



# Voice of the Listener & Viewer

**Championing Excellence and Diversity in Broadcasting**

**Autumn 2018**

**Bulletin 124**

## **PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING AT THE CROSSROADS?**

Subscriptions to TV streaming services such as Netflix have overtaken those to traditional pay TV in the UK for the first time. In response Ofcom has said that British TV will have to change the way it operates if it wants to compete with the internet giants.

Lord Hall, Director General of the BBC, recently described this change as the 'Big Shift' in a speech to the RTS Conference. He highlighted two impacts this will have: that content will become less UK specific as global platforms commission programmes and public service broadcasters (PSBs) will be unable to afford drama and other high-cost content as the global giants force up budgets.

All the PSBs are developing their online services to counteract these trends but this feels like a race against time. By the time the PSBs reinvent themselves, will their brands have lost crucial recognition among 18-25 year olds who are now happy to pay for boxsets from streaming platforms?

In his RTS speech the Secretary of State highlighted that for Government the most important aspect of public service provision is to counteract the rise of fake news. The Government is working to tackle the threat of disinformation with its Digital Charter and Internet Safety Strategy White Paper. To address the decline in the reach of the PSBs, it has asked Ofcom to recommend how to maintain PSB prominence. And it is trying to increase production of UK-specific children's content with the pilot Contestable Fund.

Regulation to support public service broadcasting has been in force since 1955 because successive governments have held that broadcasting is beneficial to society. We are now at a crossroads where the future of our broadcasting system is uncertain. PSB will fail in its mission to bring the nation together, inform and entertain us unless drastic steps are taken. The BBC budget needs to be increased, but instead it faces an uncertain future after two successive raids on the Licence Fee; PSB prominence regulation will be increasingly irrelevant as more people use devices where it doesn't apply; and introducing internet regulation to counter disinformation will be a huge policy challenge.

All this makes it clear that the next few years will be busy ones for VLV if we are to ensure the future health of our broadcasting system which is envied by many around the world.

## **VLV's 35<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL AUTUMN CONFERENCE**

**Tuesday 27th November 2018**

### **Future-proofing public service broadcasting**



Tim Davie, Chief Executive Officer of BBC Studios and Director of BBC Global and Dame Carolyn McCall, Chief Executive of ITV, will be the keynote speakers at VLV's Autumn Conference.

Other sessions on the day will include a panel session on who sets the news agenda, chaired by Stewart Purvis, former Editor in Chief and Chief Executive of ITN. To book a ticket complete the enclosed form or go to [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk).

## **JOCELYN HAY LECTURE 2018**

**Tuesday October 23rd 6.00pm**



We are delighted that Professor Mary Beard DBE will deliver the 2018 Jocelyn Hay Lecture this year at the Geological Society in Piccadilly. In her lecture, she will examine what happens to history on television, reflect on different styles of TV history, nationally and internationally, and ask, does the historian have to compromise? Does the TV director? Join us for what promises to be a thought-provoking evening.

Tickets cost £15 and include a glass of wine after the lecture. They can be booked through the VLV website or via the VLV Office.

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### **VLV Office**

The Old Rectory Business Centre  
Springhead Road  
Northfleet  
Kent DA11 8HN

**Tel: 01474 338716**

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

Office Hours: Tuesday & Wednesday  
9.30am - 3.30 pm

Sophie Chalk      Public Affairs Manager  
Sue Washbrook    Administrator  
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Voice of the Listener & Viewer (VLV) represents the citizen and consumer interests in broadcasting and champions excellence and diversity in 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.

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Northfleet,  
Kent DA11 8HN.

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## **FROM THE CHAIRMAN, COLIN BROWNE**



The VLV's core mission is to promote and support the quality of broadcasting in the UK and to hold broadcasters, politicians and regulators to account. Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) is at the heart of this.

Our response to Ofcom's consultation on how to ensure that easy access to these services is not drowned out by the multiplicity of new platforms and channels stresses that PSB is crucial for the health of our democracy. The UK's PSB system is admired around the world. At a time when our world seems to be increasingly characterised by social division and the erosion of democratic systems, disinformation and echo chambers are proliferating and thriving. The UK's PSBs provide a counter balance to these issues. They hold powerful companies and institutions to account and engage citizens in the democratic process.

Those of you who were able to attend our members' session with the then Secretary of State for Digital, Culture Media and Support, Matt Hancock MP, at the House of Commons in June will I think have been impressed by his grasp of these issues. It was perhaps characteristic of the turbulent times in which we live that within a few weeks he had moved on within Government and that we had a new Secretary of State – the third this year. However, as reported elsewhere in this Bulletin, his successor, Jeremy Wright MP, speaking at the Royal Television Society Conference in London, stressed his support for PSB, while setting the broadcasters a number of challenges to demonstrate their continuing relevance to modern audiences. BBC Director General Lord Hall was keen to accept the challenge, while flagging up the difficult financial challenges facing the BBC.

One of these is what to do about free television licences for the over-75s, responsibility for which the Government – outrageously in our view – shifted to the BBC as part of the last licence fee settlement. The BBC has said it is close to publishing its thinking on this issue. While we are sympathetic to the BBC's predicament, this is clearly a complex matter. The BBC has promised a full consultation on the various options and we will be holding them to account on this. In the meantime it would be good have any thoughts members might have.

At the VLV too change is afoot. Our long-standing administrator Sue Washbrook has decided to take a well-earned retirement at the end of the year. We will be extremely sorry to see her go. She has been involved with the VLV since 2000 and I know that, as the primary interface with members, she is well known to many of you. I hope we will have the opportunity to thank her properly at the AGM on 27 November.

Also standing down is our Treasurer Toni Charlton, after completing her two-term stint. She has given us invaluable support over the last six years. At the VLV AGM the board will recommend that Peter Gordon, currently secretary, takes over as Treasurer, and Mary Dixon steps in to become VLV Secretary.

In the meantime, I hope I will see as many of you as possible at the Jocelyn Hay lecture on 23 October and our Autumn Conference on 27 November.

**Colin Browne,  
Chairman of VLV**

## DCMS SELECT COMMITTEE REPORT ON FAKE NEWS



The DCMS Select Committee has warned that we are facing a democratic crisis founded on the manipulation of personal data and targeting pernicious views to users, particularly during elections and referenda. This first report for the Committee's 'fake news' inquiry outlines a series of recommendations to tackle the problem of disinformation. Damian Collins MP (pictured), Chairman of the Committee, said, 'I believe what we have discovered so far is the tip of the iceberg. There needs to be far greater analysis done to expose the way advertising and fake accounts are being used on social media to target people with disinformation during election periods.' The full report is available on the Committee's website.

## PUBLICATION OF BBC PRESENTER SALARIES LEAD TO DEPARTURES?



The BBC has faced what appears to be an exodus of its lead presenters. Eddie Mair has left *PM* to host the LBC drive-time show and Chris Evans is due to leave in December to join Virgin Radio.

Lord Hall said to the DCMS Select Committee that the publication of BBC stars' salaries was a factor in their decisions to leave the BBC.

Zoe Ball has been announced as Evans' replacement on the UK's biggest radio show and Evan Davis will take over the driving seat at *PM*. Evan Davis said, 'Having survived several years of people saying 'you're not as good as Jeremy Paxman', I now look forward to people saying 'you're not as good as Eddie Mair'.

## CHILDREN'S TELEVISION UPDATE

In July Ofcom published an interim report for its Review of Children's Content. The regulator has highlighted there is a lack of original, high-quality TV content specifically made for older children, there is a limited range of content which helps children understand the world around them and that there is a lack of content which reflects children's lives back to them.

Ofcom has written to ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 asking them to develop plans to address their concerns. They expect the commercial PSBs to set out plans on how they will improve their provision for children and will report back on progress in the summer of 2019.

## CABINET RESHUFFLE



In the summer's Cabinet reshuffle former Attorney General, Rt Hon Jeremy Wright MP, was appointed as Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. VLV looks forward to working with Mr Wright on PSB issues. Following our recent successful event with former Secretary of State, Matt Hancock MP, VLV hopes to arrange a meeting for VLV members with Mr Wright at some point in 2019.

