

Interview with David Waine (1944-2021) Head of Network Production Centre/Head of Broadcasting, BBC Pebble Mill, 1983- 1994

This edited interview is part of a longer video oral history I recorded with David Waine in 2017 and 2020, which is available through the BECTU History Project:

<https://historyproject.org.uk/interview/david-waine> . Sadly, David Waine died in January 2021.

Context

When I joined BBC Pebble Mill in 1987 as a junior secretary, it was David Waine's signature on my security pass. This was how every member of staff knew exactly who the Head of Broadcasting of the BBC in Birmingham was.

BBC Pebble Mill was the first purpose-built broadcast centre for both television and radio in Europe (BBC, 1962). It opened in 1971 and was demolished in 2004, when production was scaled-down and moved elsewhere in Birmingham. At its height it produced around ten percent of BBC network radio and television output (Wood, 2005), and employed around 1,500 staff. It was home to the renowned English Regions Drama Department, which had produced *Plays for Today* 'Gangsters' (1975), 'Nuts in May' (1976), and later iconic dramas like *Boys from the Blackstuff* (1982). The centre had a reputation for multicultural production in both drama and factual programming, housing the Multicultural Programme Unit which became the Asian Programme Unit. The daily lunchtime magazine *Pebble Mill at One* (1972-86) brought a host of stars to Birmingham, and the factual output included titles such as: *Top Gear* (1977-), *Gardeners' World* (1968-), *Countryfile* (1988-) and *The Clothes Show* (1986-2000). Much of the output was what Frances Bonner terms 'ordinary television', focussed around domestic subjects and largely ignored by academics (2003). This scholarly neglect makes oral accounts, like this interview, all the more valuable in exploring the television ecology of the English regions.

David Waine built on the production culture he inherited at Pebble Mill, growing, refreshing and consolidating it. He focussed attention on four key areas of television programming, which are explored in this interview: daytime, leisure, drama and multicultural output. He held the top job at a

critical time for broadcasting, from the mid-1980s to the 1990s, with competition from independent production becoming established and privatisation beginning to affect the working culture within the BBC. Television was transitioning from John Ellis's era of 'availability' to that of 'plenty' (2000). For Pebble Mill it was a time of expansion, a reflection of the emphasis on 'centres of excellence' in the nations and regions in the 'Extending Choice' initiative of the early 1990s (BBC, 1992). However, by the time Waine left in 1994, there were already foreboding signs concerning the long-term future of the broadcast centre.

As Head of the Network Production Centre, Waine had responsibility for running all Pebble Mill network television and radio programming. He later became Head of Broadcasting, with additional responsibility for regional television and local radio output across the whole of the Midlands Region, from Leicester in the east to the Welsh border in the west.

Leaving school at sixteen, Waine worked on a local newspaper for five years before becoming a freelance reporter for BBC South in Southampton. He later joined the BBC in Bristol. In 1967 he was appointed Programme Organiser for BBC Radio Brighton, and launched sports presenter, Des Lynham's career. He became Manager of BBC Radio Bristol in 1970, nurturing new talent including Kate Adie and Jenni Murray, before being appointed Regional Television Manager for BBC South West, in Plymouth in 1978. By 1983, ready for a new challenge, he applied, and was surprised to be appointed, Head of the Network Production Centre at BBC Pebble Mill:

Interview

David Waine: When I got there I found a really dynamic centre. I loved it. It was fizzing. I found a staff that was immensely committed to the building, to the programmes and although of course, they had quarrels with each other, they were also in a strange way wedded together. They always stood by each other through thick and thin, and that struck me as something that, if I destroyed, whatever else I might have created, it would be a downside. So that was good, and in a programme sense, innovation ran through what they had done before I went there, programmes like 'Gangsters' (1975); *Pot Black* (1969-86), (you know, a single frame snooker tournament which came with the coming of colour television and provided the foundations for the growth of snooker in this country and around the world); an iconic drama series which could only have been made outside of London, *Boys from the Blackstuff* (1982). People are still talking about it forty years on, and they'll be talking about it forever because it was a mind-blowing thing. And *Top Gear*, it began as a regional programme and was on BBC2 and doing extremely well, and has gone through various forms of life, some with more success than others. But it's a brand that will live forever. All this happened before I went to Pebble Mill. It was immediately obvious that you wanted to keep the same ethos and you wanted to keep the same sense of dynamism and innovation.

