

Honor Balfour

Helen Langley tells the story of the career of the Liberal activist Honor Balfour in the BBC's current affairs and political coverage.

What Honor

The pioneering broadcasting career



HONOR BALFOUR'S BROADCASTING career lasted over thirty years. This article, a companion to that of 2013,¹ focuses primarily on her contribution to the expanding, often innovatory, coverage of topical issues by BBC radio, which formed the mainstay of her work, and to afternoon television programmes for women. The files held in the BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC) detail much

of the extent and content of her broadcasting career (some programme files do not survive); they were the key component for this article – especially newly released files – in reconstructing this previously unexplored aspect of Balfour's life.² The article also draws on recorded conversations between the writer and Honor Balfour in 1997–98.³ Work on the article was boosted by invitations to give a talk on

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er of Honor Balfour (1912 – 2001)

Honor's career, and to contribute to the blogs of Vote100 and BBC history research.⁴

Researching the article opened up unexpected byways into the careers of two once-prominent Liberals who were at the forefront of BBC innovation: Stephen Bonarjee (1912–2003) and Doreen Gorsky (1912–2001), known professionally by her maiden name, Stephens. Inevitably, it became apparent that Honor's relationship with the Liberal Party differed from that described in the 2013 article. Her gradual disengagement from the party is symptomatic of its then decline. Stephens made a similar journey. Bonarjee took a different route. After he retired from the BBC he returned to work for the Liberals. The post-war party rarely featured in Honor's journalism, but several leading Liberals such as Lady Megan Lloyd George (1902–66) and Sir Dingle Foot (1905–78) remained close friends. Honor temporarily broke with the party in the wake of the 1956 Suez Crisis. But in the mid-1960s her donation to the appeal for funds to reduce the party's overdraft suggests residual sympathy.⁵

Honor's interviews are briefly mentioned in *Mothers of Liberty: Women who built British Liberalism*.⁶ The intention in this article is to reveal how she became, arguably, the first significant woman broadcaster on current affairs.

London print journalism

Honor already had 'form' as an innovator in journalism, so it is no surprise to find her at

the forefront of innovation in the BBC's handling of topical issues. After graduating from Oxford, she wrote for the *Oxford Mail*, but she was always set on London. As a founding member of and the only woman on *Picture Post*'s editorial team in 1938, she contributed numerous articles, from the dummy issue onwards. Observing the way in which the gifted editor, the Hungarian-born refugee from Nazi Germany Stephan Lorant (1901–97), used photographs to narrate a story made a lasting impression on her.⁷

After Lorant left for America in 1940, his successor, Tom (later Sir Tom) Hopkinson (1905–90) marginalised Honor's contribution to the magazine both then and in later accounts of *Picture Post*. Consigned 'to the attic to write obituaries',⁸ Honor knew she must leave; but the manner of her departure – whether Hopkinson sacked her in 1944, or she forestalled him by resigning – is unclear.⁹ Intent on a career in Whitehall, Honor instead found herself scooped up by Walter Graebner (1909–76) into first *Life* and then *Time*, the American magazines owned by Henry Luce (1898–1967). With the war reaching a critical stage, coverage of Anglo-American relations required strengthening. As the only British member and, again, the only woman on the London editorial team of *Time* (with her freedom to contribute to non-American media outlets),¹⁰ Honor had a base from which to relaunch and develop her career in the British press and in broadcast journalism.¹¹

Left: Detail from *Radio Times* advertisement for *It's My Opinion*, 21 May 1958. (© Radio Times/Immediate Media)

What Honor Did Next: the pioneering broadcasting career of Honor Balfour (1912–2001)

'My outlet was really the BBC'¹²

Honor's first connection with the BBC was literary. In December 1942 she unsuccessfully submitted a short story for consideration. She next appears in the BBC files in October 1944, fortified with the backing of Lady Violet Bonham Carter, later Baroness Asquith of Yarnbury (1887–1969), then a governor of the BBC. In later life Honor would do an amusing parody of Lady Violet's comments during meetings of the Liberal Party's national executive. The BBC WAC files reveal a warmer connection. Lady Violet probably alerted Honor that the BBC would be looking for a successor to Ernest Atkinson for the programme *Parliamentary Summary* – the vacancy was not generally known and Atkinson's departure for the United States still unconfirmed (he later decided not to go). The controller of news, conscious of the director general's reminder that Honor's status as a parliamentary candidate might be seen as compromising her suitability, could only advise her that there may be other opportunities.¹³

In February 1945, Honor made her broadcasting debut¹⁴ on *London Calling Europe*. A six-minute contribution to 'Letterbox' on *London Calling* in October closed her first year as a broadcaster. In the following year, 1946, she was contracted to make three broadcasts, appearing on the Home Service and the Light Programme.

Woman's Hour

Her appearance in January 1947 on the Light Programme's new *Woman's Hour* (first broadcast in October 1946), in the 'What's Going On' current affairs slot, was a career game changer. On average she appeared on the programme once or twice month in the late 1940s.¹⁵ She covered mainly social and economic issues, starting with the White Paper on manpower – further explored in July's talk on 'Wages and the Direction of Labour'.¹⁶ For her talk on the Marshall Plan in July she could draw on her knowledge of Anglo-American relations.

The *Woman's Hour* work allowed Honor to develop what became her speciality: short commentaries and/or interviews on topical issues, the scripts delivered by 11.30 am on the day of the broadcast (*Woman's Hour* was, at that time, broadcast in the early afternoon). Studies of the programme's early years reveal the challenges. One was to appeal both to housewives and stay-at-home mothers, and to women who had had or wanted to have a career. How women were regarded, and the roles in society they were to adopt in the decade after the war,

influenced the programme. It is a topic rarely addressed by Honor: her outlook, as the titles of most her talks suggest, was different.¹⁷ The programmes paved the way for her later television career.

Stephen Bonarjee and topical talks

In January 1949 the radio producer responsible for topical talks programmes on both the Home Service and Light Programme, Stephen Bonarjee, with whom Honor would work over many years, invited her to join the expert panel composed of serious journalists – he was averse to what he termed 'pundits' – on a new, fifteen-minute programme to be broadcast initially twice a week, Tuesdays and Fridays, and subsequently five days a week, after the Ten O'Clock News on the Light Programme.¹⁸ Originally titled *Tonight's News Topic*, it was soon renamed the more snazzy *Topic for Tonight*.

Many are familiar with the contribution of Grace Wyndham Goldie (1900–96) and her male acolytes to the BBC's development, but newly released material in WAC suggest that the working partnership of Bonarjee and Honor Balfour is significant in its own way. From *Topic for Tonight* onwards, Honor was invited to participate in the dummy runs, and eventual panels, of virtually all the new topical radio programmes introduced by Bonarjee. When you are trying to convince your bosses that a programme will 'fly', it is vital to use people you know can deliver and have potential. Honor met those criteria. And while she is not the only one who did, it is striking how often she was called upon to fulfil that role – especially given contemporary attitudes towards women's voices. It took decades to shift these. The broadcaster Libby Purves (b. 1950) was told, 'a woman's voice would be heard as one of four things: "schoolgirl, schoolmarm, mumsy or vamp". Of course there were exceptions, but, on the whole, professionally ambitious women avoided the trap of being demonstrably feminine'.¹⁹

While researching this article I discovered that Bonarjee, like Honor, had contested a school mock election as a Liberal. In retirement he became press secretary for the Liberals, and chair of the National Liberal Club, 1994–97. In his 1980 oral history interview with George Scott (1925–88), Bonarjee described Honor as the first significant woman current affairs broadcaster.²⁰

In the official history of the BBC, Asa Briggs described *Topic for Tonight* as the 'progenitor of hundreds of programmes' dedicated to events

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of the day. It was aimed at ‘the average Light Programme listener who had left school at 14 or 15 and whose ideas on economics are nebulous and parochial’.²¹ Its longevity suggests success – despite a disparaging report in 1952 which accused it of talking over the heads of most of its audience.