## TV STILL THE BEST PLATFORM TO BRING THE NATION TOGETHER



Broadcast TV is still the only mass-market audio visual medium which consistently attracts millions of simultaneous viewers according to Ofcom's Media Nations report which was published in July. Recent examples include 26.5m viewers for the England World cup game against Croatia, 14 million for the *Bake Off* final last year and similar for the May royal wedding.

PSB audience share is holding up – 70% of viewing is to the PSBs and their portfolio channels still. While this appears to be good news for public service broadcasting, the Ofcom research also highlights continuing trends which could undermine the system: younger people are viewing more content on YouTube and Netflix and there has been a significant decline in spending by the BBC and ITV.

## VLV AWARDS 2018 NOMINATIONS

Nomination forms for the 2018 VLV awards, covering programmes across the whole of 2018, are included with this Bulletin. In addition to the usual categories, Arqiva are once again sponsoring the award for Best Sports Programme and the VLV Innovation Award, and IBT are sponsoring the award for International Content. We are grateful to both these organisations for their continued support.

The VLV awards celebrate the contribution made by high-quality public service programmes and presenters. For the television awards in particular we are keen that a wide range of broadcasters should be nominated, and we encourage members, perhaps also consulting family and friends, to nominate programmes from at least three broadcasters where possible. The awards are unique in giving a voice to our membership, something greatly valued by those who win them.

### VLV AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN BROADCASTING 2018

Nomination papers should be returned to the VLV office by email or post by January 11th 2019



## REFLECTIONS ON EUROPEAN PSB

By Dr Maria Michalis

There have been interesting developments regarding public service broadcasting in Europe. The first two concern funding and the last two concern the future of the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) platform.

Starting with Switzerland, a referendum took place in March 2018 to decide whether the licence fee should be abolished. The Swiss voted overwhelmingly (about 72% of votes) to keep the licence fee, rejecting the idea of a commercially funded PSB. The threat to the viability of the PSB, the wish to support a strong PSB, and overall satisfaction with PSB services were the main reasons behind the result. What is worrying, however, is that 80% of the youngest (18-29 year olds) voted in favour of the abolition of the fee. This shows the continuing need for all public service broadcasters to better connect with younger audiences.

In 2013, Finland, a country with a long and strong history of PSB, adopted a new funding model for the national public service broadcaster, YLE. It replaced the licence fee with an innovative tax model whilst continuing to support YLE's independent and sustainable development in the new media environment. It is a tax outside the state budget, designed to safeguard PSB independence, with the level of funding guaranteed by law, including the possibility of annual increases in line with inflation. Increases, however, have been rejected by Parliament in the face of the broader economic downturn. Still, what is noteworthy is the willingness to try to keep as many of the benefits of the licence fee funding mechanism as possible in the new tax-funded model.

Turning to developments in the DTT platform, in September 2018, the Swiss PSB announced that it would terminate digital terrestrial transmission in 2019. This is part of broader cost-saving efforts, but can also be interpreted as a move to release favourable frequencies for other, notably mobile broadband, uses. Unlike Britain, the Swiss DTT platform is not significant with only around 2% of households using it for their second or third television sets. The PSB recommends that the affected households move to the free at the point of reception digital satellite platform.

In a similar move, the Belgian PSB in the Flanders region announced the end of free-to-air DTT transmissions. About 45,000 households will be affected and the PSB plans to invest the resulting savings of EUR1 million in its free-to-use online platform. The PSB channels will now be distributed on the country's pay-TV DTT platform, thereby altering the terms of access to these channels on DTT (from free at the point of use to pay).

These developments might add pressure to other countries in Europe to close down their DTT platforms and will influence future World Radio Communication (WRC) negotiations about the future of the sub-700 MHz UHF band, even though its use for DTT has been secured till 2030.

*Dr Maria Michalis is a VLV Trustee and Reader in Communication Policy, University of Westminster*

## THE VLV 2017 AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE

The VLV Awards for Excellence were presented by broadcaster Jon Snow at the VLV Spring Conference on April 19th. The ceremony was as popular as ever, attended by a host of television and radio household names.



The nominations for the awards demonstrated the number and range of high quality programmes broadcast during 2017 which delighted, informed and entertained VLV members.

