



**Voice of the  
Listener & Viewer**

# Bulletin

Working for Quality and Diversity in Broadcasting

Autumn 2008

Issue 94

## Choice in Broadcasting: can quality be sustained?

Wednesday, 26th November, 10.30am – 3.30pm  
The Geological Society, Piccadilly, London W1



VLV's 25th annual autumn conference will focus on the concern of listeners and viewers as to whether the quality of British broadcasting, and especially its public service ethos, can be sustained in the light of recent events. During the past twelve months, a succession of breaches of guidelines on managing phone-in programmes, voting contests and questions of taste and decency on the BBC, ITV and Channel 4, have seriously undermined the trust that viewers and listeners previously placed in the integrity and judgement of editorial controllers. The cumulative effect is especially damaging, in particular for the BBC, as Ofcom will shortly conclude its Review of Public Service Broadcasting and make recommendations to the Government not only on what the public service broadcasters should be expected to provide in future but also on how they should be funded.



BBC One, the BBC's flagship television channel, and Radio Two, the BBC's and Britain's most popular radio channel are at the centre of the current debate. Each will be affected by progress on switching the UK from analogue TV transmission to digital by 2012, and by calls from some commercial broadcasters for radio to follow soon after. The programme for the conference covers all these issues and will provide a unique opportunity for participants to hear and question the two key managers as well as two of those responsible for switch-over policy and delivery.

### Speakers include:

10.30am: Peter Davies, Director of Radio Policy & Broadcasting, Ofcom. A representative from Digital UK, the Company responsible for managing switch-over. 11.15am: Jay Hunt, the new Controller of BBC One. 12.30pm: an update on Ofcom's Review of Public Service Broadcasting by VLV Board Member, Professor Ivor Gaber. 2pm: Tim Davie, Director, BBC Audio & Music John Lloyd, contributing Editor and TV critic for the Financial Times and Gillian Reynolds, Media Commentator and Radio Critic for the Daily Telegraph will chair the conference. The AGM of VLV Ltd will follow at 4pm.

## VLV has a New Chairman

At an Extraordinary General Meeting on October 2nd VLV's founder, Jocelyn Hay, who has chaired the organisation for the last twenty-five years, stood down and Richard Lindley, a former television news and current affairs journalist, was elected to succeed her. Unanimously supported by the VLV Board, Richard was elected unopposed.

Richard Lindley first began working in television in 1962, as a researcher and producer for ABC Television's Sunday Break, a 'God slot' programme for teenagers. Then, after a brief spell in local television, he joined ITN, the national news for ITV. There he travelled the world, reporting wars in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. Then, in 1973, he moved from news to current affairs, joining the BBC's flagship Panorama programme.

Richard was 15 years with Panorama before becoming a television regulator at the IBA, forerunner of today's Ofcom, in charge of seeing that news and current affairs on ITV were accurate and impartial.

Returning to programme making Richard was a reporter and presenter for ITV's This Week, until Thames Television lost its licence to broadcast in the first of the big changes in ITV's structure.

*Continued on page 2*



### Inside

- In Memoriam
- AGM Called - 26th November
- Secretary of State
- Silver Jubilee Celebration
- From the new Chairman
- Responses to Consultations
- Citizenship & Broadcasting
- Media Literacy for the over 50s
- Book Reviews
- Letters
- Competition
- Diary Dates



## Voice of the Listener & Viewer

*Working for Quality and Diversity in British Broadcasting*

### VLV Patrons

Lord Barnet PC JP  
Archbishop Lord Eames of Armagh  
Sir Francis Graham-Smith FRS  
Lord Inglewood MEP  
Sir Charles Mackerras, KT, CBE  
Dame Mary Peters DBE  
Lord Phillips of Sudbury OBE  
Lord Puttnam of Queensgate CBE  
Lady Solti  
Sir John Tusa

### VLV President

Jocelyn Hay CBE

### Directors

Richard Lindley (Hon. Chairman)  
Hugh Peltor CBE (Hon. Treas.)  
Robert Clark  
Professor Ivor Gaber  
Norman Green  
Professor Brian Groombridge  
Professor Sonia Livingstone  
Professor Maire Messenger Davies, PhD, FRSA,  
Laurence Pawley  
Lewis Rudd MBE  
Warren Newman

### Company Secretary

Waterlow Registrars Ltd

### The Voice of the Listener Trust

(reg charity 296207)

VLV's sister charity which supports  
VLV's educational work

Chairman: Jocelyn Hay CBE

Trustees:

Michael Barton  
John Clark  
Professor Sylvia Harvey  
Lady Solti  
Dr Andrew Taussig

### VLV office hours:

9.30am - 5.00pm Mon-Thurs

Voice of the Listener & Viewer Ltd (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 in broadcasting. VLV does not handle complaints.