Topic for Tonight’s significance as a pioneer of topical radio has been overshadowed by the prominence given to *Home and Abroad*, the fore-runner of magazine programmes including, in its original format, the *Today* programme. But *Topic for Tonight* was a trailblazer. It fed into the ‘cultural pyramid’ strategy: the ‘notion listeners start with easier stuff and progress ...’ to the Home Service and, very rarely, the Third programme.²² An ambition rooted in the regeneration of post-war Britain. In September 1955, Bonarjee selected her for the panel to trial the introduction of the occasional five-minute *Topic* interview.²³ How much she was aware of the rivalry between Bonarjee in the Talks

department and the older, bigger, News department, keen to promote and protect their pool of news analysts, is unclear.

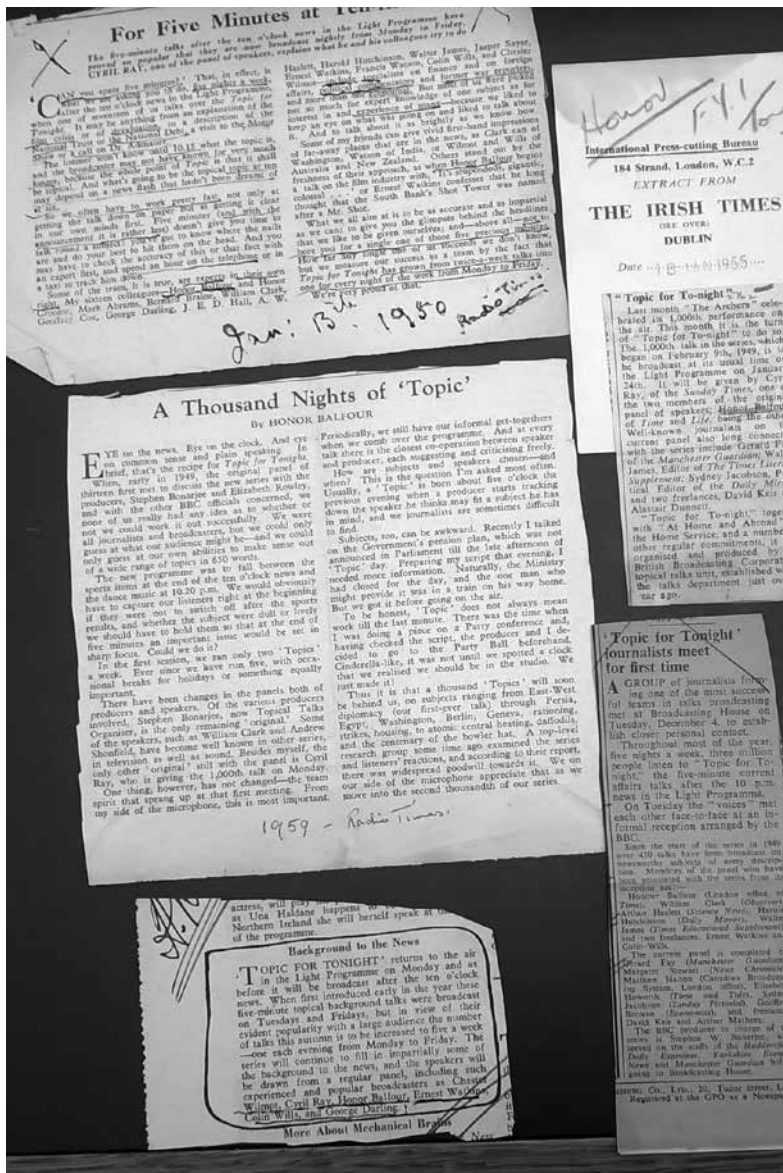
To Bonarjee, *Topic* was ‘... a breakthrough ... the first dent in the tyranny ... of the scrutiny system ... a script had to be seen by a senior person, generally an assistant head ... [or similar] ... who would comment ... ask for changes – even in the language ... However, with TOPIC because it was five nights a week [and] scripts didn’t normally arrive until 8.30 or ... later[;] senior staff ... had gone home ... [so] for the first time ... they had to trust us. ... They [saw] it the following morning. One had to deliver a p-as-b script ... But ... that’s not the same thing’.²⁴

‘[*Topic*] ran for 440’ ... we were given a pretty tight brief. There was no question of course of personal interpretation on the part of the contributors. But they were allowed considerable freedom to analyse an issue or a situation or a subject in a nonpartisan way. They were basically ... designed to inform, and inform at a popular level – because remember this was on the Light Programme ... not the speaker’s personal view, but trying to summarize ... informed comment and opinion whether in the Press or elsewhere’.²⁵

Sir Ian Jacob (1888–1993), the ‘most underrated of post-war directors of the BBC’, was supportive, taking an interest in programmes like *Home and Away* because ‘he wanted more topicality and so on’. Jacob was ‘... involved in a number of quite direct situations ... and on every occasion he made the right direction ...’²⁶ Choice of subject for *Topic* was mainly by producers. Honor’s remit hardly altered throughout the years the programme ran. In 1951 her areas were politics, descriptive, women’s interest, general topics. By the 1956–57 session she had shed women’s topics (possibly with some relief); her remit now comprising home affairs, the United States, and general.²⁷ During the five years in which she combined membership of the panels for both *Topic* and the Home Service *Home and Abroad*, launched in 1954, Honor’s voice was heard most often on the former programme. (See Figure 1.)

Rarely was Honor’s broadcasting criticised. The first time, in 1949, could have derailed her career. The formidable Mary Somerville (1897–1963), then the assistant controller of the Talks Division,²⁸ was thinking of dropping Honor from the *Woman’s Hour* current affairs slot because although ‘... undoubtedly a good journalist, careful in checking her facts and sensible about policy matters ... I don’t myself think she has much talent for simplification ... and has

Fig. 1. A selection of Honor Balfour’s newspaper cuttings relating to *Topic for Tonight*. (Bodleian Library, MS. Balfour dep. 100)



shown little or no flair for ... what would interest the less well-educated listener'. Fortunately, others in the meeting to suggest contributors to a *News Commentary* panel valued Honor more highly, Louise Cochrane (1918–2012) remarking that 'women who can do this work are extremely rare'.²⁹

Cochrane's faith was later validated. In the 1950–51 session, listeners judged Honor to be *Topic's* best speaker.³⁰ There was scope for improvement, however. An assessment panel in 1952 noted, 'The figures show her to be consistently popular with audiences. She always writes too much, but the material is lively and reliable. Microphone style excellent, but is now rather over-doing some of the "tricks of the trade"'.³¹ These were not just matters of personal performance. The director general wanted to know how well broadcasters were communicating to the 'middle ranges'.³²

In her scripts for *Woman's Hour*, and even more so in her mid-1950s television appearances on women's television programmes, Honor – and others working in the same field – were involved in a delicate balancing act. Audience research for *Woman's Hour* had shown the ways in which middle-class and working-class women approached current affairs topics. Middle-class women were said to engage with such topics, with a preference for general ones rather than ones specifically for women. Working-class women were seen as preferring 'more practical items' over current affairs. Notions of advancing 'good citizenship' were complicated by class and gender.³³

Honor's voice was heard beyond Britain in the coverage of current affairs. She was a regular contributor to *London Calling*, a programme produced by Keith Kyle (1925–2007)³⁴ for the North American Service. She contributed to Forces Educational; General Overseas, European, Midland Home Service, and Schools broadcasting. She was often 'on the road' as a panellist. On one occasion this took her to Copenhagen, to appear on *Town Forum*, broadcast in March 1950. Nothing survives of these early recordings.

