



CLAN MACCALLUM - MALCOLM SOCIETY

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Helen Mary Malcolm (1918 2010)

Famous BBC Television Announcer

Helen Mary Malcolm^[1] (15 March 1918 – 13 October 2010), as one of the first two regular female announcers on BBC Television after World War II, was a household name in the U.K. during the 1950s.

Mary was brought up in Poltalloch, Argyll, Scotland. Until the age of 16, she was privately taught. She then attended the Lycée Français in South Kensington, London. She was fluent in both German and French.

She began her television career in 1948, having gained broadcasting experience on the radio during World War II. As more and more men were called up to fight, women became increasingly in demand to fill posts at the BBC. Mary Malcolm was taken on and worked for the Home Service as a continuity announcer from March 1942. With the relaunch of the BBC's television service after the war, she worked alongside Sylvia Peters and McDonald Hobley, with the trio averaging ten days' work a month each.



At this time, all television programs were introduced by an in-vision host or hostess and broadcasts were normally live. Malcolm received no training and became known for her spoonerisms: "By the end of the day I was tired, and when I came to the weather forecast I just read it out without really trying. My biggest fear was 'drain and rizzle', which I said more than once" & "Frog and Fost." With the advent of commercial rival ITV in 1955, the BBC's reliance on announcers diminished. Commercial breaks quickly became popular and the BBC decided audiences no longer needed a hostess to soothe them.^[5] Malcolm left the BBC in 1956 although she continued to appear as a guest on various programs including an episode of the comedy series *The Goodies*. Her autobiography, *Me*, was published in 1956.

Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Malcolm

Excerpt from the Argent Castle, Winter 2011;

Mary Malcolm was one of the first real celebrities in early British television. In the years after World War II, her crisp unflappable delivery, sweet simple and very proper enunciation endeared her to a growing number of viewers. She was the very essence of a polished young lady who made everyone feel comfortable. After she had said good night, and played the National Anthem, many felt that they "had been tucked into bed by Mary." She was a reassuring presence in those post-war years. She wore voluminous gowns and was always immaculately coiffed.

Clan Chief Robin Malcolm has many fond memories of his visits to the BBC television studios where, as an impressionable teenager, he observed first hand his "Aunt Mary" doing live interviews and was introduced to some legendary characters.

Source: Clan Chief Robin Malcolm