal resourcefulness to great effect on screen, while, as 'television's subtlest clown' he made viewers laugh at the same time as inspiring 'getting away from the routine' of meal preparation (The Sketch 1950). Men began to be featured on programmes such as *Designed for Women*. In 1949, Alexander Moyes, described as a 'bachelor cook who has learned his way around the kitchen' demonstrated, from his own collection, three savoury dishes which would appeal particularly to a man's taste (Radio Times 1949e). Raymond Bush was shown on screen giving advice on how to store and preserve apples, before Patten demonstrated how to make a hot apple cake using them (Radio Times 1949b), suggesting a gendered division of labour in the kitchen.

In the stage instructions for the *Man in the Kitchen* series of programmes it is stated that 'Philip Harben takes pity of the men who feel inferior in the kitchen'

(BBC WAC Harben TVTalks2c, 16 October 1952). Programmes included instructions on sausage bundling (ibid, 12 November 1952) and brought Harben a fee of thirty guineas per fifteen-minute programme (ibid., 22 September 1952).

Harben continued, as Boulestin had before him, to reinforce the division between male and female presenters on television, supported by the BBC at the time who had a distinct bias towards male presenters, who, they felt, transmitted an air of professionalism and authority, linked to the male dominance established by the male ruling class in society at that time (Leman 1987). Harben linked himself to personalities such as Boulestin to elevate his broadcasts from the ordinary, and at the very same time attempted to appear 'ordinary' himself, while distinguished from the female-fronted afternoon programmes which followed. Some female food and cookery programme presenters appeared on screen with Harben, in assistant roles, suggesting his authority and dominance, as a male cook, and as a 'celebrity'. When writing about 'entertaining at home,' Harben collaborated with his wife to underline his role as a 'host', with his wife assisting him as 'hostess' despite his credentials as 'the TV cook' (Harben 1951a).

While Harben was referred to as 'The TV Chef' (Lincolnshire Echo 1950) who would lead television shows, the women who appeared alongside him (Marguerite Patten and Joan Robins) were described as 'cooks'. Harben was given the status of 'expert on cookery'. Patten was referred to as someone who 'also appears' on the show as an 'expert on scientific fuels as applied to cooking'; suggesting a role of lesser importance to the programme. Robins was credited with showing 'plain' cooking for housewives, implying that Harben was above this, as the 'expert.' Later Robins claimed that it was she who taught Harben to cook (The Journal 1970a). Harben was described as a 'wizard of the cookbook' and was recognised as able to teach women more effectively, as 'whoever heard of a women chef?' (Daily Herald 1952), so that one even may find men 'clamouring for jobs' to do in the kitchen (Warwick & Warwickshire Advertiser 1952).

Later, when the BBC deliberately set out to educate and entertain men in the kitchen. In 1952 Harben was given an entire television series devoted to encouraging men to cook, taking 'pity' on husbands who may feel inferior in the kitchen (Daily Herald 1952) or, perhaps worse still, 'have to do their own cooking'

(The Sketch 1952). *The Man in The Kitchen* (Radio Times 1952b) was televised late at night, presumably to engage male viewers who were home from work (The Motherwell Times 1952b). The press suggested such programmes could 'change household routines' by acknowledging that men were interested in food and cooking, and Harben was 'popular with men', which may lead to an interest in other areas of 'housework' normally the domain of women (Birmingham Gazette 1953). Harben may have been able to inspire men to, at the very least, cook something 'within their scope' when their wives were 'away for the day' (Evening News 1952).

Harben and his programmes gained international recognition. The *Evening Sun* newspaper in Baltimore, Maryland, headline a piece 'TV Cookery in England, a disappointed actor finds an audience' (BBC WAC Harben TVTAlks2c, 13 June 1952). The article stated that 'The BBC management believes that a male cook carries more authority than a woman' before saying 'Mr Harben may not have been able to play a theatre role, but on his own he gives a good show.' The article outlines Harben's industrious nature, his cookbooks, the fact that he was a home cook, and discusses his family life with his wife Katherine. The article revealed that there were 'plans afoot for exchanges in British and American telecasts', and hinted that it may not be too long before housewives in the United States have a 'Harben lesson' (ibid.).

Mass audiences – Children and different cultures

This topic brings us to other efforts to diversify audiences for food and cooking programmes. Jacqueline Rose introduced herself to the BBC in 1949 to enquire about the possibilities for giving food and cookery demonstrations. She outlined her qualifications (a diploma in Domestic Science), experience (writing a cookery book) and relevant training (Dramatic Art and Voice Production) as well as offering 'fluent French' and the ability to prepare her own scripts (BBC WAC Rose RCont1, 8 March 1949). This led to some meetings and offers to do some subsequent radio talks (ibid., 22 March 1949).

The programme[17] took place in what was now a typical kitchen setting, with brick walls, a prominent sink and a range of kitchen equipment set out on work surfaces. Rose began her appearance with an exaggerated expression on her face as she said, somewhat patronisingly, into the camera and to the audience at home, 'Hello, really nice to see you all again. She continued to say 'I have a big surprise for you – I want you to meet a friend of mine…' as she reached out a hand, off camera, and introduced a young girl, Anne, to join her. Anne is dressed smartly. Rose is dressed in an American waitress type outfit, with matching apron, possibly to underline the American theme of the recipes[18]. Rose spoke in a 'proper' and perhaps BBC way, with received pronunciation, with phrases such as 'Jolly Good' and 'Let's give our hands a wash before we start', Anne appears as if she were from stage school asking scripted questions of Rose, saying things like 'looks scrumptious' throughout. This was an attempt to appeal to the young audiences at home.

Rose shows Anne how to make Eggs with Top Hats; a piece of bread with the round hole cut in the middle, fried gently on one side, then an egg added to the centre and flipped over. The set resembles an ordinary domestic scene; Rose and Anne do not appear like Mother and Daughter, rather like Teacher and Pupil, with added aspects of spectacle. The segment provides encourages children to find fun in cooking; Anne holds the beaten egg whites in a bowl upside-down over Rose's head to show that they are ready. Rose demonstrates how to put together the dish, reminding viewers not to eat the banana skin. The recipe instructions appear on a board on the screen, Rose talks through them at a very slow speed. At the end, Anne and Rose taste the bananas and say 'Mmmm' as they do. Rose brings things to a close by saying 'We've had fun, we hope you've enjoyed yourselves, Bye!'

The segment does not have any titles or music, possibly it was due it being part of a longer magazine-type programme.

In 1955 Rose wrote to BBC producers to remind them that 'I frequently give cookery talks on Children's Television' (ibid., 19 January 1955). BBC memos

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[17] Cooking with Jacqueline Rose – 25th August 1955 broadcast at 5pm – demonstrating novel dishes from America

[18] This may have been due to the programme being about 'novel dishes from America' or may have simply been the way Rose dressed on screen, this is currently the only surviving episode

describe her scripts as 'excellent' which she 'evolved' herself (ibid.). However, her voice was thought to be 'ladylike' and that she has clearly been involved in amateur theatricals as her voice 'sounds like that' (ibid.). Rose was described as having 'not at all the sort of voice for a homely programme, but clear' (ibid.).

By the 1970s, there was much more visual complexity in programmes, including filmed segments. This programme[19] example was part of a series looking at family cooking from the regions of France. This edition looked at food from Provence. Zena Skinner was listed as the host, with Paul Jeanroy joining her. The programme began with an illustrated section, showing maps of France, then clips of France on film, with a voice-over which said, 'This is Provence' and asked, 'are you wondering what grows there?' Wine bottles, in particular Chateau Neuf Du Pape were shown, and vineyards as per a travel tour footage. Markets were shown bustling with people shopping, wandering between stalls with meats hanging. The voice over gave additional information; these were the 'fundamental elements of Provençale cooking' - garlic; tomatoes; olives (and oil); pasta and pizza (as its neighbours with Italy); charcuterie; artichokes; and Bouillabaisse Fish Stew.

The pre-filmed footage ended, cutting to a modern, wooden-fronted, built-in kitchen. Jeanroy and Skinner look at a Guard of Honour and explain that they would make ratatouille. Skinner wears a flowery dress, Jeanroy in a casual dark blue shirt with a natural-coloured apron tied around his waist. Jeanroy speaks with a pronounced French accent, and quickly begins to prepare the dish, using olive oil, garlic and seasoning over the meat, adding thyme. The modern built-in cooker, and a *Kenwood Chef* mixer are prominent, although the branding had been removed. Next, Jeanroy prepares the vegetables for the ratatouille, with long, close-up shots of chopping, with no explanation or voice over. Skinner then explains what each vegetable was 'this is a red pepper, this is a courgette, this is an aubergine…' Jeanroy fries them in hot oil in a large orange Dutch oven casserole pot. 'How long do they fry for Paul?' asked Skinner. Jeanroy tossed them around up and down, prompting Skinner to ask why he did not stir them; the answer being he wanted to be careful not to damage them too much. The scene cuts, and edits back forty-five

[19] Zena Skinner – Bon Appetit! – broadcast on 7th May 1974 at 18:40pm in colour. Mostly on BBC Two, although the first in the series as repeated on BBC One in 1976

minutes later, we are shown on screen. Skinner continues to ask questions, 'How long does it go back for now Paul?' looking at Jeanroy and never the camera.