Honor was adept at managing what today might be termed her portfolio career, presumably as much from necessity as taste. Sound investments later made her comfortably off,³⁵ but in the 1950s most women were still a long way from equal remuneration. The passing of the 1954 Equal Pay Act was a benchmark, but initially it applied only to civil servants and, later, teachers. Time Life International paid their overseas editorial staff according to the local or 'native rate'. Honor later recalled her

annoyance when she discovered that her new, young, American assistant was not only paid more than her but was living in a furnished Mayfair flat provided by the company.

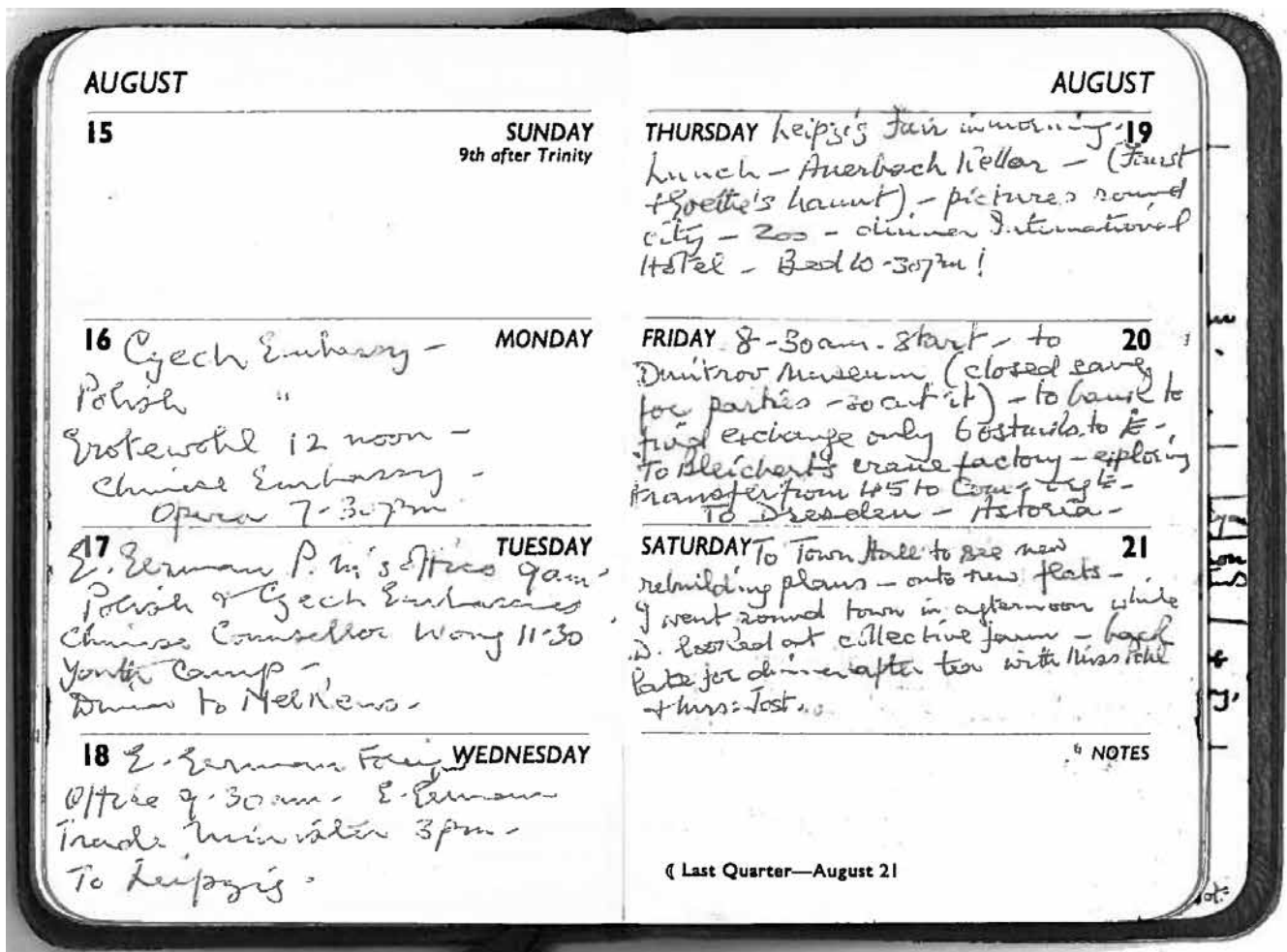
Perhaps the situation was all the more galling because his engagement arose from Honor requesting assistance with the coverage of the government's decolonising policies, which were gaining momentum. Honor came to know many of the nationalist leaders, often through her friendship with Dingle Foot. Tom Mboya (1930–69), a founder of modern Kenya and Archbishop Makarios (1913–77), first president of Cyprus, were two she remembered particularly; recalling, too, that her liberal friends used to quip that any nationalist defended against the British government by Dingle Foot – a gifted lawyer, and Liberal (and, later, Labour) MP – inevitably became a future leader of his country.³⁶ But her workload became excessive. There was no point in complaining about different treatment: '... that's the way things were'.³⁷ At the BBC, where there was a standard payment, she fared better. For *Topic for Tonight*, where delivery could be at very short notice, the original eight guineas fee for contributors was higher.

A singular journey

Honor was never short of ideas. Her drive can be partly attributed to having to push against considerable odds to fulfil her early ambition to be a political journalist, and then to maintain her position in a highly competitive, male-dominated field. The story of her extraordinary visit to East Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia in 1954 is one of 'derring-do': Honor driving her little car with its GB plates – the first unofficial British car to make the solo journey, her East German secret service 'tail' in the passenger seat – at her suggestion.³⁸ On the eve of her departure, Sir Frank Roberts (1907–98), then a deputy under-secretary at the Foreign Office, tried to dissuade Honor from the highly risky project. Should anything go wrong the Foreign Office would not be able to rescue her.

She had not intended to make the journey alone but as part of a group. But the list of British journalists she had selected, and their itinerary, were not officially endorsed. Undaunted, she was intent on seeing things for herself, and not the usual factories or infrastructure.³⁹ There were some hair-raising moments. A young guard, having checked Honor's papers, reached through the open window for her rolls of film. Instinctively Honor rapped his knuckles,

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saying, ‘No, naughty ...’; the hand quickly withdrawn. Amazingly she was allowed to proceed.⁴⁰ (See Figure 2.)

She was home on Sunday 5 September and at her Time Life desk the next day. Towards the end of the week she had a meeting with Peter Matthews at the Foreign Office.⁴¹ For Friday’s *Home and Abroad* she recorded her item ‘Grotewohl’ [and] ‘Visit to East Germany’.⁴² Thursday 16 September saw her delivering to *The Observer*’s offices her article on her path-breaking trip before switching her coverage to the upcoming political party conferences.

From 1948, Time Life International facilitated Honor’s visits to the United States to meet key staff and tour parts of the country. Ahead of her month-long visit in March 1956 to report on the presidential primaries, she approached the BBC, who gave her contact details for the corporation’s New York and Washington offices, and through these, ABC broadcasters.

