

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](#).

[Recording of the week: Oldbury – a tour of a decommissioned nuclear power](#)

station

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

For nearly 60 years much of Britain's electricity was supplied by a fleet of eleven Magnox nuclear power stations, built between the 1950s and the 1970s. They were the first series of full-scale nuclear power stations in the world, each built with a pair of nuclear reactors supplying hot steam to a set of turbines to generate electricity for homes and workplaces. While they became the workhorses of the nuclear industry, gradually their numbers dwindled as they reached the end of their design lives and one by one they were decommissioned. North of Bristol, amongst the last to be built was Oldbury, which first went critical on the 18th of September 1967. Switched off in 2012, it now stands silent awaiting the start of a decades-long process that will gradually demolish the station and decontaminate the site. Yet today Oldbury remains much as it was when the station was operational, even if its control rooms and reactor halls seem eerily empty, as Peter Webster, station manager in the 1990s, explains in this video tour of Oldbury recorded last year for [An Oral History of the Electricity Supply Industry](#).

In-depth oral history interviews documenting the lives and careers of those who worked in the electricity industry can be found in the [Industry: water, steel and energy](#) collection on British Library Sounds.

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

Recording of the week: Epic

This week's selection comes from Rosy Hall, an ESRC-funded PhD student from Oxford University working with the BL's Spoken English collections.

Epic 3. b. colloq. (orig. and chiefly U.S.). Particularly impressive or remarkable; excellent, outstanding. (www.oed.com)

According to [one Urban Dictionary entry](#), the birth of 'epic' as a popular catchphrase has its origins among 'avid gamers and pretentious English majors'. This fits with the [WordBank](#) contribution of one of our speakers (b.1991), who attributes it to 'video gamer culture' and his gaming friends.

Um, I think that 'epic' is a very interesting word that I constantly hear my friends use, because, it's interesting because it's, I feel it comes from like some kind of like video gamer culture, cause my friends are like ((bay

kid)) gamers, I mean I'm not so much, but they always use the word 'epic,' 'that was epic', or like 'epic fail' and {cough} I just, where, what does it mean? I guess it's kind of like...uh like 'amazing', like it just sort of emphasizes something. You know what I mean? Yeah. It's like a lot of emphasis on something it's epic, it's not just s- – you know ordinary, it's epic. I don't know, maybe it's rooted from the actual word epic where you know, like, I don't know the Odyssey? Who knows? Who knows. But yeah. Bye!

[Epic \(C1442\)](#)

Like so many words whose meanings have evolved over time, *epic* is a common bugbear among prescriptivists – English language mavens who would rather the word were reserved only for Homer and Virgil. As alluded to by this speaker, *epic* hasn't always been a trendy word for something like 'really good' or 'extreme'; traditionally it's a genre of lengthy heroic poetry. Scholars have pointed out, however, that even this definition is fairly fluid – the meaning of *epic* has changed over time to cover both oral and written forms, and extends to novels and even movies (*Game of Thrones*, anyone?). Language change is inevitable, after all; it seems this new *epic* is just the latest iteration.



And we'd better get used to it: unfortunately for the pedants, a high level of objection usually correlates to a high level of usage. Judging from the number of internet rants against it, it's clear that *epic* is here to stay!

Continue the conversation with us [@VoicesofEnglish](#)