



Voice of the Listener & Viewer

Championing Excellence and Diversity in Broadcasting

Autumn 2019

Bulletin 126

BBC LIMITS FREE LICENCES FOR THE OVER 75s

Free TV licences for the over 75s will be restricted to recipients of pension credit, the BBC has announced. From June 2020, the concession will be available only to households with someone over the age of 75 who receives pension credit. At present, all households containing someone over the age of 75 are eligible for the benefit.

The BBC assumed responsibility for the policy for this concession as part of its last funding settlement with the Government but made no promises as to whether the policy would continue. The BBC says that if it had continued blanket funding of the concession, it would have cost some £750m annually – around a fifth of the BBC's budget – and led to draconian cuts in its radio and television services.

Its compromise solution of limiting the concession to those on pension credit means that the cost to the BBC will be about £250m per year, with around 1.5 million households likely to be eligible. Linking it to an existing credit means that the list of those eligible is readily available and avoids the BBC becoming embroiled in means testing.

Announcing the decision, the BBC board said: 'The BBC board believes this is the fairest option to help the poorest pensioners. It is also the fairest option for all licence fee payers, as this means everyone will continue to receive the best programmes and services that the BBC can provide. The BBC will not be making judgements about poverty as that measure is set and controlled by Government.'

Chairman Sir David Clementi added: 'Linking a free licence for over 75s to pension credit was the leading reform option. It protects the poorest over 75s, while protecting the services that they, and all audiences, love.'

The BBC says that it wants to make claiming the concession as easy as possible and will work with older people's groups and other support organisations.

The VLV's position – and that of many others including Age UK – was that the Government, not the BBC, should continue to fund the concession. Unfortunately, the BBC, having previously agreed to take on responsibility for the policy, was not in a strong position to make that argument. (See also Chairman's letter, page 2).

VLV's 36th ANNUAL AUTUMN CONFERENCE

Wednesday 20 November 2019



Sir David Clementi, the chairman of the BBC, and ITV's chief executive, Dame Carolyn McCall, are to headline the VLV Autumn Conference. The conference, to be held on 20 November, will continue the VLV's examination of how the UK's broadcasters are responding to an increasingly fragmented and global marketplace.

Our conferences give members the opportunity to hear the views of the industry's key decision-makers, and also to question and challenge them and to make our own views known. To book a ticket, complete the enclosed form or go to www.vlv.org.uk. Remember, members can bring a guest at the members' rate. It is a great way of introducing potential new members to the VLV.

iPLAYER RADIO APP TO CLOSE

The BBC has announced that it is closing the iPlayer Radio app, replacing it with the BBC Sounds app. This has caused concern among users, including some of our members, who have older smartphones that do not have the operating systems to support the Sounds app.

The VLV has raised this concern with the BBC. They say that most apps require users to have a device that supports more modern operating systems and that supporting older systems is expensive and poor value for licence fee payers, given the relatively small number of people still using them. Most importantly, however, they say that the iPlayer Radio closure doesn't affect the BBC website, and that bbc.co.uk/sounds has all the same content as the BBC Sounds app and that they have optimised the BBC Sounds website for mobile and tablet. So users should be able to enjoy the full range of radio services by accessing the website rather than via an app.

We would be interested to know whether any of our readers experience difficulties with this.

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VLV represents 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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FROM THE CHAIRMAN, COLIN BROWNE



licence fee settlement. The uncertain political environment is a further complication.

In the meantime, the BBC's decision to end the benefit for roughly two-thirds of those who presently receive it has prompted some fierce criticism in parts of the media. However the BBC is standing firm at this stage, given the quite dramatic impact any extension of the benefit would have on its ability to fund its present services. We will have the opportunity to question Sir David Clementi, the BBC's chairman, further on this when he addresses our Autumn Conference on 20 November.

