

THE MONTH'S TOP FIFTY PROGRAMMES.

BARB

BROADCASTERS'
AUDIENCE
RESEARCH
BOARD LTD

4 WEEKS ENDING
01 December 1991

THIS MONTH'S VIEWING SUMMARY

Produced for BARB

Programme Title	Day & Date	Viewing Including Timeshift (millions)
1 EASTENDERS	Thu 07 November /Sun 10 November	22.44
2 EASTENDERS	Thu 21 November /Sun 24 November	21.78
3 CORONATION STREET	Wed 20 November /Sun 24 November	21.60
4 EASTENDERS	Thu 14 November /Sun 17 November	21.31
5 CORONATION STREET	Fri 08 November /Sun 10 November	21.01
6 EASTENDERS	Thu 28 November /Sun 01 December	20.95
7 CORONATION STREET	Fri 15 November /Sun 17 November	20.89
8 CORONATION STREET	Fri 29 November /Sun 01 December	20.80
9 CORONATION STREET	Wed 13 November /Sun 17 November	20.79
10 CORONATION STREET	Mon 25 November	20.45
11 EASTENDERS	Tue 19 November /Sun 24 November	20.39
12 CORONATION STREET	Mon 18 November	20.19
13 CORONATION STREET	Mon 11 November	20.17
14 CORONATION STREET	Mon 04 November	19.99
15 EASTENDERS	Tue 12 November /Sun 17 November	19.75
16 EASTENDERS	Tue 26 November /Sun 01 December	19.60
17 CORONATION STREET	Wed 27 November /Sun 01 December	19.34
18 CORONATION STREET	Fri 22 November /Sun 24 November	19.04
19 LONDON'S BURNING	Sun 01 December	18.86
20 NEIGHBOURS (1331/1737)	Mon 25 November	18.82
21 NEIGHBOURS (1347/1737)	Tue 19 November	18.65
22 CORONATION STREET	Wed 06 November /Sun 10 November	18.60
23 NEIGHBOURS (1330/1737)	Mon 18 November	18.17
24 NEIGHBOURS (1330/1737)	Fri 22 November	18.02
25 EASTENDERS	Tue 05 November /Sun 10 November	17.89
26 NEIGHBOURS (1329/1737)	Tue 26 November	17.65
27 NEIGHBOURS (1330/1736)	Tue 12 November	17.62
28 NEIGHBOURS (1329/1737)	Mon 11 November	17.34
29 NEIGHBOURS (1330/1737)	Wed 06 November	17.31
30 NEIGHBOURS (1330/1736)	Thu 14 November	17.26
31 LONDON'S BURNING	Sun 10 November	17.24
32 NEIGHBOURS (1331/1736)	Wed 27 November	17.18
32= LONDON'S BURNING	Sun 24 November	17.18
34 NEIGHBOURS (1331/1737)	Fri 15 November	17.15
35 NEIGHBOURS (1330/1736)	Thu 21 November	17.09
36 NEIGHBOURS (1331/1737)	Wed 20 November	17.01
37 NEIGHBOURS (1330/1736)	Mon 04 November	16.99
38 NEIGHBOURS (1329/1737)	Fri 08 November	16.90
39 NEIGHBOURS (1330/1736)	Thu 28 November	16.67
39= NEIGHBOURS (1331/1737)	Tue 05 November	16.67
41 NEIGHBOURS (1331/1736)	Thu 07 November	16.49
42 LONDON'S BURNING	Sun 17 November	16.43
43 NEIGHBOURS (1331/1736)	Fri 29 November	16.38
44 R.RENDELL MYSTRIES	Sun 01 December	16.34
45 CASUALTY	Fri 29 November	16.06
46 NEIGHBOURS (1331/1736)	Wed 13 November	16.00
47 CASUALTY	Fri 15 November	15.96
48 THE BILL	Tue 12 November	15.90
49 R.RENDELL MYSTRIES	Sun 24 November	15.80
50 CASUALTY	Fri 08 November	15.68

Channel	Average Weekly Viewing per person		Share of Total Viewing	
	November (Hrs : Mins)	October (Hrs : Mins)	November (%)	October (%)
ALL/ANY TV	28:49	27:00	100.0	100.0
BBC 1 (incl. Brkfast Time)	9:36	8:39	33.3	32.0
BBC 2	2:49	2:46	9.7	10.2
TOTAL BBC	12:26	11:24	43.1	42.2
ITV (incl. T.V. am)	12:17	11:43	42.5	43.4
CHANNEL 4/S4C	2:48	2:47	9.7	10.2
TOTAL/ANY ITV	15:05	14:30	52.3	53.6
Other Viewing	1:19	1:06	4.5	4.0

DEFINITIONS

Share of Total Viewing - The percentage of total viewing accounted for by each channel.

Timeshift - Viewing of broadcast material recorded at home and played back within 7 days of recording.

Population - Individuals aged 4 and over in UK private households containing a TV set in working order.

Other Viewing - Viewing to channels other than ITV, CH4/S4C, BBC1, BBC2. This is for all households.

Satellite/Cable Viewing - Viewing in homes able to receive broadcasts either via dish antenna or cable.