### Design & Production

High Profile Ltd, Tel: 01474 533077

Published by Voice of the Listener & Viewer Ltd, A private company limited by guarantee (Registered in England number 4407712)

Registered address:

Aercon House, Alfred Road, Gravesend DA11 7QF

Tel: 01474 352835 Fax: 01474 351112.

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

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

## In Memoriam - Lord Thomson of Monifieth KT, PC



Lord Thomson of Monifieth and the late Lord Swann were VLV's first two patrons. Both had just left office, Lord Thomson from the chair of the IBA (Independent

Authority) which regulated commercial television and Lord Swann as chairman of the BBC Board of Governors. Until his death on 6th October this year, Lord Thomson took a keen interest in all VLV's affairs and remained an active and staunch supporter. Just one week before his death I received a letter from him congratulating me and all in VLV for what had been achieved in its first 25 years, and sending good wishes on the appointment of our new Chairman.

Having started as a sub editor on the Rover and the Dandy with D C Thomson in his home town of Dundee, he served with the RAF throughout WWII. After demobilisation he entered politics, first as Assistant Editor of the Scottish Labour weekly Forward and then as MP for Dundee East in 1952. During the Labour government between 1964 and 1970, he served as Minister of State at the Foreign Office, then Minister for Europe and later Commonwealth Secretary. In Opposition after that, he was appointed Shadow Secretary for Defence. He retained his interest in international affairs and enthusiasm for the European Community whilst

in opposition and in 1972 Edward Heath appointed him European Commissioner with responsibility for regional policy. In this post he set out to demonstrate how membership of the European Community could benefit the UK. He returned to London two years later.

In 1977 he was created a life peer and appointed chairman of the Advertising Standards Authority, becoming in 1978 Deputy Chairman of the IBA. He took over the Chair from Lady Plowden in 1980 and, during eight turbulent years in the post, he witnessed the launch of Channel 4 and TV-AM, the clash with the Thatcher Government over the controversial Thames TV documentary Death on the Rock, and the launch of the BSB satellite (later bought by Sky). A year after stepping down, he joined the Liberal Democrats and became their spokesman in the Lords on foreign affairs and broadcasting.

Recognition that Lord Thomson was a man of great warmth, humanity and integrity was demonstrated in his membership of the Nolan committee on standards in public life and appointment as Chairman of the Political Honours Committee. He gave unstinting support to VLV and to me personally, taking a particular interest in the ten conferences VLV held between 1993 and 2005 on the future of public service broadcasting worldwide and in the formation of EURALVA, the European Alliance of Listeners' & Viewers' Associations, which VLV has led.

His wise advice and support will be greatly missed and we extend our deepest sympathy to Lady Thomson and his daughters Ailsa and Caroline. *Jocelyn Hay, President, VLV*

## Annual General Meeting of VLV Ltd

26th November 2008 Geological Society, London W1

The 6th AGM of Voice of the Listener & Viewer Ltd will follow the autumn conference at 4pm on Wednesday, 26th November at the Geological Society, Piccadilly, London W1.

Brian Groombridge and Warren Newman are standing down as Directors there will thus be two vacancies on the Board. Nominations should be sent to the Company Secretary, PO Box 401, Gravesend, Kent, DA12 9FY, not more than twenty-one days and no fewer than three days before the date of the AGM. Tea will be served between the conference and the AGM.

### Update on Executive Director

As reported in the Spring Bulletin, Anne Diack joined VLV on a short-term, part-time contract at the beginning of May.

Much of her time has been devoted to refreshing and updating the VLV website ([www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk)) and the resulting changes have received many compliments. Anne also contributed valuably to VLV's fund raising strategy and worked on a number of funding applications. As her contract reaches its end, the VLV Board wishes to thank her most warmly for all she has done to support VLV over the summer and to wish her well in her new venture.

### VLV has a New Chairman

*continued from front page*

Coming full circle Richard rejoined ITN to present its World News and make special reports for the News at Ten. When that programme was cancelled in 1999 Richard turned to writing. He has now published two books about the history of British broadcasting.

As well as being the new chairman of VLV Richard also chairs a housing charity, the St Pancras Almshouses, and has been elected to the Members' Council of the Royal Free Hospital in London. He is married to Carole Stone, managing director of the opinion research company YouGovStone.

## Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport to speak at VLV Evening Seminar

Tuesday, 9th December, House of Commons



The Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP will speak and take questions from VLV members and guests at an evening seminar in the House of Commons on Tuesday, 9 December.

Mr Burnham spoke to a packed Grand Committee Room at an earlier VLV Westminster Evening seminar on 3 June. During that event he said he found the exchange of views so helpful that he would like to repeat the experience on a regular basis. VLV has therefore been glad to

repeat the invitation.