The other thing that struck you when you walked in the building was that there was a daily programme coming from the foyer called *Pebble Mill at One* (1972-86). It was a trend setter, a mould-breaker. It was of its time. There was no *Breakfast Time* (1983-89) there was no daytime, so one o'clock, suddenly you had *Pebble Mill at One*, a topical features magazine programme. The audience that watched it was devoted to it. It meant that when people came to work, it didn't matter whether they were clerks, whether they were cleaners, whether they were in the canteen, or whether they were Heads of Drama, they walked into a building which was manifestly committed to broadcasting, that's its number one objective. So those were all the plusses.

The downsides were that refreshment was necessary, in my view. Refreshment both of the programme output, some of which had got a bit stale and refreshment of programme teams. Some programme teams which had been together a long time perhaps needed greater challenge. That's how I felt when I walked in and a strategy did emerge, but it grew out of those original instincts.

Refreshing the programmes

DW: It's all about programmes. It's like running a football club really, if you start losing games, you've got nothing left. So, we had to enrich the programmes first. And actually, we had to do it very quickly because the BBC operated an Offers process every year, where you had to go to the channel controllers and offer them new programmes, and old ones that were doing well, and you sold those programmes. That Offers sequence was right upon us when I arrived. I can remember sitting in my office in Pebble Mill with bits of paper, knocking out offers, many of which were ideas I'd dreamt up, some of them from other people and after discussion we decided what to go through with. We sold a couple of films that were dramatisations of Laurie Lee books, *As I Walked Out [One Midsummer Morning]* (1987) was one of them. That to me was a good thing to do because it showed a sort of intellectual level. It also showed that we were looking for things that were genuinely of the region, but of use both nationally and internationally. But you have to decide what your strategy is going to be and we, the management group of Pebble Mill, decided that in television terms, we probably had four specialisms: one was drama, one was daytime, one was multicultural, and one was something that we called 'leisure'. And leisure, I think we almost invented as a big-time television genre, and we tried to develop along those four prongs.

In those days, you were offering to the Controller BBC One and the Controller BBC Two. How the Offers process went depended on the personalities of the Controllers. In the case of BBC One our senior programme people took ideas to the Controller of BBC One and we went through what those ideas were, how they could develop, what the likely cost of them was going to be, and how likely it was that we could pull them off, who might present them etc. And that was done in his office. The job was to persuade him that there were things that were worth developing.

In the case of BBC Two at my first Offers, it was very different. Brian Wenham [Controller BBC Two 1978 - 1982], who was a very different personality from Alan Hart [Controller BBC One, 1981-4], came to Pebble Mill and to begin with sat in my office and we had a nice ruminative conversation. ⁱ Then he said to me, ‘do you play snooker?’ I said ‘no, I don’t play snooker actually’, ‘oh, that’s a pity I’d have given you a game of snooker’, and I said that Jim Dumighan, who was a senior executive there, ‘Jim Dumighan plays’. ⁱⁱ So he said, ‘let’s go and play snooker’, and it was like a scene from *The Hustler* [1961] really, because it was a big full size snooker table in the Club, and Jim and Brian Wenham went on this table potting balls, or not, as the case may be, while we discussed the various programmes that he liked or didn’t like. There was a dreadful moment where Brian Wenham won the first set easily and he was cock-a-hoop with confidence and Jim, canny guy that he was, won the second set. It was all terribly edgy then, and I managed to draw the game to a halt. I thought we’d lose all our programmes over winning a game of snooker. But that’s how it was done those days. It’s absolutely true. It’s an unusual thing, but that’s what happened. ⁱⁱⁱ I mean the whole Offers process became, through commissioning editors, much more professional, than it was at the time.

Daytime Television

DW: Michael Grade had by then become the Controller of BBC One. And he decided that he wanted a definitive daytime schedule. *Breakfast Time* had begun in 1983, but there was nothing in between it and *Pebble Mill at One*. He understandably wanted to create a personality which took the BBC from the moment you woke up in the morning until the moment you went to bed at night.