SHARE OF VIEWING BY ITV REGION

	ITV		CHANNEL 4/S4C		BBC 1		BBC 2		OTHER VIEWING	
	Nov (%)	Oct (%)	Nov (%)	Oct (%)	Nov (%)	Oct (%)	Nov (%)	Oct (%)	Nov (%)	Oct (%)
London	41.5	42.4	10.0	10.4	33.4	31.7	9.9	10.4	4.9	4.6
Midlands E&W	43.6	43.8	9.1	9.6	31.7	30.9	9.9	10.3	5.5	5.1
North West	43.9	44.2	9.0	9.8	33.6	32.0	9.2	9.9	4.2	3.9
Yorkshire	44.0	43.4	9.6	10.8	33.3	32.6	8.8	9.1	4.0	3.8
C. Scotland	41.1	43.9	11.7	12.4	33.7	30.4	9.9	10.1	3.3	2.7
Wales & West	40.6	42.5	7.9	8.2	33.4	31.5	10.4	9.9	5.1	5.2
South & S.East	43.1	42.1	9.3	10.1	33.1	33.0	9.6	10.3	4.5	4.2
North East	40.4	40.3	10.9	10.9	34.1	33.7	10.1	11.0	4.3	3.7
East of England	39.3	41.0	9.4	9.9	34.7	32.9	11.0	11.5	5.4	4.3
South West	40.5	42.7	8.8	9.6	36.8	34.0	9.5	9.3	4.2	4.1
Ulster	43.7	43.8	9.4	10.1	30.0	29.7	7.3	8.1	9.3	7.9
Border	46.4	46.7	9.8	10.6	30.6	29.4	8.6	8.9	4.4	4.2
N. Scotland	44.4	46.4	10.6	10.0	31.8	30.4	9.1	9.5	3.9	3.2
Network	42.5	43.4	9.7	10.2	33.3	32.0	9.7	10.2	4.5	4.0

N.B 1. The Network Share figures are based on BBC viewing and all ITV viewing in the U.K. For an individual ITV region, however, the share of audience is based upon viewing to the individual ITV Channel and to the BBC regional transmitter(s) covering that ITV region.

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TALKBACK - WITH PETER FIDDICK

The biggest difficulty raised by the ratings this winter is - and will certainly continue to be - the interpretation of the satellite figures. This month's summary illustrates the dynamic nature of the situation; in November, "Other Viewing" averaged 4.5 per cent of the total, against 4.0 per cent in October.

Meanwhile, the FT Satellite Monitor reports that the big pre-Christmas marketing drive, which satellite television is now attempting for the third time, has gathered what could be critical momentum. Sales in November are put at a touch over 100,000, and if the final pre-Christmas weeks continue to make the Astra dish, at rock-bottom prices, one of the rare commodities to buck the consumer spending trend, Britain looks set to enter 1992 with 2 million households wired for direct-to-home satellite reception. If breaching the £200 level for the price has been psychologically important and if 2 million owners proves to be another of what stock market observers see as resistance points (not so much for technical reasons in this case - maybe just because there will be enough dish-flaunting neighbours to keep up with!), then the year ahead could see the reach of DTH pushing on apace.

The impact of that on audience research, however, could be very confusing. The technical problems of keeping up with a rapidly-changing audience (and one with possibly an uneven geographical spread) are tricky enough. They are compounded by the fact - demonstrated in this November summary - that satellite households not only distribute their viewing time very differently but in a variety of different patterns. That, after all, is the main point of the choice that multi-channel television is supposed to bring.

The situation is quite the reverse of what we experienced in Britain's last channel launch: C4 was available to almost all the population on or very soon after Day One. Even then, there were puzzles enough in the early figures. It is already hard enough judging quite what is going on in the satellite community. The straight league table of share, for instance, cannot tell us anything about subscription audience size on the one hand or the effect of scheduling patterns on the other. Let alone that most tantalising of statistics, churn-rate. Nor need we expect the latter, certainly, to be volunteered.

But there is no need to dig so deep for problems. Am I alone, for instance, in being puzzled by the global average viewing figures, which this month show the national audience watching an average 28 hours 49 minutes a week, while the satellite-owners - most presumably in the full flush of the new-toy phase, at 29:28 are notching up a mere forty minutes more?

In the spirit of glasnost which this Talkback column is intended to induce, I report a response from Pamela Reiss, Thames Television's controller of programme development and noted user of research, referring to this monthly summary itself.

What, she asks, is the value of the traditional Top Fifty chart, packed as it inevitably is with the thrice-or-twice-weekly serials? "No way does it represent the range and diversity of popular viewing within the month".

Using a different basis, allowing each programme only one entry per day - so that Monday's Coronation Street, for instance, gets one entry, not four or five, she provides a sample for October which contains 42 different titles, ending with Catchphrase at 10.4 million.

I can't say I had expected to strike quite so close to home so quickly, but I have no qualms about giving this topic an airing, since BARB have known my own view of the matter for years. It is the Board's decision. But I've no doubt they would be interested to hear other opinions...

A salutary note of relevance to the interpretation of audience figures, I thought, occurred in the course of a Daily Telegraph article about the new-found fame and future plans of Saskia Wickham, the actress who played Clarissa in the BBC2 serialisation. Though its first episode occurred in the last week of the period covered by this summary, you would not expect to find it in the month's Top 50.

Still, it certainly started out all right: BBC2's No.4, with an audience of 5.24 million. Miss Wickham, the Telegraph's James Delingpole reported, remains modest, "despite rave reviews and audience figures in excess of five million (exceptionally high for a BBC2 drama about a virtually unread, mammoth epistolary novel)".

Put like that, what future commentator could disagree. On the other hand, posterity might also find it helpful to know that the series was heavily promoted with a skilful montage strong on straining bodices, lascivious hero and promise of dire doings to come. It was the ratings for episode three that promised to be "exceptionally high" - swelled, further research might show, by folk who would not know an epistolary novel from a doorstep.