He will be speaking one week after Ofcom's consultation on Phase 2 of its Review of Public Service Broadcasting ends and just a month before he is expected to announce the Government's plans in regard to the future of public service broadcasting, with far reaching implications for the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Five. A large attendance is expected. The meeting is open and free of charge but advance tickets are required.

For tickets and details please visit [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk) or phone the VLV office on 01474 352835.

## Children's Television - A Glimmer of Hope?

Wednesday 5th November 2008

The 14th annual conference of the VLV Forum for Children's Broadcasting focuses on recent changes in the provision of children's TV programmes by the public service broadcasters (PSBs). ITV is no longer a player and Channel 4 currently not involved; the BBC is coping with the challenges of restricted funds and the forthcoming move of its Children's Department from London to Salford; and Channel Five is now only providing programmes for pre-schoolers.

Ofcom's 2007 research, and its recent 2nd PSB review have shown the perils of the situation, and the broadcasters have responded. Channel 4 is interested in providing a service for the over-tens, Five could extend its age range upwards, and the Welsh language channel S4C, whose budget for children's programmes is now second only to the BBC, might provide programming for the whole of the UK. But all these developments depend on new sources of funding.

The conference will also examine approaches to regulating new media and video games.

### Speakers will include:

Richard Deverell, Controller BBC Children's Programming; Nick Wilson, Director Children's Programmes, Five; Janey Walker, Head of Education & Managing Editor Commissioning, Channel 4; Huw Rossiter, Director of Communications, S4C; John Grogan MP, (Lab) Chairman, All Party Parliamentary Group on the BBC; Ed Vaizey MP, (Cons) Shadow Minister for Culture; Lord Clement-Jones, Lib Dem spokesperson on Culture, Media & Sport; James Thickett, Director, Ofcom Review of Children's Television, Anna Home OBE, Chairman, Save Kids' TV; and Nigel Pickard, former head of children's programmes at both ITV and the BBC, now Director of Family Entertainment, RDF.



The keynote speaker will be one of the best-loved children's presenters of all time, Floella Benjamin OBE, who is also a broadcaster, independent producer and writer, and former member of Ofcom's Content Board.

## A Celebration in the Lord Speaker's Apartment at the House of Lords

Tuesday, 25th November 6 – 8pm

### Marking VLV's Silver Jubilee and 21 years of The Voice of the Listener Trust

We are very fortunate that the Lord Speaker, The Rt Hon Baroness Hayman, has graciously given permission for us to hold a Wine Reception celebrating the two anniversaries in the River Room which, as the name implies, has stunning views across the Thames. She will welcome us and our guests. Lord Bragg has kindly consented to be our host for the evening.

The Voice of the Listener Trustees and the Directors of VLV look forward to meeting as many members as possible and to thanking some of those who have supported us over the years. Space is limited and attendance will only be by ticket, which must be obtained in advance. If demand is more than can be accommodated a ballot will be held.



*The House of Lords from the river*

## VLV Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting

Remember to keep noting the radio and television programmes you have enjoyed so that you can nominate them for the 2008 VLV Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting. We are delighted that Roberts Radio has again kindly offered to sponsor a Special Award for Radio, but we hope that you will also send in nominations for the best programmes and the best individual contributors to both radio and television and also for the best new and innovative programmes. Remember that the recipients of the VLV Awards think so highly of them that they all try their best to attend in

person to receive them at VLV's Spring conference, contributing to a very enjoyable event.

In order to allow you for the first time to include some of the Christmas programmes we are altering the procedure this year. Nomination forms will go out with the January Bulletin which means you will need to fill them in quickly and return them promptly in order to enable us to meet very tight deadlines. Please help us by doing that, and please start thinking now of the programmes you have enjoyed throughout the year. The early ones are as important as the recent ones!



## Editorial – from VLV's new Chairman

Being elected Chairman of Voice of the Listener & Viewer is a great honour, particularly so because I am following such a distinguished predecessor as Jocelyn Hay. Many of you know Jocelyn well, better than I do, but in the ten years that I have been a member of VLV I have watched her with ever increasing admiration.

How has someone so unassuming come to make

such a significant mark on British broadcasting? How has she built up VLV into today's national and indeed international organisation? How has she attracted to join her on the Boards of VLV and the VoL Trust so many people expert on different aspects of the complicated subject of broadcasting today? How has she earned the respect of the people who run television and radio – broadcasters, regulators, politicians and businessmen – so that time after time so many of them have come willingly to our conferences, joining us to discuss the issues close to our hearts. And how has she inspired so many of us to join the fight to protect the best in British broadcasting?

I think it is because she has always tried to contribute positively to the broadcasting debate. Not for her just negative criticism of particular programmes or producers. For her it has always been the big picture, how VLV can influence for good the structure of broadcasting, that has mattered, and that has been recognised and appreciated by the big players in the field.

