



**Voice of the  
Listener & Viewer**

# Bulletin

Working for Quality and Diversity in Broadcasting

Autumn 2006

Issue 86

## A Changing BBC: accountability and creativity

VLV's 23rd Annual Autumn Conference  
Tuesday, 28 November 2006,  
10.45am – 3.30pm  
Overseas House, Park Place,  
off St James' Street, London SW1

The BBC is in a period of intense flux. Although its Royal Charter has been renewed for another ten years, a settlement on the licence fee has yet to be reached. No decision is expected before the end of the year. In the meantime, rumours abound that the Corporation will not be given the amount it asked for – 2.3% above retail price inflation (RPI), about a fifth of which may be needed to cover the cost of helping the nation to switch to digital television. Pending an announcement, the BBC cannot finalise any of its plans so the proposed move of some departments to Manchester and investment in its Creative Futures programme and Creative Archive are now stalled.

Under the new Charter and Agreement, the governance of the BBC will change from 1st January 2007. The Board of Governors will then be replaced by a Board of Trustees distanced further from the BBC's daily operations. Michael Grade, currently chairing the Board of Governors, will become Chair of the new Trustees and three of the present Governors will accompany him: Dermot Gleeson, Richard Tait and Jeremy Peat. Recruiting for the outstanding vacancies is now going on, following a public search for candidates.

VLV's autumn conference will focus on all aspects of the changing BBC. Among the speakers will be Mark Wakefield, Head of Performance and Chris Woolard, Head of Compliance and Value for Money in the newly-formed Governance Unit. Other speakers, from the creative content and other divisions, have yet to be confirmed. The programme will also include a short update on digital issues.

For tickets and details please  
contact [linda.forbes@vlv.org.uk](mailto:linda.forbes@vlv.org.uk)  
or call 01474 352835

## Tony Robinson to open VLV's conference



### Children's Television: Where Now?

Thursday, 2 November  
at The Royal Society, Carlton House  
Terrace, London SW1, 9.45am–5pm.

Tony Robinson, well known broadcaster, performer and actor whose work has included writing and starring in several children's programmes, will open VLV's 12th Annual conference on Children's broadcasting on 2nd November

Children's Television is in crisis as ITV seeks to end its distinguished record of providing a wide

diversity of high quality indigenous programmes and seeks permission from Ofcom to drop all but two hours of its children's output at weekends. The conference will consider the far-reaching implications of this development which will affect the future quality, cost and accessibility of children's broadcasting services throughout the United Kingdom. What will be the impact on our children of the loss of output reflecting their own society? How will Britain's cultural identity be preserved by programmes whose subject-matter, treatment and language are aimed at a global market? The BBC's future plans for its children's channels and children's changing use of the media are also on the day's agenda.

Among other confirmed speakers are:

- Richard Deverell, Controller, BBC Children's
- Anne Gilchrist, Creative Director, CBBC
- Michael Carrington, Creative Director, CBeebies
- Nick Wilson: Controller, Children's & Youth Programmes, Channel Five
- Anna Home: Chief Executive, Children's Film and Television Foundation
- Tim Suter, Senior Partner, Content & Standards, Ofcom
- John McVay, Chief Executive, PACT
- Nigel Pickard, Director of Family Entertainment, RDF Television
- Camilla Byk, parent and VLV member

Speakers from ITV, Disney World Television and Turner Broadcasting have been invited.

With great interest in the conference a capacity audience is expected.

For tickets & information contact  
[linda.forbes@vlv.org.uk](mailto:linda.forbes@vlv.org.uk) or 01474352835

### Inside

- |                     |                     |                         |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| ■ Naomi Sargent     | ■ Editorial Comment | ■ VLV Summer Conference |
| ■ VLV's 4th AGM     | ■ Guest Contributor | ■ Letters               |
| ■ VLV's 2006 Appeal | ■ VLV Awards        | ■ Digital Update        |
| ■ Save Kids' TV     | ■ Who's Who         | ■ Competition           |



## Voice of the Listener & Viewer

*Working for Quality and Diversity in British Broadcasting*

### VLV Patrons

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

### Directors

Jocelyn Hay CBE (Hon Chairman)  
Colin Graeme Thompson FCA, FIRM (Hon Treas.)  
Robert Beveridge  
John Clark  
Professor Bob Franklin, PhD  
Terry Glover  
Professor Máire Messenger Davies, PhD, FRSA,  
Warren Newman  
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

Chairman: Elizabeth Smith OBE

Secretary: Jocelyn Hay CBE

Trustees:

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

High Profile Ltd, Tel: 01474 533077

Published by Voice of the Listener & Viewer Ltd,

A private company limited by guarantee

(number 4407712)

Registered address:

101 Kings' Drive, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5BQ.

Tel: 01474 352835 Fax: 01474 351112.

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

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

# Naomi Sargant 10.12.33 - 23.7.06



Although some of us were aware that Naomi was gravely ill, news of her death in late July came as a shock: the abrupt extinguishing of a brightly-burning flame. The metaphor

has a particular resonance since a fiery spirit had sustained her throughout her life. The range of her interests, most of them better described as enduring commitments, was broad. Children and their families at Great Ormond Street, young people with learning difficulties at the Harington Scheme in North London, consumers at the Gas Council, students at the University of East London and the Open University: these were only a few of the groups to whom she gave outstanding public service.