TV winners included *Line of Duty*, *Blue Planet II*, *Unreported World* and *W1A*. Laura Kuenssberg won the TV individual contributor award. *Where in the World?* broadcast by CBeebies won the Children's Award.

Radio winners featured *Dead Ringers*, *More or Less* and *Private Passions*. Mishal Husain was voted best individual contributor to radio.



The coveted Naomi Sargent Award went to Professor Mary Beard OBE.

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## EVENT WITH SECRETARY OF STATE



In June Matt Hancock MP, former Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, met VLV members in Parliament for a discussion on the future of broadcasting in the UK.

Mr Hancock made it clear he fully supported the public service broadcasting system and acknowledged the contribution it makes to British society. The debate was wide ranging, covering BBC regulation, prominence for public service content, government proposals to address childhood obesity by new regulation on adverts, broadcasting regulation after Brexit, the regulation of news and whether listed sporting events might include cricket in future.

Damian Collins MP, Chairman of the DCMS Select Committee spoke after the Secretary of State and said, 'This just goes to show that the VLV is once again fulfilling its function of holding ministers and people in parliament who take an interest in these matters to account.'

# THE BBC: A MATTER OF DISTINCTION

By Professor Bob Usherwood

At the time of the BBC Charter Renewal there was emphasis on the need for the BBC to be distinctive. In its White Paper the Government said that, "Ensuring the BBC is sufficiently distinctive – discernibly different in approach, quality and content to commercial providers – is a central objective of this Charter Review." Despite opposition, the idea became and remains a major topic of discussion. However, then as now, most people ignored what Basil Fawlty would have described as "the bleeding obvious" distinctive feature of BBC content. That is the absence of commercial advertisements.

A recent visit to the United States, where adverts interrupt programmes to such an extent that some are unintelligible, reminded me what a blessing this is. They spoil the continuity or mood of a serious drama or documentary. Less obviously, they can have a destructive impact on creative content. In *The Radio Times*, Alison Steadman reported that when writing for commercial broadcasters, dramatists are "obliged to write up to the commercial break and give [the viewer] a little grab, a little hook so that they will come back." Similarly, Anthony Horowitz told the Hay Book Festival in 2014 that it "is absolutely terrible the way television is chopped into so many little bits...Your story is cut down into little wedges, so you have to be sure that each wedge, each section, satisfies the audience and they keep coming back from the commercial break."

There is a long history of commercial interests interfering with media content. The American TV series *Playhouse 90* had difficulty with a number of productions. The most notorious example was *Judgment at Nuremberg*, a 1969 drama based on the trial of Nazi leaders for war crimes. Amazingly, viewers heard no references to gas chambers because one of the sponsors, The American Gas Association, insisted on cutting the words "gas chamber" from the show because it feared it would create a negative image of its product.

This act of censorship was "swiftly cited in the press and by industry professionals as an example of the ways overwhelming commercial concerns could stifle quality television", but it was far from the only one. Recently I heard a lecturer describe how the *Nat King Cole TV Show* suffered from a lack of advertisers. Davidson writes: "Cole and NBC just couldn't dispel the notion among big advertisers that viewers would object to seeing blacks and whites on an equal footing and that it would hurt the companies' sales."

That kind of commercial interference is unlikely to happen today but medical research, social change and technological developments raise important ethical and social questions. In addition companies have become much more sophisticated in their approach. The website of Thinkbox, the UK marketing body for commercial

TV, says, "there are more ways than ever before for brands to get closer to TV content and its devoted viewers".

In 1965 evidence from the medical profession led to the end of cigarette advertising on British TV. Today few would argue for its return. However, the call by Cancer Research and others for a pre-9pm ban on HFSS advertising, following research linking junk food to obesity and cancer, has been criticised by commercial broadcasters. They argue that this will cost them millions and that advertisers will only move to other platforms to "hyper-target" children. There is also concern about gambling adverts during sports events. To quote an editorial in *The Guardian*, "sports gambling is a massive business, [which] seems to be turning into a public health problem". Many would argue such ads prey on the weak and should be regulated.

