

## Recording of the week: watching Britain's nuclear bomb tests

*This week's selection comes from Tom Lean, Project Interviewer for An Oral History of British Science.*

On 8th November 1957, hundreds of British military and scientific personnel gathered at Christmas Island, a remote speck of land in the Pacific Ocean. They were there for Operation Grapple X, the first successful test of a British hydrogen bomb. At 1.8 megatons, the blast was about a hundred and forty times more powerful than the atomic bomb that destroyed Hiroshima, and signified Britain's mastery of the secrets of thermonuclear power. Amongst the witnesses to the mushroom cloud rising above Christmas Island was a 35 year old technician named Frank Raynor. As he recalls, in perhaps something of an understatement, it was "quite impressive" to watch:

[Frank Raynor\\_C1379/76](#)



The tests were also witnessed by Laurance Reed, a naval officer on HMS Warrior. He describes a shipboard atmosphere of excitement, anxiety and awe when the first bomb was dropped.

[Laurence Reed\\_C1503/37](#)

The full interview with Frank Raynor can be found in the [Oral History of British Science](#) collection on [British Library Sounds](#).

Follow [@BL\\_OralHistory](#) and [@soundarchive](#) for all the latest news.

---

## Correspondence: Science and technology for economic benefit across the UK

In this letter to the Prime Minister, CST outlines 7 proposals that the government and others can carry out to deliver economic benefits across the UK. The proposals seek to build on the UK's science and technology strengths.

The proposals include:

- encouraging local economies to identify the range of science and technology related assets they already have
- maximising their existing assets
- creating the right conditions for further investment

- encouraging greater innovation in businesses across the UK's sectors and regions
- 

## **Correspondence: Science and technology for economic benefit across the UK**

Advice to the Prime Minister on how the government can encourage science and technology to deliver economic benefits that are shared across the UK.

---

## **Correspondence: Advice on the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund**

In this letter to Innovate UK and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), CST considers the selection of challenge areas and how the fund is administered.

They advise that the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund should be seen in the wider perspective of the economic challenges that the country faces:

- improving productivity
- encouraging growth
- delivering economic opportunities more widely across the UK

They recommend that potential challenges are selected and evaluated against criteria that use these priorities as their basis.

---

## **Correspondence: Advice on the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund**

Letter to Innovate UK and BBSRC providing advice on the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF).