



**Voice of the  
Listener & Viewer**

# Bulletin

Working for Quality and Diversity in Broadcasting

Winter 2005/06

Issue 84

## VLV offers opportunities to debate the future of The BBC Charter & Digital Switch-over

The Government White Paper on BBC Charter Review has now been postponed until late February. The Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, Tessa Jowell MP has re-iterated that it is likely to follow policy outlined in the 2005 Green Paper, but some powerful interests are still pressing for radical change in both the BBC's public service remit and its future funding.

VLV is therefore organising a number of high profile events in England, Wales and Scotland in order to provide opportunities for listeners, viewers and licence payers to hear and question some of the key players on these important issues. Three one-day conferences in London, Cardiff and Edinburgh will also provide opportunities to learn more about the process and implications of digital switch-over, which is due to start in Border region in two years time. All these events are open to the public.

### in Edinburgh...

Thursday, 23 February, 3pm – 7.45pm

#### Broadcasting in Scotland: Technology, Culture & Enterprise

VLV's annual conference in Scotland to be held in association with The Royal Society of Arts and Napier University.

At the Scottish Parliament  
(Committee Room 1) Edinburgh.

#### SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

Ford Ennals, CEO, Digital UK  
Caroline Thomson, BBC Director of Strategy and Charter Review  
Professor Neil Blain, Paisley University  
Professor Vincent Porter, Ministerial Consumer Expert Group on Digital Switch-over & VLV Board Member  
Hugh Mackay, Open University  
Jocelyn Hay, Chair, VLV  
Representatives from the main political parties (invited).

### in Cardiff...

Thursday, 16 March, 10am – 4.30pm

#### Broadcasting in Wales: Radio, Television and Public Service in the Digital Age

In association with Cardiff School of Journalism, Media & Cultural Studies, University of Wales

In the Glamorgan Building, Cathays Park Campus, Cardiff University.

#### SPEAKERS INCLUDE:

Aled Glynne Davies, BBC Radio Cymru  
Julie Barton, Editor BBC Radio Wales  
Andy Carter, Managing Director, Real Radio  
Andrew Jones, Station Manager, GTFM  
Huw Roberts, Head of Public Policy, BBC Wales  
Professor Elan Closs Stephens, Chairman, S4C  
Jocelyn Hay, Chair, VLV  
Roger Lewis, Managing Director, ITV Wales  
Rhodri Wales, Director, Ofcom Wales.

### in London...

Tuesday, 21 March, 6.30pm – 8pm



**James Purnell MP**, the Minister for the Creative Industries and Tourism, will speak at a VLV Westminster Evening Seminar on the Government White Paper on BBC Charter Review, Palace of Westminster, London SW1.

Thursday, 23 March, 6.30pm – 8pm



**Sir Christopher Bland**, Chair of BT and former Chair, BBC Governors, will be the speaker at a VLV Westminster Evening Seminar on the Government White Paper on BBC Charter Review, at One Whitehall Place, London SW1.

Wednesday, 26 April, 10.30am – 5pm



#### After the BBC Charter: what future for pluralism in public service broadcasting?

VLV's 23rd Spring Conference at The Royal Society, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1.

11.00am: morning speaker:  
**Peter Fincham** (above left),  
Controller, BBC 1

2.30pm: afternoon speaker:  
**Andy Duncan**, Chief  
Executive, Channel 4.

1.45pm: the presentation of  
the VLV 2005 Awards for  
Excellence in Broadcasting

will take place immediately after lunch during  
the Conference.

Full details of the programmes and of how to obtain tickets for these and other planned VLV events are available from the VLV office: 01474 352835 or on VLV's website: [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk).

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### Stop Press

Wednesday, 24 May, 6.30pm – 8pm

Mark Thompson, BBC Director General will speak at a VLV Evening Seminar on BBC Charter Review. Venue to be confirmed.



# 3rd AGM of VLV Ltd

Nearly fifty members attended VLV's 3rd AGM held at Hamilton House London WC1 after the autumn conference on 30 November 2005.

## Voice of the Listener & Viewer

*Working for Quality and Diversity in British Broadcasting*

### VLV Patrons

Lord Barnet PC JP  
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Lord Puttnam of Queensgate CBE  
Lady Solti  
Lord Thomson of Monifieth KT PC  
Sir John Tusa

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Warren Newman  
Professor Vincent Porter  
Dr Andrew Taussig

### Company Secretary

Waterlow Registrars Ltd

### The Voice of the Listener Trust

(reg charity 296207)

VLV's sister charity

which supports VLV's educational work

Interim Chairman: Elizabeth Smith OBE  
Interim Secretary: Jocelyn Hay CBE  
Treasurer: Professor Naomi Sargent  
Michael Barton  
Professor Sylvia Harvey  
Dr Andrew Taussig

### VLV office hours:

9.00am - 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

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When introducing the annual report, the Chairman referred to the decision taken at the previous AGM to change VLV's financial year-end from 31 March to 31 August. Her report and the accounts therefore covered the 17 months from 1 April 2005 to 31 August 2006. This period included the launch of VLV's 21st Anniversary Appeal by Lord Puttnam of Queensgate in July 2004 and a celebratory lunch at the House of Lords in November kindly hosted by Lord Thomson of Monifieth, with guest speaker Lord (Melvyn) Bragg. By the time the Appeal closed in July 2005, she said more than £30,000 had been raised for VLV and the Trust. She was particularly pleased that the work of VLV had been recognised in its anniversary year by the award of a CBE to her in the Birthday Honours and she was extremely grateful for the support and generosity of so many people during those 21 years.

