



# Voice of the Listener & Viewer

Working for Quality and Diversity in Broadcasting

Winter 2010/11 Bulletin Issue 103

## WATCHING THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE HASTY LICENCE FEE SETTLEMENT

BBC Director-General **Mark Thompson**, speaking publicly at VLV's Autumn Conference for the first time since the settlement, said that he had been the lead negotiator for the BBC but that the proposals had been endorsed by the BBC Trust. The BBC felt they could live with the proposed strategy and the 16% cut in BBC income over the next six years and emerge stronger.

Mr Thompson said that, although he regretted the inability to consult licence payers, his feeling was that the BBC had secured a better deal than if they had waited, as anticipated, for a decision in spring 2011.

VLV President **Jocelyn Hay** said, commenting on his statement, "VLV members were assured by Mark Thompson that the diversity of public service broadcasting would be retained but much has still to be decided and the devil will lie in the detail. Our members are concerned that the summary nature of the decisions – and the proposals – fly in the face of safeguards which had been built into legislation over many years. Whilst we accept that all public bodies must share the pain, the state of the economy must not be used as a pretext for infringing the BBC's independence."

(see more inside on page 5)

## BROADCASTING: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

### Report from VLV's Autumn Conference

The conference took place at the Geological Society and Robert Beveridge gave an update on BBC issues. Damian Tambini from LSE chaired the morning and Roger Bolton the afternoon. Lord Burns, new Chairman of Channel 4, was the keynote speaker and we also heard from Patrick Barwise, Professor Emeritus of Management and Marketing, London Business School on *Confusions and Delusions about Non-linear TV fee settlement and what it matters*. Chris Woolard questions from the floor, from Ofcom and Richard Klein, moderated by Lionel Barber, Controller, BBC Four. Sylvia Harvey editor of the *Financial Times*.



Lionel Barber, left,  
with Mark Thompson

VLV was delighted that Mark Thompson agreed to speak. He gave his first public statement since

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## VLV's 28th Spring Conference Tuesday 12 April 2011

10.15am - 3.30pm  
Geological Society, Burlington House, London W1

The keynote speaker will be **Helen Boaden, Director, BBC News**. **Stewart Purvis, Professor of Journalism** at City University, will be in the chair.



Helen Boaden

Helen Boaden has been Director, BBC News since 2004 and will shortly become a member of the BBC's Executive Board. During her time as Controller, BBC Radio 4 from 2000 to 2004, the network twice won the Sony Gold Award for Station of the Year.

**The VLV 2010 Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting will be presented during the Spring Conference at 1.45pm.**

There will be a **Members' Forum** from 4.00 - 5.00pm.

## Secretary of State Jeremy Hunt MP to meet VLV members



VLV is delighted that the Secretary of State for Culture, Media, the Olympics & Sport Rt Hon **Jeremy Hunt MP** will speak at **VLV's Westminster Evening Seminar** in the House of Commons on **Tuesday February 8 2011**. **Roger Bolton**, independent producer and presenter, *Feedback*, Radio 4 will take the chair. The seminar is from 5.45pm to 7.45 pm. Please allow enough time to pass through security. Tickets are free but anyone wishing to attend **MUST** register in advance to ensure a place. Tickets are available from Linda Forbes on 01474 338711 or email Linda.Forbes@vlg.org.uk.



Voice of the Listener & Viewer  
Working for Quality and Diversity in British Broadcasting

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#### VLV Office:

PO Box 401, Gravesend DA12 9FY

Tel: 01474 358711 / 01474 358716

Fax: 01474 325440

e-mail: [info@vlv.org.uk](mailto:info@vlv.org.uk)

Office Hours: 9.30-5pm Monday-Thursday

Linda Forbes: Conference & Events Secretary.

Sue Washbrook: Membership/ Board & Trust Administrator.