When in 1980 Jeremy Isaacs invited Naomi to leave the Open University and become Channel 4's first Commissioning Editor for Education, she left behind her a decade-long record of distinguished work at the O.U. At Channel 4, she was to oversee the development of educational programming which formed a prominent feature of the new

channel's blueprint. In Volume 6 of the History of Independent Television in Britain, Paul Bonner listed the priorities she set out for the new service before it came on air. They included Arts and History, Basic Skills, The Environment, Health and Family, Workers and the Unemployed, Leisure, Science and Technology, and Programmes for Children. Without sacrificing her prime commitment to education, she succeeded in producing programmes many of which earned their place in the mainstream of the output. Her efforts were frequently tempest-tossed, but ultimately proved a truly handsome fulfilment of the channel's obligations to innovation and diversity. She richly deserved the place given to her in its Hall of Fame by the Royal Television Society.

In 1988, at the time of the White Paper on Broadcasting, Naomi's concerns for the interests of citizens and consumers led her to join VLV. She was a tireless member of the management team before and after the formation of VLV Ltd, a step for which she had been a staunch advocate. Her membership of the Board of Trustees was marked by equal energy. Throughout that time she continued to be inspired by her conviction that broadcasting should remain a source of education, especially for the under-privileged, as much in the coming digital age as in the fading analogue era.

VLV offers its deepest sympathies to Naomi's husband, Lord McIntosh, and their sons in their great loss.  
Colin Shaw

## Changes to the Board - Retirement of Vincent Porter and Bob Fletcher

We are very sorry to be losing the services of two long-standing members of the VLV Board.



Vincent Porter retired last year as Director of the Centre for Communications & Information Studies at the University of Westminster.

Over the years he has served for three terms on the VLV Management Committee and later on the Board of VLV Ltd.

During that time he has contributed invaluable in many different ways to VLV's policy making. We are particularly grateful to him for sharing his special expertise and knowledge of politics and the broadcasting industry. He has been remarkable for the time and care he has put into drafting many impressive briefings and submissions. They have contributed enormously to the respect in which VLV is held by Government, the regulators and the broadcasters. It is reassuring to know that he will continue to serve on VLV's policy and strategy committee. His knowledge of European legislation and issues has been of particular value - expertise he will now put to good use as he succeeds Jocelyn Hay as President of the European Alliance of Listeners' & Viewers' Associations (EURALVA), an international body which VLV was instrumental in forming and in which it plays a

leading role. We have good reason to be very grateful for what he has contributed to VLV so far.



Bob Fletcher, who was formerly with the British Council, also served on VLV's Management Committee and the Board of VLV Ltd. Indeed, he kindly volunteered to serve as Honorary Secretary to the former and Company Secretary to the latter in the formative years after

incorporation. His knowledge of technical and engineering matters proved especially valuable on issues arising from the move to digital switch-over. For many members he will be a familiar figure as he deployed those practical skills to manage the PA system at numerous VLV events. We thank him for his much-valued support and wish him well.

## VLV's 4th AGM

The 4th AGM of VLV Ltd will follow the autumn conference at 4pm on Tuesday, 28th November at Overseas House, Park Place, St James' Street, London, SW1.

Nominations and resolutions should be sent to the Company Secretary at 101 Kings Drive, Gravesend, Kent DA12 5BQ, no fewer than three days and not more than twenty-one days before the AGM.

We hope that members will join us for tea at 3.30pm before the meeting.

# Promoting the Public Interest in Broadcasting

VLV's 2006 Appeal, launched by Melvyn Bragg on 28th September



Jocelyn Hay VLV chairman, Melvyn Bragg and Elizabeth Smith, chairman of The Voice of the Listener Trust at the launch of the appeal.

A group of VLV members and supporters gathered at the British Academy for the formal launch of VLV's 2006 appeal 'Promoting the Public Interest in Broadcasting' by Melvyn Bragg on 28 September. The background to the appeal was explained by Jocelyn Hay. Elizabeth Smith, Chairman of the Voice of the Listener Trust supported her. The following is a summary of Lord Bragg's remarks.

My first thought when Jocelyn asked me to launch this appeal was how on earth has VLV made such an impact for 23 years without more appeals! The answer lies in the people who have

dedicated time, effort and above all intelligence to preserving what they see as the highest standards in British broadcasting. The extent of their influence reflects a force of will by guardians of the public good doing what needs to be done – a throwback to the 19th Century notion of public will and public good.

VLV's independence; even its amateur nature, has been a great help. The place of the amateur scholar has been crucial in British life. VLV has proved itself to be in that band of true progressives. What distinguishes British broadcasting is that the public service component is very well subsidised, very well produced and very well displayed on screen. We have a Public Service element which is unlike anything else in the world.

The inevitable profit-seeking by the multiple channels have already had an impact on the mainstream channels – and in an increasingly

commercial world, not only the temptation but the necessity to beat them at their own game will grow. We all hope that the new licence fee settlement will give the BBC enough to maintain its high Public Service purpose even though it may mean trimming some of its commercial ventures. We also hope that Channel 4 will stay firmly in the PSB field and that ITV1's contribution of 29% of its output to PSB is enabled to grow – will they be able to continue on this path? VLV's lobbying to ensure that the Government listens to what the public wants is an essential element in the process of maintaining quality, as its fight to preserve Radio 4 demonstrated.