The period had been the most active in VLV's history. VLV had responded to Government consultations on the future of the BBC, European Commission on revisions to the Directive on Trans-frontier Television, and Ofcom on a range of its operations and codes of practice. VLV had run an extensive conference and seminar programme including two international conferences, one each in Wales and Scotland, another on Children's Television and several seminars including two at the Palace of Westminster with the Culture Secretary and leading Party Spokesmen. In association with CSV Media and others, VLV had also organised seminars on the BBC and digital switch-over in Birmingham, Cambridge, Edinburgh, London, Manchester, Norwich and Oxford with financial help from the Andrew Wainwright Social Reform Trust.

This huge amount of activity was entirely dependent on the voluntary support and expertise given to VLV by its supporters. All of VLV's policy work is done by volunteers, she said. VLV simply could not run without them. She thanked everyone involved, including members of the Board and VLV's Gravesend staff, Linda Forbes and Sue Washbrook. They had been joined for 18 months by Eddie Tulasiewicz, VLV's first (part-time) Education and Development Officer, who was funded by the Voice of The Listener Trust.

Eddie left in September to take a full time post as Communications Officer at the Archdiocese of Westminster. Since then, she was delighted to report, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation had kindly offered to fund a full-time Director for the next two to three years. The Board and she were extremely grateful to the Trustees of EFF and the confidence they placed in VLV and its future.

The report and accounts for the 17 month period, presented by the Hon Treasurer, Colin Thompson, were adopted unanimously.

Bob Fletcher, Company and Honorary Secretary of VLV Ltd resigned in October 2005 but remains a member of the Board. The Board thanked him and had since appointed Messrs Waterlow Registrars as Company Secretary. There were no nominations for the post of Honorary Secretary.

The two longest-serving members of the Board, John Clark and Vincent Porter, stood down under Company rules but, being eligible, were re-elected nem con. There were no other nominations.

At the end of the formal business a wide ranging discussion on current issues took place.

Copies of the annual report and accounts and an audio-cassette of the proceedings are free to members in return for a large SAE with 47p in stamps.

## New Member of VLV Board



Terry Glover, who has been a member of VLV for nearly ten years, was co-opted on to the VLV Board in October 2005. He is a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Personnel and Development and has an MSc in Organisational Psychology. After holding a number of senior personnel roles in financial services companies he set up his own consultancy in 2003 where he specialises in executive selection and development and in working with organisations to help them become more effective. He has a strong interest in current affairs and the arts, and is passionately committed to public service broadcasting.

## CAMPAIGNING IN BROADCASTING

### Director £40,000



A small, highly influential, campaigning body representing the citizen and consumer in broadcasting seeks a Director to work with the Board in developing its role and services.

Responsibilities include external relations, membership liaison and development, fund raising, conference organising and budgetary control.

An excellent opportunity for a talented media professional with proven leadership, financial, managerial and fund-raising skills to join a growing organisation at a time of unprecedented industry change.

Offices in Gravesend, Kent with regular opportunities to work from home and some business travel.

Supported by:

Send CV to;  
[info@vlv.org.uk](mailto:info@vlv.org.uk)  
Closing date:  
31 January 2006



# VLV's Spring Lecture Programme

Members can look forward to enjoying presentations by a range of distinguished speakers in VLV's 2006 lecture series. All are open to the public as well as to VLV members and guests but, as space is limited and they are popular, early booking is advised.

The new programme starts on Tuesday, 31 January.

**P.D. James** the renowned crime novelist (Baroness James of Holland Park), will give the first in the 2006 series on Tuesday, 31 January, 6.30pm – 8.30pm at the British Academy, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1.



Lady James is a former Governor of the BBC and in her talk 'The BBC – Whose Voice?' she will give her views on some aspects of the BBC and its future as well as sharing her experience as one of Britain's most eminent crime writers. The event will start with a wine reception and book signing in this gracious Regency building overlooking the Mall.

**John Simpson**, the BBC's renowned World Affairs Editor, will give the second presentation in VLV's 2006 lecture series on Tuesday, 28 March, 6.30pm – 8.30pm in the Lloyd George Room at One Whitehall Place, London SW1.

He will share some of his views and his experience as a journalist in the UK and when travelling to report major events and conflicts from all over the world, including the Middle East, Northern Ireland and the Iraq war. The event will start with a wine reception and book signing.



She will share her wide experience of working with different colleagues on current affairs, the arts and religious programmes. The event will start with a wine reception.

**Joan Bakewell**, writer, journalist and broadcaster, will give the third VLV lecture on Tuesday, 9 May, 6.30pm – 8.30pm in the Lloyd George Room at One Whitehall Place, London SW1.

## VLV's 11th annual conference on children's television, 2 November Kids' Media: a Cultural Force or a Cash Cow?

### Speakers included:

- Phil Redmond, Merseyside Television
- Alison Sharman, Controller CBBC
- Estelle Hughes, Editor CITV
- Howard Litton, Director of Channels, Nickelodeon
- Professor Al Aynsley-Green, Children's Commissioner, England
- Fran O'Brien, Senior Manager, Content & Standards, Ofcom
- Steve Perkins, Head of Public Service Broadcasting, Ofcom

This was an enthralling day in which a capacity audience, including five overseas delegates, heard how children's use of media is changing with the development of new technology. Delegates also expressed grave concerns about the future of indigenous children's television.

**Phil Redmond**, keynote speaker, said the answer to the title question was 'Yes, kid's media is both a cultural force and a cash cow at times'. The problem was that the cultural force was mainly American because of the amount of imported programmes shown by the dedicated satellite channels. Many kids watch more adult than children's programmes, he said, partly because they aspire to be older than they are, and partly because they often watch programmes like soaps with their parents. Children's programmes have never been as well-financed as others, and the best way to ensure that a range of high quality, indigenous programmes continues to be made was to support the BBC and the licence fee which took it out of the commercial rat-race.

