

# The Cultures of Early Television

2-3 July 2026

A University of Westminster conference, with the support of The British Academy  
Portland Hall, 4-12 Little Titchfield Street, London W1W 7BY

## Thursday 2 July

9.00 Registration; coffee and tea

9.30 Welcome

- **Catherine Dormor**, *Pro-Vice Chancellor, Head of College of Creative Arts and Technologies, University of Westminster*

9.35 Introduction

- **John Wyver**

9.45 Opening Keynote

- **André Lange**, editor, *Histoire de la television* website:

‘The promised ubiquity – revisiting the formative years of television, 1877-1926’

10.45 Coffee and tea

11.00 Panel: Beginnings

- **Doron Galili**, *Stockholm*:

‘Pulp vision: popular genre fiction and televisual fantasies’

- **Donald McLean**:

‘Looking back at *Looking In*: the evidence that increased awareness of BBC productions in the low-definition era’

- **John Wyver**, *Westminster*:

‘30-line broadcasts in Britain, 1928-1935: a television of attractions?’

12.30 Welcome

- **Peter Bonfield**, *Vice-Chancellor, University of Westminster*

12.40 Screening

- *BBC Television Demonstration Film*, with introduction by **Lisa Kerrigan**, *BFI*

1.30 Lunch (not provided)

2.15 Panel: People of pre-war British television

- **Jamie Medhurst**, *Aberystwyth*:

‘Eustace Robb, a pioneering producer’

- **Kate Murphy**, *Bournemouth*:

‘Business as usual? Women's work in pre-war BBC Television’

3.15 Coffee and tea

3.30 Panel: Early televisions in the United States

- **William Boddy**, *Baruch College*:

‘Interrogating the interregnum: Media historiography and 1930s American television’

- **Paul Marshall**:

‘The television of Ulises Armand Sanabria’

- **Mark J. Williams**, *Dartmouth College*:

‘Los Angeles: The “local” exception to early television historiography’

- **Ron Simon**, *The Paley Center for Media*, via video link

‘The 1939 launch of American television’

5.15 Drinks reception

## Friday 3 July

9.00 Coffee and tea

### 9.30 Traces of early British television

- **Simon Vaughan**, *APTS*:

‘BBC Television in the 1930s: a visual history through the lens of Desmond Campbell’

- **Dick Fiddy**, *BFI*:

‘Traces of television’s early comedians’

- **Stephen Bourne**:

‘A sort of magic – Black contributors and creators on pre-war BBC Television’

11.00 Coffee and tea

### 11.15 Panel: Early televisions in Europe and the Soviet Union

- **Danielle Simon**, *Middlebury*:

‘Early television and Fascist spectacle at the 1939 Villaggio Balneare ’

- **Oliver Botar**, *Manitoba*:

‘Moholy-Nagy: The *Telehor* (Television) as the transmitter of abstract “Light Plays”’

- **Jeffrey Cohen**:

‘Television before the network: performance and spectacle in early Soviet broadcasting, 1931–1941’

- **Angelina Lucento**, *Duke University*:

‘Realism in real time: early Soviet monumental painting as proto-television’

1.15 Lunch (not provided)

### 1.45 Screening:

Compilation of reports of pre-war television in Europe and USA

### 2.45 Panel: The intermediality of early British television

- **Luke McKernan**:

‘BBC television news and the newsreels in the 1930s’

- **Ian Christie**:

‘Dallas Bower – a visionary at Alexandra Palace’

3.45 Coffee and tea

### 4.00 Closing keynote

- **Anne-Katrin Weber**, *Lausanne*:

‘Surveillance and targeting by CCTV - a transnational perspective on interwar television’s useful forms’

### 5.00-5.30 Plenary discussion

For free registration:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-cultures-of-early-television-tickets-1987376877740>

Convenor: John Wyver, Professor of the Arts on Screen, University of Westminster  
j.wyver@westminster.ac.uk