### STARTING IN 1983

From modest beginnings twenty-five years ago, protesting against a foolish BBC proposal which threatened to wreck Radio 4, VLV has become an organisation speaking for listeners and viewers across a whole range of important broadcasting issues. Now, when technological and economic change threaten programme

standards as never before, VLV is determined to keep viewers and listeners informed about what is going on, alerting them to issues where VLV has a contribution to make to the decision-making process or, if need be, taking a stand on a point of principle. In the independent way in which VLV continues to tackle the broadcasting issues that affect all listeners and viewers, it is unique – and that is due to Jocelyn Hay.

### AN EXPLOSION OF NEW SERVICES

Of course there's no denying that there are some faint hearts who say that now, with audio and visual material of dubious quality pouring in from hundreds of satellite and cable channels and over the internet, it's all over; that any hope of maintaining standards in mainstream broadcasting is dead. I don't agree.

I don't believe it is all over. I think that in this transitional stage, as new ways of receiving television and radio programmes are developed, we have not only the opportunity but a positive obligation to make our voice, the Voice of the Listener & Viewer, heard. This is the moment when we must intensify the struggle to keep the standards of our television and radio programmes high, and make sure that British broadcasting continues to be something that this country is universally acknowledged to do well.

### BREACHES OF PUBLIC TRUST

Some of the signs are not good. The way in which broadcasters – public service broadcasters among them – were recently found to be abusing the trust and exploiting the goodwill

of listeners and viewers invited to take part in phone-in voting was deeply disappointing. I think it might have been better if all the top BBC managers and ITV bosses had thought a bit harder about whether it was right for them to take any of their bonuses last year.

And while the regulator Ofcom may think that cutting back on regional news is the only way to keep ITV doing public service broadcasting at all, it's not something to welcome.

More recently still the Jonathan Ross, Russell Brand row at Radio 2 has made some people wonder if trying so hard to attract a youthful audience hasn't made the BBC abandon good judgement and proper editorial control.

But now we must concentrate on having our say in the big decisions that are looming, on public service broadcasting in particular. I think VLV can take some encouragement from the fact that the Secretary of State, Andy Burnham, having heard our members' views at a VLV meeting at the Commons in June wants to return on 9th December for a further discussion. I very much hope that his new minister for broadcasting, Stephen Carter, will be no less committed to hearing what we, as licence-payers, have to say.

It is at a challenging moment that I have the honour to become VLV's Chairman, but I take courage because I know we are fighting for the right cause. Only the best is good enough for British broadcasting, and we must help to make it so.

*Richard Lindley*

## VLV Responses to Public Consultations

### October: Ofcom's discussion paper 'Citizens, Communications and Convergence'

Pointing out that Ofcom's discussion paper on this issue was long overdue, VLV welcomed what it considered Ofcom's most significant attempt since its creation to consider the interests of citizens, rather than consumers, in communications and media policy. VLV considers that Ofcom must develop an approach putting clearly the defined rights of citizens at the heart of its policy-making. The debate now started by Ofcom's discussion paper presents a good opportunity to begin this process.

### August: BBC Trust Review of BBC Children's Services

VLV pointed out that the Review had taken place against a background of severely reduced expenditure by the public service broadcasters on children's programming, most notably by ITV, but also by Five and by Channel 4 in confining its interest to the over 10's. VLV considers it essential that the BBC, as the principal commissioner and producer of children's programmes, continues to provide at least its current range and diversity of programmes, and that they continue to be broadcast on the BBC's main channel BBC One.

VLV expressed concern at the apparent weakening of commitment by some senior BBC managers to children's services, at the disruption that will be caused by the department's move to Salford, and that the BBC was not reflecting the ethnic and other diversities within the UK as well as it once did.

Ofcom's consultation on Phase 2 of its Review of Public Service Broadcasting closes on 3rd December. For more information visit [www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consultations) or telephone 020 2981 3000.

# Citizenship & Broadcasting – putting the public into public service broadcasting

Chaired by Roy Greenslade, Journalist and Media commentator. The aim of VLV'S conference on 2nd October was to provide an opportunity for two current consultations by Ofcom to be discussed: its own discussion paper, *Citizens, Communications & Convergence* and Phase 2 of its Review of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) so that VLV's responses would be properly informed about the issues and Ofcom's attitudes to them.

Diane Coyle, a BBC Trustee, pointed out that sustaining citizenship was one of the BBC's core public purposes. She explained that the BBC sought to do this in several different ways, through the provision of national, international and local news services on radio, television and online and also through a range of other information, education and entertainment programmes and services contributing to cultural, social and democratic needs.

