

## MEDIA COVERAGE

- **BBC Calling Europe**, February 1954, John Pinkerton talk on LEO reported in LEO Chronicle, February 16th 1954.
- **BC Tomorrows World** edition 'Computers in the 1960s' which features some of the film taken by CAV of their LEO !!! computer in Acton London, though without stating the source of the film. The Film with normal restrictions to using their material apply. The film shows school children being taught how computers work and their applications.thousands of people. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p031t265/tomorrows-world-computers-in-the-60s>
- **BBC French Service**, talk on LEO by Mary Coombs
- **BBC 1 TV** in March 2012 ran a 5 episode series fronted by Len Goodman, reminiscing about the 1950s entitled *The 1952 Show* in honour of the Queen's Jubilee. Episode 5 screened on March 30<sup>th</sup> at 9.15am. It featured the LEO story with an excellent interview of Ernest Kaye. See also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01f9qw3/broadcasts/2012/03>  
The section featuring LEO and Ernest Kaye can be seen on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GE6TX70A3Rc>
- **Granada TV** (2003), London's Home Movies. Episode 3 includes a section on LEO featuring David Caminer and Peter Byford. Copy held by Trevor Hughes ex LEO peripheral equipment engineer on VHS tapes.
- **60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event at Science Museum 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011**  
The event received wide coverage including interviews on the BBC Today programme, BBC World Service, and BBC5 Live Outriders programme. It was also covered by the Daily Telegraph and the Daily Mail website. A video interview of Georgina Ferry, Ernest Kaye, Mary Coombs, Ralph Land and Frank Land made for Google was also presented. The links below include reports in media, video recordings, radio recordings, photographs.  
<http://www.youtube.com/user/LeoCompSoc/videos>  
<http://storify.com/lynetter/leo-60th-anniversary>  
<http://www.pcauthority.com.au/Tools/Print.aspx?CIID=280510>
- **Eric Schmidt in the 2011 MacTaggart Lecture** noted:  
"You (UK) invented computers in both concept and practice. (It is not widely known, but the world's first office computer was built in 1951 by Lyons' chain of teashops!). Yet today none of the world's leading exponents in these fields are from the UK"  
<http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/238974/mactaggart-lecture-2011.pdf>
- **The Guardian on 2011 McTaggart Lecture** Bridging the arts and sciences divide  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/technology/2011/aug/29/bridging-arts-science-divide>
- **Sunday Telegraph July 1<sup>st</sup> 2012** Christopher Middleton interviews Eric Schmidt as part of the paper's campaign to "Make Britain Count" and in his comment on the interview repeats Eric Schmidt's earlier notes on the role played by LEO in pioneering business computing. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/maths-reform/9288256/Make-Britain-Count-Google-head-Eric-Schmidt-supports-our-campaign.html>