**Al Aynsley-Green**, an inspiring afternoon keynote speaker, outlined the responsibilities of his new position and made a plea for young people to be portrayed more positively by the media. Constant negative images and role models were very damaging, he said. He also deplored the commercial pressure now put on children to develop their sexuality and consumer tastes at an increasingly early age.

In summing up a day that was far too packed and informative to be reported here, VLV Chair, Jocelyn Hay made a plea to Steve Perkins of Ofcom to renew the research commissioned by its predecessor the BSC into the range of children's programmes currently on offer. She also hoped that Ofcom, which has assumed responsibility formerly held by the DCMS for enforcing the European Television Directive, would require satellite services targeting the UK to abide by its requirement that 51% of their programmes be original European productions.

Audio-cassettes or CDs of the event are available price £17.50 including p&tp.

## Driving Towards Digital Switch-over: Combining Quality with Equality

VLV's 22nd Autumn Conference

**Morning Speakers:** Ford Ennals, CEO Digital UK; Graham McWilliam, Deputy Head of Strategy, BSkyB; Ilse Howling, General Manager, Freeview; Keith Monserratt, Director of Communications & Policy, NTL; Hugh Williams, Executive Director of Programming, Home Choice; Andrew Burke, CEO, BT Entertainment; Chaired by Professor Vincent Porter, VLV Board Member

**Afternoon Speaker:** Stephen Carter, CEO, Ofcom, the communications regulator Chaired by Professor Steven Barnett, Westminster University & Observer columnist

Six leading protagonists in the digital television market laid out an exciting array of wares for VLV members at their Autumn Conference in London on 30 November. They demonstrated that digital technology can bring a veritable explosion of choice for those in the right place and with the means to enjoy it.

**Ford Ennals**, CEO of the company charged with managing the switch-over project, however, explained that about a quarter of homes would not be able to access the Digital Terrestrial Television service Freeview until after analogue transmissions had been switched off, starting with Border Region in 2008. Awareness of the change was high but about 10% of viewers are expected to be reluctant or unable to make the move without some help in obtaining the necessary equipment and becoming familiar with it. Digital UK would welcome help from VLV and other groups in reaching and assisting these people.

**Stephen Carter**, CEO, also concentrated on the implications of analogue switch-off for broadcasters – especially public service broadcasters. In a wide-ranging question session lasting over an hour, he said he regretted that Ofcom had not gone farther when earlier in the year it relieved ITV of some of its programme obligations, in particular those relating to non-news regional programmes. Had it done so, he said, it would have hastened the debate that still has to be held about ITV's ability to continue to be an advertiser-funded public service broadcaster in a multi-channel world.

Audio-cassettes of the event are available price £15 including p&tp.

## VLV's 2005 Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting

The splendid surroundings of the Royal Society in Carlton House Terrace will be the setting for the presentation of VLV's 2005 Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting, during the Spring Conference on Wednesday 26th April. Make a note of the date now!

Last year, when the Awards were presented by Ken Bruce, among the winners who attended and proved so entertaining were Michael Palin, Rory Bremner, John Fortune, John Bird, Tim Marlow and Andrew Marr. These stars of radio and television clearly demonstrate their respect and support for VLV by going out of their way to collect their Awards in person. Who knows who will be there this year?

It is your votes they value and which make the Awards so special, and your personal congratulations which add to their pleasure. Voting forms are included with this Bulletin. Please return yours as soon as possible.

John Clark, Awards Organiser

## Editorial Comment



2005 was a year of celebration and achievement for VLV – the culmination of 21 years of concerted effort and growth. The climax came in June when I was appointed a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours, and with the success of our

21st Anniversary Appeal launched by Lord Puttnam of Queensgate, a year earlier.

The recognition that the Birthday Honour gave to the public value of VLV's work was gratifying and heartening. So too was the tangible support which resulted in the success of the Appeal, which has now raised more than £30,000 for VLV and its supporting charity, The Voice of the Listener Trust. We are extremely grateful to every one who contributed in any way to these achievements. Recognition and funding are equally important in assuring VLV's future.

It was particularly pleasing therefore that the Trustees of the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation showed both their faith in VLV and their willingness to support our work in a very practical way through the offer of a grant to cover the costs of employing

a full-time Director for VLV for the next two, possibly three years. The advertisement for the new Director is published on page two. Please help us to spread awareness of it as widely as possible.

Thanks to these achievements, we now have a firm foundation from which to launch our work in 2006, and to prove that we deserve the expressions of confidence that have been placed in us. It will mean re-doubling all our efforts on behalf of listeners, viewers and licence-payers – as citizens and as individual consumers of broadcasting and new media services.

By the end of 2006, the future governance, remit and funding of the BBC will have been settled and laid out in a new Royal Charter. The future of Channel 4 will probably have been decided too, while the shape of ITV and its ownership may also be due to change. Meanwhile, the breath-taking speed of technical change – quite apart from the start of digital switch over in just over two years time – will bring an even more bewildering array of new services and means of delivery.

The regulatory frameworks are changing too, with proposals from the European Commission to alter the provisions of the pan-European Directive

When VLV Chair Jocelyn Hay went to Buckingham Palace in December to receive her CBE, she was delighted to meet VLV member, Mrs Jenny Nathan, who was made an MBE for her services to charities in London.



on Trans-Frontier Television, to which the UK is a signatory; and Ofcom, the UK regulator of communications, favours greater relaxation in the safeguards against commercial influence on programme sponsorship, product placement and advertising.

VLV has been given a sound basis from which to start work in 2006, but if we are to be effective, we shall need to step up all our activities and for that we shall require your continuing support, both moral and financial. The next milestone will be VLV's Silver Jubilee in 2008/9. We would welcome suggestions as to how we might mark it.