Philip Graf, Deputy Chair of Ofcom and Chair of its Content Board, said that the 2003 Communications Act spelt out how Ofcom should serve the needs of consumers by delivering choice and value for money through competition where appropriate, but was silent on how the interests of citizens should be furthered. Ofcom's research showed that



*Philip Graf, Stephen Jukes, Diane Coyle and Roy Greenslade*

audiences valued plurality in the provision of PSB services. The problem was funding them.

In increasing numbers, the public was accessing public service content via new means which made the old regulatory system unsustainable. Financial benefits currently enjoyed by the commercially-funded terrestrial broadcasters would soon be outstripped by the costs of their PSB obligations. Rather than renewal, ITV might choose to surrender its Channel 3 licence if it thought its PSB obligations too onerous. With a falling advertising income, Channel 4 also faced a deficit in its funding which threatened its PSB remit.

Ofcom believed the BBC should continue to be the cornerstone of PSB, and was against

top slicing the licence fee and so reducing budgets for the BBC's core services. But they had put forward the option that some of the income might be contestable for funding a range of PSB content by a variety of new providers, including newspapers, broadband and new media companies. See below

Ofcom considered all the funding options outlined by Ofcom in Phase One of its PSB Review remain credible and they would be fleshed out in Phase Three of the consultation which would close on 3 December. Philip Graf's speech can be seen on [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk) and [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

Stephen Jukes, Dean of the Media School, Bournemouth University, welcomed Ofcom's statement and agreed that the current system is broken. The debate about content and indeed citizenship, he said, could not be decoupled from economics and the current recession would only exacerbate the problem. Ofcom had already let ITV off the hook. The problem had been building for some time as the agglomeration of news services and changes in ownership, had led to a reduction in regional and local reporting. No ready solution would be found with the Government having so many other pressing problems.

## Roger Graef presents prizes for VLV's Student Essay Competition and launches VLV's Silver Jubilee Appeal

Roger Graef, the distinguished television documentary maker, presented the prizes for VLV's third Student Essay Competition prior to VLV's conference on Citizenship and Broadcasting on 2 October. The subject for the competition was 'Do citizens and consumers have different needs from their communications environment, or is this a meaningless distinction?'

Channel 4 kindly donated £500 for each of the winners in two categories corresponding to under and post graduate levels.

The winner of the post graduate category was Philip Crowther, who studied for a Post Graduate Diploma in Broadcast Journalism at the London College of Communications.

Philip was unable to take up the offer of work experience kindly offered by Ragdoll Productions as he is now working as a reporter for the French TV 24 hour news service, France 24.

The runner-up was Tom Toulson who also studied for a Post Graduate Diploma in Broadcast Journalism at the London School of Communications. Tom won two weeks' work experience with the independent production company Films of Record.

Nathalia Gohl won the under graduate category, having also studied at the London College of Communication for a BA in Journalism. She won two weeks' work experience with the independent production company Tiger Aspect.

The runner-up was Deborah Boyle who studied for an HND in Media and Journalism at the North West Regional College in Londonderry. Deborah won two weeks' work experience with BBC Radio Foyle.



*Richard Lindley, Nathalia Gohl, Philip Crowther, Jocelyn Hay, Roger Graef and Tom Toulson*

VLV was delighted with the results of the competition and is most grateful to those who provided the prizes and also to Roger Graef, John Snow, Robert Beveridge, Sylvia Harvey and Vincent Porter who helped with the judging.

Following the presentations, Roger Graef kindly stepped in to launch VLV's Silver Jubilee Appeal. He stood in for Jon Snow who was called at short notice to the USA to report on the financial crisis.

Roger said he was a very long standing supporter of VLV. He believed passionately in the values of public service broadcasting and admired the work that VLV did to support them. He urged all VLV supporters as well as those present to be as generous as they could in donating to VLV's Silver Jubilee Appeal.

## Media Literacy for the Over 50s

Hands on! How the over 50s can get to grips with the digital world of broadcasting and new media is the theme for a conference that VLV will be holding on Wednesday, 1 April 2009, with support from Ofcom and BT at the BT Conference Centre, 81 Newgate Street, London EC1.

Last week my 70 year old wife took delivery of a new computer. It came complete with a media package including television and radio, DVD player and a remote control. Taking it out of the box took 20 seconds. Setting it up took 4 hours of phone calls to service centres in India and Ireland because the instruction book was useless. Her persistence has paid off; but how many people are daunted by the new technology – including the obligatory switch-over to digital television?

As conventional broadcasting and broadband rapidly converge the case for media literacy has never been stronger which is why VLV will concentrate on the over 50s in an ambitious conference next year. It's aim is to provide encouragement for those who may be struggling with the new technology or who don't yet own a computer (according to Age Concern nearly half of people over 50 don't have one). But the social and educational advantages of 'inclusion' are enormous and we'll be hearing from those who have had rich experiences as well as from Internet Service Providers who will explain what the future holds as new generation broadband takes over.