- **TV Channel 5** ran a series of programmes on *Disappearing Britain*. The third episode in December 2006, entitled *The BRITISH CUPPA WITH WENDY CRAIG*, and included a section on J. Lyons with its Corner Houses and Teashops. This included the story of LEO including an interview with Frank Land. See also <http://ftvdb.bfi.org.uk/sift/title/824846?view=synopsis> and watch on [http://www.ovguide.com/tv\\_episode/disappearing-britain-season-1-episode-3-the-british-cuppa-with-wendy-craig-536421](http://www.ovguide.com/tv_episode/disappearing-britain-season-1-episode-3-the-british-cuppa-with-wendy-craig-536421)
- **BBC Radio 4** commissioned a programme from Pennine Productions called **Electronic Brains** which was broadcast on 30 October 2001. The programme was compiled by and fronted by Mike Hally and one of the four episodes featured the story of LEO. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/electronicbrains.shtml>
- **BBC Radio 5**/Live Tuesday, 29 November 2011. Short piece by Jammilah Knowles on the pioneering LEO enterprise. LEO: Making history. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/outriders/2011/11/leo\\_making\\_history.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/legacy/outriders/2011/11/leo_making_history.shtml)
- **Celebrating LEO, the world's first business computer**, Google Europe Blog, November 17, 2011 <http://googlepolicyeuropa.blogspot.co.uk/2011/11/celebrating-leo-worlds-first-business.html>
- **ITV (LWT London area only )** is to show a series of 8 programmes called London Home Movies on Sunday afternoons. The series will start on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at 5.30. Several members have contributed to the series and Trevor Hughes's contribution is included in the first programme.  
References to LEO will appear in the programme devoted to Work which will appear on Sunday November 30<sup>th</sup> at 5.30 pm.  
Interviews with David Caminer and Peter Byford will be included with the LEO film and it will include some footage of a home movie taken by Brian Eaton in the sixties, of LEO 3 together with an interview with Brian.
- **National Public Radio (NPR), USA**  
An episode of Revolutionaries, a co-production of the Computer History Museum, Silicon Valley and KQED television, Published on Jul 6, 2012 by Computer History. The subject is the contribution to computing of Sir Maurice Wilkes.  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9DrKQ2isIk&list=UUHDr4RtxwA1KqKGwxgdK4Vg&index=5&feature=plcp>
- **The Register:** Live Chat NOW: LEO, the British computer that roared, 28<sup>th</sup> June 2013 (see [http://www.theregister.co.uk/2013/06/26/live\\_chat\\_leo/](http://www.theregister.co.uk/2013/06/26/live_chat_leo/)). Gavin Clarke, editor of The Register and members of the audience interview Frank and Ralph Land online in real time. The outcome is rather messy as questions and answers do not come out in a proper sequence.
- **UK Computer Heritage**  
at Google HQ in London 1st July 2013 to celebrate UK contribution to Information and Communications Technology. Featured the Video commissioned by Google for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of LEO held at the Science

Museum: <http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLG7EqWtzelhXjSD4SdfPx1WQICKZMVcP4>

- **BBC How the Computer Changed the Office Forever.**  
*BBC Magazine. Broadcast August 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 BBC Radio 4 at 13.45 as part of a 10 episode series by Lucy Kellaway entitled Lucy Kellaway's History of Office Life and explores the changes brought about in the office by computers and this episode starts with a brief review of the LEO story including a photo of LEO I.*  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23509153>
- **BBC 4 The I.T. Girls**  
*August 2013, 11.00 am BBC Radio 4. Fronted by Martha Lane-Fox its contributors include, Mary Coombs, Dame Stephanie Shirley, Ann Moffat and Tilly Blythe. From the 1950s to the mid-1970s in Britain, many of the pioneers of early computing were women. This was a highly skilled new world of work providing opportunities that were often in sharp contrast to the established norms of post-war British life, with new technology helping drive social change.*
  - Mary Coombs was the first woman to program the world's first commercially available business computer: the Lyons LEO. She tells us what it was like to work on this machine - which was the size of a room.
  - In 1962 Dame Stephanie Shirley founded a programming company, Freelance Programmers, which only employed women. She became a very successful figure in the industry.
  - Ann Moffat started her career at Kodak in 1959. She programmed the black box flight recorders for Concorde and wrote missile programmes for Polaris.
  - The Science Museum's Keeper of Technologies and Engineering, Dr Tilly Blyth, explains the significance of her museum's collection of machines that changed these women's lives.
  - Martha Lane Fox presents the programme. In 1998 she co-founded Lastminute.com, and become one of the pioneers of the dot com era. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b038hfkx>
- **BBC News Channel: Celebrating the UK's Computer Pioneers.**  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/7521868.stm> A Brief account of the role played by the UK in the development of computers from Bletchley to LEO.
- **BBC Radio 4 Extra**, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2013, 9.00-12.00 am and 7.00- 10.pm. A three hour compilation of computing history from the BBC radio archives, fronted by Maggie Philbin at Bletchley Park. The programme started with Charles Babbage, and Ada Lovelace, went on to Bletchley and the second world war code breaking exploits, then the LEO story from the Make Hally LEO episode in the four-part story of the Dawn of Computers (about 20 minutes), Clive Sinclair and the Micro Computer revolution, Berners-Lee and the World Wide Web, and finally the spread of Social Computing with Facebook and Twitter. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03g8lx1>
- **BBC 1 ONE Show**, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2014, 7.00 pm – 7.30 pm devoted a section of the programme to Lyons and the LEO story, with extracts from a LEO film, and explanations from Peter Bird and Frank Land. It was well edited and presented, lauding the LEO initiative and stating clearly Lyons' role in building the world's first business computer