Website: [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk)

Voice of the Listener & Viewer (VLV) represents the citizen and consumer interests in broadcasting and works for quality and diversity in British broadcasting. VLV is free from political, sectarian and commercial affiliations. VLV is concerned with the issues, structures, institutions and regulation that underpin the British broadcasting system and in particular to maintain the principles of public service broadcasting.

VLV does not handle complaints.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT



So much has changed since our last Bulletin. The BBC - and the licence payers who fund it - will in future find themselves financing some services previously funded by Government, including the World Service and BBC Monitoring. Now for the first time government departments with a stake in these areas (like the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence) could be influencing the way licence payers' money is spent and tensions loom between BBC domestic and international priorities.

The BBC, moreover, is also to fund the Welsh-language S4C, a new network of local television stations and broadband roll-out in rural areas. Over and above these changes the role and powers of Ofcom, the media regulator, are being curtailed just at the time when News Corporation's bid to take over BSkyB threatens the crucial equilibrium of public and commercial funding within the UK's electronic and print media.

In parallel the government is proposing - through the Public Bodies Bill now proceeding through Parliament - to assume many powers previously vested in other agencies, including the right to alter, or theoretically even abolish, Channel 4 without consultation. The consumer interest is further threatened by the disbandment of Consumer Focus and of Ofcom's Consumer Advisory Panel, whose crucial roles have been passed to Citizens Advice without any of the resources which previously supported their specialist media expertise. All this was announced in November by the Secretary of State as a fait accompli without public consultation or parliamentary debate.

VLV is therefore re-doubling its efforts to maintain the quality, diversity and independence of British broadcasting. Key to our strategy will be a series of events around the country raising awareness of the issues and providing opportunities for members and the public to question key decision makers. The Secretary of State himself, Jeremy Hunt, will speak at the first, our seminar in the House of Commons on February 8. Several more are in the pipeline so please watch our website [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk) for the latest news or call the office on 01474 338711.

**The Annual General Meeting of Voice of the Listener & Viewer Ltd** took place after the Autumn Conference. Two members of the Board, Carol Cattley and Shyama Perera stepped down and were warmly thanked for their contributions to VLV and its work. **Christopher Mottershead** and **Eddie Tulasiewicz** were duly elected to the Board. Chris Mottershead has been interested in film and media most of his career. He taught Film and Media Studies at Birkbeck College until his retirement in 2009 and has championed the cause for children's television since 1990. Eddie Tulasiewicz worked at the BBC from 1988-2002. He worked at VLV as its first Education and Development Officer. He is now Director of Communications for the Diocese of Westminster.

#### In memoriam: Gerard Mansell CBE 1921 – 2010

Gerry Mansell, one of the most influential figures in the shaping of the modern radio network, died on 18 December, aged 89. He was born and educated in France and joined the BBC European Service in 1951 after a distinguished war service. With Frank Gillard, Mansell helped reorganise the BBC's radio services in 1967 into Radios 2, 3 and 4, a radical reorganisation that stirred up internal controversy. Sir John Tusa, writing in *The Guardian*, said he 'had a penetrating editorial mind that left its mark on both the BBC World Service and on Radio 4. Running overseas talks and features in the late 1950s and early 60s, he insisted on openness, accuracy, clarity and detachment, coupled with acute awareness of the needs of the worldwide audience'. When he retired he became a member of VLV and was always a great supporter of VLV's aims.



## BROADCASTING: WHERE ARE WE GOING? (from page 1)



Lord Burns GCB,  
Chairman, Channel 4  
(Photo R Gardner)

**Lord Burns**, Chairman of Channel 4 and only one year into the job, expressed confidence in the channel's current performance and future when giving the Autumn Conference's keynote speech.

He liked the remit – having to earn a living in the market-place, but with no commercial pressures to return profits to shareholders. Speaking as a former Treasury mandarin, he particularly liked the lack of dependence on the Treasury! Channel 4 had coped with the advertising downturn in 2008-09 and the consequent reduction in internal costs left it well positioned.