Jeanroy made Haricot Verts and Aioli next, explaining they would use the Aioli with leftovers. Jeanroy used the Kenwood Chef to make the Aioli, which is recognisable despite the lack of branding. He slowly showed the whole recipe. At the end of the programme, he presented the Guard of Honour, with beans, ratatouille, and grilled tomatoes. Skinner looked on and said 'Oh, what a feast!" while Jeanroy dipped lemon slices in parsley to enhance the garnish and explained that cold leftovers could be eaten the next day. The closing titles proclaim 'Bon Appetit!' with a shot of the final dish.

Other cultures and their foods were represented in afternoon magazine programmes, as detailed in the timeline in chapter 4 and in Appendix B.

Summary

Using the characteristics outlined by Wheatley, this chapter has looked at elements of 'spectacular' television, which are present in the archive files of the presenters of early food and cookery television programmes in Britain. This has been supplemented by some magazines from the 1950s (and examples earlier and later) to investigate particular aspects of the spectacular, such as celebrity and representations of persona outwith the BBC.

In addition to representations of ordinariness, television food and cooking programmes were increasingly designed to 'be stared at', featuring aspects of alternative and different genders and heteronormative expectations, and spectacular 'event' based television. Presenters suggested spectacular programmes for new and developing audiences, studio sets and innovations. Visually striking ideas linking history and performance, as well as appearances with memorable visual imagery and impact, were included to make a range of spectacular programmes which were designed to be entertaining, popular and well-liked, continually connecting previous presenters of early television food and cooking programmes in Britain.

Conclusion

The BBC appears conflicted by the celebrity-centred spectacular programmes, producers notes indicate a tension between the push and pull of audience reaction and a feeling that more ‘ordinary’ programmes should be made. This conflict of mass audience appeal was considered in chapter five looking at innovation and development within early food and cooking programmes, prompted and encouraged by the tension, allowing innovation to occur.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Introduction

This thesis has looked at the history and development of television food and cooking programmes in Britain between 1936 and 1976; showing unique contributions and distinct aspects of programmes from that period which have previously not been included in scholarly research. The history and development of television food and cooking programmes this thesis has drawn provides a richer, more thought provoking, and interesting analysis of the programmes, the presenters, the pioneers, and the period. The thesis chapters have examined the presenter-led innovations involved in the history and development, analysed through the lens of Winstons' 'Social Sphere' model of technological development (2006), applied to television food and cooking programmes as a collective format for the first time. the basic history, which itself previously was not well documented. Then, I analysed the mainly written archival material held by the BBC, following the pioneering work of Jacobs (2000) which has enabled a fresh appreciation of the concepts of 'ordinary' television (Bonner 2003) and 'spectacular' television (Wheatley 2016); uncovering the aspects of both which television food and cooking programmes inhabit. The evidence detailed in this thesis demonstrates a unique and valuable contribution to media history as a result, documenting several key findings and perspectives on broadcasts from 'the past' and texts which mainly only survive as 'ghosts' in the archives. This final chapter, forming my conclusion, offers a summary analysis of the discussion on the original contribution to knowledge I am making, allowing some space for elaboration and explanation of the key themes, as well as a discussion of the implications and future direction of this research.

Significance of Historiography

The history of television food and cooking programmes in Britain has not previously been well documented, particularly in the 'early' years between 1936-1976. The first contribution to knowledge here is a clearly laid out and accurate

timeline, detailing the first decades of development of television food and cooking programmes in Britain. Previously, many different programmes and presenters were credited as, or referred to, as the ‘first’ to broadcast about food and cookery in Britain. As there can only be one ‘first’; I have demonstrated a simple gap in the research around the history of television food and cooking programmes. Errors and overlooked information have often been replicated across research sources, unwittingly and as part of research about other aspects of food and cooking, as I have shown in the work of Mennell, Bonner, and Smith as examples, which has further compounded the inaccuracy or discrepancies in information. Previous research has not focused on developing such an historiography, but this new contribution to knowledge should enable future researchers to refer to and build upon the basic history, in the knowledge that is correct. To clarify the basic structure of television food and cooking history in Britain has been an important first step in my research, and enabled a clear analysis to follow, as in Corner (2003). The timeline itself is an important contribution to knowledge which will allow others to refer to the correct time periods and areas of development within each when future research is conducted, supporting further research and analysis of television food and cooking programmes.

Most research, such as Mennell, Bonner and Smith, cite Boulestin as the ‘first’ television cook in Britain, and, as the historiography chapter shows, he certainly was the first to have a regular, weekly programme broadcast on the BBC in Britain. To reinstate Rosina Dixon, for example, as the first glimpse of food and cookery on television (even if it remains unclear if she demonstrated a recipe or ‘cooked’ anything), does not and should not diminish his achievement. On the contrary, his achievements and own ‘firsts’ are documented and discussed in this thesis. Dixon was never to appear on television again (BBC Genome), and indeed her own career was quick to evaporate. Her contribution to television, entertainment and the connections between food, cookery and broadcasting should not be overshadowed or forgotten, regardless of the greater impact of Boulestin and the others who followed. The image she left, the adoption of a moniker or persona as *The Singing Cook* and the entertainment she generated to audiences at the time are all attributes which we now associate with television food and cooking programmes. As an indication of the impact of this re-telling of the history of television food and cooking programmes, my research was used in 2022 by BBC Food for an online

article to celebrate 100 Years of the BBC. This article was then used by the BBC flagship television food and cooking programme, *Saturday Kitchen*, who broadcast a short decade-by-decade run-down of television food and cooking history, placing Rosina Dixon as the 'first' to appear on BBC broadcasts in 1936.

A historiography is important for accuracy and integrity of research. Other genres and areas of British televisual history have been well-documented and discussed, which have allowed other researchers to focus on other aspects of the programmes, genres, and time periods which they are considering. Whether it be histories of *British Television Drama* (Cooke 2003) or *Children's Television in Britain* (Buckingham et al 1999). To have a historiography and timeline for television food and cooking programmes in Britain gives more legitimacy to the programmes, the presenters and the pioneers who have not been well recognised as legitimate and serious subjects for research within a wide and interdisciplinary scholarly community.

The historiography chapter allowed me to clearly identify the 'main' people and programmes to concentrate on for this thesis. While I recognise that there was an element of subsequent selection involved, the historiography enabled me to see which programmes were of most significance, and which presenters. Some of these were single broadcasts (particularly in the very early years); others more sustained both in terms of programmes and in longevity as television food and cooking presenters. This research has discussed, considering the innovation and experimentation in television food and cooking programmes, the importance of including these single broadcasts in the same way as pioneers who broadcast several series over several years, or, as Harben, Patten and Cradock did, for several decades. There are inevitably other single-broadcast programmes which could have been discussed in more detail and may have yielded other or alternative findings. During the period of this thesis (essentially the first four decades of television food and cooking programmes) when 'experimentation' was not only considered but expected and encouraged (as discussed in Wyndham Goldie 1977), looking carefully at a selection of these experimental broadcasts has been valid.

The development of the historiography and timeline allowed me to consider more realistically the context of this thesis; to consider the social, cultural, and

technological changes in Britain at the time, Then if, and how, they impacted on what was broadcast as part of the television food and cooking programmes. The period between 1936 and 1976 involved great changes in Britain (covered by Scannell and others); in society, in the cultural norms and in the technology used both for broadcasts and in the home more generally. If we consider this period as 'early television', prior to the liberation of television licences which enabled additional channels such as Channel 4, other broadcasters, and services, such as cable and satellite, to set-up and explode the notion of the nation watching a limited choice of television. The period analysed here reflects a time when opportunities to broadcast television food and cooking programmes were limited, but as I have argued, provided more opportunity for innovation. The presenters and programmes discussed in this thesis were mainly broadcasting on BBC Television, despite the ITV network being established in 1955, in the mid timeframe of this research. Some of the main BBC presenters pre-1955, such as Cradock and Harben, made a switch to programmes on ITV with differing levels of success and reach.