- **BBC Radio 4: Hidden Histories of the Information Age** 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2014 at 13.45. Repeated week commencing January 4<sup>th</sup> with LEO story on 7<sup>th</sup> January at 9.30 am. One of six 15 minute programmes, presented by Aleks Krotoski, devoted to specific exhibits at the new Information Age Gallery which opened on 24<sup>th</sup> October in the London Science Museum. The program, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of October, told the story of LEO as ushering in the new age of business computing. It involved interviews with Jessica Bradford from the Museum (content manager of the new Gallery, Gloria Guy and Frank Land from the LEO Computers Society, a teashop manageress who had been a user of the original teashop ordering program and nicely rounded off by Tilly Blyth (who had been largely instrumental in the making of the new Gallery from concept to final exhibit) from the Science Museum. Altogether a well-balanced telling of the LEO story and how it fits into the development of the Information Age. It can be heard on <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04m3ftg>
- **The Guardian Notes and Theories from the Science Desk**, 22<sup>nd</sup> October carries a comprehensive note on the Science Museum Information Age Gallery LEO Story Exhibit, including the film clip which forms part of the LEO exhibit. <http://www.theguardian.com/science/blog/2014/oct/22/information-age-cake-computer-changed-world-science-museum>
- **The Richmond and Twickenham Times** Nov 2014 carried a photograph of the presentation to Jackie Caminer and Helen Pinkerton of framed photographs of David Caminer and John Pinkerton respectively by Peter Byford and Ray Hennessy. Included was a brief summary of the LEO story and the key roles played by David Caminer and John Pinkerton in the LEO story. See [http://www.richmondandtwickenhamtimes.co.uk/news/11581099.Widows\\_gather\\_for\\_tribute\\_to\\_their\\_husbands\\_pioneering\\_computer\\_work/](http://www.richmondandtwickenhamtimes.co.uk/news/11581099.Widows_gather_for_tribute_to_their_husbands_pioneering_computer_work/)

**The Sound of LEO I** (1955) as heard in the BC Television Series *Quartermas II*. Only a short piece which can be downloaded at [http://www.computinghistory.org.uk/det/56533/Quatermass-II-\(Sound-of-LEO-I\)/](http://www.computinghistory.org.uk/det/56533/Quatermass-II-(Sound-of-LEO-I)/)

- **BBC Radio 4 'Ways of thinking'** 4th April, 2015, 1.30. An account by Naomi Alderman of what programming and coding involves including looking back at what underlies high level languages with an excerpt from Mary Coombs Oral History talking about programming LEO I.
- **BBC Radio 4 'In Business'** 9 April 2015 8.30 pm includes reference to LEO with some photos- See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05pqx2g>
- **Stewarts & Lloyds.** Corby Town Council is holding a heritage exhibition, open until end of September, 2015 1.00-4.00 weekdays, 11.00-2.00 Saturday, celebrating the town's connection with early computers. It features LEO II/3, the first LEO delivered to an outside company: Stewart & Lloyds, steel makers located at that time in Corby. See <http://www.northantstelegraph.co.uk/news/top-stories/discover-corby-s-computing-heritage-with-new-exhibition-1-6866793> and <http://www.corby.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Leo%202.pdf>
- **Living Legends Hidden Histories Exhibition**, including a presentation on LEO II/3 at Stewarts and Lloyds and exhibit of Mercury Delay memory. Thursday 3rd May 2018 at 6.00pm  
Rooftop Arts Centre. Chisholm House, Queens Square, Corby, NN17 1PZ.

- **BBC Radio London**, 2010, interview of Neville Lyons, with Robert Elms, on the occasion of opening of the new Modern London gallery in the Museum of London, which featured part of the frontage of the Coventry Street Corner House, donated by J Lyons company to the Museum.
- **BBC Radio 4 'Today Programme'** 2013 on the occasion of a major exhibition of the Lyons Teashop Lithographs at the Towner Gallery, Eastbourne. The recording, introduced by Justin Webb, was conducted by Nicola Stanbridge, the interviewees Neville Lyons, Charlie Batchelor, Curator and David Gentleman, one of the lithograph artists.
- **BBC Radio 4 'Computing Britain'** a 10 part series presented by mathematician Hannah Fry from University College London. Broadcast on Monday to Friday between 14<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> September.