The remit, with its stress on innovation and a young audience, encouraged the company to take more risks than the BBC, but not all programmes were public service – those which attracted most viewers and advertising cross-subsidised the less popular areas. He saw no appetite for privatisation and his personal preference was to leave the model unchanged. Channel 4's added digital channels had broadened scope and reach, and programmes like *The IT Crowd* and *Inbetweeners* illustrated the benefits of interplay between online and broadcast.



**Richard Klein**  
**Controller, BBC Four**

Richard Klein

**Richard Klein** described BBC Four as a different way of thinking: TV which reaches those parts of the brain other channels don't reach. He said the audience is hungry for the type of programming BBC Four transmits. The channel has a £37 million annual budget for comedy, international TV, drama and factual. Mr Klein defined the editorial approach of all its programming as 'enquiring'. He is always looking out for programming which adds cultural value to the BBC's overall output and is also innovative. He said BBC Four is regularly watched by over a million people in a seven day period. The question was asked whether BBC Four's future was safe, considering its relatively small reach. Richard Klein was confident that BBC Four is safe for the future.

**Roger Bolton**, chairing the session, raised the recent BBC Trust Review which said BBC Four's current role and remit were not sufficiently clear. Mr Klein said he did accept that the public believe that the remit is unclear. He stressed that the challenge is to get more attention and make more 'noise'. He said he is trying to rethink how to market the channel but has no control over marketing budgets and has to compete with all the BBC's other channels for funding.

All the speeches from the conference can be obtained from the VLV office or are available on VLV's website at [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk).

## VLV STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION PRIZES

**Roger Graef**, writer, broadcaster, film-maker and criminologist, presented the prizes to the winners of VLV's 2010 Student Essay Competition at the Autumn Conference. The topic was '*In the world of internet blogging, can anyone produce a news story? 'News' covers all areas of political and social interest covered by the media from sport and music to drama and the arts*'. The annual VLV Student Essay Competition is an important way of reaching younger people and introducing them to the important work of VLV. Both winners were awarded cheques for £400 and two weeks work experience and the runners-up also win two weeks work experience.



From left to right, Andreea Magdalina, Neelanjona Debnath, Roger Graef, Alexandra Irwin and Hester Phillips

VLV is grateful to the Voice of the Listener Trust for supporting the competition; to Channel 4 for kindly donating the cash prizes and to Films of Record and Tiger Aspect Productions for providing the work experience places for these young people at the start of their media careers.

**Postgraduate Winner** - Hester Phillips from the London School of Economics, studying for an MSc in Media & Communications

Runner-up - Neelanjona Debnath from Brunel University, studying for an MA in Journalism

**Undergraduate Winner** - Alexandra Irwin from Newcastle University, studying Media, Communications and Cultural Studies

Runner-up - Andreea Magdalina from University of Westminster, studying Journalism.

Channel 4 is again kindly donating cash prizes of £400 each for the **2011 Essay Competition** to be launched shortly. Watch our website [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk) for the topic and details of how to enter.

## STOP PRESS: Local TV plan announcement

Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt announced an action plan to make his vision of local TV a reality, an initiative to offer communities a "new voice" and provide local perspectives directly relevant to them. The plan proposes broadcasting the channels on Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT). Media providers have been invited to register their interest by 1 March suggesting how a channel dedicated to local news and content could work best. The aim is to award licences by the end of 2012 and for local TV to be "up and running" soon after.

## VLV CONGRATULATES THOSE AWARDED NEW YEAR HONOURS



**Mark Damazer**, former Controller, BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 7 and now Master of St Peter's College, Oxford, was awarded a CBE for services to broadcasting.

Mr Damazer left Radio 4 on a high after six years with an average weekly reach of 10.4 million listeners and a 12.5% share of the audience, its biggest since new ratings methodology was introduced more than a decade ago.

