



Voice of the Listener & Viewer

Working for Quality and Diversity in Broadcasting

Summer 2010

Bulletin Issue 101

Broadcasting Futures: Challenges and Opportunities

Saturday, 16 October, 3pm - The Showroom, Sheffield

In the present economic and political climate, the public service broadcasters (BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Five) face serious challenges. As part of Sheffield's Literary Festival, *Off the Shelf*, Rachel Cooke, feature writer for the *Observer* and TV critic for the *New Statesman*, and broadcaster Paul Allen, former presenter of

Radio 4's *Kaleidoscope*, will consider the contribution that the PSBs, the BBC in particular, make to democracy and the cultural life of our nation. VLV President, Jocelyn Hay, will chair.



Rachel Cooke,

Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt

Tuesday, 26 October, 6 - 8pm

VLV Westminster Seminar, House of Commons, London SW1

Jeremy Hunt, the new Culture Secretary, will speak to VLV members and guests at a VLV Westminster Evening Seminar in the House of Commons, on Tuesday, 26 October.

Children at the Heart of the BBC's Mission

Joe Godwin, Director of BBC Children's in conversation with Professor Jeanette Steemers

Monday, 1 November, 6 - 8pm - London SW1

The crisis in British children's television has brought a disastrous decline in UK produced programmes. The BBC continues to serve British children with its CBeebies and CBBC Channels competing against American owned rivals like Nickelodeon and Disney. But is it doing enough?

Find out how the BBC sees its child audiences, how it intends to cater for them on traditional and new platforms and which areas need improvement.



Joe Godwin

Broadcasting in Scotland and Wales: the Future

Friday, 5th November 1 - 6pm

Netherbow Theatre, Edinburgh in association with Edinburgh Napier and Stirling Universities

VLV's annual Scottish conference will examine broadcasting issues in the two devolved Nations. The key questions for the conference include: how should Scottish and Welsh broadcasting develop in the light of policy and public debates of recent years? What impact will the public spending cuts have on Welsh and Scottish broadcasting? What are the implications for viewers and listeners?

Channel 4 Chair to speak at VLV Autumn Conference

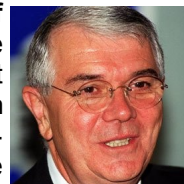
Wednesday, 24 November

10.15am - 3.30pm -

Geological Society, Burlington House, London W1

Lord Burns, the new Chair of Channel 4, will give the keynote morning speech at 11.30am at VLV's 27th Autumn conference in London on 24 November.

In looking to the future, Lord Burns will outline his vision for the Channel as it approaches its third decade, allowing plenty of time for questions.



Lord Burns

Patrick Barwise, London Business School will give the opening speech at 10.30am on Confusions and Delusions about Non-linear TV and why it Matters.

Professor Barwise will explain that if policy makers are confused or deluded about the take-up of these services they risk making bad decisions with important long term consequences.











Paddy Barwise

Jon Snow, Channel 4 News will present the prizes to the winners of **VLV's 2010 Student Essay Competition** at 1.45pm.

4pm VLV Ltd AGM

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Voice of the Listener & Viewer

Working for Quality and Diversity in British Broadcasting

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The Voice of the Listener Trust

(registered, charity 296207)
which supports some of VLV's educational work.

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VLV Office:

PO Box 401, Gravesend DA12 9FY

Tel: 01474 358711 / 01474 358716

Fax: 01474 325400

e-mail: info@vlv.org.uk

Office Hours: 9.30-5pm Monday-Thursday

Linda Forbes: Conference & Events Secretary.

Sue Washbrook: Membership/ Board & Trust Administrator.

Website: www.vlv.org.uk

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

VLV does not handle complaints.

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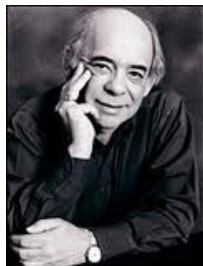
In Memoriam:

Death of VLV Patron

It was with great sadness that we heard of the death in July of Sir Charles Mackerras, the distinguished Australian conductor. Sir Charles was a strong supporter of the BBC and the role it plays in British cultural life, especially through its patronage of live music and the Proms where he had been due to conduct two concerts this season. He first became involved with VLV when he spoke at a VLV summer conference in 2004 on the future for music and the arts. Soon after he graciously agreed to become a Patron of VLV and he remained a strong and generous supporter. Our sympathy goes to Lady Mackerras and their daughter.



