

January 2017

History of the www.parliamentaryradio.com teams two books on women MPs, our three historic national Archives and our ten years of broadcasting in March 2017

Our report on our 2016 broadcast coverage:

- In the 12 months from January 2016 to December 2016 we did 54 interviews with women and men MPs of all parties. We often did these after PMQs, picking up on the issues raised by MPs. We interviewed 27 Conservatives; 19 Labour; 3 SNP; 4 LDs; 1 Green.
- We made 10 documentaries: 3 on the #WASPI campaign; 1 on TM becoming PM: 1 on Brexit; 1 on the murder of Jo Cox; 1 on the New Dawn art installation in Westminster; 1 on the 2016 Budget; 1 on the LD and gay marriage changes. Our two part documentary on women in the Conservative Party 'W2Win', first broadcast in January 2016 got over 1,000 listens when shared with other sites. Maria Miller MP and Kate Green MP, equality spokes for their respective parties have been regular contributors.
- We also broadcast three exclusive Theresa May archive interviews from 2008, 2009, and 2011 when she became PM in July 2016. We broadcast another ten minute archive interview with Jo Cox following her murder in June 2016 first broadcast after a PMQ in autumn 2015.
- From March 2016 we moved some of our most recent broadcasting onto mobile, twitter <https://twitter.com/bonisoness2> and Soundcloud. <https://soundcloud.com/bonisoness2>
- The SNP Eilidh Whiteford Private Member's Bill on the Istanbul Convention, which got all party support, was first broadcast on Soundcloud in December 2016 and has got nearly 500 listens and retweets and over 1,000 likes. Our March 2016 #WASPI documentary tweeted out got 1,000 listens. Other #WASPI docs have achieved over 700 listens.
- We interviewed two academic experts on Brexit, and two on Trump, and four female current or former lobby journalists.

History of our Ten years of broadcasting from March 2007 to March 2017

- In December 2004 Jackie Ashley wrote the "Bullied, Patronised and Abused" article in the Guardian on Blair's babes and women in politics in the UK taking her quotes from interviews carried out for our first book on women in politics. Deborah McGurran and Linda Fairbrother helped with these interviewees.
<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2004/dec/07/uk.gender>
- In September 2005 that book: Women in Parliament: The New Suffragettes was published by Methuen with 83 interviews with women MPs of all parties conducted during 2004-2005. <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Women-Parliament-Suffragettes-Boni-Sones/dp/1842751409>. Boni Sones, the principle author, was nominated for the Orwell Prize in Journalism. Professor Joni Lovenduski and Margaret Moran were co-authors.

- Collaborators for their parties included Baroness Caroline Spelman MP (Cons); Baroness Gillian Shephard (Cons); Harriet Harman MP (Lab), Vera Baird former MP (Lab) and Sandra Gidley former MP (LD).
- Boni Sones wrote the “Belittled Women” article in the Guardian in August 2005.
<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2005/aug/29/mondaymediasection3>
- The Guardian media commentators Roy Greenslade’s apology to the Blair Babes and other women MPs was published alongside it:
<https://www.theguardian.com/media/2005/aug/29/mondaymediasection4>
- September 10th 2005 BBC Archive hour broadcast the documentary resented by Jackie Ashley, produced by Deborah McGurran, and Boni Sones’ “A Monstrous Regiment” about the women in parliament. <http://www.bonisonesproductions.com/gallery.html> (to download).
(http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4216784.stm)
- In March 2007 Boni Sones and associates Jackie Ashley, Deborah McGurran, and Linda Fairbrother, set up the web broadcaster www.wpradio.co.uk. It later became www.parliamentaryradio.com interviewing women MPs across party each week about their work in Westminster. It is now approaching its tenth anniversary of broadcasting in 2017. Dame Caroline Spelman, and Harriet Harman were again MP collaborators.
- In August 2010 the British Library opened a historical audio archive of the 82 interviews of women in politics book, with time bars on access to some of the audio and transcripts. It took six years to get 82 of the 83 women interviewed to agree to deposit their audio interviews at the BL. It is called the Harman Shephard Archive. <http://www.bl.uk/press-releases/2010/september/hear-hear-the-truth-behind-blairs-babes-and-camerons-cuties?mobile=off>
- In June 2009 we originated and studio produced four photographic portraits of women MPs taken party by party by the Reuters photographer Kieran Doherty who took the famous Blair's Babe photograph to celebrate 90 years of women and the vote. Boni was assisted by Caroline Adams of the Labour women’s PLP, and collaborators from the Conservatives including Dame Caroline Spelman, Liberal Democrats and Independents too. The portraits are called “The Day the Carlton Club Accepted Women” and they were unveiled at the National Portrait Gallery with its Director Sandy Nairn. A copy of each was subsequently acquired by the House of Commons Works of Art Committee. (copyright Boni Sones)
- <http://www.parliament.uk/worksofart/artwork/kieran-doherty/the-day-the-carlton-club-accepted-women---90-years-after-women-got-the-vote-labour-women-mps/6929>
- In July 2010 we read from our audio interviews and they were displayed on a wall with headphones at the Tricycle Theatre London in a play about women in politics. <http://www.tricycle.co.uk/festivals/women-power-and-politics/> (Westminster should do the same!)
- Since March 2014 all our interviews with women MPs across party for wpradio and www.parliamentaryradio.com from May 2007 to May 2014 can now be listened to at The Boni Sones OBE and Associates Political Archive at the London School of Economics.