Other people honoured from the world of broadcasting included ex-ITN correspondent **Sandy Gall** who becomes a CMG for his charity work in Afghanistan; a CBE for *QI* producer **John Lloyd** (*Blackadder* and *Not the Nine O'clock News*) and former head of the BBC's award-winning science unit **John Lynch**, who left the BBC last year, was awarded an OBE for services to broadcasting.

Congratulations also to **Jill Allen-King**, who has been a representative VLV Member for the National Federation of the Blind since 2000 and is a frequent attendee with her guide dog at seminars and conferences. She was awarded an OBE for services to blind and partially sighted people. Her autobiography was published in July 2010.

(see page 7)

## STOP PRESS

### New Communications Bill in 2012 announced

The Culture Secretary, speaking at the Oxford Media Convention on 19 January, told the conference that a thorough review of media and communications will be carried out, leading to a new Communications Act. The new act will aim to allow the UK's digital and creative industries to move to the next stage and play their fullest possible role in promoting competition, innovation and economic growth. Mr Hunt said the Government would talk to industry about the key issues in the coming months and publish a Green Paper at the end of the year that will set out the full scope of the Bill.

### BBC Trust signs agreement with S4C

The BBC Trust and the S4C Authority have signed a renewed agreement which covers the partnership between the two broadcasters until 2013, when new funding arrangements agreed in the new licence fee settlement will come into effect. The partnership agreement covers the BBC's statutory obligation to supply S4C with at least 10 hours of programming per week (520 hours over the year) funded out of the licence fee.

**BBC Service Licences** The BBC Trust issues each BBC service a Service Licence, setting out what it expects it to achieve and how much it can spend. The Trust will begin its reviews of Radio 5 Live and 5 Live Sports Extra early in 2011, followed by a separate review of the BBC News Channel and BBC Parliament.

## VLV MEMBERS VISIT TO THE BBC ACADEMY

Led by VLV President Jocelyn Hay, a dozen members from various parts of the country paid an all-day visit to the BBC's Training Academy in London in mid November. After being shown around the studios and training areas we met Anne Morrison, Director, BBC Academy. She told us that in the past year her 210 staff had organised 60,000 training days to keep all BBC staff on their toes with the latest techniques, regulations and developments in broadcasting. The Academy also trains staff from BBC World Service, other UK broadcasters and overseas broadcasting organisations. They have close links with universities - particularly Bournemouth.

VLV members were introduced to the Head of Editorial Standards who had us taking part in a 'live' training session. We had to judge how accurate and impartial a news report we were shown had been, whether certain bad language could be used, whether offence or harm had been caused and whether the consent of parents was needed to show teenagers truanting on screen. There were no easy answers, but commonsense and good judgment was always required. We then had to decide what to do about a call from a member of the public, reporting a loud explosion near a chemical works. How should we verify the report, who needs to be contacted before we put the story on air? We realised just how much thought and effort goes into the editorial process.

We later visited the Leadership Training area and learned how all levels of BBC management were regularly trained and up-dated; we then moved on to the College of Production where presenters, newsreaders, set designers, camera crew and sound recordists are regularly given off-the-job training in fully equipped radio and TV studios and online. Finally, we visited the College of Journalism. We were told the BBC employs over 7,000 journalists. Training is now far more informal and involves role play, in-depth discussion and learning to cope with real life dilemmas. In the near future many of the Academy's training courses will be available free for all UK citizens to access.

Our overall impression of the visit was how enthusiastic and professional everyone we had met was. Standards are so important and their dedication in passing on their professional skills and knowledge to others can only enhance the BBC's reputation both here and abroad. I rate it the best visit I have been on in 15 years of VLV organised visits.

**David Eggington**

BBC Academy Director Anne Morrison said they enjoyed welcoming VLV as much as we found it fascinating and a second visit is being arranged. (see page 8).