The series will start in the mid-1940s and finish in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, concentrating the UK's part in computing history between these years. The series features the story behind machines such as LEO, EDSAC, Baby and ERNIE as well as later breakthroughs such as packet switching, home computing, the BBC Micro and ARM microprocessors.

**Program 2: LEO: The Electronic Office**, 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015, 15 minutes. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b069rvb4>

**Reflections on Program:** Peter Byford: I heard the programme in your *Computing Britain* series about LEO. Whilst I was delighted that you made a programme about LEO and Lyons, I was disappointed about a number of aspects about it.

You used our film and other recordings that we provided, I should also state that we hold the Copyright of the LEO film, made in 1957 as I told you. Despite this there was no acknowledgement of the Society or mention of its excellent website - see below. I looked at your website and there was no mention there either. Please correct this when you can and acknowledge the Society.

You used a number of people in your programme who were not LEO people to describe Lyons and LEO and possibly because of this you made some mistakes. The only LEO people the late Ernest Kaye, Mary Coombs and Gloria Guy were taken from recordings/YouTube that we provided to you. The Society has a number of quite eloquent speakers who are, of course, knowledgeable about LEO. We could have checked your facts corrected any errors you have made before it was broadcast. One significant error was that you stated that LEO was operational in 1956 - no it was in November 1951 when the first LEO program went operational.

I know Tilly Blythe of course, but who were that other people who were on the programme? Other than the presenter of course, they were not mentioned.

- **BBC 4 TV: The Joy of Data** July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 9.00pm. See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07lk6tj>

David Crawford in the Radio Times writes: "We live in a data driven world, where every industry you can think of relies on digital data, and there's the constant threat of drowning in information overload. But why are we so enamoured of all this stuff, and how did we get to this point? Happily the ever enthusiastic Dr Hannah Fry – the Beeb's new go to mathematician – is here to throw a lifeline with this witty explainer. She argues that data is the bridge essential for scientific discovery, to move from problem to solution – and invaluable in the modern world.

Along the way you'll learn how **J Lyons** purveyor of fine British tea and cakes was at the forefront of the computer revolution." The programme includes interviews with Mary Coombs and Frank Land.

Guardian Review at <https://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2016/jul/21/the-joy-of-data-review-who-knew-data-could-seem-so-magical-so-sexy>  
The Program was repeated on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at 2.00 am

- **Wall Street Journal**, August 14<sup>th</sup> 2018, correspondence from John Kelly III, of IBM claiming IBM invented business computing and response from Norman Witkin refuting the claim and putting forward the LEO precedence. Frank Land has copy of correspondence. See <https://www.dropbox.com/s/nva7ep5ejpuarde/Wall%20Street%20Journal%20Correspondence%20August%202018.docx?dl=0>
- **BBC News East (West) One of the world's first computers gets VR reboot**, The LEO story retold in the context of the Cambridge Centre for Computer History partnership expectation to build a virtual reality version of LEO I – news item on local BBC News 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018 6.30 pm <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-cambridgeshire-45953502>.
- **BBC Look East 2018** BBC World Service BBC Look East news segment from October 2018 on the LEO story retold in the context of lottery funding received by the Centre for Computing History and LEO Computers Society partnership project [Swiss Rolls, Tea and the Electronic Office](#). Includes Pathe footage of Lyons teashops and an interview with Dr Lisa McGerty. A live studio interview with Jason Fitzpatrick was also broadcast at the time.

Both the Centre for Computing History and the LEO Computers Society have a copy of the recorded broadcast, and it can be viewed at CCH but we are restricted from making this available on display due to copyright restrictions.