In announcing its approach, the BBC noted that a number of respondents to its consultation had mentioned the need for a more open and transparent process for determining the BBC's funding going forward and referenced the VLV's suggestion that a statutory commission should be established to set the level of the licence fee in future. It is encouraging that there seems to be a growing body of opinion in support of a much more open process, including for the first time from the BBC, and it is an issue on which we will continue to campaign strongly.

Of course, it's not just the BBC that is facing financial challenges. A weak advertising market and increased competition from the global players is making life difficult for all the UK broadcasters. In this context, Ofcom's recommendations for due prominence on all platforms for the public service broadcasters is welcome; but legislation is required to give effect to this and the present political turmoil is not helpful. We look forward to the take of ITV's chief executive, Dame Carolyn McCall, on this at our Autumn Conference.

I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at that conference and at the AGM that follows it.

Colin Browne,
Chairman of VLV

TRUSTEES

Cheryl Campbell, elected as a trustee in November 2018, resigned at the end of July 2019 to take up a new career in education. Professor Sylvia Harvey, who has completed two three-year stints as a trustee, is obliged to stand down for a year before she can be re-elected. We would like to thank both of them for all the work, support and time they have devoted to the VLV.

All our trustees are volunteers and without them the VLV would not be able to carry out its important work. If you are interested in working with the VLV as a volunteer or becoming a VLV trustee, please get in touch with the chairman, Colin Browne.

NEW RADIO 4 CONTROLLER



Mohit Bakaya has been appointed as the new controller of Radio 4, replacing the long-serving Gwyneth Williams. Bakaya has been the commissioning editor for factual at the station since 2008, responsible for science, natural history and religion programming. He joined the BBC in 1993 and served as editor of *Night Waves* on Radio 3.

His appointment is part of a wider management shake-up at the BBC's audio services. Jonathan Wall, the controller of BBC Radio 5 live and 5 live Sports Extra, has been made the inaugural controller of BBC Sounds. Lorna Clarke has also been appointed as the BBC's first controller of pop music, a job that gives her responsibility for the corporation's five pop stations: Radio 1, Radio 1Xtra, Radio 2, Radio 6 Music, and Asian Network.

iPLAYER WINDOW EXTENDED



Ofcom has approved the BBC's plans to make programmes on the iPlayer available for 12 months, a major extension to the present standard of 30 days. Some shows could be made available for even longer. Ofcom estimated that viewing of the iPlayer could increase by as much as a third overall as a result of the proposed change. Making many shows available for longer will still be subject to negotiations with independent producers, however.

'The BBC's proposed changes to BBC iPlayer could deliver significant public value over time,' Ofcom said. The likely adverse impact on rival services would be outweighed by the public value created by the iPlayer's expansion, Ofcom ruled.

TEXT AXED FROM RED BUTTON



The BBC has announced that the text services on the red button will no longer be available. However, all the red button broadcast services – sporting events that are not shown on the main channels, a choice of courts to watch at Wimbledon, for example – will continue to be available.

The VLV took the view that it would not be reasonable to object to this change. Technology moves on, just as the earlier Ceefax service was phased out. We considered that as long as the broadcast services were maintained, that would be acceptable, given the widespread availability of text services online.

NEW CULTURE SECRETARY



Nicky Morgan was appointed as culture secretary in July, following Boris Johnson's arrival in Downing Street. Morgan, the Conservative MP for Loughborough, previously served as education secretary and minister for women and equalities during David Cameron's premiership. She is the eighth culture secretary since 2010 and replaced Jeremy Wright, who spent a year in the job. Nigel Adams was appointed as minister of state for sport, media and creative industries, replacing Margot James.

BRITBOX TO LAUNCH

The new UK subscription streaming service BritBox is expected to launch by the end of the year. BritBox, a joint venture between the BBC and ITV, is designed to challenge existing services such as Netflix and Now TV. Subscribers will pay £5.99 per month for access to shows such as *Love Island* and *Gentleman Jack*. Programmes will move to BritBox after they have dropped off the iPlayer or ITV Hub, while new shows made for the service are set to appear from next year. The move comes amid increasing competition in the streaming market, with Disney+ and Apple TV+ also set to launch soon.