Schools broadcasting responded enthusiastically to her proposal for a programme on the New Hampshire Primary or whatever else she looked at.⁴³ Her *Topic for Tonight* on 4 March, ‘The political effects of Presidential Eisenhower’s decision to run again’, ‘... was a jolly good piece, except that in your campaign enthusiasm

Entries from Honor Balfour’s diary recording her journey behind the ‘Iron Curtain’, 1954. (Bodleian Library, MS. Dep. Balfour dep. 72)

you went on for a min too long and some of your gems had to be cut out. If you could possibly restrain yourself and not exceed 4½ mins for a Topic, you could be sure not one of your colourful words would be omitted.⁴⁴

1955 general election

The entry in her 1955 appointment diaries gives no hint of just how significant a role Honor played in the BBC’s first-ever live coverage of election results.⁴⁵ And nothing was made of it in *Radio Times*’s publicity. The enormous computer received more coverage than the panel.⁴⁶ She was the only woman of the five contributors to the radio coverage. It is not a distinction Honor would wish made: if she had considered it, she would probably have attributed her presence to her knowledge and expertise. Her view, widely held, was that to succeed in a man’s world one had to be even better than a man.⁴⁷ For reporting on the 1950 general election, Honor had been assigned to the Labour Party headquarters, so she had experience of covering the unfurling story. The 1955 general election promised to be especially interesting, being the first fought by the Conservatives under Sir Anthony Eden (later 1st Earl of Avon,

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1897–1977) – Sir Winston Churchill (1874–1965) having finally resigned in April.⁴⁸

The Sixties: *Ten O'Clock*

The 1950s were Honor's peak years as a broadcaster. Her career then briefly dipped. In 1960 she worked mainly for the European English Service, in the form of two-minute contributions to the *What People Are Talking About* slot.⁴⁹ She was also doing the occasional piece for *Roundabout*, on the Light Programme's early-evening schedule. In later years, BBC budget cuts would limit editors' engagement of freelancers like Honor, and, as she ruefully reflected in 1977, once you are off air you are quickly forgotten.⁵⁰

Her career was rebooted in September 1960 by Bonarjee's invitation to participate in a trial for a new series, *Ten O'Clock*; the chosen topic for the five-minute discussion – 'Labour's critical 25 days', for which she was paid seven guineas. Her 45" interview of the Conservative MP Carol (later Sir Carol) Mather (1919–2006) for the programme on 9 January 1961 was the first of many contributions over nine years. Initially in runs of one a month for three months; sometimes twice a month; tapering off to one or two a year by 1967.⁵¹

While the recordings have not survived, the invoices do; and we learn whether the interview was unscripted – Honor's preference. Of the two interviews she did for 15 March 1962, one was in the studio and the other a five-minute pre-recorded item on 'National Opinion Polls & Liberal Success at Orpington'.⁵² Honor resisted scripted interviews because she believed she performed better, and the outcome was better, when conversation flowed naturally. This sometimes led to fraught exchanges with ministers, or their 'P.R. man' – a category loathed by Honor because they tried to interpose themselves between her and her interviewees.⁵³

Honor's career continued ticking over: there was little to suggest that some of her best work was yet to come. The early 1960s do, however, provide a couple of rare archival survivors from her broadcasts.

Any Questions

The 6'43" snippet from the *Any Questions* broadcast from Lymington on 6 April 1962⁵⁴ probably survives because it includes Sir Gerald Nabarro (1913–73), a right-wing Conservative MP and business man known for his 'trenchant views'.⁵⁵ His response to the question 'Why

do politicians spoil this programme?' was: '... party politics is the art of advocating something you know to be bad as the only alternative to something you know to be a good deal worse'. Honor was not '... quite sure whether politicians spoil the programme' or whether it is 'liable occasionally to spoil politicians'. The programme gave them a '... platform [to] four or five million people'. Politicians 'say things which they think clever but [are just] darn stupid.' Her voice is typical of the day: very received pronunciation, her crisp tones quite stern.

The Labour MP and future cabinet minister Richard (later Lord) Marsh (1928–2011) suggested journalists needed politicians to fill their pages, and Nabarro reminded everyone of the success of *Any Questions* with its millions of listeners. The exchanges have a knock-about quality to which C. J. Joyce (1900–76), headmaster and former borstal governor, added little. The extract draws to an end with Honor asking to make a 'serious' point: 'I only wish this programme could be beamed to Iron Curtain countries, to contribute to freedom of thought and expression' – perhaps remembering her visits to Eastern Europe in 1954 and 1957.⁵⁶

Honor appeared on over twenty *Any Questions* between 1950 and 1971, so it is disappointing that this is the only recording we have of her. The programme followed what Jonathan Dimbleby (b.1944), chair 1987–2019, called the 'town hall forum'.⁵⁷ Women panellists were not uncommon but, according to the first chair, Freddy Grisewood (1888–1972), their 'personal and individual answers' and the absence of politics made the programme less serious than nowadays.⁵⁸

The second surviving recording is the *Frankly Speaking* interview with Edward (later Sir Edward) Heath (1916–2005), then Lord Privy Seal in the Macmillan government – an encounter which had been postponed several times since November 1962. It eventually took place on 3 January 1963, and was broadcast on 27 February.⁵⁹ This was an altogether different experience for Honor from her pleasurable BBC interview that morning with Earl (Clement) Attlee at his home to mark his eightieth birthday.⁶⁰ She shared the Heath interview with a *Frankly Speaking* regular, Leslie Smith (1912–?). The series was renowned for its ferocity, and Heath sounds uncomfortable from the outset. Honor later congratulated Joyce Ferguson: 'I thought you did a very good editing job on what must have been a difficult recording on the ... programme'.⁶¹

The Weekly World

1966 saw a decline in Honor’s appearances on the radio. Her voice was only heard twice: a 4’5” minute interview, ‘Doubts about Liberal Leadership’, for *Ten O’Clock* on 3 January and, for the same programme, a talk on ‘Rebel Labour MPs’ on 4 August.⁶² This may have been by choice, or circumstances: her mother, to whom she was close, had died in July 1965. Progress on the projected book on the 1945–51 Labour government was stuttering, largely due to the lack of accessible archival sources. Renegotiating her Time Life contract to facilitate working on the book had had the unintended outcome of absorbing more not less of her days, or so it felt. There was also a new generation of broadcasters coming up behind her; and the BBC was changing.

The years 1967 to 1970 are punctuated by runs of presenting *Weekly World*, a review of weekly magazines running since 1963, to which she brought her characteristic innovation, extending the remit beyond the political weeklies to include *Campaign*, *New Scientist* and *Nature*: ‘By degrees we spread our wings’.⁶³ (See Figure 3.) She was booked for a month of Saturdays at a time, surviving a re-imagining of the programme in 1970 as a slot on *Saturday Briefing*.

She conducted only one interview for *Ten O’Clock*, but made her Radio 2 debut in February 1969, recording a comment for *News Time*’s item on Viscountess Asquith of Yarnbury’s death. Through their broadcasting careers, Honor’s earlier acquaintance with Lady Asquith had developed into friendship.

Whatever You Think

Just when it looked as though her radio career was coming to an end, Honor got an offer to appear on a trial for a new programme, *Whatever You think*. The BBC was making a fresh attempt at a live phone-in programme. Honor was not new to the concept: she had appeared on the dummy run for the Light Programme’s *The Floor is Yours* in April 1956, a re-imagining of a short-lived version with the same title televised over two months in 1953. The 1956 session invited listeners to submit questions by postcard.

Whatever You Think was chaired by the amiable Cliff Michelmore (1919–2016). Panellists answered questions submitted live as well as beforehand. No subject, other than party political was excluded.⁶⁴ From the outset Honor, billed as ‘an award-winning Anglo-American

"THE WEEKLY WORLD" Producer: Terence Boston
 Speaker: Honor Balfour
 Reader: Michael de Morgan
 Pre-recorded: Friday, 8th March 1963.
 Tape Number: TLO 4967
 Transmission: Saturday, 9th March 1963. 9.10 - 9.25 a.m. HOME.