Ordinary Television Food and Cooking

The second original contribution to knowledge that this thesis outlines is the connection between television food and cooking programmes and 'ordinary' television. The study of 'ordinary' television by Bonner (2003) indeed mentions television food and cooking programmes. Using Bonners criteria to analyse 'ordinariness' had been missing from research. Several other food and media history scholars, such as Hollows, have taken the discussion of 'ordinary' television which Bonner prompted and made a connection between their work, her notions, and the development of television food and cooking programmes in Britain. This connection has been asserted, repeated, and not investigated, and crucially not in the way that I have in this thesis; by considering a range of archival materials to map against the criteria of ordinary television. In the book *Food and Cooking on Early Television in Europe*, published in 2022, for example, the editor established in the introduction that 'most food television' is ordinary (Tominc 2022, p. 5) without any further explanation or evidence. This may be the position of the researcher, my own research exploring the criteria of 'ordinary' television adds an original contribution to knowledge; advancing research in this area through the analysis of

the content of archival documents. This contribution stimulates further discussion and differing points of view of course.

One criteria for television to be considered 'ordinary', Bonner discusses, is the aspect of television programmes which are 'everyday' and mundane; referencing audiences, especially housewives, as active participants in that everydayness. *Everyday Television* has been previously discussed by Brunsdon and Morley (1978). An analysis of the early television audiences is difficult to do with hindsight, with very few members of the audience being asked for their views of the programmes broadcast at the time. However, some audience feedback was sought, from the BBC, and collected from the presenters themselves either as evidence of their popularity or in support of their proposed changes to television food and cooking programmes. While Bonner argues that the early audiences of television food and cooking programmes were themselves 'ordinary', matching the 'ordinary' presentations of the programmes, this was not always accurate. Initial television broadcasts before the War were not seen by 'ordinary' or everyday audiences (as we would classify them today) as they did not have access to the technology to receive television in their homes, and they would also be engaged in the ordinary aspects of their lives; work and childcare at the time. The people who purchased television sets for their homes and lived within the transmitter range in central London., were not 'ordinary' or everyday people, instead they were likely to be 'elite' and privileged. It is less clear if 'ordinary' people who may have been part of their households, working in roles such as housekeepers or cooks, were afforded any opportunity to view early television food and cooking programmes.

As television resumed after the War, women became employed outside the home less, and the rise of 'ordinary' audiences were more prominent. The BBC, as the sole broadcaster of the time, appeared to have an idea of the 'ordinary' viewer who they imagined would be at home watching the food and cooking programmes which they produced. From my own analysis of the BBC Written Archive materials, this view was not often shared by the presenters of the food and cooking programmes; they had a different, less-ordinary audience in mind.

Bonner establishes that ordinary television programmes include ordinary people in the broadcast, which often provides a contrast between the 'celebrity' persona of

the presenter and those ‘ordinary’ people. I have shown in the discussion of ‘ordinary’ television food and cooking programmes that some people classed as ordinary did appear on screen alongside presenters, particularly in the 1950s. I have found that ‘ordinary’ people did appear on some food and cooking programmes, in the post-war period, where they were either asked to share their own recipes or in the studio to witness a cookery demonstration; intended to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to return home and replicate the dish. One programme in particular, *Cookery Club*, in the 1950s aimed to develop a community of home cooks who might share recipes which would be printed in the Radio Times for others to follow. Viewers were encouraged to send in their recipes, which then went through a rigorous testing process before a selection appeared on the programme, suggesting a level of ‘extraordinary’ public involvement.

Later, in the 1970s, viewers were asked to send their culinary problems to Zena Skinner to address in her afternoon programme, *Ask Zena*. This programme was especially ‘ordinary’ in nature, featuring ‘ordinary’ people who were viewers with food and cookery dilemmas; Skinner could help to solve by straight-forward teaching techniques and delivery of instruction. By contrast, in the final year of the period examined in this thesis, 1976, Fanny Cradock took part in a programme of the popular television series *The Big Time*, presented and devised by Esther Rantzen. Cradock acted as a mentor to ‘ordinary’ Devon housewife Gwen Troake, who was attempting to break into the food industry by devising a menu for Edward Heath and other VIPs. Cradock’s role was not a teacher or instructor, but instead a mentor, guide and critic aiming to provide a foil to Troake’s ordinariness, by herself being spectacular and entertaining.

As I have shown in Chapter Six, as a further original contribution to knowledge, some of the early food and cookery presenters included members of their own families in the studio. They were at times referred to during conversations while cooking as if to underline the presenters own ‘ordinariness’; presenting a recreation of their own cooking at home for viewers in their own homes. Just as Harben himself was not an ‘ordinary’ husband (instead coming from a theatrical family), his daughter and his wife, who appeared occasionally alongside him, would certainly be primed to be less than ordinary screen participants.

By contrast, before the war, Boulestin invited friends and well-known people from the theatre, entertainment, and society to join him in the studio for occasional programmes, such as *Polite Wine Drinking*. They were asked for their views on certain aspects of gastronomy, and of course to benefit from the skills, knowledge, and experience of the host presenter. Although not billed as members of the 'ordinary' public, these appearances were from people who may have been 'ordinary' viewers of television at the time, given that only select households in London could afford the technology to watch television. Viewing them as 'ordinary' people as opposed to those normally engaged in television performances, I argue that they were performing the same role as later 'ordinary' people; as a point of difference to the host presenter, offering a non-professional view which served to highlight and enhance the 'celebrity' persona of the host.

As I have shown in Chapter Six the incidences of the inclusion of these 'ordinary' people were uncommon and occasional when looking at the output of television food and cooking programmes across the four decades considered. They were, however, significant as a tool for the BBC, and the hosts themselves, to connect with the audiences at home, to trial out new approaches and formats to food and cookery on television and to boost the persona of the presenters. By appearing with 'ordinary' people the presenters were immediately set apart from the 'ordinariness' of their companions.

Early television food and cooking programmes, particularly after the war, as I have demonstrated with reference to the BBC Written Archive Centre documents and files containing letters, memos, notes, plans and instructions, were heavily connected with Government policy, in particular advice from the Ministry of Food. Some of the early presenters linked to the Ministry, coming to the BBC from roles within the Ministry as in the example of Joan Robins. I have shown, in the post-war period all the recipes and demonstrations had to be tested, evaluated, and approved by the Ministry before transmission; to ensure that they worked (and hence produced no food waste), that they included ingredients that people could easily obtain (on and off the ration) and were of balanced nutritional value. Presenters such as Joan Robins were not required to submit their recipes for testing, as she had worked as a demonstrator with the Ministry previously, others including Marguerite Patten and Philip Harben had some of their recipes and ideas

rejected upon submission, the archival documents I have analysed reveal. This link between Government policy and televised broadcasts by the BBC was significant at the time and paved the way for greater involvement from 'home economists' behind the scenes, developing recipes for the host-presenters as opposed to them creating their own without much interference previously.

Chapter Six demonstrates that the connections between food and domestic life have been obvious in television food and cooking programmes from the very beginning. The studio settings and equipment used for broadcasts could be described as 'ordinary'; attempting to replicate domestic spaces of the audiences. Television cooks have, from the very first broadcast, demonstrated recipes and techniques in approximations of a 'real' kitchen set-up in the television studios. They can look especially 'ordinary' when viewed through modern eyes. However, from the beginning the presenters, producers and institution ensured that they had the very latest, 'modern' examples on show in the studios to provide an aspirational showcase for new and evolving products. Whether a single ring Primus stove used by Moira Meighn, a Radiation New World Gas Cooker as used by Boulestin or a Parkinson Cowan Gas stove used by Fanny Cradock, the early television food and cooking programmes provided an opportunity for presenters to link their craft with promotional possibilities. This type of 'influencer' role was not 'ordinary' at the time. Presenters would attempt to underline the 'ordinariness' of the equipment that they used on screen, such as Cradock emphasising that some of her equipment came from her ordinary kitchen at home; allowing viewers to construct their own reality that what they saw was 'real' and not, as the presenters knew to be real, promotion.

The links to ordinary domestic life were underlined by early television food and cooking presenters involving their families in the studio, assisting them to cook and discuss food, as they would supposedly do at home. Boulestin was assisted by his partner, Robins by her daughter, Harben by his wife and daughter, and Cradock by her husband (although they themselves were not married until 1977) and an assortment of young apprentice-like-assistants. These domestic arrangements were not 'ordinary', despite their portrayal. Boulestin's male partner assisting him on screen represented an ordinary domesticity for them, but not necessarily for all the viewers. For those for whom such queer domesticities were usual at the time, it

was an ordinary reflection. Robins worked as professional executive with the Gas Board, cooking on television in her 'spare time', and was unlikely to rush home to cook for her family, never mind with her daughter. 'Ordinary' domesticity was not represented in the 1950s by a husband or father taking the lead in cookery, with assistance from his wife as in Harben's case. Equally it was atypical for a woman to take the lead role in the kitchen assisted by her husband as Fanny and Johnnie Cradock demonstrated. Nor was it 'ordinary' to have a team of young, enthusiastic apprentices in your home to assist with cooking, cleaning, and demonstrating culinary skills.

Spectacular Television Food and Cooking

The third contribution to original knowledge which this thesis makes is the connection between television food and cooking programmes in Britain and the concept of 'spectacular' or entertaining television. In her book, *Spectacular Television* (2016) Helen Wheatley outlines her criteria for the exploration of spectacular television and 'televisual pleasure'; I used these in Chapter Seven as a framework to discuss television food and cooking programmes. Wheatley analyses a range of historical television programming with her 'archaeological' lens of spectacular television, which includes reference to television food and cooking programmes particularly post-war. Other scholars have subsequently looked at the time 'before television' to which Wheatley outlines, including work by Weber (2022) who concludes that all examples of 'television before TV' (broadcasts and exhibitions aimed at encouraging the use of television in a domestic setting) were themselves 'spectacular' in nature, as they were new and had never been seen previously.

I have examined in detail the period of television food and cooking programmes broadcast between 1936 and 1976. This period generally follows on from Weber's analysis and overlaps with Wheatley's. Both, clearly, have a wider lens than that of television food and cooking programmes alone. Taking the principles of Wheatley's contribution as a starting point enabled me to analyse television food and cooking programmes from the period in terms of their spectacular nature and design; Wheatley herself selects one or two food and cookery programmes or presenters to mention in her evidence of spectacular television (2016 p. 52), such as Cradock

and Harben. She discusses their appearances off screen at food exhibitions as evidence of spectacular-ness. Taking the examples from my own history and timeline, provides a deeper, thicker, analysis which demonstrated new and interesting aspects.

The central tenet of *Spectacular Television* is that 'spectacular' television should be a 'pleasure to watch'; with three sub-categories of interest. These were links to the format or genre of the programme, inclusion of aspects of interest such as travel, gender crosses and links with history, and thirdly the involvement of celebrity participants. As I demonstrated in Chapter Seven, the presenters themselves worked hard to create programmes which were indeed a pleasure to watch, ultimately aiming for the audiences at home to not wish to take their eyes off the screen during the programme. By providing to the home viewer 'televisual' styled food and dishes that looked spectacular; unlike anything they had seen before.

As I have shown, early television food and cooking programmes were designed to be spectacular in format; allowing audiences to see something that they had not seen in their homes before, a cookery demonstration. Where previously those who cooked at home had learnt alongside a family member (see Andrew's 2012), or with an open recipe book in hand perhaps, and latterly by listening to radio talks, for the first time they could watch clearly, face-on, how someone else prepared a dish, how they organised their available space, and how they operated and negotiated equipment, such as the cooker. For wealthy London pre-war audiences, glimpses of food preparation were completely new and 'spectacular', with completed dishes normally appearing in front of them; prepared in a restaurant kitchen or downstairs in the kitchen by the household staff (Boulestin 1931).

The format of television food and cooking programmes leads to the 'showstopper' moment when the completed dish is unveiled, or produced from the oven; often tasted by the person cooking, who of course finds it wonderful. The pleasure of watching is shared between the viewer and the host, to encourage the viewer to try their own hand at creating the dish and sharing it with others in their home, not just in the spectacular domestic environments shown on screen.

Television food and cooking programmes which have travel elements included can also be seen as spectacular and a pleasure to watch. I have shown in Chapter Seven, that these began earlier than previously documented (Hollows 2022) with Harben and his *Cooks Tour* in 1951. Travelling around the country, Harben highlighted local dishes and recipes, with the added entertainment of dressing-up and by including some form of dramatic interlude. Cradock devised plans for a European travelogue food and cooking programme in the 1950s, based on her radio reminisces of visiting Italy, France, and Denmark (and her associated travel books); the BBC deemed them to be too expensive to produce. Skinner's 1974 series of programmes on French regional food and cookery, *Bon Appetit!,* sequences were filmed in French regions; these were played at the beginning of the programme, to set the context for the recipes and discussions of ingredients, dishes, and preparation techniques in the programme itself. These travel elements compound the 'pleasure to watch' element of spectacular television, outside the usual studio environment.

Harben was also involved with the first television food and cooking programmes connecting food and history. Dressing up in an approximation of historical costume and moving the already familiar format of the television food and cooking programme and studio set, to one which suggests an altogether different historical context, Harben was able to bring recipes from the past to life for a modern-day audience ready to celebrate the Coronation in 1953. Harben linked historical context throughout his television food and cooking programmes; heightening the spectacular aspect of his broadcasts that only television could show. He presented a combination of discussions of history, cooking history, re-constructing history through costume, and setting.

Television food and cooking programmes connected celebrities with the communication, preparation, and enjoyment of sharing food from the beginning. As aspects of 'spectacular' television, later television food and cooking programmes, such as those by Keith Floyd or The Two Fat Ladies, are often credited with creating this connection. Pre-war, Boulestin invited famous faces from theatre and society to join him in the studio to learn about *Polite Wine Drinking*, food preparation and for food parlour games such as *Bee For Boulestin* (also known as *Blind Man's Buffet*). Giving legitimacy to his own status as a celebrity; Boulestin interacted as an equal. The celebrities who joined him were friends of his, selected

by him and proposed to the BBC *by* him, for the programmes concerned. The BBC enjoyed these connections provided through him; the ability to 'persuade' well-known faces to enter the studios at Alexandra Palace to be broadcast to raise the spectacular nature of television. Before Boulestin, Dixon appeared as a famous face in her own right as part of the magazine programme *London Characters*. In the 1950s, Harben associated himself with the celebrity of Boulestin by recreating his food and cookery advice for the perfect omelettes by lip-synching along to a previously available 78rpm gramophone record of Boulestin providing cooking instructions. In the 1960s, Cradock created a television food and cooking programme with the inclusion of celebrities who she would cook for in the studio, before they all enjoyed the meal, and engaging them in an interview. These examples show that 'spectacular' television programmes existed alongside more 'ordinary' broadcasts at the time.

Previous research focused on gender, and specifically women, in programmes aimed at 'housewives'; the gender roles shown on screen with Marguerite Patten (Charlesworth 2022), gender roles behind the cameras in terms of production with the research by Irwin (2022), or the gendered audiences of Arnold (2023) and Murphy (2016). I have shown in Chapter Six that these examples of 'ordinary' or expected gender roles were part of the early television food and cooking programmes, as a new contribution to knowledge, this is developed this further. I outlined the example of Robins, herself an Executive with the Gas Board (and other organisations working with and for women), that her gender was a conflict point with the perception of how a women should be held by the BBC, both on screen and behind the scenes, as Arnold had previously argued. The clashes of ideas and battles between Robins and the BBC over what the 'housewife' wanted, and expected, to see show the views of women the BBC had at the time. Robins was required to support her male colleague Harben on screen and off, accepting the lesser role of 'The Afternoon Cook' to his 'The Television Cook'; later claiming to have taught him to cook. In his earliest days on television, she mentored him through his programme plans, from a nutritional and broadcasting perspective. Fellow presenter Patten fulfilled the more well-documented, gendered, role of on-screen demonstrator and 'friend' of the housewife (Charlesworth 2022; Moseley 2008). Feeling undervalued and under-used at the BBC, Robins eventually parted ways with them and left her broadcasting career behind to pursue roles with the

National Council of Women and Boards of organisations representing women in the fields of technology, education, and wider social causes; she was awarded an OBE for this work.

I have further developed the understanding of how gender was represented in different and surprising ways on television food and cooking programmes in Britain; differences in gender representations were evident from the beginning. Dixon was presented as a working cook, and Meighn as a strangely dressed domestic, certainly not representative of the audience. Boulestin presented himself as a Maître D' figure, running the operation, in command of every eventuality, dressed in a pinstripe suit and never as a 'cook' (certainly not 'a chef') and indeed distinguished from a traditional homemaker. It was his 'ordinary' domestic representation which provided a different and spectacular gender perspective for the time. Occasionally assisted on screen by his real-life male partner, Boulestin demonstrated 'acceptable' queer domesticity, which was been part of his life, and lifestyle, in London at the time. The audiences watching would possibly have known about his domestic situation and sexual orientation, from his associations with restaurants, the Theatre and society, but, regardless, they represented a 'spectacular' display of their everyday domesticity; cooking together, preparing meals and hosting friends and well-known faces in approximations of their own homes for all to see. This type of queer domesticity remains uncommon to see on television; real-life partners and family are less commonly referred to onscreen among those television food and cooking presenters (such as Nigel Slater and Yotam Ottolenghi) identifying as homosexual. Boulestin and Adair as a real-life queer couple, were certainly the first to appear together on television food and cooking programmes. This adds positively to established discussions of gender and early television food and cooking programmes, and also to the wider inclusion of queer identities on television generally. These indications of a more 'spectacular ordinariness' including a range of queer domesticities has been missing in research.