SHARON WHITE TO LEAVE OFCOM



Sharon White is to leave Ofcom to become the new chair of the John Lewis Partnership. White, formerly a senior civil servant at the Treasury, joined Ofcom as chief executive in 2015. During her tenure Ofcom became the first external regulator of the BBC. She is expected to leave Ofcom around the turn of the year. At the time of going to press, the Ofcom board had not announced her successor.

PSB PROMINENCE REVIEW

Ofcom has outlined a set of recommendations to keep public service content prominent in the online world amid concerns that it is becoming increasingly hard to find. It has amended its Electronic Programme Guide code to ensure the main five PSB channels remain easily accessible, with minimum levels of prominence set for other PSB and Local TV services. But updating the rules on prominence will require legislation. 'A new framework of legislation and regulation would ensure that viewers can continue to find and access the PSBs' linear and on-demand services, across a range of connected devices (smart TVs, set-top boxes and streaming sticks),' Ofcom said in its review.

VLV SPRING CONFERENCE 2019 REPORT



The VLV Spring Conference on 9 May 2019 covered a wide range of topical issues. It opened with a lively discussion of recent coverage of politics on TV and radio featuring the *Guardian* columnist Polly Toynbee, Dorothy Byrne, head of news and current affairs at Channel 4, and Mark Damazer, the master of St Peter's College, Oxford, and a former controller of BBC Radio 4.



This was followed by a session on regulating the internet chaired by Emma Goodman from the LSE Media Policy Project. Lord Gilbert, chairman of the House of Lords communications committee, discussed the recommendations of the committee's recent report on internet regulation. Dr Victoria Baines, an expert on cyber-security and visiting fellow at Bournemouth University, provided unique insight into the benefits and risks of the internet. And Professor Richard Tait of Cardiff University, formerly of Ofcom and the BBC Trust, highlighted elements of broadcasting policy which could be applied to the regulation of online content. The session considered how to maximize benefits to the citizen while minimizing the risk of harm.

After lunch and the presentation of the VLV Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting, a panel consisting of the media industry analyst Claire Enders, Caroline Abrahams from Age Concern and Richard Ayre, who was a BBC Trustee at the time of the last BBC financial settlement, explored the implications of the BBC taking on the responsibility and the cost of free TV licences for the over 75s. The discussion was chaired by Will Wyatt, the former chief executive of BBC Broadcast.



The final session of the day was chaired by the *Sunday Times* radio critic Gillian Reynolds. A panel of experts – Steve Parkinson, managing director for Bauer Media, Peter Naughton, senior audio producer at the Telegraph Media Group, and Helen Thomas, head of content commissioning at Radio 2 – discussed the future of traditional radio at a time of growing competition from global streaming services.

You can listen to sound recordings of all the sessions at the Spring Conference at www.vlv.org.uk.

THE VLV AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN BROADCASTING 2019

Nomination papers should be returned to the VLV office by email or post by **10 January 2020**

THE VLV AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN BROADCASTING

The VLV Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting 2018 were presented by the brilliant Jan Ravens at the VLV Spring Conference on 9 May 2019. The ceremony was as popular as ever, and attended by many household names from the world of television and radio.

The nominations for the awards demonstrated the number and range of high quality programmes broadcast during 2018 which delighted, informed and entertained VLV members.



Ian Hislop, team captain on the long-running comedy news quiz *Have I Got News for You*, picked up the show's award for best TV arts and entertainment programme. *A Very English Scandal*, the acclaimed BBC1 series starring Hugh Grant as the former Liberal leader

Jeremy Thorpe, won the award for best TV drama. Other TV winners were BBC2's *A House Through Time* (best news and factual programme) and BBC1's *Drowning in Plastic* (award for international content).

The best individual contributor to TV award went to Matt Frei, Channel 4 News' presenter and Europe editor. *My Life: Mumbai Street Strikers*, a CBBC documentary about football-mad children from the Mumbai slums taking a trip to the UK, won the award for best children's programme.