Hence this appeal.

The amount sought is both modest and attainable: £30,000 over the next year. Plans are afoot to garner this and already early a third has been raised. We all want to thank those who have contributed and wish VLV well in its essential and important ambitions.

## VLV 2006 Appeal

Donations may be sent directly to VLV. They may also be sent to VLV's sister charity, The Voice of the Listener Trust, registered number 296 207, which supports many of the charitable activities of VLV. We are most grateful for all those who have already contributed to the appeal and wish to explain that we realise that in some of our letters we did not make it clear that The Voice of the Listener Trust supports only those activities of VLV that fall within its own objects: to educate the public about all aspects of broadcasting, including its role in society, and to commission and publish research.

## Save Kids' TV!

Save Kids' TV is a new campaign set up in the face of the crisis now confronting children's television in the UK. VLV is a founder member, speaking as a veteran of a ten-year struggle to convince the Government and the regulators of the growing threat to this crucial strand in British broadcasting

The problem is that ITV's audiences are increasingly turning to digital channels. As a result, advertising revenue is falling and last year Ofcom, the regulator, allowed ITV to reduce its hours of religious, regional and children's programmes. Now with its revenues further threatened, this time by a proposed ban on the advertising of high fat, sugar and salt products, ITV has sought permission to cut its weekly hours of children's programmes to just two at the weekend. Fortunately, Ofcom has refused it.

ITV has recently spent £35 million a year on commissioning children's programmes but can it continue to do so? The proposed ban on HFSS products could lead to the commercial companies losing between £30 and £100 million. If an alternative source of funding cannot be found, can Ofcom go on withholding permission for ITV to drop the eight hours a week of children's programmes that it now provides?

However much we share concerns about obesity, we do not believe that such a move is the

solution to a problem which requires a total change of lifestyle. Surely Ofcom cannot wish to see the end of children's programmes on all the mainstream commercial channels. To begin with, the price for that could be the loss of a highly successful and profitable industry, admired around the world for its excellence. But much more is at risk. Writers, artists and programme-makers with real concern for children's needs have created a great tradition of much loved programmes. Remember Rainbow and Magpie and dramas, from the classic Snow Spider to the more recent My Parents are Aliens? That tradition would be lost for ever.

The BBC does an excellent job, but as its own Controller of Children's Programmes, Richard Deverall, says, the BBC needs competition to keep it on its toes. That will not come from the satellite channels, almost all of which are subsidiaries of multi-national corporations, broadcasting largely American programmes, including many soaps or cartoons primarily designed to market related merchandise. The largest penetration of satellite take-up is in homes with children. The young viewers who spend most of their time watching satellite channels are exposed to a constant diet of American language, references and values, promoting consumerist lifestyles and encouraging the rise of obesity and the loss of childhood that so many are currently deploring.

Is it right that our children should be brought up with a Disneyfied view of their own culture and history? Shouldn't the channels which target young British viewers be required to invest in the production of programmes which are made in the UK to reflect and reinforce our own values and culture? Shouldn't a way be found to support the continued broadcasting on ITV and other commercial channels of programmes which reflect the location, language, culture and values of the young people who watch them?

If you would like to know more about the campaign 'Save Kids' TV', please join us at VLV's annual conference: 'Children's Television: Where Now?' at The Royal Society, London, on 2nd November, or visit the Save Kids' TV website: [www.savekidsTV](http://www.savekidsTV) or contact Greg Childs at 020 8810 8856.



## Editorial Comment



Members of the Board and I spent much of the summer on a review of all aspects of VLV's work, outside activities and finance. With our new Executive Director, Peter Blackman, fully involved, we are preparing a new three-year business plan. In all of

this, we have been acutely aware of the rapid pace of the changes now affecting, and in many cases, threatening the British tradition of public service broadcasting. Poll findings show that the BBC is still held in high esteem and that most of the public is willing to pay a licence fee which will help it to maintain its standards. But the public has much to learn about the new realities, as my colleagues and I have been finding out.

In just twelve months Whitehaven in Cumbria will be the first place in the United Kingdom to have its analogue television signals switched off. After that, unless viewers in the area switch to digital, they will not be able to receive television broadcasts over the air at home. However, if they have a computer linked to their telephone or a new mobile phone, they will be able to receive not only all the traditional services but a multitude of others ranging from 24 hours news to online gaming and shopping channels. The implications for our traditional broadcasters are immense.

In the meantime, the new technology is transforming not only the way we receive and use the broadcast media, but also the economic basis on which they have been built. Although we know the BBC's Royal Charter is assured for the next ten years, uncertainty remains about the level of the licence-fee settlement. There is also worrying talk about the possible resurfacing of one of Ofcom's favourite projects, a new Public Service Publisher (PSP) which would be partly financed out of the BBC's licence fee income. Until a decision is made, the BBC faces a period of uncertainty when planning for the future has to be stalled.

Among the casualties of the changing ecology are the regulators to whom in the past, credit for the quality of programmes was often due. Their task was made much simpler because of the adherence of most broadcasters to the traditions of public service broadcasting and the existence of assured incomes for the BBC and the commercial operators. The many hundreds of new channels, often based overseas, have no concept of those earlier values, are relentlessly competitive and feel little obligation to adapt their output to the needs of British audiences, including children.