BALFOUR: Having worked for most of my professional life in weekly journals, I really should know better - yet whenever I come from some big argument and I don't find it discussed in the Weeklies forthwith, I always feel a pang of disappointment, even irritation; yet how can it be, when some papers go to press in mid-week? So it was that this week the case of the "Silent Journalists" going to prison was too late for most of the weeklies - but not for the Economist. The daily press has spoken with one voice in protesting against the prison sentences of Mr. Mulholland and Mr. Foster; and several MP's and professional bodies have protested that in a world where people are more and more at the mercy of authority, it is all the more necessary to guard the freedom of the press. The judgement of the Appeal Court that the public interest required the disclosure of these two journalists' sources was the Tribunal's - so we cannot discuss this; but the question is being asked: should journalists be given by Statute a privilege which other citizens do not have. The Economist says:

DE MORGAN: "The answer surely must be no".

BALFOUR: And it goes on to explain that in its opinion:

DE MORGAN: "Statutory licencing of the press is the start of a long and slippery slope - journalists ought never

ordinary free citizens from whose right to be informed their own so-called rights entirely derive."

BALFOUR: This, of course, is the right approach - for once the state begins to legislate for the press in any way, who knows where it may lead? Better the press be free from the state completely. After all, it has earned and won its freedom by its responsibility. And the highest Tribunal and protection of all is public opinion. As the Economist puts it:

DE MORGAN: "Just as honest journalists will stand up to the state itself if the people's interests seem really at stake, so they will never take or ask for liberties that might put either the interests or reputation of individual persons in peril ... the arbiter in the end will be the people's view of the press's performance in their behalf."

BALFOUR: Which brings me to another argument over the rights of a big communications medium to publish as it thinks fit - the case of BBC Television's Panorama where M. Bidault was interviewed. What a to-do! An international incident ... a government flutter ... a row in parliament ... and a heated argument over whether or not the BBC acted responsibly in providing a platform for an OAS leader. First and foremost, as the Statist said:

DE MORGAN: "It was a scoop".

BALFOUR: And a scoop that apparently delighted, for one, the highly respectable and dignified Times Educational Supplement:

DE MORGAN: "Auntie BBC is being de-auntified so fast by Mr. Cakleton Greene, that she will soon be as chic and tart a contemporary as any "with-it" bird. The Bidault television interview was another step away from the grave. But the BBC was doing more than stick its tongue out at foreign offices



Fig. 4 *It's My Opinion* televised from Bridgwater, 21 May 1958. From left: Frank Byers, Honor Balfour, Denzil Batchelor, Alan Bullock, and a member of the public who asked one of the questions. (© BBC Photo Library) Frank (later Lord) Byers (1915–84) then a broadcaster, was a former Liberal MP and Chief Whip. In 1967 he became leader of the Liberal peers.

journalist', was a regular (though not among the most frequent) – twice deputising for Michelmore while he was on holiday. Of the four panellists, one was usually a woman. Marghanita Laski (1915–88) with whom Honor had often appeared on radio, was another regular. Newer voices included the novelist Fay Weldon (b. 1931) and the philosopher Mary (later Baroness) Warnock (1924–2019).

Honor retained vivid memories of the experience of the programme. The BBC was worried that 'cranks' might phone in. Requiring feats of concentration – listening simultaneously to the producer's voice through the earpiece, panellists, and the questioner – she likened it to taking part in a choral work.⁶⁵ The programme ran until June 1973, with Honor appearing in May, but by then her broadcasting career really was fizzling out.

There were still occasional appearances on Brian Redhead's (1929–84) *A Word in Edgeways*;

but Honor's own criticism of her performance alongside Elizabeth (later Baroness) Howe (b.1932) in 1975 – 'I should have been more assertive, though my part OK as far as it went'⁶⁶ – and her diary entries in the years after her retirement from Time Life in 1972 suggest it may have been a relief to preside over the last *Weekly World* in April 1976, making way for *Saturday Briefing's* new feature: a newspaper review.

Her broadcasting years were seemingly over. Then, in May 1979, out of the blue she was invited to contribute to Redhead's *Countdown to No. 10*. Sadly, her comments did not survive the edited highlights archived, but her diary entries assessing Mrs (later Baroness) Thatcher (1925–2013) do. Honor had welcomed Mrs Thatcher's arrival as party leader – a first for women – but observed 'she needed to match her intelligence and skills with requisite compassion and humanity'. This turned into a lament in May

1979: it was good to have a woman PM, ‘just a pity it had to be Mrs Thatcher’.⁶⁷

Television career

Archivally the highlight is the recording of the *Press Conference* interview with Eleanor Roosevelt (1884–1962) on 3 April 1959, reshown on *Late Night Line Up* in 1965. It is the only televisual recording of Honor’s work known to survive.⁶⁸ One wishes there had been more, but nearly all of her television career was on the margins, in women’s afternoon programmes. The only other BBC visual sources are photographs taken for the 1946 Cassington Home Service programme and a 1958 still from *It’s My Opinion*.

Press Conference

A consequence of the arrival of Independent Television in 1955 was a sharpening of the BBC’s coverage of current affairs (another, which also impacted on the careers of Honor and Gorksy, was to cut the funding of women’s afternoon television). *Press Conference*’s style owed something to American television. The interview opens by introducing the panel to Mrs Roosevelt, in London on her way home after traveling through the Middle East and Europe with her granddaughter.⁶⁹ Along with Honor, then political correspondent of *London Star* and *Time*, the panel included H. V. Hodson (1906–99) of the *Sunday Times*, Keith Kyle, formerly the BBC’s Washington correspondent, then of the *Economist*, and Francis Williams (later Lord Francis-Williams, 1903–70) of the weekly *Forward*.⁷⁰ Topics included Mrs Roosevelt’s views on the Middle East situation, the position of women in the region, the role of the US presidency, and the Soviet leader Khrushchev. Kyle and Honor come across as the most engaged and lively interviewers.

It’s My Opinion

The still from *It’s My Opinion* depicts the programme’s distinctive characteristic. As producer Peter Bale explained, it was intended as a televised version of *Any Questions*, the major difference being that contributors from the audience had a bigger role. Each would join the chair on the platform to give an opinion on their subject that was then opened up to panel discussion, after which they returned to the platform to respond. It was intended as a very informal affair, with four to five minutes per

subject. Initial feedback had been very encouraging. The still captures the moment a woman audience member leaves the platform (see Figure 4).

Bale was effusive in his praise of Honor’s ‘... admirable efforts ... You delivered an excellent performance which has been frequently commented upon by my colleagues and by viewers. I have a feeling that your regular appearances on television helped you a lot in this broadcast. In particular we noticed your approach to the camera and I am sure this made your performance all the more effective’; rather spoiling the affect with the patronising ‘Full Marks’.⁷¹ Would he have used these words for a male contributor?

Honor’s Round Up

After her breakthrough television broadcast in 1951 – *Women’s Viewpoint*, broadcast on 11 June 1951 – and occasional appearances in 1952 and 1953, her career had taken off in 1955. Her forte was the fifteen-minute topical talks or interviews which appeared after the mid-afternoon women’s television programmes.⁷² As a freelancer, Honor had to rely on her own resources, doing most of the pre-broadcast research herself and often lunching contributors at the Time Life office. Her correspondence with contributors is a window into mid-1950s’ society and social mores. With a tiny budget, producers had to make do with second-hand sets. In a rare surviving example of a studio floor plan, the usual combative format – men with nameplates seated round a table – was feminised. The inclusion of a writing desk and bookcase conveyed seriousness, to counter prevailing notions that women’s discussion might be lightweight.⁷³ (See Figure 5.)