Among radio winners were BBC Radio 4's *The Now Show* (best drama and comedy programme) and *Saturday Review* (best music and arts programme). Melvyn Bragg collected *In Our Time*'s award for best radio news

and factual programme, another success for Radio 4. The BBC's chief international correspondent, Lyse Doucet, was voted best individual contributor to radio, while the best sports programme award went to the BBC's venerable live cricket programme *Test Match Special*.



Documentary makers Norma Percy and Brian Lapping were joint winners of the Naomi Sargent award for their work over many years providing audiences with significant insight into issues and stories from around the world. Their work includes *Inside Obama's White House*, *Iran and the West*, and this year's *Inside Europe: Ten Years of Turmoil*.

The team behind *They Shall Not Grow Old*, the BBC2 documentary featuring original First World War footage, were the winners of the VLV award for innovation.

NEW INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S CONTENT

By Professor Jeanette Steemers

Children's content is a key component of public service broadcasting and two recent developments might suggest progress in supporting it.

In April, the British Film Institute launched the Young Audiences Content Fund (YACF), a three-year pilot with a budget of £57m for the development and production of public service content for children and young people under 18. The YACF aims to support UK-originated children's content, distributed free-to-air, which puts the spotlight on the three commercial public service broadcasters – ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 – to support more commissions. Successful bids must have 50% of funding in place before the YACF can support a production; the commercial PSBs will have to show commitment for the fund to work. There are no such funding limits on smaller applications for development funding, which do not need to have a broadcaster in place, because the priority is to encourage new voices and emerging producers.

In July, Ofcom set out a new approach to the commercial PSBs, whose support for original children's content has fallen drastically since 2006. Ofcom is not proposing a return to transmission and production quotas for children's content. Instead it calls for a flexible but firm approach to stimulate new content, satisfying itself that each broadcaster has responded 'positively' to the concerns it has highlighted about low levels of investment and commissioning. The extent to which ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 respond to this encouragement is also likely to have an impact on the success of the YACF pilot, because the scheme can put up only 50% of funding for any project. The rest needs to be secured from broadcaster commissions, pre-sales and other sources.

Beyond the YACF and Ofcom's interventions in the children's market, there are two further factors that are likely to have an impact on the longer term development of children's content in the UK.

The first is the response of the BBC. As the largest commissioner of children's content in the UK, which has no intention of applying to the YACF, the BBC needs to be scrutinized over what it is commissioning. In 2017 it announced an additional £34m of investment in children's services in the three years to 2019-20 to enable 'a personalised offering' for younger viewers, but it is unclear how much of this has been spent on content or delivery.

The second development to watch will be the launch of Disney+ in November, as Disney starts to compete in the subscription video-on-demand market with Netflix. As a global competitor with a vast archive and new content for children and families it will present a formidable rival to UK PSBs and pay-TV packages. This will place recent policy initiatives in context.

Jeanette Steemers is a trustee of the VLV and chair of the YACF Steering Group, a producers' forum for advising the fund

ELECTIONS: WHEN POLITICS AND MEDIA COLLIDE

By Chris Mottershead

Relations between politicians and broadcasters in both the US and UK seem to have deteriorated markedly in recent times. President Trump accuses the media of disseminating 'fake news' to discredit his administration. In the UK, Brexiteers complain of a media agenda allegedly provoking fear while Remainers blame the media for not challenging the supposed untruths of their opponents.

This clash is nothing new. Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch studied the activities of broadcasters and political organisers in elections in the US and UK from the mid-1960s up to the 1992 UK general election. One of the key findings in their 1995 book *The Crisis of Public Communications* was that politicians and the media are structured into opposing each other and that this results in producing a public sphere of 'professionals' from which voters are effectively excluded.