- **ITV Grantchester, Episode 3, 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2019** investigating a break in at a computer laboratory includes a sequence mentioning EDSAC and the LEO teashop job. Available for viewing until Spring 2019 at <https://www.itv.com/hub/grantchester/2a2958a0022>
  - **BBC 2 TV The Dream Machine** a series of episodes on the history of computers televised on Sunday evenings in November and December 1991. The story of LEO is briefly recounted in episode 2 with extracts from an ICL film on LEO. <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=bbc+2+The+Dream+Machine&&view=detail&mid=A1C7350BBDAD3B907A3BA1C7350BBDAD3B907A3B&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dbbc%2B2%2BThe%2BDream%2BMachine%26%26FORM%3DVDVXX>

*The Machine that Changed the World: Inventing the Future, PB Series on Computer History* 5 May 9<sup>th</sup> 2012. A 1 hour long programme telling the story of the birth of the electronic computer and its rise from obscurity as a machine for computing tables of trajectories for the American military to the universal machine of today. The program tells the story from an American perspective through interviews with some of the early pioneers and with computer historians. Much of the program is taken up by the story of ENIAC and its founders, the attempt by them to build a universal machine, the UNIVAC, and the rise of IBM to dominance. But the program switches briefly to the UK and the story of Lyons and LEO including an interview with John Pinkerton. It notes that in 1954 Lyons added computers to their product range. The program is well constructed, informative and provides a good analysis of, for example the rise of IBM to dominance. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GropWVbj9wA>

BC World Service, Mike Lanchin introduces Witness History including: From cakes to computers, Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> November, 2019 at 8.50. 12.50 and 1.50 local

time. See <http://www.computinghistory.org.uk/det/56531/Witness-History-From-Cakes-to-Computers/>

☑ Mary Coombs recalls her work as an early computer programmer on LEO, the first electronic office system, pioneered by the Lyons catering company. In the early 1950s, the leading British catering firm, J Lyons & Co, pioneered the world's first automated office system. It was baptised LEO - the Lyons Electronic Office - and was used in stock-taking, food ordering and payrolls for the company. Soon it was being hired out to UK government ministries and other British businesses. Mary Coombs worked on the first LEO and was the first woman to become a commercial computer programmer. She tells Mike Lanchin about her memories of those heady days when computers were still in their infancy.

Photo:LEO 2 in operation, 1957 (credit: The LEO Computers Society)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csyx55>

**BBC TV 2, 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 9.00 pm and IPlayer.** Greg Wallace and presenters visit factory baking Malt Loaves. ***Meanwhile, historian Ruth Goodman reveals the surprising story of a British baking company that cooked up the first business computer J. Lyons and the LEO Computer. The link is another factory process – the miles of Swiss Rolls baked by Lyons in its Cadby Hall factory. The TV show devotes about 5 minutes, about 40 minutes into the program, to an excellent account of the LEO story. See:***

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m001363m/inside-the-factory-series-6-4-malt-loaf>

Note the IPlayer version is only available in the UK and until August 5th 2022.

### **BBC Witness History**

Coombs, M. and Lanchin, M., (2019), From cakes to computers, BBC Witness History Coombs recalls her work as an early computer programmer on LEO, the first electronic office system, pioneered by the Lyons catering company. In the early 1950s, the leading British catering firm, J Lyons & Co, pioneered the world's first automated office system. It was baptised LEO - the Lyons Electronic Office - and was used in stock-taking, food ordering and payrolls for the company. Soon it was being hired out to UK government ministries and other British businesses. Mary Coombs worked on the first LEO and was the first woman to become a commercial computer programmer. She tells Mike Lanchin about her memories of those heady days when computers were still in their infancy

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3csyx55>

### **Why The UK's IBM Failed**

A podcast designed to explain why the UK's computer industry failed to emulate the success of IBM despite the impetus of building pioneering systems both technically and in terms of the uses the computers were put to. The explanations are broad-brush, not surprising given the number of years covered and the complexity of the subject. The result is a story narrated with confidence and plausibility pinpointing many relevant decisions over the course of many decades. But equally the approach has a number of important gaps which reduce the value of the broadcast. There is only a single mention of LEO (19 minutes into the broadcast) but without any explanation of the role it

played. Nor is the attempt by the European computer companies, including LEO, to provide a united front to combat the advance of IBM and the US computer industry in Europe.

The broadcast can be downloaded at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkTHDgYTh64>