## **VLV WATCHES WITH CONCERN AS THE BBC STARTS TO DEVELOP A STRATEGY TO MEET ITS NEW OBLIGATIONS**

The BBC needs to make wide reaching cuts to survive within the licence fee settlement.

BBC Trust Chairman **Sir Michael Lyons**, in a letter to Mark Thompson, sets out the Trust's view of the way forward, expecting the BBC Executive to draw on, and develop, the strategic direction set for the BBC in *Putting Quality First*, the final version of which reflected an extensive dialogue with the public and industry led by the Trust. It concluded that the BBC needs to address four priority areas, which should underpin its thinking on implementing the new licence fee settlement:

- Increasing the distinctiveness and quality of its programmes and services
- Improving the value for money it provides to licence fee payers
- Setting new standards of openness and transparency
- Doing more to serve all audiences.

Sir Michael also wrote that the Trust does not expect that backroom efficiencies will fully meet the funding gap alone and some hard choices about content and services may need to be made as part of this process. Once the Trust has had an opportunity to consider the BBC Executive's proposals it will launch a consultation with licence fee payers and the wider industry to test its understanding of their likely impact and plans to report by the end of the year.

## **BBC Director-General invites staff to put forward their ideas**

**Mark Thompson** has launched a wide-ranging consultation with all BBC staff on how the BBC can best deliver the highest quality programmes and content to audiences to the end of the Charter in 2017 as part of the debate about choosing the best way forward for the BBC to work within the licence fee settlement.

As the licence fee settlement, which froze the licence fee to April 2017 at £145.50, means the BBC faces significant financial challenges if it is to balance income and expenditure, meet its new obligations, such as funding BBC Monitoring and the World Service, and continue to invest in new programmes and innovation.

Mark Thompson has set the BBC the challenge of finding 20% savings over the four years to April 2017. 16% savings will balance income and expenditure and fund new services whilst a further 4% will give flexibility to invest back into new content and innovation priorities set out in *Putting Quality First* last spring. You can read more about *Delivering Quality First* at [www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc](http://www.bbc.co.uk/aboutthebbc).

## **Sir Michael Lyons and Mark Thompson appear before the CMS Select Committee**

The hearing on December 15 concentrated on the BBC licence fee settlement. The committee probed the details of the negotiations which confirmed much of the speculation that appeared in the press. They also sought to establish how the budget cuts would affect BBC services and the impact of the new responsibilities included in the settlement. The full transcript of the 2 ½ hour session can be found at [www.parliamentlive.tv](http://www.parliamentlive.tv) and viewed at [www.parliamentlive.tv](http://www.parliamentlive.tv).

## **BBC Trust launches Consultation into On-demand Syndication**

The BBC Trust has concluded provisionally that on-demand BBC programmes should only be made available to TV platform operators through the BBC iPlayer, and should not be made available on a programme-by-programme basis. The BBC iPlayer should be made available in standard formats that the great majority of other TV operators can readily adopt, the Trust has concluded. 'Bespoke' versions of the iPlayer should be developed only in exceptional cases. VLV has been invited to take part in their public consultation on the new syndication policy by 9 February. Full details can be found at <http://bit.ly/fRW8jk>.

**Ofcom** has invited comments on the way it conducts its internal processes and on its draft Annual Plan 2011/2012. The Annual Plan is of particular interest to VLV as Ofcom will shortly be without direct consumer advice with the dissolution of the Content Board and Consumer Panel.

## **VLV RESPONSES TO CONSULTATIONS**

VLV submitted its views to Ofcom on the **Public Interest Test of the proposed acquisition of BSkyB by News Corporation** in November, saying that VLV was opposed to the proposed takeover on public interest grounds. The submission said VLV was concerned that the impartiality of Sky News could be weakened by closer collaboration between News International and Sky News newsrooms and that the balance of the broadcast market for rights, programmes and events would be weighted in News Corporation's favour. VLV did not think this would be in the national interest and those of individual UK citizens and consumers.