Honor last appeared on women’s afternoon television in *Mainly for Women* on 28 May 1958. Apart from *It’s My Opinion* and *Press Conference*, her only other known appearances from this later period are two for commercial television: Southern TV’s *Up the Poll*, on American influence in Britain, 12 August 1964; and, on 1 June 1973, on Tyne-Tees Television, as a panelist on *Front Page Debate* together with George (later Lord) Wigg (1900–83), *The Sunday Times*’s Peter Harland (1934–2005), and a local editor, Ian Fawcett.

Doreen Gorksy/Stephens: the first editor of women’s television programming

The experimental 1951 television programme *Women’s Viewpoint*, beamed from Alexandra

Honor had welcomed Mrs Thatcher’s arrival as party leader – a first for women – but observed ‘she needed to match her intelligence and skills with requisite compassion and humanity’. This turned into a lament in May 1979: it was good to have a woman PM, ‘just a pity it had to be Mrs Thatcher’.

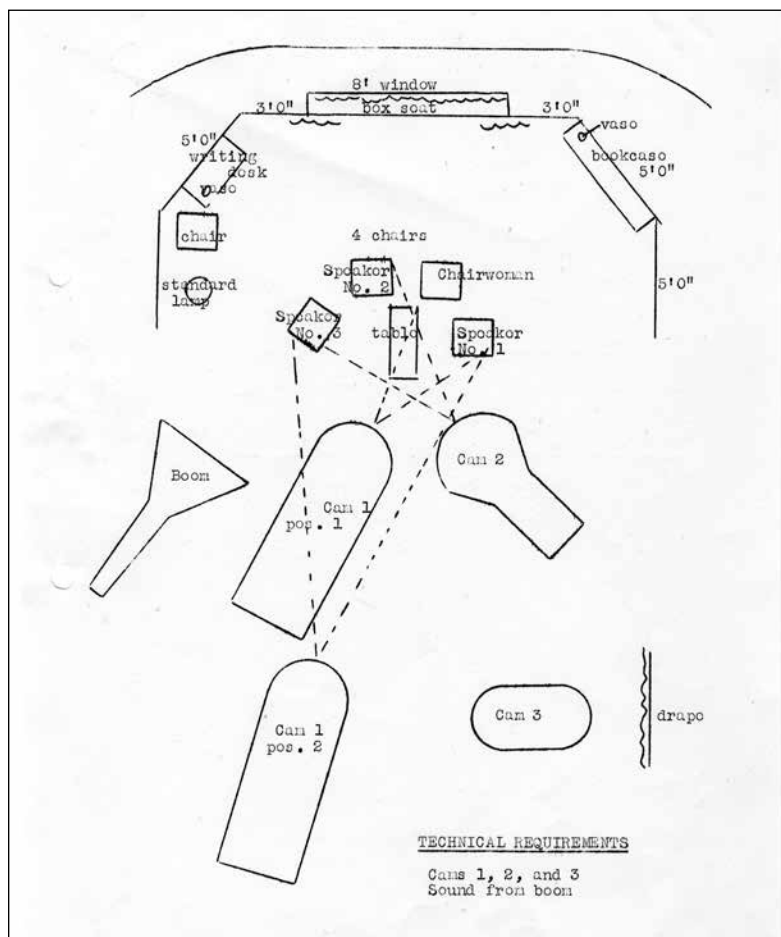
What Honor Did Next: the pioneering broadcasting career of Honor Balfour (1912–2001)

Palace, brought together Honor and another former leading light of the Liberal Party and an exact contemporary: Doreen Gorsky. The BBC WAC files are a pathway into those heady but frustrating times when Gorsky (obliged to revert to her maiden name, Stephens, to distinguish her from her political past) grappled as the first editor of women's television programming with the constraints and negativity of her senior managers. There is not enough archival evidence to determine how Stephens and Honor actually regarded each other, but exchanges suggest their working relationship was friendly and productive. *Honor Balfour's Round Up* became a regular feature. Surviving moves to axe it, the fifteen-minute slot was extended in 1957 to half an hour.⁷⁴

A trail blazer in her own right, Gorsky first contacted the BBC June 1948 as president of the Women's Liberal Federation. Writing to *Woman's Hour* to thank them for reporting on the resolution on the financial inequalities of women she had piloted through WLF's AGM at Blackpool, she included three script ideas of her own. Inspired by feminism and contemporary social issues:

I should like to do ... a series dealing very simply with current problems from the angle of the interest of the ordinary housewife should find in them, and the need for her to be politically alive. It still horrifies me when I go round at election times, the number of women who know absolutely nothing, and vote blindly as told by their husbands! I do not know what length you would require, but should be most grateful for any criticisms you care to make on the idea.⁷⁵

This, and her later scripts and suggestions, only elicited largely dismissive responses from the *Woman's Hour* team.⁷⁶ Undeterred, in October 1953 she applied to the advertisement in the *Evening Standard* to be the editor of women's television programmes. Among her referees were Philip Fothergill (1906–59), honorary chair of the Liberal Party, and Lady Helen Nutting (1890–1973), her deputy on the Council of Married Women: 'Never at a loss for new and original ideas; I am sure you will find her a great asset'.⁷⁷ The new programmes were scheduled for April 1954. From the outset she had to contend with men like Cecil McGivern (1907–63), head of television, who doubted the worth of women's television, Stephens' abilities, and her team of programme makers, some of whom later held senior posts in the BBC. By



1958 McGivern grudgingly admitted there had been 'improvements' – more programmes were worth him watching. Nowadays her 'diverse and ambitious weekly [schedules]' are fully acknowledged.⁷⁸

Ironically, what may have affected the afternoon programmes was the abolition of the Toddler Truce in 1957. (To coincide with children being put to bed, television had previously closed down between 6 pm – the end of children's programmes – and the beginning of the evening schedule at 7 pm.) This created more time for evening television programmes but drained resources from limited budgets. At first Stephens fought the cuts then, bowing to the inevitable, sought to shape the outcome.⁷⁹ In 1960, on her recommendation, management of women and children's television were combined and rebranded as afternoon television. Stephens' annual review in 1963 noted her 'remarkable abilities', but her application that year to be the BBC representative in the United States suggests that she wanted to change direction.⁸⁰ Her career at the BBC ended acrimoniously in 1967 after she accepted an invitation by David (later Sir David) Frost (1939–2013) to join London Weekend Television (LWT) as head of women, children and religious programmes at twice her BBC salary.

Fig. 5. BBC Floorplan for *Women's Viewpoint*, 1951; a televised experimental unscripted discussion. Chaired by Honor Balfour, the guests were Doreen Stephens (Liberal Party; later, as Doreen Gorsky, innovative women's television programmer); the Labour MP Jennie Lee and the Conservative MP Pat Hornsby-Smith. (BBC WAC T32/363.)