*Jocelyn Hay*

## digital update

**Always look for the Digital Tick symbol when buying new television or recording equipment.**

Although the US media regulator, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has brought forward the date by which all TV receivers in the USA must include the capability to receive digital TV signals, the British government has not. Many retailers are still selling widescreen analogue receivers which will not be able to receive digital transmissions unless they are fitted with a set top box.

**Any analogue TV can be used to receive digital but it only if fitted with a set top box.** For Freeview and cable you will need to check if you are in a coverage area. Your retailer should be able to help by checking your post code. To receive Freeview you may also need a new aerial and your TV should ideally have a 'scart' socket to plug the box into. A wide variety of boxes is now available. Have a good look round before buying the cheapest – for just a few pounds more you may be able to get a much wider range of options that you might want to take up later.

**Recording Digital Programmes. Unless you have a digital recorder you will only be able to make a recording of the digital channel you are watching.** You will be able to make a recording

of an analogue channel while watching a digital channel but not of a different digital service.

**Digital Sets and the stand-by mode.** Some people believe it is necessary to leave all digital receivers on stand-by overnight but one study estimated that 8% of a typical household's electricity costs resulted from domestic appliances always being left on standby – as high as £12 a year for some TVs. If you pay for a subscription TV service, the provider will send you software up-dates during the night but if you only have a digital terrestrial TV receiver for the Free view service, it is not necessary to leave TV sets, video or DVD recorders on standby all night.

**The next 'big thing' is High Definition Television (HDTV).** Be careful and to look for the HDTV symbol if you are planning to buy an expensive plasma screen to hang on your wall, not all plasma screens are compatible with HDTV. The BBC and BSkyB are planning to start trial broadcasts of HDTV in 2006 and hoping to be joined by the cable operators. HDTV screens will be needed to enjoy these broadcasts and also to view the next generation of DVDs.

**BBC 2 will be first channel to go fully digital in each region** when analogue signals are switched off. BBC 2 Controller, Roly Keating is therefore planning a pilot project early this year to test how its

content could reach viewers via the Internet and mobile phones. Newsnight is already experimenting with a broadband edition of the show via its website.

**The BBC Launches its Digital Curriculum for schools** under the name 'BBC Jam' After several years of preparation, the BBC has launched its new learning service for five to 16 year olds, formerly known as the 'digital curriculum', under the new name of BBC Jam. The new service, will be delivered over broad band, continuing until September 2008.

When purchasing digital equipment look for the logo

## STOP PRESS

**BBC Children's TV switch from One to Two**

On 7 January the BBC switched its children's programmes from BBC 1 to BBC 2 for a three month trial period. The programmes are broadcast from 6am to noon.

The BBC says it is to provide 'greater consistency for young viewers who tune to BBC 2 for children's output on every other day of the week'. It will also allow the BBC more freedom to broadcast sport on Saturday mornings.

If you have children and views on the change, write to Richard Deverell, Acting Controller, CBBC, White City, London W12 0RT.

## Student Essay Competition

Sarah Smith, of Channel 4 and E4 News, presented the prizes to the winners of VLV's first Student Essay Competition during VLV's autumn conference on 30 November.

The theme was 'The Future of UK Public Service Broadcasting in the Digital Age' and first prize was won by James Bennett, who gained a PhD from the University of Warwick. James received a cheque for £1,000 kindly donated by Channel 4 and the offer of a work placement with Endemol UK.

The two runners-up, Nektaria Marinou, who gained a PhD in Broadcast Journalism from the University of Central England, and Ben Singleton, who gained a PhD in Broadcast Journalism from City University, London, won work placements with the independent production companies Films of Record and Tiger Aspect Films, respectively.

VLV's Student Essay Competition was launched in 2005 with support from Channel 4 and the Voice of the Listener Trust. We are delighted that Channel 4 and the Trust have agreed to support the Competition for a further year.

VLV's 2006 Student Essay Competition will be launched on 15 February. Full details will be available on the VLV website: [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk) or by post in return for an SAE from the VLV office.



## Guest Contributor, Tony Hall

**"A Many Splendoured Thing"** – but is British culture being properly exploited as an unique international asset? Tony Hall, Executive Director of The Royal Opera House – who received a CBE in the 2006 New Year Honours – says we need a Foreign Policy for the Arts.

I went with the Royal Ballet this summer to Singapore and watched the audiences there respond to the Royal Ballet. It really was extremely exciting to see our dancers performing there, and in Korea and in Japan – to packed houses and raising such a stir. The series of events was a fantastic export for Britain.

Another example from another part of the world: South Africa. There we do a programme each year in Johannesburg where teachers come from Soweto to spend a weekend with us, learning how to write an opera. Their assignment is to spend some hours each week teaching their children about culture. Our UK contribution is to

train them to conduct a weekly lesson for an entire year, putting together a piece of "music-theatre" – what we might call opera. Black South Africans being what they are, the notion of it just being about the voice soon gets taken over by dance as well. You can't sing without moving. I found it fabulous to watch and to be part of.

These two examples illustrate a more general point: that the UK possesses an unrivalled range of cultural exports including the BBC World Service and BBC World TV. We have so much to offer the rest of the world. The international contacts which culture facilitates for Britain are phenomenally important. Conceptually these contacts, and what they represent, fall into the category of "soft power". This kind of power, exemplified by the work of the British Council, needs to be built on and backed by serious resources, and synergically

We need to pull together some of the really big cultural players. Alongside the British Council, the BBC, Channel Four and other broadcasters we should team up some of the organisations which make London and this country so great: the British Museum, the Tate, the Victoria & Albert Museum, the National Gallery, the Royal Opera House, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre and others. We require a cultural export policy

which, without being 'dirigiste', is coherent and coordinated. The 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2010 Shanghai World Exposition and the 2012 London Olympics exemplify events which will offer huge promotional scope.