[At the time of going to press \(24 January 2011\) an announcement from the Secretary of State, Jeremy Hunt, about the proposed takeover by News International of the remaining areas of BSkyB it does not already own is still awaited.](#)

VLV sent in a submission to the **BBC Trust consultation into radio services in Wales, Scotland and N Ireland** - a brief paper generally dealing with high level issues, the impact on the services of the licence fee settlement and final BBC strategy.

## WHO'S WHO: SOME NEW APPOINTMENTS



**Bill Matthews** has been appointed as the **BBC Trust Member for Scotland**, replacing Jeremy Peat, from 1 January 2011 for a term of four years. The post commands a salary of £37,660 per annum, for a commitment of approximately two days a week. Bill Matthews is

currently chairman of NHS National Services Scotland, a public member of Network Rail, non-executive director at the Security Industry Authority and the Scottish Police Services Authority. His previous career was in the electronics and electrical engineering industry. He is a former member of the BBC's Audience Council for Scotland and its predecessor, the Broadcasting Council for Scotland.



**Zai Bennett** has been appointed **Controller, BBC Three**. Bennett joins from ITV, where he is currently Director of Digital Channels and Acquisitions, and his start date will be confirmed shortly. In his current role, Zai is the creative leader responsible for all

editorial content on ITV's digital channels (ITV2, ITV3 and ITV4 and the CITV channel). He is responsible for commissioning, acquiring and scheduling across the channels. Between 2006 and 2009, Zai was Controller of ITV2, one of the most successful multi-channels in the UK.



**Simon Burke** has been appointed as a **non-executive director of the BBC Executive Board**. Mr Burke will join the board from 1 January 2011. He replaces David Robbie, whose term came to an end earlier this month. The appointment has

been made by the BBC Executive Board with the approval of the BBC Trust. Simon Burke is currently a Trustee of the National Gallery; Chairman of Hobbycraft, the arts and crafts retailer and Chairman of the Irish supermarket chain, Superquinn. His previous positions include chief executive or chairman roles for Virgin Entertainment Group, Hamleys PLC, Majestic Wine PLC and Total Home Entertainment.

### Digital Radio Christmas advertising campaign

You may have noticed two quite different advertising campaigns suggesting you buy digital radios as Christmas presents. Both were coordinated by Digital Radio UK, the trade body tasked with promoting the take up of digital radio. The BBC had a low key series of adverts explaining the availability of their programmes on digital radio. On commercial radio there was a more aggressive campaign aimed at promoting purchase. The adverts were toned down following criticism by consumer organisations including VLV. Some commercial broadcasters have refused to carry the advertisements as they have concerns, including the problems with digital radio reception.

## A CELEBRATION OF MAIDA VALE

By the BBC Elstree Concert Band

**Sunday 3 April 2011 at 3.00pm**

BBC Maida Vale Studios, Delaware Road, London W9 2LG - Nearest tube – Warwick Avenue

Come and join the BBC Elstree Concert Band and presenter Keith Clement for a captivating afternoon of music and narration, illustrating the groundbreaking history of Maida Vale Studios through 75 years of music making held in aid of The Voice of the Listener Trust, by kind permission of the BBC.

In Maida Vale studios Bing Crosby made his last recording session; Vera Lynn and Anne Shelton hosted the *Evening Dance Band* shows; Henry Hall rehearsed his guest night; the BBC Variety Orchestra became the Big Band; the Beatles recorded several sessions; *Music While You Work*, and *Sing Something Simple* both came from there as did John Peel's legendary sessions; the music for *Dr Who* came out of the BBC Radiophonic Workshop and, best of all, Maida Vale has been the home of the BBC Symphony Orchestra for all those 75 years.

In **A Celebration of Maida Vale**, the history of the studios will be revealed using music from all the decades and to suit all tastes.