Honor and the satirists: ‘the satire was spiky but wholesome’

Invisible best describes Honor’s contribution to the sixties’ satire boom. Her name does not appear in the index to Humphrey Carpenter’s definitive study.⁸¹ Hopes that she might be the ‘unknown’ woman in the photograph of ‘The Establishment [Club], 1961’ could not be substantiated.⁸² Honor did not expect to be remembered. But we have her recollections of stepping into the club at lunchtime, pooling her political gossip (presumably with other journalists), feeding into skits on the BBC’s *That Was the Week That Was*, or columns in *Private Eye*. Honor enjoyed ‘constructive gossip’.⁸³ The bare wooden floors, scrubbed benches and tables were like a school but with cheese and beer: ‘We [Ned Sherrin (1931–2007), John Bird (b.1936), John Wells (1936–98), and others] all used to pitch in ... then lean back to laugh at it all.’ The satire was ‘spiky but wholesome; could be prickly ... a bit like a prefects’ room; amateur; not “poison pen”’.⁸⁴

Conclusion

Honor Balfour led a remarkable life. With a solid but, at times, problematic base at Time Life International, she forged a career at the BBC. She was a key contributor to the development of current affairs programmes, exploring concepts of citizenship in rebuilding society. In *Mothers of Liberty*, Robert Ingham describes Honor as ‘an incisive commentator and interviewer’ and notes her ‘furious networking’.⁸⁵ She had not had the easiest start in life, which may be why she enjoyed networking widely – putting people in touch with each other, to their advantage. Sir Robin Day (1923–2000) was one such beneficiary; Bonarjee recalling Day’s debt to Honor.⁸⁶

She was a confident woman’s voice, analysing and talking about political, economic and social issues: not unique but rare, and hugely significant in the early years. Could Honor have achieved more at the BBC? Probably not, given the organisation’s structure, and the attitude towards women. And without the long working relationship

with Stephen Bonarjee, she might, as a freelancer, with mainly short slots, have achieved less despite her obvious ability. The BBC may have been a congenial environment for Liberals and the left-inclined, presumably attracted by the organisation’s remit and scope, but, as both Bonarjee and Stephens discovered, there were shortcomings.⁸⁷

Like Bonarjee and Doreen Stephens, her exact contemporaries, Honor had once been a luminary of the Liberal Party. Like them, in its decline she carved a distinguished career outside the party. In a parallel universe Honor might have been a cabinet minister. As a broadcast journalist her contribution was profound. Her contribution deserves to be fully recognised.

Helen Langley is a historian, writer and former manuscript curator. She contributed a guest post to the UKvote100 blog (<https://ukvote100.org/2018/12/17/honor-balfour-westminster-and-a-womans-voice/>) and, in 2019, a guest blog, ‘Honor Balfour: the first significant woman in BBC current affairs’, to <https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbchistoryresearch>. She also writes about historic houses and gardens.

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1 Helen Langley, ‘Honor Balfour and the Liberal Party’, *Journal of Liberal History* 78 (Spring 2013), pp. 6–19.
 2 Honor’s Radio Talks files have been available since 2009; her television file, and Bonarjee’s oral history file were released July 2018, and January 2019.
 3 Presently with the writer.
 4 [https://ukvote100.org/2018/12/17/honor-balfour-westminster-and-a-](https://ukvote100.org/2018/12/17/honor-balfour-westminster-and-a-womans-voice/)

[womans-voice/; https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbchistoryresearch/entries/55a963b3-66e5-4ce8-877f-9bd-cb38f6b82](https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbchistoryresearch/entries/55a963b3-66e5-4ce8-877f-9bd-cb38f6b82). With thanks to Dr Anne Summers, chair, Friends of the Women’s Library, LSE, London, for the invitation to give a ‘work in progress’ talk in November 2018; Mari Takayanagi, Parliamentary Archives; Kathleen Rowe, Sound & Vision, British Library; Elisabeth Luard; and Professor David Hendy for pointing me to the BBC website on pioneering women. Kate O’Brien, her BBCWAC colleagues and Rob Seatter, Head, BBC History, were key to the researching and sharing of Honor’s story. Thanks to the BBC Photo Library team for their assistance with images. The writer also owes a special debt to Lady (Marina) Vaizey for both sharing her recollections of Honor and reading the article’s penultimate draft. Her insights were invaluable. Any errors or omissions are this writer’s.

5 MS. Balfour dep.5. Donated £25 (£440.40 in 2017 value) in 1967 and 1968, the latter appeal to clear the overdraft. Honor never voted Labour.
 6 Robert Ingham, ‘Honor Balfour’, in *Mothers of Liberty, Women who built British Liberalism* (Liberal Democrat History Group, 2015), pp. 52–3.
 7 Balfour conversation, 24 Jul. 1997. Copies of the magazine’s dummies, subsequently annotated to identify her authorship, are in Honor’s papers: MS. Balfour dep.49, file 1.
 8 Conversation, *ibid*. The attic reference may be figurative rather than literal.
 9 Event, described in 2013 article, revolved around campaigning for Bury St Edmonds Liberal candidate, Margery (later Dame Margery) Corbett Ashby (1882–1981).
 10 Stipulated by Honor Balfour in her contract.
 11 Her *Time* work mainly reached American audiences; the focus on analysing and summarising the week’s news. Balfour conversation, 17 Apr. 1998: she covered industrial, city, economic and parliamentary; maintaining her links to *The Observer* and *The Guardian*.
 12 Balfour conversation 17 Apr. 1998.
 13 BBCWAC, R. Cont 1 Talks, Balfour, Honor, File 1, 1942–50.
 14 She may have been interviewed during her 1943 Darwen by-election contest.