He appointed a Head of Daytime Television, who worked out of London, who ironically was the first assistant editor of *Pebble Mill at One*. His name was Roger Laughton, a hugely talented man and one of his first decisions, along with Michael Grade of course, was that they wanted to move the midday News to one o’clock. That raised questions about how you can do *Pebble Mill at One* when it’s not going to be on at one o’clock. They both felt that *Pebble Mill at One* had passed its moment in time. Michael put it to me, it was a bit like a cuddly cardigan, and I don’t want a cuddly cardigan. I want something sharper, more ‘now’ than that. Roger Laughton, the Head of Daytime, had seen *Neighbours* [1985 – present] and thought this would be a marvellous soap opera to run after the News at 1.30pm and would bring a younger audience to BBC One, and he could get it relatively cheaply. We did play with the idea of doing it in a different time slot, but it felt second-hand. So, it disappeared, very sadly. From the point of view of the building we were able to do a deal, which over a short period of time meant that we were editorially responsible for all the morning daytime programmes, from nine o’clock: *Kilroy* [1987 – 2004], through the midmorning until the One O’clock News. The main centre point to that was [*Good Morning with*] *Anne and Nick* [1992-96]. We were

not doing *Kilroy* in Birmingham, it was done in London, but we were editorially responsible for it. So, there were many gains for Pebble Mill in that deal, but sadly an iconic show disappeared.

Leisure Programmes

DW: Birmingham had, without knowing it, been involved in leisure programming long before Pebble Mill. *Gardeners' World* was in black and white with Percy Thrower and done out of Birmingham, and it became the big programme that it was, and still is. There was *Pot Black*, which was a sort of leisure programme and then there was the idea from *Pebble Mill at One*, a spin-off programme called *On The House* (1987-88), in which a house was built within the courtyard in the centre of Pebble Mill and it dealt with do-it-yourself, everything that you have to do when you own your own house. Remember these were the Thatcher, own your own house, days. It was never out of the BBC Two top ten. And probably the biggest and most important one of them all was *The Clothes Show*. Jeff Banks [designer and presenter], used to do a fashion spot on *Pebble Mill at One* and Roger Casstles, who was a producer involved with that, put out the idea of a weekly show which would be produced in a way not seen before. It would focus on men and women's clothes with a pop music background to it, staccato editing and so on. It took us years to sell that. It was laughed at year after year and in the end, we managed to sell it more by luck than judgment. Selina Scott and Jeff Banks built it into a show that ran for a decade or more. And from it was spawned live events at the NEC, which a hundred thousand people used to go to, to see high fashion brought to the masses. It was a major step forward for leisure programming. Not to mention *Top Gear*, of course.

The Archers (1951-), I know it's not television but it's germane to what I'm saying, here was another example of the amazing interaction that there was. *The Archers* has gone on for donkeys' years and it goes through various different changes and it has its up times, it has its bad times. That's a normal ebb and flow of a series like *The Archers*. We appointed Vanessa Whitburn, who was working with the mainstream Radio Four drama, to edit it. She was personally very innovative and she brought new ideas to almost everything she did. She loved *The Archers* and she took it into a completely new world. She took it away from the, 'I'm in the farmyard, the weather's getting a bit damp', kind of thing of the Dan Archer period, and she brought it into the eighties with multicultural people, with homosexual people living in the villages, and a completely different feel to it. Now that was extraordinarily successful, and it put on an audience. But what it did was, it caused the building to begin to think about some of the other things that it did, and it had a fundamental effect on the programme called *Farming* (1958-88), which went out on a Sunday morning and was a bit Ministry of Agriculture, imparting information to farmers. But it was perfectly clear that the world had moved on and *The Archers* had picked that up. It was beginning to filter through to others of us in the building and I realized that the *Farming* programme on BBC One had probably passed its time, and I

went back to the office on a Monday morning absolutely hell-bent on getting rid of it. I got a phone call in the afternoon and John [Kenyon, series producer of *Farming*] said could he pop up and have a word with me. He came in and said, 'I think *Farming* has had its day', he described exactly what we've been talking about. So, you know, everything has its time, doesn't it? We couldn't do something like that without the BBC agreeing it of course, and we were well aware of the political ramifications of it, the fact that we were going to upset the farming community, the fact that the NFU [National Farmers' Union], which is a very powerful lobby, weren't going to like this, but the BBC were very supportive in London. They took a little while to think through the politics of it, but in the end, they supported the move from *Farming* to what became known as *Countryfile* (1988-) and faced-down the opposition, which didn't last very long, actually. I went around to a number of meetings, and it was fairly fierce to begin with, but once they saw what was happening, it began to die away, and *Countryfile* found its feet. What has been done with it is absolutely superb. It's been given a decent budget and it's been given the resources of a top flight, peak time BBC One programme, and it shows. But in essence it's exactly the same programme as it was when it was conceived and got into its stride.