On revenues, the current crisis at ITV provides a powerful example of the painful consequences which follow the loss of audiences to new services and the consequent loss of income. Although ITV's public service remit forms part of its licences the

company wants to drop much of what it deems unprofitable: religious, children's and non-news regional programmes, for example. ITV, having already reduced the hours of its children's programmes, is now seeking to reduce them to just two hours at the weekend. Ofcom has so far refused to allow it to do so, but how much longer will it be able to hold out, if a ban on junk food advertising costs ITV millions in lost advertising revenue?

All of which means that the work of VLV in upholding standards across the board and in representing the interests of listeners, viewers and users of new media as both citizens and consumers is becoming ever more important. The current campaign to Save Kids' TV, (see page 3) is just one element of that. It is an issue on which VLV has been the leader for the past twelve years. In the face of all these extra demands VLV needs to increase its resources and efficiency. So we were delighted when Melvyn Bragg kindly launched our 2006 Appeal on 28 September. To enable VLV to continue to promote public service in broadcasting, I hope that all our supporters will respond as generously as they can.

*Jocelyn Hay*

## VLV Awards for 2006

Your chance to reward the best Radio and Television programme makers

One of the most striking things about VLV's annual Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting is how much the recipients value them – because they are chosen by you, the listeners and viewers who have enjoyed the programmes selected, and not by professional peers.

No matter how busy the winners are they always find time to come and collect them in person at the spring conference and to share with VLV members their pleasure and pride in receiving them. Those who attended this year will remember the entertaining presentation by Michael Palin, and the delighted reaction from Jeremy Paxman, Kate Adie, Charles Wheeler, Jon Snow and the other winners.

The Awards have kindly been organised by VLV members John and Carey Clark for the past four years and we are extremely grateful for the care and trouble they have taken to make them such a success. To do so takes hours of behind the scenes care, preparation and attention, which only shows on the day except in the smooth and enjoyable ceremony that passes all too quickly. We are most grateful to John and Carey, who now in the face of other commitments, are handing over the



Michael Palin presents Kate Adie with the award for Radio 4's 'From Our Own Correspondent'.

organisation of the Awards to VLV Board Member, Terry Glover.

Please help us to make the Awards even more popular and successful this year. It is your unique chance, wherever you live, to participate in an important VLV event and to single out and reward the broadcasters and programme-makers whose work you have most enjoyed. Despite the oft-heard grumble that 'There is nothing worth watching tonight', it is quite amazing how many excellent programmes our members do find. So think back over the year and send in your nominations for programmes and performers you have enjoyed in 2006 on the forms enclosed.

### New President for EURALVA

Jocelyn Hay, VLV chairman, stepped down as President of EURALVA, the European Alliance of Listeners' & Viewers' Associations, at their annual meeting in London on 4th September. VLV member Professor Vincent Porter was elected in her place.

VLV hosted the two-day meeting which was attended by representatives of member organisations from Canada, Denmark, Germany, Norway and the UK. A number of European and international policy issues were discussed and EURALVA's response to the European Commissions' consultation re revisions to the Television Without Frontiers Directive and new Audio Visual Media Services Directive was agreed.

### VLV Responses to Recent Consultations

VLV has responded to the following public consultations. Copies of the responses may be seen on VLV's website: [www.vlv.org.uk](http://www.vlv.org.uk) or are free to members in return for a large sae.

- White Paper on the Future of the BBC and Lord Burns Inquiry – April 06
  - Ofcom consultation re food and drink advertising to children – June 06
  - UK Government Consultation on Revisions to the Television Without Frontiers Directive – Sep 06
- VLV is preparing responses to inquiries by Ofcom and the BBC Board of Governors into the market impact assessment of the proposed launch of the BBC's new iPlayer.

# Guest Contributor, Professor Christopher Frayling – the relationship of the BBC and the Arts in the UK



Guest Contributor, Professor Christopher Frayling, is Rector of the Royal College of Art and Chairman of Arts Council England. He shares some of his thoughts about the relationship of the BBC and the Arts in the UK.

The last ten years has been a golden age for the arts in Britain. People tend to look back at the period 1946 -1960 – the period following the original foundation of the Arts Council – with misty-eyed nostalgia, as if that was 'the golden age'. But the era of the Lottery (transforming the arts landscape) and of increasing Treasury support has been more than matched by a flowering of the arts. In the Visual Arts there have been the Tates, the Baltic, the Young British Artists, the increasing maturity of the art market in the UK. In Music, the Sage and the renaissance of Aldeburgh, the renewal of the Royal Opera House, the rise of Youth Music. In Theatre, the new regimes at the National and the RSC, the Donmar phenomenon and the Arts Council's 'theatre review' which has re-resourced the sector, especially in the regions. There are countless other examples. I could go on and on, and often do.

The question is: has this golden age been reflected in or stimulated by – or even kept pace with – by the BBC?

The question is not in my view asked enough, or not asked in that way. At first glance, where network television is concerned the last ten years has been far from a golden age. It has seen the end of The Late Show – for which Late Review once a week is no substitute – the end of Arena and Omnibus as regular stands, the shunting of much arts programming onto BBC4, the rise in compensation of the Culture Show which is assembled from short segments and of Alan Yentob's Imagine slot. In this area, at least, the balance sheet doesn't look too good – which is more than a pity, because the arts have increasingly moved to the heart of national life, reflecting more and more Britain's rich and diverse cultural identity, and regional identities. The arts have moved centre stage. Do the mainstream schedules reflect this? Discuss.