At the time of writing, there is much speculation about a possible autumn general election. In the *London Review of Books*, the academic David Runciman pointed out that whereas in the 2017 general election voters were grouped '40:40:20', with the two main parties each getting roughly 40% of the vote and the remaining 20% going to others, the division might now be more like a five-way split between the Conservatives, Labour, the Liberal Democrats, the Brexit party, and others. If this proves to be the case, there may be very real problems for the broadcasters as to how they represent this division. What will be the allocation of time for party political broadcasts? How will the various campaigns be covered in news broadcasts to ensure fairness? Who should be included in any televised debates between political leaders?

While these questions are similar to the issues Blumler and Gurevitch looked at, recent changes may complicate the general election, namely the development of social media. Writing in the *Guardian*, Peter Pomerantsev has examined some of the possibilities. He explains how the information that Facebook users put on to the social media platform can be used by advertisers and spin doctors 'who target us with specially tailored campaigns we might not even be aware of... This produces a model that is very different from the 20th century. Instead of stuffing an ideology down people's throats via TV and radio, a spin doctor has to tailor different messages to different social media groups.'

What is very unclear is how such digital campaigning is organised and financed and how it relates to the legal requirements for elections. While the internet may have encouraged the spread of political activities by enabling groups to organise rapidly, this exploitation of social media presents a potentially threatening development which may be hard to guard against.

Chris Mottershead is a former trustee of the VLV

MACTAGGART 2019: FEAR AND LOATHING, TRUTH AND LIES

By Professor Bob Usherwood

VLV members who saw Dorothy Byrne's contribution to the panel discussion about politics on TV and radio at the VLV Spring Conference will not be surprised that her recent MacTaggart lecture at the Edinburgh TV Festival hit the headlines. In a dynamic and powerful speech, Channel 4's head of news and current affairs castigated men behaving badly and politicians who avoid scrutiny, and likened listening to the *Today* programme to 'accidentally walking into a knitting shop in Bournemouth'. There were some good jokes, but above all there was the message that 'we must find courage in this time of crisis and... unite to use the power of television to protect democracy because it is being seriously undermined'.

Reading this, I thought back to July when a prime minister and a virtually new government was 'elected' by 92,153 Conservative members or just 0.13% of the population. British television did little to reflect the serious implications of this. The BBC resorted to knock-about politics, encouraging politicians from different parties to shout at each other, and pointless vox pop interviews. Sky News branded its broadcasts with a Brexit countdown banner, apparently presuming that we could not wait for the great event.



All a far cry from the time when, in Byrne's words, broadcasters 'believed programmes could be used to make our country a better place'. She argued that 'we have to stop being afraid of serious analysis authored by big brainy people'. We need, she said in the poem that closed her lecture, 'A programme about THIS Island, Making more noise than *Love Island*'.

This she saw as a role for the terrestrial services that still account for 69% of all TV viewing and 'are the only people who have any interest in saying big things about Britain'.

But 'what do we do when a known liar becomes our Prime Minister?' Byrne's question is now even more significant following the Supreme Court's ruling in September that the Government's decision to prorogue Parliament for five weeks was unlawful. Her opinion that Boris Johnson should be called a liar when lying brought accusations of bias from right-wing bloggers et al. These were predictable but unjustified, as her judgement is clearly based on a belief, as expressed in a recent interview with the *Guardian*, that 'truth has a primacy in a democratic debate'. Moreover, she also went on to criticise Jeremy Corbyn for avoiding major

interviews, urging him to 'be a hero, come on *Channel 4 News*, go on the *Today* programme...'

Today, as indicated earlier, was also disparaged. Many would agree that it is not what it was when Brian Redhead asked Nigel Lawson: 'Do you think we should have a one-minute silence now in this interview, one for you to apologise for daring to suggest that you know how I vote and secondly perhaps in memory of monetarism which you have now discarded?' Currently, some presenters on the *Today* programme appear, at times, unable or unwilling to speak such truth to power. That said, the programme does have Mishal Husain, who is one of the most forensic and analytical journalists in the business.

