# Evolution of Lesbian Kisses on British TV Over Five Decades



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In February 1974, British television made history with the first televised lesbian kiss on BBC Two's drama anthology series, Second City Firsts. The pivotal scene featured Jackie, an Army officer played by Alison Steadman, kissing her superior officer, Harvey, portrayed by Myra Frances. Pre-broadcast discussions included whether the kiss should air after 23:00, reflecting the period’s sensitivity.

Fifteen years later, Channel 4's LGBT magazine show, Out on Tuesday, aired a controversial segment in February 1989 where an advertising campaign included an image of two women kissing. The show addressed significant LGBT issues and faced protests from figures such as Mary Whitehouse, a well-known campaigner.

In January 1994, Channel 4's soap opera Brookside featured a landmark kiss between characters Margaret, played by Nicola Stephenson, and Beth, portrayed by Anna Friel. This event was notably the first romantic kiss between two women broadcast outside the 21:00 watershed.

The early 2000s saw more prominent depictions, including the February 2001 kiss between Willow and Tara on Buffy the Vampire Slayer, marking one of American TV's first lesbian relationships. Similar moments on other popular shows indicated a trend of 'lesbian kiss episodes' used to boost ratings.

In July 2017, Doctor Who introduced the lesbian companion Bill Potts, played by Pearl Mackie. Bill’s kiss with Heather (Stephanie Hyam) marked a significant moment for representation on the long-running series.

Most recently, the BBC dating reality series I Kissed a Girl, which aired its finale in May 2024, began with women pairing up and kissing before even speaking. Abbie Cole and Lisha Paige, a couple from the show, noted the increase in visibility and representation of lesbian characters on TV compared to their youth.

From covert and controversial beginnings to more normalized portrayals, the evolution of lesbian kisses on British TV signifies broader cultural shifts over fifty years.