Sir Charles Mackerras



Alan Plater

It is also with great regret that we learned of the death of the playwright, Alan Plater. In a long and distinguished career, he brought pleasure to millions of viewers through drama ranging from 'Z Cars' to the more recent 'Last of the Blonde Bombshells' which starred Judi Dench. Outside television he wrote extensively for the theatre. An active champion of young writers and the Writers' Guild, he first spoke at a VLV seminar on the future of radio and television drama in the 90's. He became a VLV member soon after. We send our condolences to his family.

Loss of VLV members

This year has brought the sad loss of several long-standing VLV members, some of whom were active in attending VLV events, some who quietly gave their support from home. All were much-valued and will be remembered with affection and gratitude.

Miss A Coles joined VLV in 1992 and never attended a major VLV event. She only managed to get to one visit near her home in Taunton but she was a staunch supporter whose generous legacy to the Voice of The Listener Trust has enabled the Trust to increase a grant to VLV to improve its investment in new technology and its website.

Another member who provided uplifting regular encouragement and support to me, but always wished to remain anonymous, left a bequest which enabled the Trust to make a useful increase in the size of its grant for the new technology.

Three members who will be remembered and very much missed for their active participation in VLV events were Janine Thomason, Margaret Fenton and Richard Moss.

Janine Thomason first had dealings with VLV when she was our liaison person in BBC Corporate Affairs during the 90's, involving VLV in drafting the BBC's first promises of performance. Janine was always helpful and courageous during a long illness, typically turning her professional interest into practical support by becoming a member on her retirement.

Margaret Fenton, who worked for the BBC World Service and was a frequent participant at VLV London events, also joined on retirement. The last occasion at which we enjoyed her company was in 2008 at VLV's splendid 25th anniversary party in the Lord Speaker's apartment at the House of Lords.

Richard Moss and his wife Celia, who lived in Cambridge, were early and staunch VLV members. Richard was one of the founders of the Cambridge Group Polynous which met at his old college, Trinity, where he twice invited me to speak. Richard was a keen radio listener, most recently concerned about poor coverage of digital radio on the East coast.

May I also record my gratitude and that of the Trustees and the Board to the many other members who have generously responded to our appeals by sending donations at this critical time. Many wished to remain anonymous but not only have the costs of moving the VLV office been covered and plans for IT upgrades put into action, but now we have money earmarked for badly needed new computers for Linda and Sue, a high quality digital camera, a modern MP3 recorder, new membership leaflet and a stronger Fighting Fund with which to campaign on your behalf. Please continue to give if you possibly can or could you consider leaving a legacy? Whatever its size we would be grateful and what better way to ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy the best of British broadcasting, the most powerful influence on British democracy and culture.

Jocelyn Hay

‘Reshaping today’s BBC for tomorrow’ by the Chairman of the BBC Trust

The Chairman of the BBC Trust, Sir Michel Lyons, gave the audience at a VLV seminar on 30 June an exclusive preview of many of the elements in the response of the BBC Trust to the BBC Executive’s proposed future strategy. It was, he said “an important moment in the life of the BBC”. Chaired by Patrick Barwise, Emeritus Professor of Management and Marketing at the London Business School, Sir Michael gave a wide-ranging speech in which he outlined what the BBC Trust will be asking the BBC Executive to do and which specific areas have to be addressed. He set them in the context of the continuing review of BBC Strategy that was the subject of a public consultation by the Trust during the spring. Three core areas were addressed.



Patrick Barwise and Sir Michael Lyons

The Transition to Digital

The BBC is in a period of transition from analogue to digital.

In 2012 the switchover of television to digital will be complete. That will “be the trigger for the BBC to re-examine its portfolio of television channels”. Another trigger will be the point at which on-demand viewing reaches 50% of total viewing when it may be necessary to look again at the emphasis given to scheduled programming.

Sir Michael was more cautious about progress on digital radio. Take up is much slower than in TV; there are reception problems and concerns about the most appropriate platform. Progress would be slow until there is greater certainty in these areas. “Digital radio is not a problem the BBC can solve on its own” he said.

Boundaries

Here Sir Michael trod a precarious tightrope. While he agreed that there must be choice and quality to ensure a diverse media, he said the BBC must both serve particular audience groups and ensure it reaches the overwhelming majority of the population. When money is tight, however, he said “the BBC must concentrate its resources on what it does best: commissioning and producing high quality content that goes to the very heart of its public service mission. The BBC needs to get better at making its portfolio of individual services distinct from one another, rather than trying to make each service appeal to the broadest possible audiences”. He supported Director General Mark Thompson’s view “that in the longer term the only way to put quality first is likely to be doing fewer things better”.

Sir Michael’s conclusion on this core area was that “tighter boundaries around the BBC will help the rest of the industry.... a good thing in itself, as well as producing potential benefits for licence fee payers.... High quality distinctive content is itself a boundary the BBC must work within”.

Behaviour

The final core concern was the behaviour of the BBC. “What the public and the wider industry have been telling us is that their concerns are not so much about the size of the BBC or about specific services but about the way the BBC behaves”. He outlined the following initiatives.

1. An undertaking “not [to] seek to maximise the BBC’s take from the licence fee. We will seek only what is necessary for the BBC to fulfil its public purposes as set out in the Charter”.
2. A further scrutiny of budgets with a report to the Trustees after the summer break “so that we can assure ourselves that we are doing everything possible to remove slack in the organisation”.
3. The agreed cuts of 3% year on year in budgets are to continue until 2013 a £1.9 billion saving in total.
4. The National Audit Office will be asked to conduct further work on the overall efficiency of the whole BBC. There was an undertaking that this will not inadvertently lead to inappropriate involvement in the BBC by either Parliament or Government.
5. The BBC Executive will be asked to publish details of all senior managers’ pay.
6. The Executive will be asked to publish presenters’ and other top talent pay in bands, including the details of the number of people in each band.
7. The Executive will be asked to accelerate the 25% cut in senior management pay within 18 months and not 3 years. In addition, the members of the Executive Board have agreed to be paid for 11 months rather than 12 in each of the next two years.

On 5 July the Trust published its full interim response to the Executive’s proposals. It included a reprieve for Radio 6 music, an agreement to close the Asian Radio Network and major cuts in the BBC’s online activities. A copy of the final BBC Strategy Review Report can be found on the BBC website at www.bbc.co.uk/bbctrust.

Comment - the Whirlwinds of Change

Jeremy Hunt, the Culture Secretary, has been swift in proposing changes to his brief, starting at the DCMS itself where, one newspaper reports staff will be cut by 50%. One of his earliest moves was to cut Arts funding, advising arts organisations to follow the example of the USA and seek private philanthropists to make up the loss. His advice to the BBC has been just as blunt while the Chair of the BBC Trust, Sir Michael Lyons, has set stringent new targets for payments to on-screen talent and for senior staff salaries and pensions.

We agree that those both on and behind BBC programmes must share the pain being felt by everyone else, especially those senior executives and performers whose rewards have escalated in recent years. Ministers must remember, however, that despite shortcomings, the BBC remains one of Britain's most respected institutions. The World Service, which many other countries would give anything to equal in influence, is funded by the Foreign Office but greatly enriched by being part of the larger Corporation. Projecting British culture, language and industry to the world it earns many times the cost of its keep whilst acting as a beacon of truth and accurate reporting.

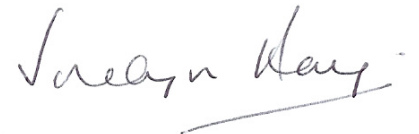
At home, the BBC is Britain's largest patron of the arts, providing employment for many thousands of people far beyond its own payroll supporting a thriving arts culture which helps sustain the tourist industry. It may be illogical for the BBC to have assumed the role of arts funder but who else could now pick up that tab? Certainly not the BBC's competitors. The BBC is also the leader in one of our most successful export industries. British tv programmes and formats are in demand all over the world, most originating from the BBC, followed by ITV and Channel 4. The music industry also depends on the BBC, especially Radios One and Three, for the thousands of hours of live and new music that BBC Radio commissions and broadcasts every year, from Glastonbury to the Proms.

The mechanism of a universal licence fee spreads the load so that it does not place an intolerable burden on anyone's shoulders but enables the BBC to deliver the fruits of its patronage, free at the point of use, to every viewer and listener. Funding via the licence fee also ensures that the BBC is publicly accountable and cannot favour any particular group. Demands by some commercial broadcasters to lift the requirement for all broadcasters to provide impartial reporting of political and industrial affairs would overthrow this tradition which has served our democracy for nearly 80 years. Calls for it to be abandoned now are part of a campaign by the BBC's competitors to reduce the Corporation to the status of Public Broadcasting in the USA, valued by a small minority, but overlooked by the rest.

Twenty-five years ago, the then Mrs Thatcher set up the Peacock Inquiry to find an alternative to the licence fee but Peacock found it was no less important to maintaining the quality of ITV, Channel 4 because it freed the BBC from the need to compete for advertising against the terrestrial broadcasters. The reasons are just as valid today as the effects of last year's recession in advertising showed.

The BBC is at the heart of so many strands of British life that everyone who cares about the quality of British culture and democracy should join in public debate about its future. It's far too important to be left to the politicians, the broadcasters themselves or commercial rivals. VLV is therefore setting up a range of events to provide opportunities for you to join the debate and work with us to ensure the BBC and its fellow public service broadcasters continue to maintain the quality and diversity of British broadcasting.

Please let us have your views



Visit to Channel 4 News

VLV VISITS - SUMMER 2010

Our visits this summer have covered a wide range both geographically and in content, starting with a session at the Advertising Standards Authority, which since 2004 has been responsible for the regulation of broadcast as well as other forms of advertising. A well illustrated presentation by Policy Manager Lynsay Taffe was followed by a lively discussion. A contrasting visit was to *Waybuloo*, an independently produced programme for the BBC's pre-school channel, CBeebies, at a huge purpose-designed studio near Glasgow, combining digital production techniques, a large volume, and the problems of

working with very young child participants. The other production we visited was *Channel 4 News*, at the London base of ITN, which is also the headquarters of ITV. Our visit was conducted by the Deputy Editor, Martin Fewell, and included being in the studio for the live lunchtime bulletin, seeing the editing and graphics suites, and a discussion with Martin and Krishnan Guru-Murthy on the issues of combining objectivity with attitude in a news service. Our final visit was of a more technical nature, to Arqiva, the successor organisation to what was originally the old Independent Broadcasting Authority's technical division. Today Arqiva, an independent commercial company, provides much of the infrastructure behind TV, radio and mobile communications. The site includes control rooms through which the BBC, ITV and other commercial broadcasters are served, a vast number of huge satellite dishes, and we were also given a demonstration of 3D television.



Visit to Arqiva

Lewis Rudd

Changes in Government and at Department for Culture, Olympics, Media & Sport

The new Secretary of State for Culture, Media, the Olympics and Sport is Jeremy Hunt MP.



Jeremy Hunt MP

Mr Hunt, who addressed VLV's autumn conference in 2009, has accepted an invitation to speak to VLV members on Tuesday, 26 October, House of Commons, London.

The new Minister for Culture with responsibility for broadcasting, including media, telecoms, broadband and digital switch-over is Ed Vaizey MP. He is a joint Minister with the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills.



Ed Vaizey MP

The new Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media, the Olympics and Sport is The Rt Hon Ben Bradshaw MP.

DCMS Structural Reform Plan

The **Culture Secretary**, has said that after the autumn Spending Review he will 'set out his broader ambitions for the DCMS'. Before then he wants to know what you think about the programme he's proposing – it can be seen on the DCMS website www.culture.gsi.gov.uk or requested through the DCMS Press Office 020 7211 3000.

Please send your comments to:
structural.reform@culture.gsi.gov.uk

Three areas are of particular interest to VLV:

Removing rules on cross-media ownership to encourage the growth of local television stations, consultation paper to be published January 2011;

Reform of media regulatory regime by identifying areas for scaling back Ofcom: June – September 2010, leading to scoping exercise for new Communications Bill and publish proposals November 2010 - December 2011;

BBC and new licence fee settlement: Give National Audit Office full access to the BBC's accounts June 2010 and agree a new licence fee settlement by April 2012.

New House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee:

Chair: John Whittingdale (Cons). Louise Bagshawe (Cons); David Cairns (Lab); Dr Therese Coffee (Cons); Damian Collins (Con); Philip Davies (Cons); Paul Farrelly (Lab); Alan Keen (Lab Co-operative); Adrian Sanders (Lib Dem); Jim Sheridan (Lab); Tom Watson (Lab).

The Committee will hold public evidence sessions at 10.30 on 8 September on the BBC Annual Report and Accounts 2009-2010, and on 14 September on the DCMS accounts 2009-2010 and the responsibilities of the Secretary of State.

The Committee is to hold an Inquiry into Arts and Heritage funding. Responses should be sent by 2 September, preferably by email to cmsev@parliament.uk. Or by post to CMS Committee Assistant, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London SW1P 3JA.

The House of Lords Government spokesman on communications is Lord Shutt of Greetland (Lib Dem). **The Opposition spokesman** is Lord Evans of Temple Guiting (Lab).

New House of Lords Communications Committee

Chair: The Earl of Onslow (Cons). Lord Clement-Jones (Lib Dem), Baroness Deech (C/B), Lord Dixon-Smith (Con), Baroness Fookes (Con), Lord Gordon of Strathblane (Lab), Lord MacDonald of Tradeston (Lab), Lord Razzall (Cons), Lord St John of Bletso (C/B), Lord Skelmersdale (Con).

Public Consultations and Responses:

VLV Responses to Consultations

VLV has responded to the following consultations:

The **BBC Trust Strategy Review** and the **BBC Syndication of On-Demand Content**. Copies may be obtained from the VLV website or from our office by email to Linda.Forbes@vlv.org.uk or by post enclosing a large SAE.

Free to Air Listed Events Review Consultation

Following the consultation on Listed Events launched by the previous Government at the end of 2009, to which VLV responded, the DCMS has announced it will defer any decisions regarding the future of the List until after digital switchover has been completed in 2012. Meantime the current list remains in force.

Public Consultation on BBC Radios 3, 4 and 7

On 3 June the BBC Trust announced a review of BBC Radios 3, 4 and 7. Every five years the BBC Trust carries out a review of each of the BBC's services. This summer it is the turn of these three radio stations. The timing could be crucial, for it overlaps the BBC Strategy Review.

There is a questionnaire on the BBC Trust's website: www.bbc.co.uk/trust which you can print off and post back or respond to online. Or you can request a copy be posted to you by calling: 0800 0680 116.

If you are a radio listener, it is most important you respond to this consultation and take this opportunity to influence the future of these services. They are unique and play a vital role not only in British culture and democracy but in acting as beacons of excellence to the rest of the world.

The deadline for responses is 25 August. Make sure you don't miss it.

Strictly Public Service Broadcasting - Creative Freedom and Ambition

VLV's Spring Conference in London on **Wednesday, 28th April**

The BBC's Strategy Review dominated the morning sessions with **William Gresswell, Controller of Strategy BBC Vision** and **Alan Yentob, Creative Director across all BBC platforms** as the speakers. **John Lloyd, Contributing Editor, the Financial Times**, and Director of Journalism at the Reuters Foundation for the Study of Journalism at Oxford University was in the chair.

Mr Gresswell outlined the Strategy Review in a detailed presentation and then took a range of questions.*

Mr Yentob began and ended his address* by emphasizing the need for viewers and listeners to speak up strongly in support of public service broadcasting 'in order to counter the increasing stridency of those voices lined up against the BBC'.



William Gresswell, Alan Yentob
and John Lloyd



Mark Lawson and Melvyn Bragg

*Both speeches can be seen on the VLV website.

Melvyn Bragg, presenter of ITV's *The South Bank Show* and Radio 4's *In Our Time*, was interviewed after lunch by **Mark Lawson, presenter of Radio 4's *Front Row***. Asked to define public service broadcasting, Lord Bragg said the definition had not changed, but 'certain words fell out of significance'. The BBC was 'the bedrock of public service broadcasting', he said, drawing a distinction between programmes which are 'not cost, but culturally effective'. Replying to a question about the demise of *The South Bank Show* he said ITV had offered him an unacceptable budget.

The final session took the form of a VLV Members' Forum in which a range of topical issues were discussed.

VLV Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting

VLV's spring conference was the occasion for the presentation of the VLV 2009 Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting. They were presented by Richard Lindley, veteran News and Current Affairs Broadcaster. The Awards were supported by The Voice of the Listener Trust, kindly organised by VLV board member Carol Cattley. We were delighted that the Roberts Radio Special Award was presented by Roberts' Managing Director, Leslie Burrage.

The winners were: Best Television Programme - ***The Choir, BBC2***; Best New Television Programme - ***The making of modern Britain, BBC2***; Best Individual Contribution to Television - ***Ian Hislop***; Best Children's Television Programme - ***Dr Who, BBC1***; Best Radio Programme - ***The Food Programme, BBC Radio 4***; Best New Radio Programme - ***1989 Day by Day, BBC Radio 4***; Best Individual Contribution to Radio - ***Sandi Toksvig***; Naomi Sargent Educational Award - ***Bettany Hughes, Channel 4***; Special Children's Television Award - ***Horrible Histories, CBBC***. Roberts Radio Special Award - ***Charlotte Green, BBC Radio 4***.



Back Row left to right: Robert Abel, Anne Gilchrist, Joe Godwin, Barney Rowntree

Middle Row left to right: Carol Cattley, Caroline Norris, Leslie Burrage, Russell Finch, Joby Waldman, Chris Grunland, Dollan Cannell, Robin Dashwood, Richard Guard, Margaret Collins, Richard Lindley

Front Row left to right: Sharon Banoff, Ian Hislop, Sheila Dillon, Sandi Toksvig, Bettany Hughes, Vicky Mitchell, Charlotte Green, Louise Page, Tracie Simpson, Rebecca Moore, Dan Saladino

New Controller of BBC Radio 4 and BBC Radio 7 - Gwyneth Williams

Gwyneth Williams, currently Head of English Language Services at the BBC World Service has been appointed new Controller of Radio 4. She takes up her appointment in September.



Gwyneth Williams

Mark Damazer, who has been one of the most successful Controllers of Radio 4 in recent years is leaving the BBC to become Master of St. Peter's College, Oxford.

Digital Radio

The DCMS is continuing with proposals to switch to the digital transmission of Radio and published an Action Plan on 8 July. In announcing the plan, the Minister, Ed Vaizey, stated "I would like to make it clear today that the needs and concerns of radio listeners will be absolutely central to our approach to Digital Radio Switchover. We will not switchover until the vast majority of listeners have voluntarily adopted digital radio over analogue."

VLV welcomes this change of policy, especially as in his speech the Minister showed he is aware of the complexity of this potential change. However, VLV is concerned that the policy still appears to be inconsistent as he concluded by saying "We will only consider implementing a Digital Radio Switchover once a majority of listening is already on digital". VLV does not consider 51% represents 'the vast majority'.



Significantly, the DCMS website has this comment "The plan outlines how we will decide whether to proceed with a digital radio switch-over."

The Consumer and Digital Radio – the Consumer Expert Group

VLV has been a member of The Ministerial Consumer Expert Group since its establishment in 2003. The Group was appointed by the Broadcasting Minister to advise Government on consumer issues relating to Digital Television Switchover. In early 2010 the remit was extended to digital radio and its remit has been confirmed by the new Minister. Robert Clark is VLV's current representative.

The Group decided its first task in relation to radio was to provide the Minister with a report on the impact on consumers of a switch to digital. VLV has been active in preparing the report which involved taking evidence from a range of experts and members of the radio industry. We hope it will ensure that consumer issues are considered and reflected during the early stages of the evolution of the policy.

The report will consider the costs for consumers; the criteria that might lead to a switch; the coverage of digital radio transmissions; the problems of reception; the low take up of radio in comparison to television; the very few digital receivers in vehicles; the functionality of sets; the needs of the elderly and disabled. We hope the report will be in the public domain by early autumn.