Husain's authority may also do something to address Byrne's concerns about the lack of progress in increasing ethnic diversity in broadcasting, something she called 'the single most disappointing failure during my career'. 'How,' she asked, 'can we represent the people of the UK if we ourselves are unrepresentative of the population?'

In his MacTaggart lecture in 1993, the great TV dramatist Dennis Potter – not named or shamed like some mentioned in Byrne's introduction – observed that 'on the television screen it is often when the set is switched off that it actually picks up a direct or true reflection of its viewers'.

Potter was speaking from a dramatist's perspective and at a different time, but fascinatingly there were other connections with Byrne's approach. Both reviled the name Murdoch. Potter mocked the Murdoch Chair in Language and Communications established at Oxford University, while Byrne reminded her audience of Ofcom's description of James Murdoch following his role at News Group Newspapers during the phone hacking scandal.

Both speakers probably made some audience members feel uncomfortable. Byrne suggested hers may have included some 'sexist bastards' while Potter attacked several strands of BBC management. His lecture was 'in the nature of a personal statement, or a cry as much from the bile duct as the heart'.

Byrne too was personal. She expressed fear at what we might lose and loathing at the behaviour of some male colleagues as well as examining the consequences of not identifying truth and lies in our democracy. Crucially, Potter and Byrne both articulated and demonstrated their love of, and their belief in, the value and values of public service broadcasting. Values which they felt were/are in danger of being eroded.

There was one further link between the two lectures. In 1993 Potter suggested that 'Channel 4, if freed from its advertisements, could continue to evolve out of its original, ever-precious remit into a passable good model of the kinds of television some of us seek'. At the end of her splendid, honest and forthright lecture, I would have loved to have asked Dorothy Byrne how she would have reacted to that proposal.

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

FLOUNDERING IN THE MID-ATLANTIC

By Professor Sylvia Harvey

Delivering the Steve Hewlett memorial lecture in September, Mark Thompson, the CEO of the *New York Times* and former director-general of the BBC, outlined the risks and rewards of global digital competition.

Thompson said that with support from owner-investors with deep pockets, it had been possible to turn the *NYT* around, away from the siren voices drawing many news services on to the rocks and into the open seas of competitive advantage. He reported that subscriptions to the *NYT* had risen from just over half a million in 2012 to 5 million this year, the company's stock price had more than tripled, and the journalistic cohort had risen, with an extra 300 people employed – all this in a period when most papers were shedding staff. None of this has been easy, and he emphasised the importance of the strategic decisions that had been made to invest in high quality and original news production.

In considering the prospects for television, he noted that, as in the newspaper sector, the advantage that TV once enjoyed in attracting premium-priced advertising has diminished as major players like Google and Facebook have transformed this market. Moreover, the new 'streamers' – subscription video-on-demand services such as Netflix – are investing large sums in high quality original programming and challenging previously secure national markets in the production of drama in particular.

This poses a challenge for broadcasters in the UK, especially in a period when the BBC, though not reliant on advertising, has nonetheless suffered two large cuts to its income. In 2010 and in 2015 (in my estimate) the corporation lost some 20% of its programme-making budget in each of those two years. These cuts on both occasions were the result of austerity measures as the Government sought new sources of income, in this case from BBC licence fee payers, that might allow it to reduce government department spending. This has included the cost of paying for the licence fees of the over 75s, previously met by the Department for Work and Pensions.

It is this rather bleak context that has led Thompson to conclude that the outcome of public policy has been 'to hobble the chances of the UK's only credible global contender' in bringing 'British talent and British ideas to the world's audience', tethering it to what George Orwell described as 'Airstrip One'.

Moreover, national sovereignty in the UK, Thompson suggested, requires cultural sovereignty – the opportunity to recognise 'your language, your life experience, your community in the prevailing culture'. This is seen as a necessary pre-condition for national self-determination. And the streamers, Thompson warned, while at first happy to share the fruits of co-production and shared copyright with the Brits, will soon ensure that the commissioning power, the copyright and the cash are directed to meet the priorities of the transnational providers.