Of course – and this, too, needs saying over and over again – there is much to praise where the BBC's arts activities in the public realm are concerned: the orchestras, the choral work, the support for new writing and music, and a range of community and public broadcasting activities such as the Big Screens and its network of learning centres, and mobile units to increase access. The BBC certainly plays an important part in the wider arts development landscape, working on its own and with others to provide opportunities to showcase and develop new talent and profile artists across its services. It has been particularly successful in helping audiences find routes through to the arts, discovering their own creativity, providing platforms for people to generate their own content through the online sites such as Where I live, BBC Arts and Blast sites.

The BBC can also be a gateway for people, a trusted entry point, helping viewers and listeners to deepen their appreciation of the arts, encouraging opportunities for formal and informal learning; the partnership with the Open University on 'the Romantics' series is a recent example with a wealth of other examples including the excellent BBC Radio Music work Listen Up!, Making Tracks and Interactive Proms and Picture of Britain/Digital Britain support services. If only the mainstream schedules contained, in their mix of an evening's viewing, more arts content.

**So, what might help bridge-building between the arts and the BBC?**

- Well, perhaps the Charter Review process could lead to a clear articulation of the BBC's core purposes in relation to the arts – especially Music, Drama, Literature, Dance and the Visual Arts.
- The BBC could develop a more coherent overarching cultural strategy running across all genres and networks.
- Of course, the impact of the BBC on culture is 'broad' and not limited to 'cultural programmes'. Nevertheless specific attention could be given to these cultural sectors within the broader canvas.
- There could be a clear articulation of arts output within each individual service licence – for greater executive and public clarity and accountability. Closer planning and partnership nationally and regionally would help to achieve the BBC's purposes unlocking financial and human resources from the wider arts and cultural sector, potentially maximising shared cultural investment through public arts funding partnered with BBC investment.
- The BBC should definitely reflect a greater range and depth of regional/local arts from within England in its schedules. Regional arts do not feature on BBC ONE, TWO, THREE or FOUR to any great extent beyond festivals. It is vital that entry points into culture can be placed within regional arts coverage and reflected on both regional and national platforms, to engage and stimulate the widest possible audience.
- Network Television BBC output is still largely London-centric. Presentation and content across the platforms still also tends to reflect a largely white middle class profile.

- There are also opportunities for the BBC to support wider access to UK cultural venues, across the UK, through closer working with arts organisations and diversifying output. At present, the sole coverage of these within mainstream channels is in the Culture Show's short segments – and occasional outside broadcasts – but there could be an extension of coverage into special, more in-depth pieces and series, with appropriate partnerships to ensure legacy post broadcast.
- In short, the BBC could drive deeper into the living arts, the cultural and creative fabric of England, working with its partners and regional communities to stimulate and inspire the further growth of the arts and creative industries, helping to develop and improve attendance and participation in the arts.
- Finally, it will be terrific if the BBC could develop the use of its archive by working in partnership with others. The archive can go well beyond the educational purposes outlined in the government White Paper to stimulate the growth of contemporary culture in the UK, supporting the BBC's wider cultural and creative purposes.

Maybe the most effective way of ensuring that all this will happen, would be to have a formal statement from the BBC on its responsibilities to the arts of this country – a minimum commitment, which would survive whichever regime was at the top. A commitment to the arts, as part of the public service remit.

## Radio 3 Celebrates its 60th birthday

Radio 3, successor to the Third Programme set up in 1946, is one of the BBC Services which has continued, despite a few ups and downs, to fulfil the high aspirations of its founders and audience. After 60 years it is good that we can celebrate the channel which not only commissions more live music than any other in the world, supports four of the BBC Orchestras and the BBC Singers and so many British composers, plus the annual delight of the Proms, the largest and most successful music festival in the world.

We send our congratulations and good wishes to the channel and its Controller, Roger Wright, and were glad to receive the following reply from him to two recent rumours. There is no truth in the story that Radio 3 is to include pop music in its future schedule. Nor in a story that the channel is to drop its popular 'Choir of the Year' competition. We also received an assurance that the drop in the bit rate for DAB broadcasts of Radio 3 from 192 to 60bps will still provide an acceptable signal, especially for those on the move. VLV feels it is important for Radio 3 broadcasts on DTT and Satellite to continue to be transmitted at 192 bps as many of these will be listened to by music lovers on higher quality receiving systems.

## Consumer Expert Group

The switchover from analogue to digital TV transmission (DSO) will start in 2008 so the planning has been in progress for several years. I am the latest VLV representative on the Ministerial Consumer Expert Group that monitors DSO and advises on communications. Groups representing those with special needs such as the blind, deaf and elderly are in the majority and VLV is one of the few organisations representing the general consumer.

In the last year the specialist members of the group have prepared two reports. The first was on the special needs of the disabled and elderly in relation to the equipment provided for DSO. The second covered the support the most vulnerable would need during DSO.

Since the spring I have taken an interest in the special problems faced by the 20% of the population who live in flats, hostels or various types of residential accommodation. Landlords in the public sector seem to be organised and upgrading or replacing the aerials and cables. However in the private sector the situation is patchier. Some landlords may go for more elaborate systems than are needed, encouraged by suppliers, passing the costs on via the service charges. There are different issues for residential care homes and for each type of housing unit.

*Robert Clark*

## A Visit to the ASA

On Friday July 14th Jocelyn Hay (Chairman), Warren Newman and Andrew Taussig (Board Members), Peter Blackman (Executive Director), John Brotherton and John Williams (VLV Members) visited the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) at their Holborn headquarters. Welcomed by Christopher Graham, Director-General, the visitors were treated to a presentation by Clare Forbes, Director of Communications, followed by a guided tour of the working areas. There, they were shown facilities for monitoring commercial channels and the 'hot desk', the first input point for complaints.

The quality and character of the advertisements seen by viewers of commercial channels are for VLV, core concerns. Secondly, the ASA is a reassuringly effective model of industry self-regulation. It is backed up, for broadcast platforms, by powers delegated by Ofcom under the 2003 Communications Act). In recent policy debates, at both national and European levels, VLV has found itself a lonely voice, arguing the case for regulation by government, first, to track new platforms, and, secondly, for self-regulation to be subject to stricter tests of effectiveness.

The ASA prefers conciliation, where appropriate persuading complainants not to pursue insubstantial cases and encouraging advertisers voluntarily to drop commercials which give prima facie grounds for concern. So a high proportion of complaints are upheld. Although the Authority has a majority of members from outside the industry, its decisions are based on a code formulated by the Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) which represents mainly commercial companies and the advertising industry itself. The Director-General said the ASA was already accepting complaints about internet advertising. The development followed naturally from its remit to meet public demand in the new media age.

*Andrew Taussig*

## Who's Who in Broadcasting

### NEW CEO FOR OFCOM



Ed Richards has been appointed Chief Executive of Ofcom, the Office of Communications which was set up by the 2003 Communications Act to regulate all aspects of radio, television and telecommunications. His salary is expected to be more than £400,000 per annum.

Currently Chief Operating Officer at Ofcom, and before that Head of the Policy Unit at No.10 Downing Street, Mr Richards will take over from Stephen Carter, who was the first to hold the post. Mr Carter is widely tipped to succeed Charles Allen who recently resigned as Chief Executive of ITV.

Michael Grade, Chairman of the BBC Board of Governors, will become Chairman of the new BBC Board of Trustees on 1st January 2007. His salary will almost double to £140,000 for a four day week. Other members of the Trust will also be paid

more than the present Governors, at between £35,000 and £40,000 for two days a week. Jana Bennett, Director of BBC Television, has also been made Director of BBC Vision, the new BBC multi-media content, commissioning and channels group. She has appointed former BBC Executives, Peter Salmon and Jane Tranter to key roles within the group.

Anna Carragher has retired as Controller, Northern Ireland after 36 years with the BBC.

Blair Jenkins has resigned after six years as Head of News and Current Affairs at BBC Scotland.

John Willis has resigned as Director of BBC Factual & Learning. Keith Scholey has been appointed Acting Director in his place.

Michael Wakelin has been appointed BBC Head of Religion and Ethics, replacing Alan Bookbinder who has moved to the new BBC College of Journalism.

## Broadcasting: Serving the Arts - VLV's Summer Conference

More than 80 people with a wide range of interests gathered at the Foreign Press Association in London for VLV's summer conference on 6 July. Their focus was on how broadcasting can serve Britain's uniquely rich cultural heritage by extending public awareness and enjoyment of the arts.

The speakers gave several impressive examples of how the broadcasters - BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Five - are not only providing access to music, drama and the visual arts on television and radio but also, often with support from the Arts Council, they are creating new and exciting opportunities for local groups to become involved in practical arts projects.

The fear was whether the commercially-funded broadcasters could continue to create these opportunities in the more competitive digital future.

Mark Lawson, broadcaster and critic, chaired the conference. The other speakers were: Adam Kemp, BBC Commissioning Editor, Arts, Music, Performance & Religion; Andrew Whyte, Director of Communications, Arts Council England; Kim Peat, Channel Five Controller, Daytime, Arts & Religion; Jan Younghusband, Channel 4 Commissioning Editor, History, Science, Religion and Arts; Jonathan Levy, Producer, South Bank Show, ITV.



*Andrew Whyte, Mark Lawson and Adam Kemp taking questions.*

# Letters to the Editor

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

## BBC MUSIC POLICY

*I would like to know why the BBC so steadfastly refuses to include more music from the pre-pop era. Why is so much pop rubbish played on Radios 1, 2 and 6? Surely a little more time could be given to the ever-popular genres of Big Band, Swing and the music of the first part of the 20th century? It is not only the older generation who enjoy it, but the thousands of young people who are learning musical instruments or playing in school orchestras, bands and groups. You only have to look at the programmes of the amateur choirs in countless towns up and down the country to see how popular this kind of early 20th century music is – both instrumental and vocal. Why doesn't the BBC reflect this popularity in its programmes?*

**Ron Savage, Blundell Sands, Liverpool**

*Radio 3 has carried on many of the Third Programmes' good practices but one change that has crept in drives me to distraction and that is the adverts. I know they are called trailers but to me they are unnecessary and, above all, repetitious. They would drive me to switch off, except how else would I get the well-chosen two-minute essence of the day's news?*

*Is there credible evidence that listeners prefer to have these interruptions to what they have switched on to hear?*

**Jean Davies, Oxford**

## DIGITAL RECEPTION PROBLEMS

*I believe many viewers are unaware of an important fact when choosing between the different Digital TV service delivery options.*