### JUST HOW MUSICAL ARE YOU?

BBC Radio 3 and BBC Lab UK are launching a scientific experiment that asks the public to help discover how musical Britain is. By taking the **How Musical Are You?** test, participants will reveal their own musical profile, while at the same time helping scientists to define what it really means to be "musical". So, take part in our science experiment by going to <https://www.bbc.co.uk/labuk/experiments/musicality/> and find out just how musical you are!

## UPDATE ON DIGITAL SWITCHOVER

2011 sees the biggest year for digital switchover with more than 10 million homes making the move to all-digital television. Analogue signals will be switched off across the Central, Anglia, Yorkshire and STV Central TV regions, allowing hundreds of thousands of households to receive digital TV free via an aerial for the first time. By the end of the year, 66% of the UK will have completed the process.

Starting the countdown to all-digital Scotland: in just six months' time, analogue terrestrial TV services for four million viewers will start being switched off, as the digital switchover reaches its final stage in Scotland.

Viewers in the Channel Islands woke to a digital dawn on 17 November 2010 as switchover made Freeview services available for the first time. Shortly after midnight, all analogue television services were turned off at the Fremont Point transmitter group, allowing 50,000 homes across the Channel TV region to receive digital TV via an aerial.

## Letters to the Editor

Letters do not necessarily represent the views of the Association and may be shortened for publication

The recent 'radio amnesty' was an absolute travesty if it was a percentage knocked off prices of new models. £10 off a model costing £100 (John Lewis). When are we going to be able to buy windup digital radios which are priced at a level I can afford and which will run for more than a few minutes on a full wind-up?

AND what will happen to the environment when we are all forced to switch to digital thereby using significantly more electricity and have to throw away (landfill sites) all our analogue sets?

**Ms E M Thornton**  
**Bury St Edmunds**

While researching what DAB reception was like in the Borders I was surprised to note on the BBC Engineering website that DAB transmitters are being put in at the rate of about 2 to 3 a month, some below 100W.

I recently re-installed my Sony DAB receiver in my Micra after a lapse of a year or so. I have been pleasantly surprised how reception has improved meantime. Reception round Southampton has been improved by some quite significant new fill-in transmitter work. However, I still hear too many stories about DAB not working satisfactorily indoors. This is still a serious problem and I think it is insoluble.

DAB does save on transmission electricity costs but I fear they have just moved them onto the listener and, probably, for the worse, in terms of net consumption.

**Adrian Pickering**  
**Southampton**

**Editor's note:** VLV has supported digital radio for over a decade with regular presentations at our conferences. We continue to support the switch to digital transmission but suggest that people consider buying a dual analogue/digital receiver when purchasing new equipment.

The new settlement between the Government and the BBC guarantees the maintenance of the licence fee until 2017, albeit at its existing level and with additional responsibilities (World Service, BBC Monitoring etc). As such it has been welcomed by the Chairman of the BBC Trust as well as the Director-General. It is a 'done deal' and I hope that VLV will not spend a lot of time and energy contesting it. In the present economic climate the BBC must bear its share of cuts, and there is still plenty of fat to trim on top management and top talent pay. Does the Corporation really need four television channels, four pop music stations, 40 local radio stations, five orchestras and a multitude of news correspondents? Tough questions may be, but these are tough times.

**Anthony Wills**  
*(former radio producer)*  
**London NW3**

**Editor's note:** Please see the editorial from the President, page 2 and further information on page 5.

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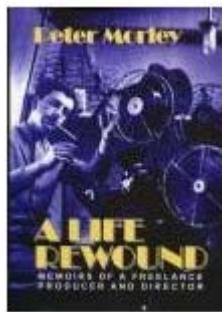
**Deadline for next issue:**  
**3 March 2011**

Write, fax or e-mail your letters to the Editor  
at:  
[info@vlv.org.uk](mailto:info@vlv.org.uk)