John King was the executive producer of *Countryfile* and he was forever coming up with interesting ideas. I first came across John in Bristol, we were friendly, so, when I came from Plymouth to Birmingham, he followed and produced a number of very unusual shows and he was also very good at finding new talent. He was amazing at finding people and recognizing them, like Jeremy Clarkson. Alan Yentob [Controller BBC Two, 1987-1992] wanted to reform *Top Gear*. I don't think I thoroughly understood what Alan was after, but he was after a design show with gloss and performance and vigour in the kind of pictures that it created, and the way that it was presented and we realized that you couldn't even begin to do that until you changed presenters. Somebody, I can't remember who, mentioned Jeremy Clarkson to John King, who was doing freelance work in the 'Top Gear' office. John chatted to him and gave him a film to make and he came into my office one day and he said, 'I think we might have found the guy to do 'Top Gear'', and showed me the film and he was absolutely what we wanted. He was brash. He was a classy writer, a classy performer. There was a sensuality about him. John was convinced that cars were all about sex and the bonnets were phallic symbols and all the rest of it. That was the way he saw it and he put these two things together and he also said to the production team, this programme has got to be made with the gloss of a car advert only they make it for 600,000 pounds, we've got to do it for six - can't be done - but it was. The audience figures that *Top Gear* got then, remember it was BBC Two for half an hour; it was entertaining, but it wasn't an entertainment programme, it was a journalistic programme which was hard journalism, and got us into a lot of trouble with the car industry, but it was getting seven, eight and very occasionally ten million viewers. It was a staggering success, much of it linked to Clarkson and his individualistic personality.^{iv}

Television Drama

DW: I had a clear view that the dramas that we made, should have something to say, or a talent to exploit, that was of the Midlands. That's not to say that it was parochial and only of interest to the Midlands. For instance, Arnold Bennett's *Anna of the Five Towns* (1985), in the Potteries was made by our department, editorially responsible to Pebble Mill. We made several D.H. Lawrences; they were made in the East Midlands, some of them in studio, but they were quintessentially Midlands programmes. *Nice Work* (1991), which was David Lodge's adaptation of his own book, which was set in the West Midlands industrial and academic areas where people changed jobs and very well explained the contradictions in Thatcherism probably better than anybody has ever done before or since, that was another thing that we did. *Shalom Salaam* (1989), which was a multicultural drama done out of Leicester was another.^v So, there were all these aspects of our editorial control that we carried out, which we tried to have a non-metropolitan view of. That's what we tried to do with what we called 'in-house' stuff. It wasn't always possible, the main reason was that we couldn't always sell the dramas we wanted to make, and because we had this great resource, we had to keep making drama, so we had to make other dramas, which we weren't editorially responsible for. The hosted^{vi} stuff was given to us effectively, and we took thankfully, and it didn't just build the craft space but it built the standing of the building within the Midlands, and made us more able to compete on equal terms with Central^{vii} as it was, and ATV^{viii} before that. So, there were many reasons for these two different streams. One of the hosted dramas which was one of the most successful ever done out of Pebble Mill was *Howards' Way* (1985-90), produced by Gerry Glaister, a London-based hugely talented producer, who fought with all his stuff to have it made in Birmingham.

Vanity Fair (1987), was a wonderful glossy, superb production and it was editorially run by people in London, but it was entirely resourced by people in Pebble Mill. Dressers, hairdressers, carpenters, scene shifters, film editors, video editors, all of it was done in Pebble Mill. The craft skills that there were in Pebble Mill were second to none. There were all these big productions, productions like *All Creatures Great and Small* (1978-90), and we made our own *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1994), which was a costumed drama with the same costume skills that had been burnished by these other productions. So, when the building shut, those skills disappeared, and they didn't just disappear for the BBC in Birmingham, they were skills which largely have disappeared for Birmingham itself.

Martin Chuzzlewit had never been televised and David Lodge a Birmingham academic and world-rated writer produced the adaptation. Pedr James was the director and Chris Parr, BAFTA winning, was the producer. And we put this idea up over and over again and we couldn't get it commissioned and, in the end, we couldn't get anything else commissioned at that time and I had a feeling that there was the move afoot to begin to downplay the commissions from Pebble Mill because we were finding

that sort of thing in other areas. And I said in Television Centre one day, when we'd been arguing over to commission, or not to commission for far too long, 'look if you don't commission this Dickens: *Chuzzlewit*, David Lodge, Chris Parr, you're not going to commission anything, so, I'll go back home and shut the department down, because why would we want to waste our time?' Absolute silence. And when I got back to Birmingham beginning to rue being rather out-spoken, I had a message from London saying they'd commissioned it. *Martin Chuzzlewit*, incidentally was a stunning success and won many awards.