*Many believe that taking Freesat from Sky involves only a one-off payment. One has only to read the terms and conditions for this service on the freesatfromsky.co.uk website to see that this is true for a limited period only. Of the mainstream channels, only the BBC transmits unencrypted. i.e. free-to-air. The other mainstream channels are transmitted encrypted, thus requiring the use of an access card as part of the decryption process in the receiving equipment. The cost of this initial access card is included in the one-off payment but when it is changed in the future – and this has already happened in the recent past – a new card has to be purchased. There are therefore ongoing unquantifiable costs associated with this means of digital TV delivery*

*which are not to be found in Digital Terrestrial TV reception, i.e. Freeview. At present there is not a level playing field. Those unable to receive Freeview are forced to pay more for their equipment initially and to continue to pay additional sums at irregular intervals into the future. And there is, of course, the implied threat in this arrangement that reception of encrypted channels will be permanently lost if a new card is not purchased.*

*The proposed BBC/ITV freesat service may or may not change this situation, but not even the DCMS Committee on Analogue Switch-off knows for sure, according to their report.*

**Michael Howe, By E-mail**

*I have spent nearly £300 on an aerial to receive BBC 4 and other digital stations, but because of the Wembley arch I am unable to receive them. I have been advised I will have to subscribe to Sky at a cost of £150 – £250 to receive these channels. I find it appalling that the general public have to suffer at the expense of a football stadium. Why cannot the developers pay for a transmitter so that we can receive all the stations? I do not particularly wish to subscribe to Sky – what can the BBC do?*

**Elizabeth Lawrence, London NW11**

*Editor's note – VLV has been pressing for the launch of a free-to-air satellite to help solve the problem that Ms Lawrence and many other viewers face, unable to receive Digital Terrestrial Television until after analogue signals have been switched off. We understand the Government has commissioned a report on the matter shortly to be put out for consultation shortly.*

## VLV APPEAL & PSB

*Please find enclosed my cheque in response to your appeal. I am very aware of the continuing and ever increasing pressure on the idea and principle of public service in broadcasting – and, indeed in all areas of public life. I am glad to respond urgently.*

**Joan Darwent, Sheffield**

*We wish to assure you that we consider that the issues of quality broadcasting and funding have never been more important and more under threat. We are most appreciative of the care you and others as watchdogs*

*take to protect quality. The mere suggestion that Radio 4 may not be safe fills us with horror. In days dominated by the financial interests of private media we regard the danger of the BBC ceasing to champion quality, for whatever reason, a betrayal of trust.*

*I would stress, however, that if one is prepared to hunt diligently enough there are still some programmes of imagination and integrity and immense power and influence, one would like to think, such as the series earlier this year 'Facing the Truth' with Archbishop Desmond Tutu. So we take heart.*

**Giles Heron, Whitby, North Yorks.**

## BBC & RELIGIOUS BROADCASTS

*Ms Duffy (Bulletin Spring 2006) seems to imagine that non-religious programmes (reality TV? sport? films?) should be enough to satisfy those with a non-religious lifespansuch as Humanism. Does she really think Humanism is so empty?*

*Humanists do not object to religious broadcasting but do object strongly to the bias towards religion on the BBC. Every week Radio 4 alone puts out over three hours of broadcasting specifically for Christians by Christians about Christianity. (This excludes magazine programmes like 'Sunday'.) Despite constant requests the BBC never gives any time for humanists talking about Humanism. The best we get is being asked to comment on religious questions on religious programmes.*

*Yet under the Human Rights Act the BBC, as a public body, is barred from discriminating on grounds of 'religion or belief' (and Humanism undoubtedly counts as a belief). And under the Communications Act (sn 264), public service broadcasting is meant to include programmes about such beliefs – Humanism was actually named by the Government in the relevant debate.*

*All we are asking for is fair play!*

**David Pollock, Trustee, British Humanist Association, 1 Gower Street, London WC1E 6HD**

**Deadline for next issue:  
1st December, 2006**

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

## digital update

When purchasing digital equipment look for the logo



### SOME OF THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### Why is digital switch-over happening?

About a quarter of UK households cannot get the full range of available digital TV services through an aerial and a fifth of households cannot get Channel Five TV through their aerial. These numbers can only be increased through the process of digital switch-over. The move will make it fairer for everyone and it will also free up analogue spectrum which can then be used for other new services such as high-definition TV and mobile telephony. Any surplus frequencies can be sold off. The switch will also help the UK to continue as a world leader in broadcasting and digital technology.

#### What are the benefits?

Digital switch-over will bring:

- Extra TV channels
- Improved quality of TV pictures and less interference

- New features such as on-screen TV listings and red-button interactivity which will enable you to do tele-banking and shopping and join in gaming, betting and on-screen games.
- Access to special services for those with disabilities such as audio description of TV programmes for those with sight impairment.

#### Will switching to digital mean I get High Definition TV (HDTV)?

No. HDTV is a new technology which will enable viewers to get higher definition TV pictures, but an HD-Ready TV is not necessarily a digital TV. Make sure that it carries the 'digital tick' logo, if it does not you may need to get a digital set top box.

#### I live in a flat and share my aerial with others. What do I need to do?

If you share a communal aerial you may need to adapt this to digital. Your landlord or managing agent should be aware of this need and be making plans – ask them for information.

