

[Recording of the week: soul midwives](#)

This week's selection comes from Holly Gilbert, Cataloguer of Digital Multimedia Collections.

Friends, Vanessa and Felicity, talk about their work as soul midwives which involves working with people who are dying to ensure that their death is personal and dignified. They describe the different ways that people approach and experience death and how their work has changed the way that they view life and think about their own death. They discuss at length the mysteries that surround death, how other people react to what they do and the gift of insights that they feel are given to them by the people they work with. They also describe the experiences of death that made them want to do this job, they talk about how much they enjoy what they do and say that, contrary to what people might think, it actually involves a lot of joy and laughter.

[The Listening Project_soul midwives \(excerpt\)](#)



This recording is part of [The Listening Project](#), an audio archive of conversations recorded by the BBC and archived at the British Library. The full conversation between Vanessa and Felicity can be found [here](#).

Follow [@CollectingSound](#) and [@soundarchive](#) for all the latest news.

[Recording of the week: computer programming and motherhood in the 1960s](#)

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

Like many women in the 1960s, Stephanie Shirley left her job in the computer industry after becoming a mother. At the time, women were expected to cut short their professional careers and stay at home to raise the family, but this was not quite what Stephanie Shirley had in mind. In 1963 she started a company named Freelance Programmers, to allow women who had left the computer industry when they had children to continue working as programmers from home. In time, Stephanie Shirley's company grew to a major business employing thousands of people. However, at the start, with sexism rife, Stephanie Shirley had to go to rather unusual lengths to create a professional image, not least calling herself "Steve", as she recalls in this interview from [An](#)

[Oral History of British Science.](#)

[Stephanie Shirley Programming at home \(BL ref C1379/28\)](#)



This clip is part of [Voices of Science](#), an online resource which uses oral history interviews with prominent British scientists and engineers to tell the stories of some of the most remarkable scientific and engineering discoveries of the past century.

Follow [@BL_OralHistory](#) and [@soundarchive](#) for all the latest news.

Tom Lean will speak about the related [An Oral History of Electricity Supply Industry](#) project at 'The Life Electric', a British Library event on Thursday 19 October. Book your tickets here

<https://www.bl.uk/events/the-life-electric-oral-histories-from-the-uk-electricity-supply-industry>

[Recording of the week: Chantal Akerman](#)

This week's selection comes from Stephen Cleary, Lead Curator of Literary & Creative Recordings.

Pioneering Belgian film director [Chantal Akerman](#) (1950-2015) features in this week's recording from the archive. Here she is interviewed by Simon Field at the ICA, London, in 1990, on the occasion of a season of her films.

[ICA Talk_Chantal Akerman](#)



This recording comes from a [substantial collection](#) of talks and discussions held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London between 1982-1993.

Follow [@BL_DramaSound](#) and [@soundarchive](#) for all the latest news.

[Recording of the week: a poetry reading by Kayo Chingonyi](#)

*This week's selection comes from Dr Eva del Rey, Curator of *Drama and Literature Recordings and Digital Performance*.*

Zambian-born poet Kayo Chingonyi reads selections from his pamphlet *Some Bright Elegance* (Salt, 2012) and other works.

In this recording you can hear some of the stories behind the poems. For example, Kayo's thoughts of himself as a writer in the poem 'Daemon', and his memories of making cassette mixtapes of songs recorded from pirate radio, which informed 'Guide to Proper Mixtape Assembly'. And, before the reading of 'Orientation', Kayo invites the listener to imagine being a secret service operative, setting the mood for the spy poem that follows.

[Kayo Chingoyi reads](#)



Kayo Chingonyi, British Library 2016.

The recording was made in the British Library studio, 12 March 2013, for '[Between Two Worlds: Poetry & Translation](#)', a British Library project created in collaboration with Amarjit Chandan, and funded by the Arts Council.

For other recordings of Kayo Chingonyi accessible at the British Library please see:

[Interview with Kayo talking about his work and influences \(2013\)](#)

['Beyond Bounds: Britain Re-Presented in Poetry': event at the British Library with Kayo Chingoyi and fellow poets Anthony Joseph, Jay Bernard and Vahni Capildeo \(2016\)](#)

Follow [@BL_DramaSound](#) and [@soundarchive](#) for all the latest news.

[World Rivers Day](#)

You may not know it, but a global celebration of the world's waterways has taken place on the last Sunday of September every year since 2005. From rallies and special film screenings to community cleanups and riverside get-togethers, this [annual event](#) highlights the importance of our rivers and the need to protect them.

In honour of World Rivers Day 2017, here are some of our favourite river recordings from around the world.

[Agua Azul cascades recorded in Chiapas, Mexico by Richard Beard \(BL ref 149032\)](#)

[Riverside atmosphere recorded in Wedza, Zimbabwe by Nigel Tucker \(BL ref 125784\)](#)

[River Dart below the surface recorded in Devon, England by Peter Toll \(BL ref 212542\)](#)

[Boyd River atmosphere with frogs recorded in New South Wales, Australia by David Lumsdaine \(BL ref 150641\)](#)



Be sure to check out the Twitter hashtag #WorldRiversDay for more info on the day's events. You can also find other watery sounds in the [Environment and Nature](#) section of [British Library Sounds](#).