Book Review –
'In our Time' edited by Melvyn Bragg
In Our Time is a radio programme popular with VLV members. Each week Melvyn Bragg and three academics take us on an amazing tour through the history of ideas, from philosophy, science and history to politics, literature and art. Now the scripts of 26 programmes have been assembled into a book so we can revisit discussions on Alchemy, Shakespeare's Language, Socrates, Tea and more. If you enjoy the exchange of ideas do make room for this book in your library. Published by Hodder and Stoughton Hardback: £20.00; 608 pages; ISBN No 9780340977507

Letters to the Editor

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

Deadline for next issue:
15 September 2010

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

I must protest about the curse of background 'music' and sound effects on TV and radio. I enclose a letter I've received from BBC Audience Services in response to my complaint which says they appreciate my irritation but find it difficult to strike a balance between those who like it and those who don't. They do, however, say that all complaints are logged and 'can help to shape decisions about future programming and content' so I suggest other members follow suit.

Pat Shea, St Albans, Herts

Editor's note: This is the most frequent complaint that VLV receives and one on which we have been working for some time. We hope to report good news in the autumn.

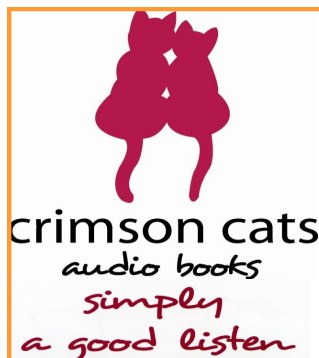
I am totally against digital radio switch-over and don't know why it should take place at all. 2015 is certainly much too early. Like many others, I have several radios – in the kitchen, bedroom, lounge and bathroom. How much will it cost me to replace them? Also I understand I won't be able to play any of my cassettes (on the new radios), which will be a great loss to me. How can one Government department deplore our contributions to landfill while another orders us to discard thousands of (usable) radios and TVs?

J. S. Salmon, South Croydon

Editor's note: We have had similar comments from many members, including Jeremy Mitchell in Edinburgh and others in Wales. VLV is pressing the consumer case - see reports on this page.

Advertisements

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



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Give a 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.

Fill out the subscription form below and state which publication and card type you would prefer.

THE RADIO LISTENER'S GUIDE 2010 & THE TELEVISION VIEWER'S GUIDE 2010



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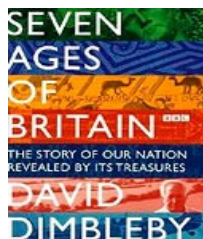
The guides cost £5.95 each (inc. p&p).
Please make your cheque payable to
Radio Listener's Guide and send it to
Radio Listener's Guide. PO Box 888,
Plymouth, PL8 1YJ

Summer Competition

David Dimbleby's *History of Britain* was one of the BBC's most popular recent documentary series in which he travelled the length of the land to highlight outstanding treasures. You could win a copy by answering the following question:

"What was the Cathedral in which Thomas Becket was murdered in 1170AD".

Replies on a postcard to: Summer Competition, VLV, PO Box 401, Gravesend, Kent DA12 9FY. Or by email to: info@vlv.org.uk by 14 September 2010. Editor's decision is final.



Seven Ages of Britain by
David Dimbleby, published
by Hodder & Stourton.
H/b: £25.00
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Diary Dates

Wednesday, 6 October 1-2pm
Visit to **ITV News Studio**, Birmingham

Saturday, 16 October 3pm
**'Broadcasting Futures:
Challenges and Opportunities'**
The Showroom, Sheffield

Tuesday, 26 October 6-8pm
**Westminster Evening Seminar with
The Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP**
Palace of Westminster, London SW1

Monday, 1 November 6pm-8.30pm
**'Children at the Heart of the BBC's
Mission'**
One Whitehall Place, London SW1

Friday, 5 November 1pm - 6pm
VLV's 18th annual Scottish conference
**'Broadcasting in Scotland and
Wales: The Future'**
Netherbow Theatre, Edinburgh

Thursday, 11 November 11.30am
Visit to **BBC Training Academy**,
London W12

Wednesday, 24 November
10.15am-3.30pm
**VLV's 27th annual Autumn
Conference**
The Geological Society, Piccadilly,
London W1

Wednesday, 24 November 1.45pm
**Presentation of Prizes for VLV's
2010 Student Essay Competition**
The Geological Society, Piccadilly,
London W1

Wednesday, 24 November 4pm
VLV Ltd's AGM
The Geological Society, Piccadilly,
London W1

**For tickets and enquiries please
contact: Linda Forbes
Tel: 01474 338711
Email: linda.forbes@vlv.org.uk or
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