Interestingly, the hyper-targeting of audiences is predicted to be the latest thing for commercial radio. A recent piece in *Radio Times* noted, "commercial radio...has traditionally sliced up its audience along age and gender because that's what advertisers wanted. But as more radio goes online and listeners pull content to their devices according to their tastes we can expect ads to become spookily precise". Apart from the creepy possibility of listeners being hyper-targeted by advertisers, this slicing up of audiences takes away one of the joys of public service radio. That is the ability of a station like Radio Four to interest you in something that you did not know you were interested in. There are also the very real dangers of the echo chamber effect but these must be left for another time.

It would be interesting to hear VLV members' views on these issues. For example, how should requests to restrict adverts to protect the health of children and vulnerable adults be balanced with the concerns of TV executives fearing financial loss? Are you worried that organisations are finding it easier "to get closer to TV content and its devoted viewers"? Do you fear for democracy as technology and commerce combine to segregate citizens by age, gender, politics, and taste to target commercial and political messages more effectively? Such matters raise particularly difficult issues for commercial public service broadcasters who are expected to serve both the public and their commercial interest.

Although we must remain vigilant, such questions are less relevant to the BBC. The absence of adverts on the BBC is a significant part of its unique provision. It is important for audiences, accuracy and artistic integrity. Moreover, when we consider broader issues such as democracy, society and citizenship it is obvious that the value and values of commercial-free broadcasting are not only distinctive but also essential.



Bob Usherwood is a VLV Trustee and former Professor of Librarianship at the University of Sheffield.

## SPECTRUM ISSUES: DTT AT WORLD RADIO CONFERENCE 2019

By Gordon Drury

For many years the regulation and technical co-ordination of international telecommunications services and technology and the radio spectrum they employ has been managed through an agency of the United Nations, specifically the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) based in Geneva. Its remit is very wide-ranging over the complete extent of the radio spectrum from Long Waves (LW) to the high Microwave bands. Its agreements and conclusions are published as the Radio Regulations. The broadcasting spectrum is a very small part of this whole.

National regulators, advised by industry partners, are typically the members of many study groups that continually review the use of spectrum in national and regional jurisdictions. However, every 4 years there is a full plenary assembly – the World Radio Conference (WRC) - lasting about a month where all agencies from around the world meet to review progress and to plan the future use of spectrum, specifically new telecommunications services, systems and technology. In recent years the globalisation of services, in particular mobile ones, has required a greater global co-ordination of standards and spectrum usage than ever before.

The next such plenary (WRC-19) is in Geneva in November 2019. Preparations for this event have been progressing for some time and recently Ofcom consulted on its approach to the WRC. VLV responded, urging Ofcom to protect the interests of audiences and broadcasters by resisting further attempts to reallocate broadcasting spectrum to Mobile Data Services (MDS).



The availability of spectrum is vital for Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) services, which is the main way universal, free-to-view television is delivered to UK viewers, using the Freeview platform. Availability of this spectrum has been eroded in recent years, due to the demands of the mobile telephone and broadband operators. The agenda for WRC-19 does not include proposals for any further erosion of DTT spectrum in the Ultra High Frequency (UHF) bands, which is a welcome relief. However the issue of the UHF is likely to return for the next WRC in 2023 the agenda for which will be discussed at WRC-19. We and Ofcom must be vigilant that the WRC-19 agenda is not changed and that any scope for UHF reallocation in WRC-23 is removed or at least contained. The health and future prosperity of DTT depends heavily on having enough UHF spectrum to maintain its current and future security and growth and that includes the ability to introduce new technologies at a pace that viewers are able to follow.

## REFLECTIONS OF A RETIRING VLV TREASURER



*Toni Charlton, who has been both a Trustee and VLV's Honorary Treasurer since 2012, will be standing down at the AGM in November. Here she reflects upon her experience of the last six years.*

I was hopping about on crutches at the end of June in 2012 when I received a call from Andrew Taussig. VLV, he explained, had been without an Honorary Treasurer since the unexpected death of Hugh Peltor a few weeks earlier and he and John Clark, his fellow Trustee of the Voice of the Listener Trust (VoLT), wondered if I would join them for lunch to discuss whether I would be prepared to take on the task.

