

Linguistics at the Library – Episode 1

PhD placements students Andrew Booth and Sarah Rowan write:

Episode 1

The first episode of Linguistics at the Library introduces the British Library's Evolving English Collection, which is a sound archive capturing the diversity of English accents and dialects. Podcast hosts Andrew Booth and Rowan Campbell are working with this archive as part of a PhD placement, and every few weeks will be bringing you a fresh discussion about linguistics and how to identify different accents.

This week's 'What's the feature?' used a clip from:

BBC Voices Recording in Newcastle. BBC, UK, rec. 2005 [digital audio file]. British Library, C1190/32/01. Available: [sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects...1190X0023XX-0101V0](https://sounds.bl.uk/Accents-and-dialects/C1190X0023XX-0101V0)

Interesting links:

The glottal stop in

Glasgow: www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jun/11/england-london

The Bristol 'l': blogs.bl.uk/sound-and-vision/2014/06/11/an-idea-dialect.html

An in-depth look at the Newcastle

accent: www.bl.uk/learning/langlit/sound-studies/geordie/

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Andrew Booth and Rowan Campbell

Recording of the week: Benno's Emperor

This week's selection comes from Jonathan Summers, Curator of Classical Music Recordings.

The last Classical Recording of the Week was of [George Szell conducting Haydn](#). [Here](#) he is again fifteen years earlier in 1938 during his time as conductor of the Scottish Orchestra (1936-1939) just before he left for the United States. He conducts the London Philharmonic Orchestra for soloist Benno Moiseiwitsch in Beethoven's immortal Piano Concerto No. 5, the Emperor Concerto. The music of a genius performed by one of the greatest pianists of the twentieth century. Conductor and soloist are in total accord in the magisterial first movement; Szell shapes the poetic slow movement to perfection (beginning at 20'32") while both have fun in the rollicking third

movement (beginning at 28'42").

[Concerto for Piano and Orchestra no. 5 op. 73 E flat \(Emperor\)](#)



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

Recording of the week: Anglo-Romani and dialect

This week's selection comes from Jonnie Robinson, Lead Curator of Spoken English.

It was great to see [Peaky Blinders](#) back for a fourth series as, among its many delights, it offers a rare glimpse in the mainstream media of Anglo-Romani. Given the presence of traveller communities across the UK it's perhaps not surprising that Romani has influenced local dialect in many parts of the country. Speakers either side of the English-Scottish border, for instance, will be familiar with terms like gadgie [from gaujo = '(non-gypsy) man'], mort [= 'girl, woman'], mooley [from mui = 'mouth, face'], radgie [from radge = 'mad, angry'] and scan [= 'food']. A small set of Romani words are used more widely, including cushty [from kushti = 'good'], mullered [= 'dead, killed'] and mush [= 'man (esp. as form of address)'] and a recent [collaboration](#) between the British Library and Guardian newspaper to document regional words confirmed the relationship between Anglo-Romani & dialect as contributors supplied numerous expressions including chore [= 'to steal' (Poole)], dinilo [= 'fool, Idiot' (Portsmouth)], jukkel [= 'dog' (Carlisle)], ladging [= 'embarrassing' (York)] and tuvli [= 'cigarette' (Newark)].



Probably the most unfortunate contribution of Anglo-Romani to English is the word *chav*, which in recent years has been adopted by young speakers all over the country to refer negatively to a stereotypical young ne'er-do-well characterised by cheap designer clothes, anti-social behaviour and low social status. The word derives from the much more endearing Anglo-Romani word *chavvi* [= 'boy, son'] and illustrates how certain social groups have unfortunately always attracted suspicion and condemnation. A WordBank contributor from the Medway, Kent who can *pukker* [= 'to speak'] Romani explains, for instance, how he will often *jel* down the *tober* to see my little *chavvis* in my *vardo* ['go down the road to see my children in my caravan'], while another contributor submitted an expression assumed to be local to Newark, seemingly unaware of its Romani origins. The book *Romani Rokkeripen To-Divvus* (Thomas Acton and Donald Kenrick, 1984) records *mandi* [= 'I'], *buer* [= 'woman'] and *rokker* [= 'to talk, speak'].

[Jel down the tober to see my little chavvis in my vardo \(BL shelfmark C1442/2355\)](#)

[Mandi don't know what the buer is rokkring \(BL shelfmark C1442/1079\)](#)

Over 400 recordings capturing English dialect and slang worldwide can be found in the [Evolving English Wordbank](#) collection on [British Library Sounds](#).

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

Recording of the week: Trisha Brown in conversation with Richard Alston

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

American dancer and choreographer Trisha Brown talks to British choreographer Richard Alston at the ICA, London, 15 November 1991 (duration: 59 min 43 sec).

At the time of the discussion there were three works by Trisha Brown programmed at the Sadler's Wells theatre in London: *Opal Loop* (1980), *Lateral Pass* (1985) and *For M.G.: The Movie* (1991). Most of the discussion is centred on these three works.

In 1989, *Opal Loop* was added to Rambert's repertory under the artistic direction of Richard Alston. This was the first time Trisha Brown had ever agreed to stage it for a company other than her own. Alston was the artistic director of Rambert from 1986 till 1992.

Brown also talks about her explorations of gravity and perspective for her 'walking on the walls' pieces; how she works with dancers; character and gender in dance; and *Set and Reset* (1983), a dance work made in collaboration with Robert Rauschenberg and Laurie Anderson.



Trisha Brown – *Walking on the Wall*. Photo by Sascha Pohflepp / CC BY. The Barbican Gallery, London, 5 May 2011. First performed in 1971 at the Whitney Museum, New York.

This recording comes from a [collection](#) of 889 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: Ethiopian Michael Jackson?](#)

This week's selection comes from Dr Janet Topp Fargion, Lead Curator of World and Traditional Music.

This song was recorded in 1991 by ethnomusicologist Lesley Larkum at the Green Hotel, Mek'ele (Mekelle) in the northern Tigray region of Ethiopia. It represents one of those wonderful moments of ethnographic fieldwork when you come across something, not necessarily related to the focus of your work, but nevertheless captivating. It's times like those you are thankful for a sound recording device! Lesley was conducting research on Tigrinyan music during revolution. She had heard these two children singing in a bar a couple of nights beforehand and had asked them to return so she could record them. Sadly there's no photograph of them but as I listen, in my mind's eye I see a couple of youngsters with the voices, rhythm and exuberance of a young Michael Jackson.

[Children singing at the Green Hotel \(C600/15\)](#)



The [Lesley Larkum collection](#) of Ethiopian field recordings can be consulted at the British Library.

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