In Chapter Seven, alternative gender norms and domesticities in early television food and cooking programmes were discussed beyond Boulestin. The main audience for the BBC food and cooking programmes were women at home, housewives. The inclusion of male presenters at the forefront showed a flip of

traditional gender roles in the production of food. Harben was shown in a fabricated uniform of a blue and white striped butchers' apron (which no chef would wear), paired with a formal shirt and tie, instead of the uniform of a professional kitchen. The studio recreation was domestic, not professional. He did not wear a chef's hat or whites, and used supposedly 'ordinary' utensils to be found in kitchens at home. He was a spectacular representation of an imagined cook. His 'gender bending' demonstration was further amplified when he was assisted on screen by his real-life wife, who, on occasion, found her way into the studio to support Harben with non-cooking activities; clearing things away and moving things around for the camera. When he cooked alone Harben would refer to his home life, saying 'I cook this for my wife at home' and so on; further consolidating his switched traditional gender role in the preparation of cooking. From the set-up in the studio, Harben was elevated above his co-presenters Robins and Patten; they were subservient to his authority, despite cooking collectively. Certainly, his dishes were 'showier' and more spectacular than those presented by others, categorised as ordinary and every-day.

Harben was also joined by his daughter in the studio; showing her how to cook and prepare certain dishes. Robins did the same on at least one occasion. Although Patten appeared to stick to her role of cookery demonstrations for housewives, she too would indicate that she cooked with her daughter in magazine articles linked to her television programmes (Women's Day 1960). For Harben to be shown alongside his daughter by the BBC was presented as normal; for the audiences watching at home, it would have been spectacular to see, never mind to imagine.

When Cradock began cooking on television, her initial performances were with her husband; she adopted the traditional role of cook, he worked as her assistant. She adopted a 'bossy' tone with him, subverting the traditional roles in a subtle way to demonstrate her gender. Cradock refused to wear an apron in the kitchen, and on television, as a feminist statement, insisting that aprons marked women out as domestic slaves; she herself was a culinary artiste. The reversed power of the Cradock's demonstrated a different gender dynamic, appealing to less empowered women and men alike.

In terms of programmes, Harben would introduce a series of television food and cooking programmes aimed specifically at men; *The Man In The Kitchen* was designed to appeal to men, to show them how they could impress their wives and families with food and cooking. They were designed to combat negative connotations held at that time of gender roles being reversed at home; men rarely entered the kitchen to help, or took the lead to prepare food for their families as a role model and instructor. Harben appealed to men who were just as interested in food and cooking without threatening their own perceptions of masculinity and their established role within the home.

Television food and cooking programmes of this early period were designed and produced to appeal to mass audiences, as I have shown in Chapter Seven; one of the criteria Wheatley gives for 'spectacular' television. I have documented food and cooking programmes which deal with food history, travelogues, children, 'other' cultures and so on, as well as programmes intended for men as outlined above. The spectacular nature, from an audience perspective, of colour television, was shown through Harben being asked to trial colour television food and cooking programme in 1954. Cradock presented the first ever colour series, *Colourful Cooking*, in 1969, allowing people at home (with colour sets) to see food in all its glory. Cradock capitalised on this by including colour around the set, in her outfits and on the plate.

Creating a sense of history is another characteristic of 'spectacular' television suggested by Wheatley. I have shown in Chapter Seven that television food and cooking presenters linked to history by referencing, mimicking, and reviving cooks that came before them; Harben lip-synching for his life along to a recording of Boulestin, or Cradock aligning herself with the great French chef Escoffier in her programme broadcast live from the Royal Albert Hall. Television food and cooking presenters in the early era knew the value of historical associations for legitimacy and consistency.

Television food and cooking presenters were seen in their own programmes, and were regular guests on popular, so-called 'light entertainment' broadcasts. Dixon was part of an early talk show, a magazine programme interviewing interesting *London Characters*. Cradock appeared on an early edition of *Television Tea Party* in

1956 (ATPS 2023), designed to show television stars in a relaxed mode; not on ‘show’ in the studio. Cradock went on to appear regularly on television chat-shows such as *Parkinson*, *Wogan* and *Jonathon Ross*. With her husband Johnnie, she would guest on *The Generation Game*, *Juke Box Jury*, *What’s My Line*, *Celebrity Squares*, and other popular, prime-time programmes; showing a completely different side to her character. Cradock presented her own series of a light entertainment programme for ITV, *Late Extra* (see Geddes 2019). These opportunities to connect with audiences and be seen away from the kitchen setting, enhanced the spectacular nature of Cradocks programmes, giving her an edge as a personality. The way the presenters dressed on ’entertainment’ programmes was an enhanced version of how they appeared on studio kitchens.

Others were involved in presenting light entertainment programmes based on food and cookery. Boulestin created the format of *Bee For Boulestin*, also known as *Blind Man’s Buffet*, a television programme quiz parlour game. Invited celebrity guests were blindfolded and tasked with identifying dishes presented to them by Boulestin’s partner, Adair. Skinner was a regular guest presenter and quizzer on the game show *Know Your Onions*; guests answered food related questions and identified dishes and ingredients placed in front of them.

The presenters of the early television food and cooking programmes at times featured on light entertainment programmes by proxy, with comedians performing complex and often spectacular impersonations of them. Starting with Boulestin, lampooned by Charles Spence in a burlesque skit in 1938, followed by Benny Hill taking off Harben in the 1950s. Hill would go on to perform as Fanny Cradock in regular slots in his programme *Fun in the Kitchen*. With his sidekick as Johnnie, these performances were popular and helped to shape a familiarity around Cradock by those who had not seen her food and cooking programmes on television. Cradock was also impersonated by Freddie Starr on television, and she was undoubtedly the inspiration for the character Fanny Haddock on the popular radio series *Round The Horne.* The links created by these additional light entertainment programmes reinforced the extra-ordinary, spectacular personalities of the presenters of seemingly ordinary television food and cooking programmes; they were fun characters to be played with and enjoyed, as well as listened to and be taught by.

Television Food and Cooking as a centre for Innovation

A significant and unique contribution to knowledge that this thesis has provided is the connection between what was broadcast in terms of television food and cooking programmes and the contribution of the presenters themselves in innovating and creating the format, genre, content, and style of television food and cooking programmes. In Chapter Five, I applied the framework developed by Brian Winston (2006) to investigate the technological development of television, through his 'Social Sphere' lens. Winston used this to explain technological development. I used it to the analyse the development of television food and cooking programmes in Britain between 1936 and 1976. My research question suspected (informed by previous research for my master's dissertation which looked solely at the contribution of Fanny Cradock using her own personal archive) that the presenters themselves were instrumental in designing, delivering, and developing what we saw in those early broadcasts. The BBC initially felt that television was perhaps too ordinary to bother too much about (Wyndham Goldie 1977), instead focusing on the more spectacular radio broadcasts that were able to reach more homes across the country. The ground was laid for innovation, change and experimentation to flourish. I wanted to research the role of the presenters in that development, to discover if they grasped the opportunity to do something different and innovative which could be sustained and exploited by television broadcasters in the following years.

By examining the period and the various presenters as a collective, I have been able to map their work by analysing the BBC Written Archives (and other resources) to conclude that the unique situation of television food and cooking enabled the innovation suspected. Ideas were established, tested, and altered to match the changing social needs of the country. Formats were created, then suppressed by the BBC (in particular), before being distributed as established ideas. This was as a result of the work of the pioneer presenters; never credited to them. As Sellors (2010) outlined, I recognise that the presenters did not work in isolation, and as such were not auteurs, but were responsible for much about the broadcasts, from set design to soundtrack music. They were effectively 'left alone' to establish and develop the programmes (with at least initially little interference from producers

and going under the radar of management) and were able to maximise the opportunities for their own development. They developed themselves as 'stars', celebrities, personalities. They ensured that they linked other, often lucrative, opportunities to partner with industry and advertisers to promote products on screen, and in associated publication. They established the nuances of television food and cooking programmes; making them 'ordinary spectacles' on television.

Television food and cooking programmes had to start somewhere, in some format. I have shown that the ideas came from radio broadcasts, theatre presentations, demonstrations and filmed inserts. These were established by the presenters who were often asked to fill a particular time slot with whatever item they felt appropriate. The BBC felt that food and cooking programmes were of less interest than drama or music, but were keen to include something for, as they saw it, a different audience; women. I have shown that the early single programme broadcasts can be seen as trial and error of early ideas, leading to a prototype, developed and broadcast the following year with Boulestins first series, for example. The collective ideas for the first four decades can be seen as prompting what came next.

I have shown that the presenters and producers took the basic prototypes developed in the early years and replicated and duplicated them. The changes to society that the War brought about in terms of food availability, changing work patterns and employment generally and developments in the household dynamics, prompted further changes and developments in television food and cooking programmes. I have shown that the presenters and producers had differing ideas to the institution, the BBC, of what this should like, and who the audiences were; leading to the presenters being ever more inventive and creative in their work. As the BBC as an institution became more interested in television as a broadcasting medium - recognising that it was 'here to stay' - they attempted to take back control of the content and innovation contained within television food and cooking programmes. Presenters such as Terry plotted out each programme like a theatre script, others like Harben provided a short, written outline. Robins provided a topic only, speaking 'off the cuff' during broadcasts; preferring to dispense with written scripts altogether. Cradock provided detailed outlines linked to her own

books and other ideas, detailing a progression through each series of culinary ideas and expertise.

To standardise broadcasting output, the BBC thought that they could discourage invention and change, suppressing ideas which they felt were alternative to their plans, to 'protect' television food and cooking programmes. This led to an initial period of change in terms of presenters and programmes in the 1950s, ending with the diffusion of a more standardised version of what a television food and cooking programme should be like in the 1970s. This continued until a new period of change and invention in later decades. These television food and cooking programmes, from the 1980s and 1990s, are the focus of recent research, which views them as providing new content, invention, and ideas for development. As I have shown here, the history and development of the ideas came much earlier and returned later in cycles of innovation.

Further research

I believe that this research period has been important as a unique contribution to knowledge; prompting contrary or connected research questions from other researchers of television food and cooking programmes, and television more generally.

During the research process, examples of television food and cooking programmes have been 'discovered' in the visual archives; as a result of my research and because of the one-hundred-year anniversary of the BBC. This centenary prompted some 'opening up' of the previously unavailable visual archival material to be made available for academic research. I worked with Learning on Screen to promote examples, although they 'arrived' too late to be the main focus of research for this thesis. By connecting the examples of available visual material with the archival written and photographic resources, I have provided strong and compelling arguments to show that 'ordinary' and 'spectacular' television food and cooking programmes have been part of the history of the genre from the earliest broadcasts.

Other areas of knowledge could still benefit from more research. During my research, for example, I discovered that representation of and contribution by British Asians on screen happened earlier in television food and cooking than had been previously recognised. The BFI, in honour of the BBC Centenary, released a list of their One Hundred BBC Television 'Gamechangers'; including the Madhur Jaffrey series *Indian Cookery* from 1982 at number sixty-three. Although they acknowledge that Jaffrey was not the 'first' representation of Indian food on television, they do credit her programme with changing Britain's attitude and understanding of ingredients and techniques used in Indian cooking, and ultimately encouraging Britain to become more 'multi-cultural'. I have shown in earlier chapters, however, that representations of Indian food and culture were part of television food and cooking programmes from the beginning; certainly earlier than acknowledged by the BFI, or indeed by the BBC.

Similarly, Sanderson (1995) lists the first 'real' gay people to appear on screen in a news broadcast in 1954 (p. 16) and then in an ITV documentary in 1957 (ibid.). The BBC, in an online 'timeline' of LGBTQ+ representation by the broadcaster, identifies the drag performer Douglas Byng, as the first television appearance by a member of the LGBTQ+ community in Britain, broadcast in 1938. My research has highlighted Boulestin as appearing, with his real-life partner, uncovers a different history of LGBTQ+ representation on television in Britain.

Other areas for future research could include applying my methodological approach to other early 'instructional' lifestyle programmes in Britain, such as gardening, DIY, and other programmes; these were broadcast with the aim of replicating educational advice and tips for domestic use, in the same way as television food and cooking programmes. They would benefit from a more thorough analysis. These programmes in the earliest days of television in Britain were broadcast in similar time slots to food and cooking programmes, and some presenters, for example C.H. Middleton in his gardening programmes, are not recognised for their contribution to the development of future programmes. As noted previously, Boulestin appeared alongside Middleton in some programmes before the war. Middleton's gardening programmes after the war were subject to Ministry of Food advice and scrutiny, and were then included in some ways with other domestic magazine programmes. Later, they found 'new' audiences during

the 1980s and beyond, as standalone programmes in a variety of formats. Programmes focused on DIY feature in the very early schedules of the BBC.

My methodology could be used as a template to map against programmes (including food and cookery, as well as others) made and broadcast after 1976. These have a higher likelihood of being available to view in the archives; this is not guaranteed. Availability of written archive materials may be less forthcoming due to BBC Written Archive policies, where information is only available after a certain time period has lapsed, or in cases where personnel mentioned within files are deceased. Consideration could be given to aspects I have highlighted with the thesis, for example food travelogues, food presenter links with light entertainment or gameshows, or cooking with and for children, or food history programmes; all make strong subjects for research. Research may also focus behind the camera, looking at the producers, directors, and camera operators as examples of research topics to consider in connection with television food and cooking programmes. The contribution of S.E. Reynolds and others, in particular, would be a valuable area for scholarly research.

Final thoughts

Television food and cooking programmes in Britain have been part of the schedules from the very beginning, and show no sign of reducing in quantity or scope as television broadcasters continue to adapt, shift focus and compete for the audiences of the future. By understanding the innovation cycles of change involved in early food and cooking programmes, and realising how they evolved, perhaps we can learn to adapt more strongly in the future.

To conclude, I have demonstrated that television food and cooking programmes in Britain between 1936 and 1976 were important; collectively and in their own right. They contributed to the development of the format(s) which followed. Rather than being dismissed merely as ‘ordinary’ and as such less important for research and documentation, I have shown that they were important and ‘spectacular’, and as vehicles for the presenters to drive forward change and innovation. This deeper understanding and knowledge about the development of television food and cooking programmes is itself a new contribution, and also indicates other

contributions to the field of media history - in particular the development of programmes at the BBC, during a period when the BBC itself was questioning whether television itself should be 'ordinary' or 'spectacular'; the culture and purpose of their own television broadcasts. My own contribution will be of interest to other media history scholars, scholars looking at gendered programmes and other areas of historical research linked to television.

The history and development of television food and cooking programmes outlined here is one that culinary entrepreneurs pre-television, such as Mrs Agnes Marshall, would have recognised, used and expanded on. The presenters of these early television food and cooking programmes in Britain did exactly that.

History itself is an interesting topic, and can also be a tool or a lens to show how the future may be. By recognising the contributions, whether ordinary or spectacular, of those that came before as inspiration, as a springboard for change, and as a for reflection of what 'works' best for television producers, presenters and audiences making and watching television food and cookery programmes, formats and styles; history can only help.

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TV Mirror. 1954c. *Look Out For The TV Teacher.* January 23rd. Vol. 2. No. 4. p. 26.

TV Mirror. 1954d. *Up and Over.* February 27th. Vol. 2. No. 9. p. 7.

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TV Mirror. 1954g. *TV Stars on a Desert Island.* March 13th. Vol. 2. No. 11. p. 3.

TV Mirror. 1954h. *Mr Harben meets Mr Harben.* March 27th. Vol. 2. No. 13. p. 7.

TV Mirror. 1954i. *The Face Of Them All – Clifford Stanton*. May 8th. Vol. 2. No. 19. p. 23.

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TV Mirror. 1955c. *Harben's Choice.* November 19th. Vol. 5. No. 21. p. 8.

TV Mirror. 1955d. *Philip Harben's Grace.* December 24th. Vol. 5. No.26. p. 6.

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TV Mirror. 1957b. *Cooking with the Cradocks – Swiss Roll That Never Cracks.* April 6th. p. 16.

TV Mirror. 1957c. *Frying Tonight with the Cradocks – Fish and Chips.* April 13th. p. 23.

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Woman's Day. 1960c. *Right Way Christmas Cookery.* November 12th. p. 29.

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https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/prog/RT3B07BA?bcast=119274612 (Accessed 02 Aug 2023)

Fanny Cradock Cooks for Christmas, Your Christmas Cake, 19:00 24/12/2020, BBC4, 15 mins.
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The Big Time, Gwen Troake's Banquet, 23:20 29/10/2006, BBC4, 55 mins.
https://learningonscreen.ac.uk/ondemand/index.php/prog/005D23DC?bcast=21855277 (Accessed 03 Aug 2023)

Appendix A

Files accessed at the BBC Written Archive Centre, Caversham, Reading. Two visits were made: the first on 7th October 2021 (marked *); and the second on 25th August 2022 (marked **). Files marked *** were accessed prior to the commencement of this PhD.

Files which have been referenced in the thesis are shown in bold. The other files have been useful for background context and reading, but have not been referenced in the Thesis.