What's on offer here in London surpasses in quality what's available in New York. Our weakness is in packaging, presenting and promoting – areas where the French, incidentally, are very skilled. The challenge is one of taking our cultural exports more seriously; ensuring that efforts are joined-up. The Royal Ballet, for example, focuses its overseas tours on wealthy countries where it can count on more than covering costs. Actually – given the power of Britain to influence, to shape, to nurture – we should be going to places that can't afford us: emulating what the British Museum has done recently in the Sudan. There's a project on my desk right now for work in Cape Town townships: one of a number of projects in various cultural fields which – if they could be made to happen – would at the same time showcase British skills and be exciting experiences for British artists: a real two-way street of teaching and learning.

The challenge for those running major cultural organisations is to collaborate and make it happen.

### VLV Responses and Briefing Papers

#### ORAL EVIDENCE

VLV Chair, Jocelyn Hay, was invited to give oral evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Analogue Switch-off on 8 November.

She appeared before the House of Lords Select Committee on BBC Charter Review in July and has been invited to give further evidence to the 2nd stage of the Committee's inquiry on 24 January 2006.

VLV has submitted written evidence to the following consultations:

- House of Commons Select Committee on Culture, Media & Sport: inquiry into Analogue Switch-Off: October 2005
- House of Lords Select Committee on Charter Review, 2nd Inquiry into Religious, Sports and Regional Broadcasting and the Role of the BBC World Service: October 2005

- BBC – Consultation by the BBC Governors on the Future of the BBC Radio Archive: November 2005
- BBC – Preparing for the New BBC Trust: Service Licences and the Public Value Test: December 2005
- Ofcom – Procedures for the Handling of Fairness & Privacy Complaints: December 2005.
- Ofcom – Radio, Preparing for the Future – Phase 2: January 2006

#### VLV DISCUSSION PAPERS:

- The end of Surreptitious Advertising? Advertising, Sponsorship and Product Placement, prepared for VLV's Policy Seminar in October.
- Revisions to the European Directive on Trans-Frontier Television: prepared for EURALVA meeting in Lisbon, January 2006.

Copies of all responses are posted on the VLV website: [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk) and free to members in return for a large SAE with 47p in postage.

#### DCMS Consultation on the Use of National Lottery Money

The DCMS has launched a public consultation on how the money raised by the National Lottery should be used. The money is currently distributed to good causes under four main headings: the arts, film, national heritage and sport, all of which receive an equal share. The introduction of scratch cards to help fund the Olympics may affect this policy and the department is consulting on what proportion of Lottery money should be allocated to the arts and film, sport and heritage after 2009. For further

information visit the DCMS website: [www.lottery2009.culture.gov.uk/](http://www.lottery2009.culture.gov.uk/)

The closing date for comments is 1 February, send them via the website or to: National Lottery Consultation, DCMS, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London SWY 5DH.

#### Public Consultations Now Open

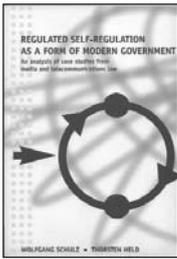
- Ofcom's Annual Work Plan – 2006.
- Ofcom – Issues to do with Product Placement.
- Ofcom – The Future Licensing of DAB Digital Radio.

Further details from Ofcom call centre 020 7981 3000 or at [www.ofcom.org.uk](http://www.ofcom.org.uk)

#### A selection of Conferences & Meetings in which VLV representatives have spoken or participated recently.

BBC Governors' consultation; BBC Director General's consultation, BBC Citizenship event; meeting with DCMS Creative Industries Division; Ofcom presentations on their Annual Work Plan, Media Literacy, Consumer Forum; Future of Radio and Advertising; Digital Stakeholders' Group; Ministerial Expert Consumer Group on Digital Switch-over; Westminster Media Forum Seminars on Advertising, Digital Switch-over and Media Literacy; Quarriers conference in Bath on Children's Rights Vs Press Freedom; EURALVA meeting on revisions to European Directive on Television Without Frontiers, Lisbon.

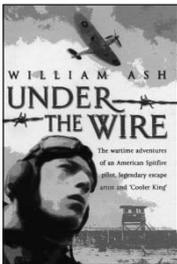
## Book Reviews



### REGULATED SELF-REGULATION AS A FORM OF MODERN GOVERNMENT

by Wolfgang Schulz and Thorsten Held, published by John Libbey Publishing for University of Luton Press, Box 276, Eastleigh, SO50 5YS, email: john.libbey@libbysurf.fr. P/B ISBN: 1 86020 597 6

The relationships between governments and public and private institutions are changing all over the world. This analysis of case studies from media and telecommunications law covers experience in Australia, Malaysia and the UK. The authors set out to find answers to questions about the changing role of government, especially in regulating the trans-national communications industry, and to provide a tool-kit that can be applicable across the world for what they call 'regulated self-regulation'. They address a number of key questions, including whether industry can, in the first place, be trusted to regulate itself, and if so, how overall regulatory objectives can then be protected.



### UNDER THE WIRE

by Bill Ash, published by Bantam Press h/b price £16.99 ISBN 05 93 054 083 (p/b £6.99 ISBN 055 38 17 48 June 2006) from bookshops or online from [www.underthewire.co.uk](http://www.underthewire.co.uk)

Bill Ash has been a member of VLV for many years. In this autobiography co-authored by Brendan Foley, he tells the story of his adventures as a Spitfire pilot, during World War II, including his time and escape from the notorious German prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft III. Bill, now 87 and living in London, originally hailed from Texas. Despite a tough youth, he worked his way through college during the Depression before joining the Royal Canadian Air Force on the outbreak of War. He was shot down over France, captured and tortured by the SS, before becoming one of the most courageous escape artists. After the war he worked for the BBC in India and UK until he retired as senior radio drama producer. Bill is a constant champion of the underdog and writers.

