

Join the campaign to protect the future of independent research at the BBC Written Archives Centre

The following text is an open letter expressing the concern of historians and researchers about [changes to services](#) at the BBC Written Archives. A news report about our campaign can be found [here](#).

If you would like to join our campaign to secure continued *independent* access to previously unvetted files, and to be kept up to date, please write to bbcwaccampaign@gmail.com. Please also provide your professional affiliation in the email should you wish for us to add your name to the letter. **Note: you cannot add your name directly to this page.**

To express your own concerns, and we encourage you to do so - please contact heritage@bbc.co.uk.

Thank you for reading.

Ian Greaves, Dr Kate Murphy and Professor John Wyver

August 2025

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Open Letter

As historians, researchers and writers, we feel compelled to express our profound concern about access to the BBC's history, following changes that have been introduced at the BBC Written Archives Centre (WAC) at Caversham.

The WAC is a unique social, political and cultural resource, with extensive holdings about broadcasting history and the histories of Britain and the Commonwealth.

Recent policy changes have created an impossible situation for those seeking to tell new and hidden stories. The BBC will no longer vet files for access on request, closing off around two thirds of the present archive. Independent and exploratory research is now effectively dead.

The BBC has stated that there will be some new releases of material, but on their terms. Corporate and commercial interests will take the place of genuine enquiry. The Archives were paid for by the public's licence fees, and open and independent access to them must be maintained. Researchers must also have clarity for the planning of new books, PhD dissertations and other projects.

As Charter Review approaches, we call on the BBC to publish a code of practice affirming continuing WAC access and the continued availability of files on request. This is an invaluable national resource and must remain so.

Sincerely,

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