You can also visit the Department of Trade and Industry's website for more information

#### Where else can I get help, especially if I do not have access to the internet?

Your local electrical retailer should be able to advise you about reception or you can contact Digital UK, the company set up to manage the switch-over process. Their telephone number for enquiries is: 0845 650 50 50. Website [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk)

#### Will my video recorder work after switch-over?

Yes, VHS video recorders will play back tapes as before and they will be able to record one digital channel at a time. But they will not be able to record a digital channel if you are watching another at the same time. To do that you will need a digital TV recorder, with two or more tuners, such as Freeview Playback, Sky+ or ntl: Telewest TVDrive.

## Advertisements

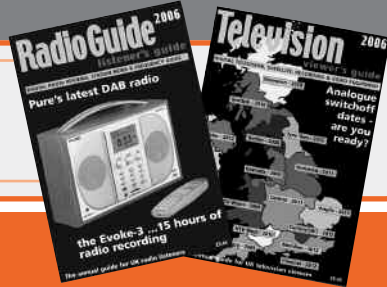
Please refer to VLV when responding to advertisements. VLV Ltd cannot accept any liability or complaint in regard to the following offers. The charge for classified advertisements is 30p per word, 20p for members. Please send typed copy with a cheque made payable to VLV Ltd. For display space please contact Linda Forbes on 01474 352835.



### VLV Gift Membership

Give VLV membership as a gift to a friend or relative. We will add an appropriate greetings card and a FREE copy of the Radio or TV User's Guide worth £5.95.

Single member: £25.00  
Two at same address: £40.00  
Student/Concession: £17.50  
Joint concession: £35.00  
Overseas: £35.00



#### THE RADIO LISTENER'S GUIDE 2006 & THE TELEVISION VIEWER'S GUIDE 2006

#### ORDERING DETAILS

The guides cost £5.95 each - (this includes postage and packing). Please make your cheques payable to *Radio Listener's Guide*, and send them to:  
**Radio Listener's Guide, PO Box 888  
Plymouth PL8 1YJ**

1000s of books, pamphlets and magazines - new and out of print - (including extensive stock of back issues of 'Radio Times' and 'The Listener').

## KELLY BOOKS

#### BROADCASTING & MASS COMMUNICATIONS:

- GENERAL
- HISTORICAL
- PROGRAMMES
- PERSONALITIES



Kelly Books, 6 Redlands,  
Tiverton EX16 4DH  
Tel: 01884 256170  
Fax: 01884 252765  
Email: [len@kellybooks.co.uk](mailto:len@kellybooks.co.uk)

Website: [www.kellybooks.co.uk](http://www.kellybooks.co.uk)

## Autumn Competition

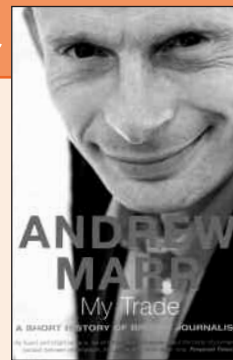


Journalists are not taught what news is, says Andrew Marr, the BBC's former Political Editor. In an autobiographical survey of the journalist's trade, he claims that they learn by copying, gradually acquiring a 'nose' for news.

Win a copy of Andrew Marr's book by answering the following questions:

**Questions:** Which Radio 4 programme does he present? *and* Which tv programme does he present?

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



## Diary Dates

#### Thursday, 2 November

VLV's Annual Conference on Children's Broadcasting:  
Children's Television:  
Where Now?  
The Royal Society, 6-9 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1  
9.45am - 5pm

#### Tuesday, 28 November

VLV's 23rd Annual Autumn Conference:  
A Changing BBC:  
Accountability & Creativity  
Overseas House, Park Place, off St James' Street, London SW1  
10.45am - 3.30pm

#### Tuesday, 28 November

VLV Ltd's 4th AGM  
Overseas House, Park Place, St James' Street, London SW1  
4pm - 5pm

## The BBC in London and Scotland has a fresh look

Two of the BBC's centres in London and Scotland have been given a new look.

Pacific Quay, the BBC's new purpose built headquarters in Glasgow was completed within budget and on time for it to be formally handed over in August. The BBC's former premises in Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow were partly designed by the renowned architect Charles Rennie McIntosh in the Art Deco style. The rabbit warren nature of the premises made it extremely difficult to run efficiently, however. The new premises, on the banks of the River Clyde will be both more efficient and more accessible.

The refurbishment of the BBC's flagship Broadcasting House in London is also now almost complete. The project has included not only re-furbishing and extending Broadcasting House itself but also buildings adjacent to it. The result is a better working environment for the BBC and a much more attractive and harmonious look to that end of Regent Street.



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

\*please delete as appropriate

VLV subscription - individual £25.00, two at same address £40.00, student/concessionary £17.50, joint concessions £35.00.  
VLV overseas subscription - individual £35.00, student/concessionary £25.00. Newsletter only subscription (non members) UK £30.00, overseas £35.00. Please make cheques payable to VLV Ltd and send to 101 Kings Drive, Gravesend, DA12 5BQ.

PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

Name

Address

Post Code:

Tel  Fax:

e-mail:

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

Name of Cardholder

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

Card No.  /  /  /  Amount £

Signature of Cardholder

I would like to pay by Bankers' Order  Gift Aid  please send me a form.