## Who's Who

Philip Graf has been appointed Deputy Chair of Ofcom and Chair of Ofcom's Content Board, replacing Richard Hooper who retired at Christmas. Mr Graf who is a former Chief Executive of Trinity Mirror Group was commissioned by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport to carry out a Review of the BBC's Online Services in 2004.

David Jordan, the BBC's Chief Adviser, Politics, has been appointed Controller, Editor Policy, succeeding Stephen Whittle who retired in December.

Alison Sharman, former Controller of CBBC has left to take up the post of Daytime Controller at ITV.

Julian Bellamy, former head of Channel 4's factual entertainment and of E4, has been appointed Controller of BBC 3, replacing Stuart Murphy who left the BBC in October to join RDF Media.

## VLV Visit to ITV Network Centre

VLV members much enjoyed a visit in October. After a welcome by Sophie Cohen, Controller of Public Affairs, they were given presentations by Nigel Pickard, Director of Programme Services, Alan Rufaie, Head of Content Research, David Bergg, Director of Programme Strategy, Dominic Crossley-Holland, Controller of Current Affairs, Arts & Religion, Estelle Hughes, Editor, Children's ITV (CITV), and Jill Kerslake, Operations Director.

ITV has the highest commitment to public service broadcasting of all the commercial broadcasters. It puts out more regional news, children's programmes and original drama than any of its competitors, terrestrial or satellite. ITV's audience research involves 50,000 people a year, weighted to match the UK population. It includes both the programmes and which artists are most popular.

Before leaving, time was allowed for everyone to test their skills at fitting a selection of advertisements into a normal day's schedule. The computer 'Game' (see photo) involved was developed



for training new schedulers and the choices it posed proved remarkably tricky. Among the factors that affect the placing of advertisements are the season and the weather, the time of day and whether pre or post the watershed, also whether the programme in which the advertisement is placed is targeting a male or female audience.

All stops were pulled-out to make this visit an in-depth occasion. We came away with a much greater understanding of the difficulties that programme controllers and schedulers face when trying to maximise the revenue from advertisements on which ITV depends for its survival.

## Visit to Ofcom

Matt Peacock, Director of Communications, hosted a visit for VLV members to Ofcom in November.

Ofcom is responsible for managing all over-air communications, including those used by broadband, mobile phones and air traffic control. Pirate radio stations often create interference on wavebands used by emergency services or air traffic control and in 2004 almost brought Heathrow airport to a standstill. Today pirate stations are mostly set up by drug dealing gangs to advertise clubs where drugs are available. The sums of money involved are large, and police raids are met with violence. Normal policy is to remove the transmitters from their illegal placements, but this can be difficult and hazardous. An average of 1000 police raids take place each year.

Community radio stations are different, as long as they are licensed and using frequencies allocated by Ofcom. The licence costs only £500.

210,000 businesses which is largely funded by the fees they pay. Ofcom receives a third of a million emails/calls every year, but the number of actual complaints is relatively small and under 9% concern broadcasting. Many complaints can be answered quickly, but some have to be referred on, eg, to the ASA or Ofcom's Content Board.

By the start of digital switchover in 2008 a cheap set-top box should be available but some people will need a new aerial. Attention is being paid to vulnerable groups who will need help with installing new equipment.

One problem is that there are not enough frequencies to allow the whole country to switch until after analogue signals are turned off. Matt said that keeping an existing television and buying a reasonably priced set-top box was a good option at present. With a cheap set-to box you cannot record a digital channel whilst simultaneously watching another digital channel but if one or both are analogue it is possible to do so.

## VLV Visit to CBBC



Senior Executive, Amanda Gabbittas welcomed VLV members to the BBC's children's department in November shortly after Alison Sharman, Controller for the past year, had left to join ITV.

Richard Deverall, Acting Controller of CBBC joined us over coffee and sandwiches – in the lounge where normally groups of children are invited to discuss the kinds of programmes they would like to enjoy. He explained that the BBC employs 500 staff, all committed to providing high quality programmes for children on TV, radio and online.

We saw plenty of evidence of this dedication during our two-hour tour of the department. First, we were given a demonstration of some of the programmes which have been developed especially to help children with learning and physical

disabilities to learn and interact through computer games linked to the TV and website.

Next, we visited the Newsround production office and met its editors, Ian Prince and Sam Beddows. They told us how their bulletins are sensitively written to help young viewers cope with difficult news and to give them an understanding of the world they live in. The Newsround website has launched a project to help children become journalists by develop their writing, observational and story telling skills. 5,000 requests for the project kit had already been received.

A highlight was the Blue Peter studios, and an opportunity to meet the presenters, watch them in rehearsal and see the Blue Peter Garden.

Finally, members were taken to a studio used to train young people where they were given the chance to read news and take part in a panel game.

A most enjoyable and informative visit during which members were impressed by the dedication, pride and skill shown by every one they met.

# Letters to the Editor

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

## DIGITAL SWITCH-OVER

The Government's decision to switch the UK to a fully digital television system between 2008 and 2012 raises a number of concerns, including the potentially large costs to ordinary viewers. The current Freeview service would, in effect, become the core of the new service but Ofcom's current consultation proposals could potentially de-stabilise and threaten the existing varied channel line-up, leading to a poorer service for all. Personally, I think the stability of the existing system should be preserved and, for once, Ofcom should put long term public interest ahead of its dogmatic competition inclinations. In case it is of any interest, I have enclosed a copy of Ofcom's latest proposals plus my response. It is at times like these that I am glad that the Voice of the Listener and Viewer exists.