T32/1/1/TV Talks/About The Home/File 1a/1951-1952 *
T32/1/2/TV Talks/About The Home/File 1b/1951-52 *
T32/1/3/TV Talks/About The Home/File 2a/1953 *
T32/1/4/TV Talks/About The Home/File 2b/1953 *
T32/1/5/TV Talks/About The Home/File 3a/1954-1955 *
T32/1/6/TV Talks/About The Home/File 3b/1954-1955 *
T32/1/7/TV Talks/About The Home/File 4a/1956-1957 *
T32/1/8/TV Talks/About The Home/File 4b/1956-1957 *
T32/1/9/TV Talks/About The Home/File 4c/1956-1957 *
T32/3/Television/Subject File/Talks/ About The Home/New Homes For Old/File 6a/1955 *

T32/4/TV Talks/About The Home Programme/1954-1959	*
RCONT1/BOULESTIN, Marcel/Talks/1930-1938	*****
TVTAL1/Television Contributors/BOULESTIN, Marcel/Talks/File 1/1936-1937	*****
TVARt1/BOULESTIN, Marcel/TV Talks/File 2/1938-1939	******
T32/68/TV Talks/Bees/Bees for Boulestin/1939	*****
T32/647/1/Cookery Club/Auditions/Television/Subject File	*
T32/648/1/Cookery Club Recipes/File 1/General	*****
T32/648/2/Cookery Club Recipes/File 2	*
RCONT1/Talks/CRADOCK, Phyllis (Fanny)/File 1/1949-1954	***
TVART1/CRADOCK, Phyllis (Fanny)/File 1/1953-1962	*******
RCONT1/CRADOCK, Phyllis (Fanny)/File 2a/1955-1959	***
T32/486/1/Challenge in the Kitchen/1955	*******
T14/8/TV Outside Broadcasts/Bon Viveur at the Albert Hall/1956	*******
RCONT1/Talks/CRADOCK, Phyllis (Fanny)/File 2b/1960-1962	***
RCONT12/Talks/CRADOCK, Phyllis (Mrs)/File 3/1963-1967	***
RCONT12/Talks/CRADOCK, Phyllis (Mrs) (Fanny)/File 4/1968-1972	***
T32/1169/1/Kitchen Party/Pilot and General/1963-1964	*******

TVART3/CRADOCK, Fanny/File 2/1963-1970 *******

R43/420/420/1/Home Cooking/1964-1969 *******

T57/52/1/Home Cooking/Pastry/1965-1966 ***

T57/103/1/Home Cooking/General/1966-1967 ***

R43/424/1/How To Give A Dinner Party/1969 ***

R43/567/1/Correspondence/Ten Classic Dishes/1967-1969 ***

TVART5/CRADOCK, Fanny/TV Contracts/1971-1980 ***

T32/125/1/TV Talks/Designed For Women/File 1a/1947-1948 *****

T32/125/2/TV Talks/Designed For Women/File 1b/1948 *****

T32/125/3/TV Talks/Designed For Women/File 2a/1949 *****

T32/125/4/TV Talks/Designed For Women/File 2b/1949-1951 *****

C1/175/1/TV Cookery Programmes and Presenters/HARBEN, Philip/1936-1998 *

RCONT1/Contributor/Talks/HARBEN, Philip/March 1943-1962 *

RCONT12/Contributor/Talks/HARBEN, Philip/File 2/1963-1967 *

RCONT12/Contributor/Talks/HARBEN, Philip/File 3/1968-1972 *

Personal Files/Television/Talks/File 1/HARBEN, Philip/1946-1949 *****

TVTALa/Television Contributors/HARBEN, Philip/TV Talks/File 2a/1950 *****

TVTAlks2b/Television Contributors/HARBEN, Philip/TV Talks/File 2b/1951 *****

TVTalks2c/Television Contributors/HARBEN, Philip/TV Talks/File 2c/1952-1954 *****

Personal Files/Television/Talks/File3/HARBEN, Philip/1955-61 *

RCONT1/TWIGG, Phyllis/Talks/File 1/1931-1962/(also known as Moira Meighn) *****

RCONT1/Talks/PATTEN, Marguerite/File 1/1946-1962 *****

RCONT12/PATTEN, Marguerite/Speaker/File 2/1963-1967 *

RCONT12/Contributor/Talks/PATTEN, Marguerite/File 3/1968-72 *

TVART1/Television/Personal File/ROBINS, Joan/File 1/1947-1961 *****

RCONT1/ROSE, Jacqueline (Miss)/Contributors/Artists/File 1/1949-1962 ******

RCONT12/ROSE, Jacqueline (Miss)/Contributors/Artists/File 2/1963-1967 ******

RCONT12/ROSE, Jacqueline (Miss)/Contributors/Artists/File 3/1968-1972 ******

RCONT1/SKINNER, Zena/Talks/File 1/1954-1962 **

RCONT12/SKINNER, Zena/Contributor/Speaker/File 2/1963-1967 **

M26/174/1/Midland Region TV Contributor/SKINNER, Zena/TV Talks/1965 **

RCONT12/SKINNER, Zena/Contributor/Speaker/File 3/1968-1972 **

TVART3/SKINNER, Zena/1963-1970 ******

TVART5/SKINNER, Zena/Talks/1971- **

R43/608/1/SKINNER, Zena/Publications/1966-1970 **

RCONT15/SKINNER, Zena/Speaker/File 1/1973-1982 **

R43/1659/1/Zena Skinner Cookery Books **

R43/1658/1/Zena Skinner Cookbook **

TVART1/TERRY, Josephine/Talks/File 1/1946-1954 **

RCONT1/Talks/WEBB, Arthur (Mrs)/File 1a/1931-1936 **

RCONT1/Talks/WEBB, Arthur (Mrs)/File 1b/1937-1941 **

RCONT1/Talks/WEBB, Arthur (Mrs)/File 2/1942-1945 **

RCONT1/Talks/WEBB, Arthur (Mrs)/File 3/1946-1962 **

Appendix B

Historiography Timeline

The following table shows…

Year	Date	Time	Person	Programme	Producer	#	Description	Comments
1936	18th November	21:23	Rosina Dixon	London Characters			The Singing Cook	
	9th December	15:00 and 21:00	Moira Meighn	Quarter of an Hour Meals				
	25th December	15:00	BJ Hulbert	How To Carve A Turkey				
1937	14th January	21:20	Monsieur Dutry and Monsieur Clafour	Art in the Kitchen				

	21st January	15:00 and 21:00	X. Marcel Boulestin			27		
	11th March	15:00 and 21:00	An MP and John Hilton	Home Affairs – Food and Health	Mrs Mary Adams		With samples of food	
	24th March	15:00	Janet Bond	Picture Page	S.E. Reynolds		Lecturer on Canned Foods	Photo in BBC Photo Library
	7th April	15:00	Frau Freda Breur	Picture Page			German Housewife	From the Ideal Homes Exhibition
	25th August	21:00	Miss HM Tress	Picture Page			Demonstration of cooking plums	From Kings College
	27th October	15:30	Florence White and Edith Lockyer	Picture Page	S.E. Reynolds		Interview with a cook and a maid	

	3rd November	15:30	Ruth Bradshaw	Picture Page	Mary Sharpe		Attractive potato dishes	Potato Marketing Board
	8th December	15:30	Various	Picture Page	S.E. Reynolds		Catering Exhibition from Olympia	Sugar Cathedral, Army School of Cookery, - model field kitchen of Crimea
1938	12th January	15:30	Various	Picture Page			Children's Cookery Course participants	
	1st April	15:00	Charles Heslop	Nice Work – A Crazy Programme	Cecil Madden		A burlesque of Marcel Boulestin	Comedian
	7th July	21:30	André Simon	Picture Page			President of the Wine and Food Society	Showing a collection of old wine bottles

	30th August	14:30	Mrs Arthur Webb	Sulphured Plums				
	17th November	15:30	AF Mussard	Picture Page			Describing life as a cook on a fishing trawler	
1939	31st January	21:00	Jane Carr as Mrs Hamish Macpherson	Comedy Cabaret			Giving listeners a recipe	
	20th April	15:30	Sergeants Carney, Wood, Ibell and Howie	Picture Page			Finalists from the Army Cookery Championship Aldershot	Photo in BBC Photo Library
	25th August	11:00	Mrs Sterling	Come And Be Televised			Chinese Food and Customs	
	28th August	11:00	Mr W Gardner-Stanbridge	Come And Be Televised			Bachelors Hints to Housewives	

The following table shows post-war

Year	Date	Time	Person	Programme	Producer	#	Description	Comments

1946	12th June	20:55	Philip Harben	Cookery		159	How to Make Lobster Vol Au Vents	
	11th November	15:00 and 20:45	Josephine Terry	Josephine Terry’s Kitchen	Mrs Mary Adams	21	Offers practical advice to the busy women	
1947	22nd September	15:45	Joan Robins	Housewife in the Kitchen		96	Gives her solution to the weekly end-of-ration problem	“have your pencil and paper ready”
	6th November	15:00	Marguerite Patten	Designed for Women		180	Cookery segment	
1948	9th September	15:00	Yvonne Arnaud	Designed for Women	Helena Malinowska		Cookery With Tears Sketch	Comedian
	30th November	15:00	Sarah Churchill	Designed for Women			Some hints on making quick and exciting supper dishes	
1949	2nd June	15:00	Janet Walker	For The Housewife		2	Demonstrates two vegetarian dishes: cold fruit soup and salad with nut cutlets	Vegetarian