So why did I agree to agree to take over the role which - after a distinguished naval career as a submariner and commander of a guided missile destroyer - Captain Hugh Peltor RN CBE (Rtd) had fulfilled for eight years? I had joined VLV whilst I was doing a Masters Degree in Communication at the University of Westminster, following a 35-year career at the BBC. My knowledge of finance was limited to TV programme budgets. I had no experience of managing the cash flow of what were then two separate organisations. I think it was because it was a challenge and because I believed that the survival of VLV was important.

The first year was both daunting and demanding, as well as being a huge, but enjoyable learning curve. I could not have survived what became the joint meetings of the VoLT Trustees and the Directors of VLV without the support of Colin Browne, who had recently agreed to be the Chairman of VLV, the late Robert Clark, who was VLV's Honorary Secretary, John Clark, who chaired VoLT and Sue Washbrook, who was the Membership, Board & Trust Administrator. It was Sue and Robert and John, who helped me get to grips with the precariousness and complexity of VLV's finances and the relationship between VLV and VoLT. And it was Robert and John and I who formed a committee of three to manage the merger, which saw the dissolution of VoLT and the establishment of VLV as a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee in July 2013.

And so the slimmed down VLV has survived and, although its funding continues to be precarious, it continues to be able to hold two highly influential conferences each year as well as to produce VLV's Annual Awards for Excellence and to deliver two printed bulletins and regular e-newsletters to members. More importantly, through the generosity of donations from members and grants from the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and Patrick McIntosh's KMG Foundation, it has been able to employ the inestimable Sophie Chalk as VLV's Broadcasting Policy Adviser. I am in awe of what she and Colin Browne have been able to achieve during the last five years to ensure that the Voice of the Listener & Viewer is heard and listened to by Public Service Broadcasting's key decision makers – be they broadcasters, regulators or politicians.



## UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES OF SET TOP BOXES AND CATCH UP TV

By Patrick McIntosh

Who watches live TV any more, especially if you're young, mobile and connected?

The increased cynicism around fake news and the plethora of news from free newspapers to TV, radio and online platforms suggests to me that there will be an increasing reluctance to justify the TV Licence Fee when there are so many other ways to consume media content. In addition, of course, many people are now paying other subscriptions to all sorts of outlets.

The increased use of Freeview boxes, let alone Sky boxes and the evolution of the iPlayer, alongside ITV's Hub and everybody's ability to skip the adverts to watch content uninterrupted must mean that both the Licence Fee and the advertising model that funds the commercial public service broadcasters is under severe threat of collapse.

The digital age has demonstrated how quickly human behaviour changes, adapts and, most importantly, takes advantage of other forms of entertainment communication and relaxation. We must recognise this trend is likely to impact on public service broadcasting. I would suggest the trends identified will dramatically affect the ability of the funding models currently in place to survive beyond the next Charter review.

I would also suggest that the challenge for central Government to raise sufficient taxation to meet the spending promises made to a demographically ageing population and falling birth rate will increasingly politicise the current funding arrangements.

To make life easier for politicians it is entirely probable that funding will be devolved to independent organisations who can then set their revenue arrangements to suit evolving human trends and the economics around media, entertainment and news etc. It will be very interesting to see how the BBC decides to deal with free Licences for those over 75, especially since they are the greatest consumers of BBC content.

I do not have a crystal ball and I have no idea how these matters will play out, but I most sincerely know that the only organisation which is likely to campaign to preserve high quality, accessible, cost-efficient public service broadcasting is the VLV. Unless we are all prepared to support this vital organisation, campaign with it and financially support it, UK society will be a much poorer place.



*Patrick McIntosh is a VLV Trustee. He is cycling from the UK to Japan to raise funds for charities, including VLV, to coincide with the 2019 Rugby World Cup.*

For more information visit <https://www.kmgfoundation.co.uk/about-patrick>

## THANK YOU FROM VLV

We have recently discovered that two long-standing VLV members have sadly passed away, but left VLV generous legacies in their wills. As a small charity, we are very dependent on the generosity of our members and we can't thank them enough for having remembered VLV.

### Bill Chard

Bill was the inventor and patent-holder for what became known as the V-Chip used mainly in the USA to allow parental control of TV output in homes. Bill died in October 2016. He joined VLV in 1995 and attended all VLV conferences, coming up on the overnight sleeper train from Cornwall. He has been one of VLV's most generous members and we are very grateful for his support.