Tim Fairhead, By e-mail

Editor's note: We are grateful for Mr Fairhead's support and always welcome news of consultations and copies of members' responses which help to inform our thinking.

I am of the opinion that the digital drive appears to be a strange affair. I'm still not sure of why we need to be digital only in the first place. Also, digital devices are noticeably power-hungry compared to their analogue counterparts by a factor of 10+ times in some cases. How does this square with the Government's green and energy saving policies?

Graeme Craig, Aberdeen

I monitor the television service for my area from the Beacon Hill Transmitter. We cannot get Channel Five here but my husband and myself are quite happy with the four channels we receive. Now, however, we are being informed that we shall 'have to go digital' before very long. Needless to say we do not want this enforced upon us and, in any case, we cannot receive the pictures. Moreover, we are not allowed to have external aerials here, they have to be in the roof void. It will, I have no doubt, also involve us in extra expense. I sometimes wonder who makes all these decisions – probably a person who has little else to do and no knowledge of the ramifications involved; a bit like running a train without any rails for it to run on!

Mrs B V Ashton, Brixham, Devon

As a retired BBC staffer, dedicated listener and occasional online buff, living near the New Forest where the new TV services are not available without the high cost of a new TV aerial which is beyond my budget, the radio and TV trails urging me to try the delights of BBC 3 and BBC4 drive me to distraction.

Norma Gilbert, Fordingbridge, Hants

## OFCOM'S CONSULTATION PRACTICE

I am not happy with the ten-week consultation period that Ofcom generally allows for its consultations: it is too short for many organisations. For instance, Ofcom's Phase 2 consultation Radio – Preparing for the Future – was published on 19th October, too late for the last VLV newsletter and the closing date in January will be too soon to alert members in the next one.

I also find that it is not easy to navigate around some of Ofcom's documents, particularly online, and that key proposals are sometimes hidden in technical verbiage. Although they produce a plain English version, it is not enough; to respond to the questions you need to read the main document, which should be clearly laid out and have most of the technical content in appendices. Often the appendices are only available on CD. None of this is helpful to those wishing to respond unless they are industry players with specialist technical back-up.

Robert Clark, London SE11

Thought for the Day & Religious Broadcasting  
We are the Programme Secretary and Chairman of the North East Humanists.....

We are dismayed by the low quality of some of the Thought for the Day broadcasts, where the only criterion for choosing the speaker would seem to be

a firm religious belief. We could suggest many non-religious people who would have much more to contribute and comment on life and problems...

One of the main duties of the BBC is to reflect the totality of life and interests in Britain, so we do not object to religious programming, provided that it is proportionate...

We believe that the excessive time devoted to religion should be balanced by many more programmes that represent the views (especially in matters of philosophy and ethics) of the huge proportion of the population that rejects the claims of religion, or is indifferent to organised religion....

Complaints to the BBC about Thought for the Day have not been dealt with objectively ..... Possibly the BBC should consider adopting the appeals procedure operated by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, which offers an Independent Complaints Review Panel to look into cases where complainants about issues concerning serious bias, lack of balance or unfair treatment are dissatisfied with the response from the ABC."

Jean and Barrie Berkley, Hexham, Northumberland

Editor's note: What do readers feel about these issues?

## VLV'S CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN'S TV

As I cannot attend VLV's November children's conference, I would be grateful if you could make the following point on my behalf. Children's broadcasting is a specialised area and can not possibly be delivered successfully by programme makers or presenters who are not professionally qualified to understand how young people think and what their real needs are. Children are highly perceptive and can detect, extremely quickly, a lack of substance and any patronising tones.

As a former teacher and founder of the 'Junior Literary Club' here in Northern Ireland, I have been campaigning for many years for better provision, on television and on radio, for 8 to 14 year olds. I fail to understand why quality programmes for this very important age-group can not be regarded as commercially viable. There is an urgent need for a full-scale debate to examine ways in which programmes of a higher standard could be encouraged and supported by corporate bodies to the advantage of all

Anne C Robertson, Portstewart, Northern Ireland

Since VLV's main purpose is to maintain and improve standards in broadcasting, I was surprised to see the word 'Kids' on the front page of our last Bulletin, especially in view of the latest politically correct absurdity in calling schoolchildren no longer 'pupils' or even 'students' but 'learners'. If these well-established words are somehow considered demeaning, how much more demeaning is it to refer to young people as goats.....

A word in the ear of the BBC would not come amiss; but I suppose the answer would be that they are not allowed to 'edit' speakers' contributions.

R M Wickenden, Staplecross, East Sussex

Editor's note: We agree with the sentiment of this letter but chose the title of VLV's conference 'Kids' Media – a Cultural Force or a Cash Cow?' deliberately in order to shock people into realising just how much the dominance of American media is influencing the English language and our children's cultural heritage.

## VLV AND MEDIA WATCH

How I echo the point made by a VLV member in the Autumn Bulletin that 'VLV is nothing to do with the National Viewers' & Listeners' Association, now re-named Media Watch'. At a recent talk that I attended, given by a staff member of the British Humanist Association who deals with education, she mentioned the VLV in a dismissive way, saying that this was the organisation founded by Mary Whitehouse. Had I not been present to correct this unfortunate error, everyone in the audience would have believed it to be true.

Wendy Sturgess, Somerton, Somerset

Editor's note: VLV is frequently confused with the former NVALA and would be glad of suggestions as to how we could reduce this.