Unless the BBC and other UK broadcasters have sufficient resources to produce programmes with the interests of the home audience in mind, it is likely that ostensibly British production will adopt the sort of mid-Atlantic identity that allows it to thrive in international markets, while embodying little that is specific to the already internally diverse British experience. By contrast the successful transformation of the *New York Times* indicates that investment in quality along with a robust digital commitment can bring great rewards.

Only the British Government can ensure that HMS BBC – one of the country's few remaining world class assets – ceases to flounder in the icy waters of the mid-Atlantic; new policy developments are awaited with interest and concern.

Sylvia Harvey is a trustee of the VLV and a Visiting Professor in Broadcasting Policy at the University of Leeds

MONICA SIMS, 1925-2018



The former Radio 4 controller Monica Sims, who died last year, has left the VLV an extremely generous legacy. We are very grateful for her gift. As a small charity we depend very much on the generosity of our members and we greatly appreciate their support.

Monica Sims joined the BBC in 1953 and by the time of her retirement more than 30 years later had become its most senior female executive at a time when the corporation's management was heavily male-dominated. In its obituary, the *Guardian* described her 'passionate commitment to traditional public service broadcasting'.

She held a string of important jobs. She spent three years in the mid-1960s as the editor of *Woman's Hour*, where, according to the *Guardian*, she 'consolidated the programme's reputation, breaking taboos by broadcasting provocative items about women's physical and mental health, religious doubts, financial difficulties, the domestic division of labour, childcare and sexual orientation'.

In 1967 she became head of children's television programmes. Among her achievements in more than a decade in the role were the launches of the children's news bulletin *Newsround* and the pioneering school drama *Grange Hill*. From 1978 to 1983 she served as the controller of Radio 4, before being promoted to BBC Radio's director of programmes, the first woman to fill either of these key positions.

After her retirement, she was commissioned to write a report on the lack of women in BBC management. All her recommendations, which included flexible working and job-sharing, were ultimately accepted by the BBC.

She also served as vice-president of the British Board of Film Censors and as director of production at the Children's Film and Television Foundation. She died aged 93 on 20 November 2018.

VLV AGM

The 17th Annual General Meeting of Voice of the Listener & Viewer Ltd will be held on Wednesday 20 November 2019 at 4pm 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, not less than three 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 Sarah Stapylton-Smith at the VLV office.

NOMINATIONS FOR THE VLV AWARDS 2019

Nomination forms for the VLV Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting, covering programmes broadcast during 2019, are included with this bulletin. We are making some changes, introducing a separate award for best radio drama and new awards for best podcast and best comedy programme across radio and television. In addition, the IBT are once again sponsoring the award for international content. We are grateful to them for their continued support.



The VLV awards celebrate the contribution made by high quality 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 several broadcasters where possible. The awards are unique in giving a voice to our membership, something greatly valued by those who win them. The awards will be presented as part of our Spring Conference, to be held on 30 April 2020.

Diary Dates

VLV's 36th Autumn Conference Wednesday 20 November 2019

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

To book a ticket, complete the enclosed form or go to www.vlv.org.uk

Voice of the Listener & Viewer Annual General Meeting Wednesday 20 November 2019

*The Geological Society,
Piccadilly, London W1J 0BG
4.00—4.45pm
Members Only*

VLV's 37th Spring Conference Thursday 30 April 2020

*The Geological Society,
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including*

The VLV Awards for Excellence in Broadcasting 2019

VLV's 37th Autumn Conference Tuesday 24 November 2020

*The Geological Society,
Piccadilly, London W1J 0BG*

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The Old Rectory Business Centre,
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VLV will be sending out regular updates by email - so please ensure that Sarah Stapylton-Smith has your up-to-date email address or else keep looking at the website at www.vlv.org.uk

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Name of Cardholder _____

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Card No. / / / Amount £ _____ Signature of Cardholder _____

I would like to pay by standing order ☐ please send me a form.

giftaid it I would like to GiftAid my payment ☐ please send me a form