### Daphne Wyke



Long-standing VLV member, Daphne Wyke, passed away in January 2018 at the age of 91. She had been one of VLV's most loyal members and regularly attended our events until recent years. We are incredibly grateful to her for remembering VLV in her will and for her support over the years.

## VLV AGM & BOARD

**The 16th Annual General Meeting of Voice of the Listener & Viewer Ltd will be held on Tuesday 27 November 2018 at 4.00 pm at The Geological Society, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BG.**

Nominations and resolutions should be sent to the Chairman at VLV, The Old Rectory Business Centre, Springhead Road, Northfleet, Kent DA11 8HN no fewer than 3 days and not more than 21 days before the AGM. Papers for the AGM will be emailed in advance and copies by post will be available on request by contacting Sue Washbrook at the VLV office.

Three VLV Trustees are due to stand down at the AGM. We would like to take this opportunity to thank Wendy Jones, Patrick McIntosh and Toni Charlton, VLV's Treasurer, for all the work, support and time they have devoted to VLV during the past few years. All our Trustees are volunteers and without them VLV would not be able to carry out its important work. If you are interested in working with VLV as a volunteer or becoming a VLV Trustee please get in touch with VLV's Chairman Colin Browne.

## VLV SPRING CONFERENCE 2018 REPORT



Sir David Clementi, Chairman of the BBC, opened the VLV Spring Conference on April 19th. Sir David's focus was on the BBC's delivery of its mission by providing British content for a range of audiences. Concerned about maintaining BBC reach among younger audiences, he outlined plans to reinvent the iPlayer and Radio iPlayer so they are more of a destination for this audience.

Damian Collins MP, Chairman of the DCMS Select Committee, was the second speaker. He provided a fascinating update on the Committee's inquiry into fake news which has uncovered new information about interference in democratic processes in the UK and US. He also highlighted the problem of data manipulation which has serious implications now that people increasingly are moving away from traditional news outlets. Mr Collins made it clear he believed that the tech companies and government share a responsibility to improve media literacy so we can protect ourselves online and recognise reliable content. He said regulators need to have access to tech companies to make sure that they follow data protection laws.



After lunch Kevin Bakhurst, Content Group Director at Ofcom, updated us on BBC regulation now that Ofcom has taken on responsibility for regulating the BBC. He highlighted that the BBC, along with the other PSBs, is being dwarfed by enormous global producers. He stressed that innovation, maintaining choice and reflecting the whole of the UK are key for the future of the BBC. He said that the full Ofcom report on BBC performance, due out in October, will provide detailed research on audience satisfaction.



The final session of the day was a lively discussion about the contribution commercial radio makes for audiences with broadcaster Nick Ferrari, Siobhan Kenny, CEO of Radiocentre, Matt Deegan of Fun Kids Radio and Folder Media, and Dr Tony Stoller, media historian, all masterfully chaired by Gillian Reynolds, radio critic of *The Sunday Times*.

You can listen to sound recordings of all the sessions at the Spring Conference on the VLV website - [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk).

### Keeping up to date

VLV will be sending out regular updates by email - so please ensure that Sue Washbrook has your up-to-date email address or else keep looking at the website at [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk)

## Diary Dates

### Jocelyn Hay Lecture 2018 Professor Mary Beard DBE Tuesday 23 October 2018

*The Geological Society,  
Piccadilly, London W1J 0BG  
6.00 pm - 8.30pm*

### VLV Autumn Conference 2018: Future-proofing public service broadcasting

**Tuesday 27 November 2018**

*The Geological Society,  
Piccadilly, London W1J 0BG  
10.30 am - 4.00 pm*

### Voice of the Viewer & Listener Annual General Meeting Tuesday 27 November 2018

*The Geological Society,  
Piccadilly, London W1J 0BG  
4 pm - 5 pm*

**Members only**

### VLV Spring Conference 2019 Thursday 9 May 2019

*The Geological Society,  
Piccadilly, London W1J 0BG  
10.30am-4.00pm  
including*

### The VLV Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting 2018

The conference will be followed by  
**The VLV Members' forum**

## VLV Address and Office Hours

### Tuesday and Wednesday

9.30 am to 3.30 pm  
Tel: 01474 338716



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