Broadcasters, too, have a vital role and they'll be asked what they're doing about Media Literacy, how they plan to expand their association with the Internet, what they are doing about digital switchover and how they propose to demystify the whole process of broadcasting.

There'll be lots of demonstrations of the latest aids for an easier and more rewarding life including the voice activated computer; two-way video links with relatives across the globe; and, hopefully, extracts from the BBC's new local broadband news services where viewers can submit their own videos.

VLV will be inviting other interested organisations to come along and tickets will be available shortly – for £10 including a light lunch.

Michael Barton, VoLT Trustee

## Who's Who in Broadcasting



### NEW MINISTERS AT THE DCMS

Lord Carter CBE has been appointed Minister of State with responsibility for Communications and Broadcasting. Stephen Carter was the first Chief Executive of Ofcom until the spring of last year when he was succeeded by Ed Richards. He has recently been acting as special adviser to the Prime Minister. Barbara Follett MP has been appointed Minister for the Arts, succeeding Margaret Hodge. Ms Follett was previously parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Work and Pensions and Minister for the East of England.

### AT OFCOM

Lord Currie, the Chairman of the media regulator, Ofcom, is due to retire at the end of the year. An advertisement for his successor which closed in October, called for applications for this three day a week position offering circa £200,000 per year.

### AT THE BBC

Janice Hadlow, previously Controller of BBC 4, has been appointed Controller of BBC Two. She replaces Roly Keating who has been appointed Director, BBC Archive Content. Tim Davie was appointed Director of BBC Audio & Music replacing Jenny Abramsky who retired in September. Lesley Douglas has resigned as Controller of BBC Radio 2.

## Book Reviews



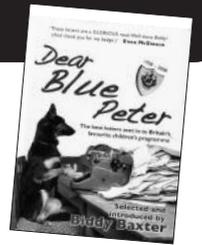
**THE MEDIA IN SCOTLAND**  
*Edited by Neil Blain and David Hutchison, published by Edinburgh University Press (www.eup.ed.ac.uk)*

*22 George Square, Edinburgh EH8 9L. HB £52.50, ISBN 9780 7486 2799; PB £17.99, ISBN 9780 7486 2800.*

The editors have compiled fifteen essays by leading academics and commentators covering the past thirty years of the media in Scotland. Their aim is to cover all aspects of the media in the context of devolution and a third Holyrood Parliament. Broadcasting policy is a power reserved to the Westminster Government. Increasing calls from within Scotland for this power to be devolved to Holyrood make this a timely contribution to current political and cultural debates.

### DEAR BLUE PETER

*The best of 50 years of letters to Britain's favourite children's TV programme selected and edited by Biddy Baxter, published by Short Books, 3a Exmouth House, Pine Street, London, EC1R 0JH. HB £12.99, ISBN 97819 0602 1498.*



Blue Peter is known and loved by children of every generation since the 1960s, whether for its pets, appeals, legendary mishaps or endless creations using sticky-back plastic. But few know how Biddy Baxter, its editor for 26 years, encouraged children to write in with ideas, pictures, stories and comments of all kinds. This selection provides a unique record of children's lives in the second half of the 20th century.

## Broadcasting, Broadband and the Arts

VLV organised a seminar on 15 October to discuss the implications of the digital and broadband revolutions for the arts and broadcasting. It was supported by Arts Council England (ACE) and took place against a background of greatly increased public participation in arts events and a broadly steady audience, but despite the explosion of new channel, no comparable rise in broadcast arts programming.

A wide range of institutions and interests were represented, including the BBC, Channels 4 and Five, leading museums, galleries and music companies, independent producers, government, ACE and VLV.

The aim was to encourage cooperation and partnerships between content producers, broadcasters and other distributors which can help to promote the arts and make them more accessible for the millions of people who fund them through public subsidies, including the licence fee, but who may themselves have little opportunity to visit a concert hall or gallery. A number of promising initiatives were outlined for future development but as the seminar was conducted under Chatham House rules reporting of it is limited for the moment.