## BACKGROUND NOISE IN PROGRAMMES

I was so sorry not to get to Tim Marlow's evening with VLV, I greatly admire him, especially as he does not allow his producer to introduce a single note of background music, something that drives me up the wall in so many other programmes. I would have liked to have asked him how he manages to keep out that universal plague.

E Neville-Rolfe, Tisbury, Wilts

## VLV MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

These days I hardly see any television at all so cannot sensibly complete the Awards voting forms, and having now acquired arthritis, seldom make any journeys outside. However, I do admire all you are doing, and if you do not mind having a non-participating member, I shall be happy to continue my subscription standing order.

With every possible good wish for your work

P. Croy, London SW11

Editor's note: We are extremely grateful for the continuing support of every member. Some are able to participate in events, some are not – but VLV's main aim is to be an effective campaigning body and for that both kinds of member and financial support are equally important.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS AND THE RAFFLE

Congratulations on producing the Christmas cards.

What a good idea. How about producing some notelets?

Jill Hyem, London W14

**Deadline for next issue:  
15 March, 2006**

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

## IN MEMORIAM

VLV has lost two active supporters and a good friend in recent weeks:

Helen Cresswell, the popular and prolific children's writer and creator of Lizzy Dripping and the eccentric Bogthorpe family, was a member and staunch supporter of the VLV Forum for Children's broadcasting, adding her weight to our campaign for more quality programming for young people. Helen lived in Nottinghamshire and died after a long illness. We extend our sincere condolences to her daughters.

Doris Griffiths, a former head teacher and neighbour in Gravesend, was a long-standing

member who helped VLV regularly in a variety of practical ways, including the preparation and posting of the quarterly mail-out. Doris died suddenly just before Christmas. We shall miss her very much. Our thoughts are with her two daughters.

Philip Whitehead MEP, was a long-standing supporter of VLV who participated in several of VLV's international conferences. Philip kept us in touch with European affairs and in a Christmas card just before his death, expressed concern about some aspects of the proposed revisions to the current European Directive on Trans-frontier Television. We offer our deepest sympathy to his widow and family.

## Advertisements

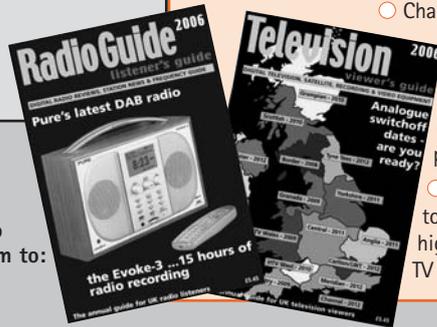
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### The Radio Listener's Guide 2006

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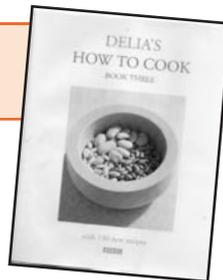
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- Equipment advice covering TV sets, VCRs, DVD players and recorders, Sky and Freeview.
- Freeview set-top box guide.
- Channel lists for Sky and Freeview.
- Advice covering aerial installation, connecting equipment and avoiding picture problems.
- News about analogue to digital switchover, high-definition TV and TV over broadband.

## Winter Competition

You could win a copy of 'Delia's How to Cook - Book Three' by answering the question below.

**Question:** Which football team is Delia Smith closely associated with?

Replies on a postcard to: Delia Competition, VLV, 101 King's Drive, Gravesend, DA12 5BQ. Or by email to: [info@vlv.org.uk](mailto:info@vlv.org.uk) by 1st March 2006. The Editor's Decision is final.



### AUTUMN COMPETITION - The Janus Aspect by John Tusa

Two winners: Shelagh Norton, Thetford, Norfolk and Richard Francis, Penarth, Wales

### 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.

Single member: £14.50  
Two at same address: £22.50  
Overseas: £21.50

## Diary Dates

### Tuesday 31 January

An evening with P D James  
The British Academy, Carlton House Terrace, London SW1  
6.30pm - 8.30pm

### Tuesday 14 February

VLV Visit to ITV Studios, Newcastle  
12.30pm - 2.30pm

### Thursday 23 February

VLV Conference In association with Napier University & The Royal Society of Arts Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh  
2.30pm - 7.45pm

### Early March (date tbc)

Visit to ITV News Studios, Southampton  
12.45pm

### Thursday 16 March

VLV Conference In association with Cardiff School of Journalism, Media & Cultural Studies, University of Wales, Cardiff  
10.30am - 4.30pm

### Tuesday 21 March

VLV Evening Seminar with James Purnell MP, Minister for the Creative Industries & Tourism House of Commons, London SW1  
6.30pm - 8pm

### Thursday 23 March

VLV Evening Seminar with Sir Christopher Bland, Chair BT One Whitehall Place, London SW1  
6.30pm - 8.00pm

### Sunday 26 March

Concert by BBC Elstree Concert Band In aid of The Vol Trust, BBC Maida Vale Studios, London W9  
4.30pm - 6pm

### Tuesday 28 March

An Evening with John Simpson One Whitehall Place, London SW1  
6.30pm - 8.30pm

### Thursday 6 April

Visit to BBC Radio Leicester  
2pm

### Wednesday 26 April

VLV Spring Conference The Royal Society, London SW1  
10.30am - 5.00pm

### Wednesday 26 April

Presentation of VLV's Awards for Excellence In Broadcasting The Royal Society, London SW1  
1.45pm - 2.30pm

### Thursday, 11 May

An Evening with Joan Bakewell One Whitehall Place, London SW1  
6.30pm - 8.30pm

### Wednesday, 24 May

VLV Evening Seminar with Mark Thompson, BBC Director General Venue tbc 6.30pm - 8.00pm



### NEW SUBSCRIPTION / DONATION / CHANGE OF ADDRESS\*

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