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<http://archives.lse.ac.uk/Record.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog&id=SONES&pos=1>

- In March 2014 our second book “When There's a Woman in the Room: Women MPs Shaping Public Policy” was published and it was mentioned favourably in the Chamber. It is a record of the history of our broadcasting over seven years and extracts from our 350 interviews with women MPs are quoted in it. It was written by Boni Sones.
<https://www.amazon.co.uk/When-Theres-Woman-Room-Shaping/dp/0956587194>
- In January 2015 journalists Jackie Ashely, Deborah McGurran, Linda Fairbrother and Boni Sones interviewed 10 of the Labour women standing down and deposited these audio interviews with the History of Parliament Trust. Our article on these interviews was published in the Guardian in March 2015. theguardian.com/politics/2015/mar/29/10-labour-women-changed-the-face-of-westminster
- In October 2015 we won an Honourable Mention in the International Association of Women in Radio and TV for this work “Throwing in the Towel: how Labour Women MPs fought to change Westminster Politics”. We were the only UK winner.
<http://www.iawrt.org/iawrt-2015-international-awards-0>
- In April 2015 all four of our women MP portraits from 2009 featured again in the House of Commons art exhibition of women in politics thanks to Melanie Unwin the Deputy Curator. All four portraits still hang in the House of Commons today in Norman Shore South.
- In January 2016 we broadcast a two part audio documentary on the history of the Conservative Party, Women2Win and Equality with the support of Dame Caroline Spelman, Bernard Jenkins, and their colleagues. It got over 1000 listens.
- In July 2016 we did a special documentary to celebrate Theresa May MP becoming the second female Prime Minister of the UK. We interviewed, Wendy Morton, the MP for Aldridge-Brownhills, Victoria Borwick the MP for Kensington, and Caroline Spelman the MP for Meriden.
- From February 2015 to December 2016 we have broadcast on the www.bonisonesproductions.com platform website, soundcloud and twitter.
- Our documentary interviews over this period on the history of equality in all three parties, Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat are now deposited in the History of Parliament Trust. Thanks to its Director, Dr Paul Seward.
- Our history and all those who have assisted us are written up in more detail in our Wikipedia entry. We thank them all.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_Parliamentary_Radio

Thanks to journalists: Jackie Ashley, Linda Fairbrother and Deborah McGurran. Thanks to our MP supporters, who have been: (Cons) Dame Caroline Spelman MP, Eleanor Laing MP, Penny Mordaunt MP. (Lab) Gisela Stuart MP, Barbara Keeley MP. (LD) Baroness Susan Kramer and the former LD MP Jo Swinson. And thanks also to our long serving third sector Advisory Board Members, Anastasia de Waal, and Nick Aldridge. More recently our thanks go to Dr Paul Seward, Director, the History of Parliament Trust for his support and encouragement.

Dame Caroline Spelman, Gisela Stuart, and Jackie Ashley deserve particular thanks for their encouragement of us over many years.

End.