## Book Reviews

### A Life Rewound by Peter Morley

Published by Bank House Books  
[www.bankhousebooks.com](http://www.bankhousebooks.com)  
Price £20



Peter Morley's career spans TV history from the birth of ITV to the development of DVDs. In the 1950s he produced and directed such documentaries as *Tyranny – The Years of Adolf Hitler* and a live studio production of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. In the 1960s and 70s he produced ITV's *This Week*, the OB coverage of Churchill's funeral and Lord Mountbatten's TV autobiography, a major history of Europe in the 20th century for the BBC and Harold Wilson's *Prime Minister On Prime Ministers*. Morley's personal background as a refugee from Nazi Germany, who left school in 1939 with few qualifications but a determination to get into the film industry, is a fascinating story. The book gives an insight into the workings of ITV in its heyday as well as charting the technical developments of TV production over half a century. It constitutes a valuable source for students of the media – and an entertaining read for anyone interested in television.

### Just Jill – The Autobiography of Jill Allen-King MBE



Published by Apex Publishing Ltd  
Price £9.99

*Just Jill* is an inspirational and moving account of one woman's triumph over adversity and how she used her own experience of disability to benefit others. It charts her journey from partially sighted child to totally blind adult, culminating in her being awarded an MBE in 1983. It was only when she got her first guide dog that she began to discover the world outside her front door and took those first giant steps towards regaining her freedom and independence which led to a life of campaigning for reform and helping others. Jill says "I hope my life story will help to inspire other people who are losing their sight."

## Advertisements

Please refer to VLV when responding to advertisements. VLV Ltd cannot accept any liability or complaint in regard to the following offers. The charge for classified ads is 30p per word, 20p for members. Please send typed copy with a cheque payable to VLV Ltd. For display space please contact Linda Forbes on 01474 338711



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Replies on a postcard to: Winter Competition, VLV, PO Box 401, Gravesend, Kent DA12 9FY. Or by email to: [info@vlv.org.uk](mailto:info@vlv.org.uk) by 3 March 2011. The Editor's decision is final.

The winner of the Autumn Competition was Shelagh Norton, Wicklow, Co Wicklow, Ireland.



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## Diary Dates

### Tuesday, 8 February 2011

5.45 - 7.45pm

**Westminster Evening Seminar with The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP with Roger Bolton** in the chair *Palace of Westminster, London SW1*

### Sunday, 3 April 2011

3.00pm

### A Celebration of Maida Vale

A concert by the **BBC Elstree**

**Concert Band** in aid of The Voice of the Listener Trust by kind permission of the BBC in celebration of Maida Vale's 75th anniversary. Introduced by **Keith Clement**.

*BBC Maida Vale Studio, Delaware Road, London W9 2LG*

### Tuesday, 12 April 2011

10.15am - 4.30pm

### VLV's 28th Annual Spring Conference

Keynote speaker **Helen Boaden**, Director, BBC News. Chaired by **Stewart Purvis**.

*The Geological Society, Piccadilly, London W1*

### Tuesday, 12 April 2011

1.45pm

### Presentation of the VLV 2010 Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting

*The Geological Society, Piccadilly, London W1*

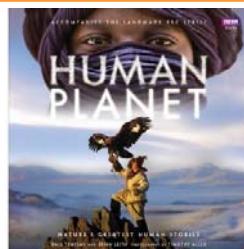
### Visits to the BBC Academy and Broadcasting House, London

are being arranged. To go onto the waiting list contact Sue Washbrook on 01474 338711 or Email: [sue.washbrook@vlv.org.uk](mailto:sue.washbrook@vlv.org.uk)

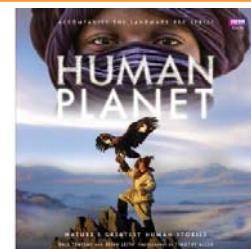
**For tickets and enquiries please contact: Linda Forbes**

**Tel: 01474 338711**

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