	8th September	15:00	Raymond Bush	Designed for Women			Gives advice on storing, cooking and eating apples	
	18th November	15:00	Rosemary Hume	Designed for Women			Describes training for a career in cookery	
	18th November	15:00	Muriel Downes	Designed for Women			Demonstrates a special chestnut dish from France	
	23rd November	15:00	Alexander Moyes	For The Housewife			Bachelor cook who has learned his way about the kitchen - From his own collection of recipes, he makes three savoury dishes to appeal particularly to a man's taste	
1950	13th February	15:00	Christine Andrews	Designed for Women			Has cooked for many famous people, shows some favourite garnishes	
	6th September	17:40	Kitty Wilson	For The Children	Pamela Brown	4	Shows how to bake some scones – assisted by	

							Pierre of the laurel Puppet Company	
1952	3rd January	15:00	Jacqueline Rose	For Women: About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	10	How to make a chocolate cake without baking	Children's segment 1955 available on BoB
	24th April	15:00	Margaret Forrester	For Women: About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	5	Shows the traditional Scottish ways of making scones	Scottish
1953	22nd January	15:00	Signora Vera Calderoui	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		How to bring an Italian savour to standard English food	Italian
	12th March	15:00	Mia Vanderberg	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		Foreign Cookery – how to cook some typical Dutch dishes	Dutch
	14th May	15:00	Margaret Alcorn	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	9	How to make Eccles Cakes	Regional - Northern

	16th July	15:00	Hedi Schnabl	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		How to cook a genuine Viennese Steak	Austrian
	19th November	15:15	Lawrence Martin	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	2	How to use better sugar supplies to make sweets at home using ordinary kitchen utensils	Confectionery
1954	18th February	15:15	Ann Hardy	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	2	How to make a sponge cake	
	6th May	15:15	Evelyn Rose	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	19	How to make cheese blintzes paper thin pancakes, filled with either a cream cheese mixture of a savoury meat or chicken filling; and then fried to a golden brown crispness	Jewish
	8th July	15:00	Edna Williams	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	7	Shows equipment and methods used for making red-currant jelly at home	Senior instructor of the

								Derbyshire Rural Domestic Economy Centre
	15th July	15:00	Else Forster	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	3	Shows Marguerite Patten the traditional German way of making Apfelkuchen	German
	22nd July	15:00	Gladys Mann	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		How to cook Yorkshire Curd cake	
	16th September	15:00	Gretel Beer	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	2	Bischofsbrot and Salzurger Nocker	Austrian
	23rd September	15:00	Kamila Tyabji	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	2	The traditional way of making curry and other dishes	Indian
1955	13th January	15:00	Elinor Jones	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	7	An Easter Bride learns from Elinor Jones how to cook vegetables	Basic Cookery for Brides

	17th February	22:15	Phyllis Cradock (Fanny)	Kitchen Magic	Alan Sleath	200+	The Bon Viveur husband and wife cookery team present an unusual style of cookery to a studio audience at the Television Theatre	
	21st April	15:00	Helen Burke	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		Two popular Canadian sweets: Lemon Meringue Pie and Pineapple Chiffon Pudding	Canadian
	5th May	15:00	Beatrice M Brown	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		Apple Courting Cake	Traditional Dish from Cumberland
	9th August	15:00	Constance Price	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		A West-Country Dish	
	25th August	15:00	Marie-Jeanne	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds	3	How to prepare a Rum Baba by a method not well known in this country	French

	15th September	15:00	Jytte Hardisty	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		An Aeggekage – Danish Egg cake	Danish
	22nd September	15:00	George Dertu	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		Cooks a Gourjonnade de Filets de Soles Murat	French
	20th October	15:00	Jean Watmough	About The Home	S.E. Reynolds		Apple Cheese Crisp	

The following table shows post 1955

Year	Date	Time	Person	Programme	Producer	#	Description	Comments
1959	12th February	14:45	Zena Skinner	Mainly For Women	Ann Shead	200+	Brandy Snaps	
1969	26th September	18:00	Graham Kerr	Entertaining With Kerr		100+	The Galloping Gourmet – a light-hearted look at one of his favourite recipes and cooks it with skill and enthusiasm	A new series from Canada
1973	12th September	14:45	Delia Smith	Family Fare	Betty White	500+	Convertible Dishes – Alpine Eggs and Fruit	

							Tarts – these two dishes can be cooked fairly quickly and cheaply for every day or, alternatively, they can be jazzed up for a special	
1978	25th October	13:00	Lalita Ahmed	Pebble Mill At One			Indian Cookery	Indian
1982	13th September	19:05	Madhur Jaffrey	Madhur Jaffrey's Indian Cookery			Actress and international cookery expert will show lovers of Indian food how to achieve those subtle and exotic flavours in their won kitchens	Indian
1984	29th October	19:35	Ken Hom	Chinese Cookery			Introducing the classic techniques of Chinese Cooking, demonstrates his simple method of preparing one of China's most spectacular dishes – Peking Dick	Chinese

1985	14th November	18:45	Keith Floyd	Floyd on Fish	David Pritchard	600+	Fish	Series of Seven
1988	4th October	20:00	Gary Rhodes	Floyd on Britain and Ireland	David Pritchard		Floyd visits his old chum Gary Rhodes to cook Britain's signature dish, braised oxtail	
1992	1st October	20:00	Mireille Johnston	A Cook's Tour of France			First of a six part series celebrating modern French cuisine, presented by Parisian cookery writer	
1995	12th September	20:30	Rick Stein	Rick Stein's Taste of the Sea	David Pritchard		Fish	
1998	23rd November	20:30	Nigella Lawson	Food and Drink			Guest chef Nigella Lawson cooks apricots stuffed with goat's cheese and pistachios	
1999	14th April	20:00	Jamie Oliver	The Naked Chef	Patricia Llewellyn		Chef Jamie Oliver strips down recipes to the bare	A new six part series

							essentials, preparing simple but delicious meals in his London flat	

Appendix C

Winston's Social Sphere of Development Model

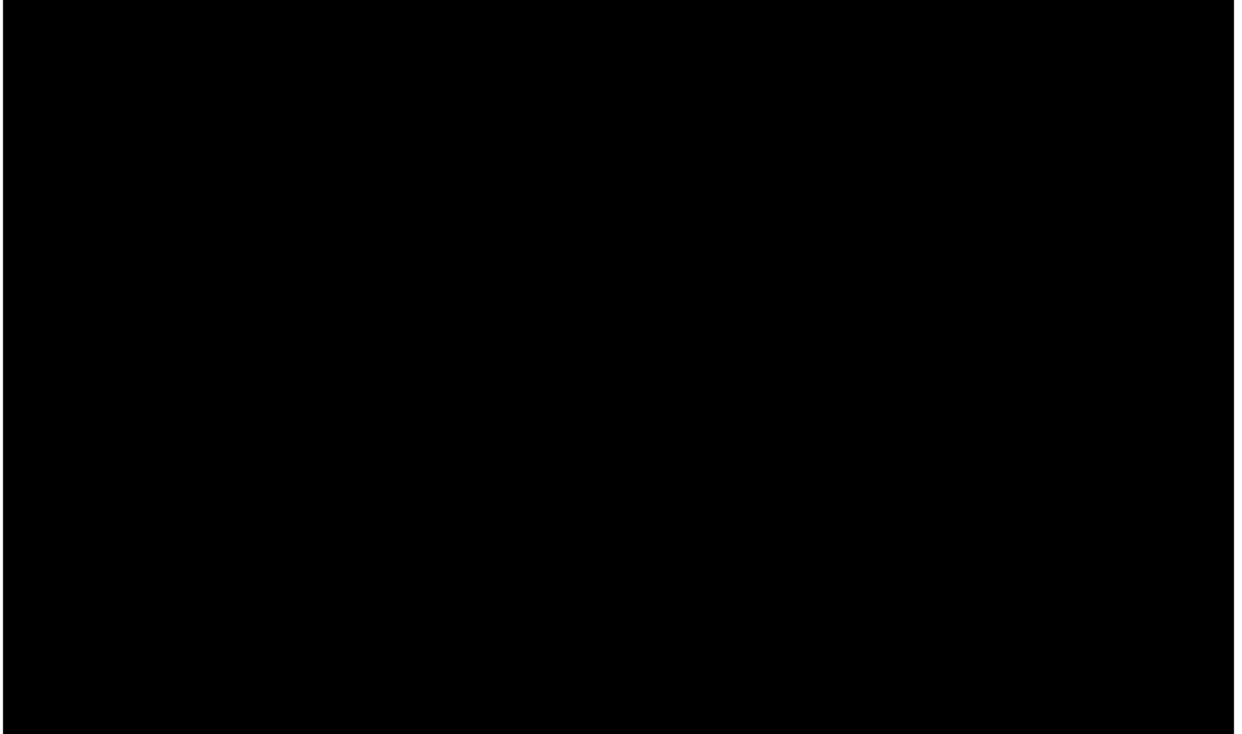

Figure 14. From Media, Technology and Society. 1998. p. 14.