## Letters to the Editor

### VLV'S NEW CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT

*I first read about Voice of the Listener, as it then was, in 1985. To me, who greatly enjoys BBC radio, it seemed just the sort of organisation I should join.*

*I wrote to Jocelyn and she invited me to the 20th Committee meeting in an attic near Charing Cross.*

*If I join a Committee, I volunteer for a job I know how to do, lest I get lumbered with one I don't like. So I offered to take the minutes, as that would 'bring me up to speed' with how VoL worked.*

*Soon the meetings moved to the better surroundings of the National Film Institute.*

*I happily carried on, barring occasional absences, till the 103rd meeting in 1993. I enjoyed working with a varied group of knowledgeable people and taking part in many good discussions. Yes, discussions could become tedious and meetings could drag on: such are committees.*

*I especially enjoyed knowing the VLV Treasurer Alan Laws, the only other scientifically minded Committee member. I was amazed at the range of Jocelyn's contacts and I enjoyed our visits to influential people concerned with broadcasting.*

*My family still cherishes a fine 'Radio 4' umbrella that the BBC kindly provided on a day that suddenly turned wet while the Committee were visiting.*

*It's hard to imagine VLV without Jocelyn, but I'll always be grateful for my Committee experiences.*

Henry Rishbeth, Southampton

*The 2nd October was a splendid occasion: my birthday the day after was almost an anti-climax!!*

*The enclosed is a contribution to the Silver Jubilee Appeal*

*I was very glad to have had the opportunity for a few words with the new Chairman. He seems a splendid choice. With all good wishes to you both*

Ted Bell, Bognor Regis

*I can't believe that so much time has passed since Jocelyn introduced Voice of the Listener to my writing group and WI. So much has been achieved, particularly in keeping BBC Radio up to scratch (we're not viewers). Jolly well done!*

*We shall continue to support VLV in continuing*

*the good work, in appreciation of which please accept the enclosed donation to the Appeal.*

Freda Basley, Sidcup, Kent

*I am enclosing a CAF cheque as a donation to the Appeal. I also want to thank you all for all you have done, and especially remembering Mrs Hay. With all good wishes for the future*

Miss E P L Beck, St Andrews, Fife

*I would like to send my very great thanks to all those who have sent messages of congratulation on my move from Chairman to President of VLV. I have been deeply touched and quite overwhelmed by the volume of messages of congratulation and good will that have been showered on me and delighted at the generous good wishes and continuing support shown to my successor, Richard Lindley. I look forward to working with him and to thanking each in due course.*

Jocelyn Hay,  
President, VLV



### THE FUTURE FOR BROADCASTING IN THE NATIONS AND REGIONS

*It seemed odd that just a fortnight after the Scottish Broadcasting Commission proposed a dedicated television service for Scotland (population 5 million) at a cost of between £50-75 million per annum and within five days of the start of a Gaelic television service costing £21 million per annum (only 60,000 people speak Gaelic), Ofcom seems prepared to allow ITV in England (population 50 million) to cut its non-news regional programmes to 15 minutes a week and amalgamate news regions in such a way that they lose much of their local relevance.*

*ITV maintains that it needs to save £40 million, yet I understand that even with the present level of regional production the station serving this area, Border Television, makes a profit. Amalgamated with Tyne Tees its area would be about 170 miles north-south and also east-west plus the Isle of Man.*

*Almost simultaneously with the contraction of ITV, next April, the BBC is to upgrade its Controllers of the small nations and abolish the existing one for the English Regions as Local Radio and Regional Television will come under the control of the*

*national news service based in London. It's all very well giving the 'nations' greater clout with no fewer than 3 directors "each with a place on the BBC direction group where much of the operational planning is done". They represent fewer than 10 million people in total. But what of the 40 million in England beyond the M25? Who will speak for us in the corridors of planning?*

*We look enviously across the Scottish border ten miles away. We see BBC Scotland programmes. They have grown greatly in ambition in the recent years in a way which those for the BBC English regions have not. I worry that those new directors of nations will gang up against funding programmes which reflect the social and cultural diversity of England. And will the news empire based in London have any real understanding of the more distant parts of England?*

Nigel Holmes, Carlisle

### PROGRESS ON DIGITAL SWITCHOVER

*It appears that there are still no new TVs manufactured with digital-only tuners. Sets are still being produced with both analogue and digital tuners. I would have thought with digital*

*switchover now starting, new TV sets would be digital only - what is the point of buying new TVs with what will soon be redundant technology and buttons on the remote control that will not be used after digital switchover.*

*Wouldn't the presence of digital only TV sets help speed up the public grasp of the eventual digital only environment?*

Roy Staines, by email

### THE DEATH OF LORD THOMSON

*I was shocked to see Lord Thomson's obituary this morning, though I knew he had been unwell. He was a man of tremendous integrity and we could do with more of his stamp in politics today. My contacts with him go back to the early 1980s, he was always friendly and supportive. Most recently, when the 2003 Communications Bill was going through Parliament, he was instrumental in helping me get a couple of key amendments adopted. He was he was one of the few people in broadcasting who really had the interests of viewers and listeners at heart - most of the others just pay lip service.*

Jeremy Mitchell, Edinburgh

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

**Deadline for next issue:  
15 December, 2008**

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



### VLV's New Postal Address

VLV has a new postal address.