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- 15 Speaking for eight to ten minutes. BBC standard rate was one guinea (gn.) per minute. A guinea was one pound one shilling; in 2017 value £32.77 (National Archives historical currency converter).
- 16 Contributed to *Woman's Hour* until 1953; once each in 1960s and 1970s.
- 17 A *Topic for Tonight* on a woman's angle on the Festival of Britain, 9 May 1951, a rare exception.
- 18 BBC WAC R_{51/114/1} Talks, Current Affairs, Topic for Tonight File 1A, 1948–49. Honor did not appear in the draft list of panellists; she was the only woman of the eleven on the launch list, 28 Nov. 1949. With Cyril Ray (1908–91) Honor marked the thousandth edition of the programme.
- 19 Libby Purves, 'Would Becky Sharp come to the diary room', *The Times*, 17 Sep. 2018; *The Times* obituary of Meryl O'Keefe (1929–2019) on the persistent obstacles, 25 Oct. 2019. Anne Karf, *The Human Voice: The story of a remarkable talent* (Bloomsbury, 2006).
- 20 BBCWAC R_{73/503/1} Oral History Project, Bonarjee, Stephen. File released 14 Jan. 2019 for writer. George Scott (1925–88) journalist and broadcaster (including *Home and Abroad*); worked with Honor; chaired the Political Division of the Liberal Party, 1962–3. He stood four times as a Liberal parliamentary candidate between 1962 and 1983.
- 21 Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, vol. iv, Sound and Vision* (OUP, 1978), p. 533. W. A. Benson, Audience Research department, BBC, 'Topic for Tonight, a study of comprehensibility', *The BBC Quarterly*, vol. 7, Apr. 1952–Jan. 1953, (BBC, 1953) pp. 94–9.
- 22 Hugh Chignell, *Public Issue Radio: Talks, news and current affairs in the 20th Century* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011) p. 58.
- 23 BBCWAC R_{51/114/4}. Bonarjee changed name from rota to panel to encourage bonding.
- 24 BBCWAC R_{73/503/1} Oral history, Bonarjee, Stephen, 21 Apr. 1980 (released 14 Jan. 2019) p. 11.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid., pp. 13–14.
- 27 BBCWAC R_{51/114/2} Talk, Current Affairs, Topic for Tonight/File B, 1950–1951; Talks file IV, 1955–[1960] Current Affairs/Topic for Tonight, 1956–7.
- 28 Grace Wyndham Goldie, 'Somerville, Mary (1897–1963) educationalist and broadcasting executive', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).
- 29 BBCWAC R Cont 1 Talks, Balfour Honor, File 1, 1942–50, May 1949.
- 30 BBC WAC R_{51/114/2} Talks, Current Affairs, Topic for Tonight, File 1B, 1950–1.
- 31 BBCWAC R_{51/114/3} Talks Current Affairs, Topic for Tonight file 2 1952–3. 26 May 1952.
- 32 BBCWAC R_{51/114/2} Talks, Current Affairs, Topic for Tonight, File 1B, 1950–1, 15 Jan. 1952.
- 33 Dr Kristin Skoog, 'Neither worker nor housewife but citizen: BBC's *Woman's Hour* 1946–1955', <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/78074476.pdf>. Accessed 3 Apr. 2019. This article includes a quotation from a 1947 interview by the Talks Department's Peggy Barker, at that time a producer on *Woman's Hour*.
- 34 Keith Kyle (1925–2007). Broadcaster and writer; SDP candidate for Braintree, 1983 general election.
- 35 Funded concerts in Cheltenham; substantial bequest to St Anne's College, Oxford.
- 36 Balfour conversation, 17 Apr. 1998.
- 37 Balfour conversation [1997], date lost in conversion from tape to CD.
- 38 Balfour conversation [1997]. Honor made the novel suggestion to Prime Minister Grotewohl (1894–1964) during their meeting, at which Peter Nelken (1919–66) acted as interpreter; subsequently passenger.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Ibid. Crossing the border from Czechoslovakia to Austria. Honor's Czechoslovak broadcast was picked up by the BBC's Monitoring Service.
- 41 MS. Balfour dep.72 (BEA diary entry of 9 Sep. 1954).
- 42 Ibid. (diary entry of 10 Sep.1954). 'Grotewohl 7pm for 9.15pm'.
- 43 BBC WAC RCont1 Talks, Balfour, Honor, file 3, 1955–7. John Reed.
- 44 Ibid. C. F. A. (Toby) Clarke, 12 Mar. 1956.
- 45 Ibid. Forty guineas for election results coverage.
- 46 The BBC audio-visual archive accessed at the British Library only has a discussion about the computer: 23SX1654. Television's inaugural coverage fared better.
- 47 Balfour conversation, 14 Nov. 1997.
- 48 4 Apr. 1955, Honor's *Topic for Tonight* on the farewell dinner at No. 10.
- 49 Balfour conversation, 11 Nov. 1998. The producer, Anne Symonds, née Harrison (1916–2017) was an Oxford contemporary; their friendship began through their mothers, both war widows bringing up daughters alone. Hilda Harrison had been one of H. H. Asquith's epistolary confidantes. Symonds marked the birthdays of Asquith – 'Uncle Henry' – by placing flowers on his grave in Sutton Courtenay.
- 50 MS Balfour dep.36. Letter to Peter Shear re her tax return, 18 Oct. 1977.
- 51 BBCWAC RCont1 Talk, Balfour, Honor, File 4, 1958–62.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Balfour conversation, 14 Nov. 1997.
- 54 BBC Audio Visual recording, *Any Questions*, 6 Apr. (Lyminster) 28SX11109/DD04251014.WAV (British Library).
- 55 John Ramsden, 'Sir Gerald David Nunes Nabarro, 1913–1973', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.
- 56 In 1957 Honor returned to Eastern Europe, this time accompanied for at least some of the trip by others, including the Labour MP Desmond Donnelly (1920–74), a close friend. The visit was the topic of her 'As I See It' Home Service talk, 30 Jun. 1957.
- 57 BBC Radio 4 programme *Any Questions is seventy*, broadcast 13 Oct. 2018.
- 58 Freddy Grisewood, *My story of the BBC* (Oldhams Press Ltd., 1959) p. 174.
- 59 BBC audio visual recording *Frankly Speaking*, 27 Feb. 1963, 28SX1212/DD04179072.WAV (British Library). Honor's sharpness is interesting: friendship did not hold her back.
- 60 Balfour conversation (unrecorded). Attlee interview broadcast on *Ten O'Clock*, 3 Jan. 1963.
- 61 BBC Audio visual 28SX1212/DD04179072.WAV (British Library). BBCWAC RCont12 Talks, Balfour, Honor, File V, 1963–7, Honor to Jocelyn Ferguson 1 Mar. 1963. Honor was personally well-disposed towards Heath.
- 62 BBCWAC RCont12 Talks, Balfour, Honor, File V, 1963–7.
- 63 Balfour conversation, 14 Nov. 1997.
- 64 D. Hendy, *Life on Air: A history of Radio Four* (OUP, 2007); references the Brains Trust format, p. 71.
- 65 Balfour conversation, 14 Nov. 1997.

- Bonarjee was sent to the United States to 'see how it was done'. Honor was paid sixty guineas for chairing *Whatever You Think*.
- 66 MS. Balfour dep. 73 (diary entry for 5 Apr. 1975); programme recorded 4 April. Elsie Clayton, president, National Union of Teachers, the other panellist.
- 67 *Ibid.*, (diary entries for 11 Feb. 1975 and 4 May 1979).
- 68 BBC audio visual resources: TVLCA7409H/00 accessed at the British Library. This was not Honor's debut on the programme; she appeared occasionally between 1953 and 1957. https://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/Press_Conference, 'People who make the news face questions from people who write the news', 3 Apr. 1959, 22:15; *Late Night Line Up*, 9 Oct. 1965, 22:15, 'Weekly raid on the archives'. BBC 2 only began broadcasts to the north later in the month.
- 69 Mrs Roosevelt's son was an exchange professor in Iran.
- 70 Panel introduced with these epithets.
- 71 MS. Balfour dep.3, folder 2; []April; 23 May 1958. Programmed primarily for West Country audiences, so probably limited its wider significance.
- 72 Selection of topics appears to have been left to Honor. Her original fee fifteen guineas and ten guineas expenses.
- 73 BBCWAC T32/363/TV Talks 'Women's Viewpoint'/1951. Floorplan for 11 June 1951 programme. Contributors paid fifteen guineas. Chaired by Honor with guests Jenny (later Baroness) Lee (1904–88), Pat (later Baroness) Hornsby-Smith (1914–85) and Doreen Gorsky, in her Liberal Party role. See also Mary Irwin, 'Women's Viewpoint', in Maggie Andrew and Sallie McNamara (eds.), *Women and the Media: Feminism and Femininity in Britain 1900 to the Present*, Routledge Research in Gender and History (Routledge, 2014). Only four programmes made but layout widely adopted.
- 74 MS. Balfour dep.3.
- 75 BBCWAC RCont2 Doreen Gorsky. Letter to editor of *Woman's Hour*, Evelyn Gibbs. File released 9 Jan. 2019.
- 76 *Ibid.* Stephens did a couple of overseas broadcasts in 1948, but in May 1951 *Woman's Hour's* Isa Benzie (1902–88) dismissed Stephens' approach as seeking publicity as Liberal candidate (Carlisle) in forthcoming general election.
- 77 *Ibid.*
- 78 Mary Irwin, 'What Women Want on television: Doreen Stephens and BBC television programmes for women, 1953–1964', *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*, 8(3), pp. 99–122. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.16997/wpcc.135>. Providing women's programmes had become priority for evolving roles of post war women.
- 79 Janet Thumim, *Inventing Television Culture: Men, Women and the Box*, Oxford Television Studies (OUP, 2004), p. 86.
- 80 BBCWAC L1/1742/1, Stephens, D. M.
- 81 Humphrey Carpenter, *That Was the Satire That Was* (Faber, 2002).
- 82 Elisabeth Luard, 'Peter's Friends made the 60s swing', *The Oldie*, Nov. 2017, pp.14–16.
- 83 An aspect of Honor's friendship with John, later Lord Vaizey. Lady (Marina) Vaizey, 25 Feb. 2020.
- 84 Balfour conversation, 11 Nov. 1998, recorded as Honor read through her appointment diaries.
- 85 Ingham, 'Honor Balfour', p. 53.
- 86 Lady (Marina) Vaizey, 24 Feb. 2020. BBCWAC R73/503/1 Oral History Project, Bonarjee, Stephen, p. 29. Honor had known Day since he was president of Oxford University Liberal Club, a post she held in the 1930s.
- 87 Three of Honor's colleagues were, or had been, active Liberals; how representative this was of the BBC is unquantifiable.

Mothers of Liberty Women who built British Liberalism

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