Please make a note now to send correspondence in future to  
VLV Ltd, PO Box 401, Gravesend, DA12 9FY.

The telephone number: 01474 352835 and email address: [info@vlv.org.uk](mailto:info@vlv.org.uk) remain unchanged.

## 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 advertisements is 30p per word, 20p for members. Please send typed copy with a cheque made payable to VLV Ltd. For display space please contact Linda Forbes on 01474 352835.

### VLV Gift Membership

Give VLV membership as a gift to a friend or relative. We will add an appropriate greetings card and a FREE copy of the Radio or TV User's Guide worth £5.95. Fill out the coupon below and state which publication and card type you would prefer.



### THE RADIO LISTENER'S GUIDE 2009 & THE TELEVISION VIEWER'S GUIDE 2009

#### ORDERING DETAILS

The guides cost £5.95 each - (plus p&tp). Please make your cheques payable to *Radio Listener's Guide*, and send them to:

Radio Listener's Guide, PO Box 888, Plymouth PL8 1YJ

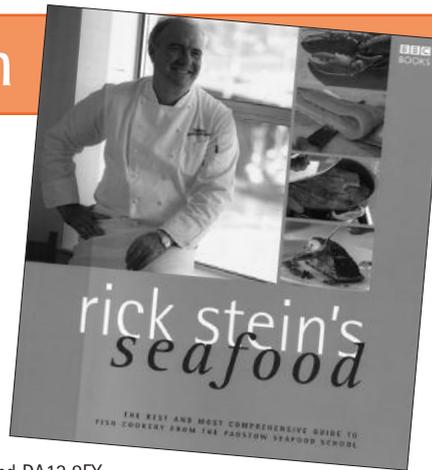
## Autumn Competition

### Win a copy of Rick Stein's superb guide to seafood cookery.

Published by BBC Books @£15.00 ISBN 13 978 0563 4934 7 Rick Stein's passion for cooking and his travels around Britain in search of locally sourced produce have endeared him to thousands of TV viewers. His seafood cookery is based on the methods taught at his cookery school in Padstow, Cornwall. It takes the reader through the whole process of cooking seafood, from choosing and buying fish to preparing and serving it.

**Q: On which TV Channel have Rick Stein's programmes been shown?**

Replies on a postcard to: Autumn Competition, VLV, PO Box 401, Gravesend DA12 9FY or by email to: info@vlv.org.uk by 15 December 2008. The Editor's decision is final.



The winner of VLV's summer competition for a copy of *Preserves* by Pam Corbin was Mrs S Adam from Kenley in Surrey.

## Diary Dates

### Tuesday, 4th November

VLV Visit to BBC Newsroom  
Television Centre, Wood Lane  
London W12 7RJ  
2pm

### Wednesday, 5th November

Children's TV: a glimmer of hope?  
New Connaught Rooms  
Covent Garden, London WC2  
9.30am - 4.45pm

### Tuesday, 11th November

Visit: BBC, Salford Quay &  
Granada Studios, Manchester  
12 noon

### Tuesday, 25th November

Silver Jubilee Reception  
River Room, House of Lords  
London SW1  
6pm - 8pm

### Wednesday, 26th November

- 25th Annual Autumn Conference  
10.30am - 3.30pm
- VLV Ltd 6th AGM,  
4pm - 5pm  
The Geological Society,  
Piccadilly, London W1

### Tuesday, 9th December

VLV Westminster Evening Seminar  
with Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP  
House of Commons, London SW1  
Time to be confirmed

### Thursday, 5th February 2009

VLV Visit to Parliamentary  
Broadcasting Unit, Millbank  
London SW1  
11am

### Wednesday, 1st April

VLV Conference on Media Literacy  
and the Over-50s  
BT Centre, 81 Newgate Street,  
London EC1  
10.30 - 4.30pm

## NEW SUBSCRIPTION / DONATION / CHANGE OF ADDRESS\* (\*please delete as appropriate)

VLV subscription - individual £25.00, two at same address £40.00, students £15.00, concessionary £19.50, joint concessions £30.00. VLV overseas subscription - individual £37.50, students £18.00, concessionary £30.00. Newsletter only subscription (non members) UK £35.00, overseas £37.50. Please make cheques payable to VLV Ltd and send to PO box 401, Gravesend, DA12 9FY

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

OR to pay by Credit Card please complete the form below or call 01474 352835

Name of Cardholder: \_\_\_\_\_

Card type: Mastercard  Visa  Expiry date  /  Issue No.   CVS   (last 3 digits of security code on reverse of card)

Card No.     /     /     Amount £ \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Cardholder \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to pay by: Bankers' Order  Gift Aid  please send me a form. FREE TV Viewer's Guide  Radio Listener's Guide  Card type: \_\_\_\_\_