There was *Our Friends in the North* (1996), political satire is the wrong word, exposé of life in the north of England, of a political dimension; Michael Wearing was the producer, we offered it for seven years and it was turned down and we were told never again to offer it.^{ix} They were fed up with hearing about it, 'we're not going to make it'. Michael Wearing moved to London, to be Head of Serials, and it was made immediately he was back in London.^x And I think there were two elements to it; the most important of which was that in order to make *Our Friends in the North* you had to shift a considerable amount of money to Birmingham, and they weren't prepared to do that, but they were prepared to spend the same, or probably more, to make it in London. The second reason was very political: to have it close to hand, so they can control it.

Multicultural Television

DW: When I first got the job, I spent my evenings walking around Smethwick and I realized that there was a whole new world growing up here very fast, that nobody was reflecting and I wanted to do that. The programme that Pebble Mill was doing was aimed at first generation immigrants and it was in Hindi/Urdu. It had a very small following and it was living in an age where we were dealing the second-generation immigrants. My view was that what the BBC should do was to end the Sunday morning Hindi/Urdu programme, and start more contemporary programming, which actually got into today's communities in English, and only use Asian mother tongue when it was absolutely critical to do so. I thought I would try and persuade the BBC centrally to move its mother tongue programming on to BBC local radio, and then they wouldn't have to do some sort of one-size-fits-all language. They could use Gujarati where they were talking to Gujarati people and Hindi when talking to Hindu people etc. And that is what happened, and I have to say the BBC were absolutely terrific about it. It was negotiated with London very, very quickly. It was very controversial. It got the backing of the Board of Governors on one hearing.

Local radio took over the language side of it; we closed the Sunday programme and we started doing magazines devoted to contemporary life of second-generation immigrants. Later on we set up a

Multicultural Unit. There was a Black unit called *Ebony* in Bristol, who never felt comfortable there. They moved to Birmingham and we dealt with the wider issues of multicultural programming. Incidentally that was during the days of apartheid and we did some memorable output in Soweto. We were one of the first programme departments to tell the full story of the life and death of Steve Biko, the Black Consciousness leader, and we had many run-ins with the South African Embassy over some of our stuff, and were the subject of visits from the South African ambassador [*Biko: The Spirit Lives* (1988)]. We had a moment when he wanted to come and talk to us and I said well, we'd be delighted to meet him and at the end of the conversation, I said to him, there's just one point here, 'I will be bringing some programme makers with me', and he said, 'of course', so I said, 'and they will be Black, and they will have been to South Africa', then there was a bit of a pause and he said okay. So, I brought from the *Ebony* crew, Vastiana Belfon, who headed it up and a number of her colleagues, and we had an extremely edgy, not very enjoyable event at the time, but an event that lives in the memory for now, for ever more with the South African ambassador. It was very good. But all that was a sort of fusion of things that were going on in the streets in the West Midlands and things that were going on in Pebble Mill.

As part of the same initiative, we tried to increase the number of black and brown faces on the staff of Pebble Mill, and that was very difficult. We discovered that the problem was that the Black people believed that the BBC in particular, and Pebble Mill as a specific example, were an all-male, all-white, Oxbridge educated elite who didn't want people like them. That was not true of Pebble Mill, but that's what they thought. We bought a caravan actually, and we toured the ethnic areas with the caravan and where we did have Black people, we took them with us, and tried to get them to understand that all their applications would be welcomed. We also set aside a small fund for training and in the end, we got people applying in the natural course and working at Pebble Mill, and where they perhaps weren't quite ready for the jobs that we had to offer, because they had no history of working in those areas, we gave them training contracts and they either gained or didn't gain jobs in the end in open competition. That worked very well and it brought the number of ethnic minority people up significantly and at the same time we were also trying to get women into senior management positions.^{xi} There were a lot of women in production, more difficult in resources areas, but we were working on that as well. We had a small equal opportunities group on which we looked at issues of gender, issues of ethnicity, issues of sexuality and we did what we could at a time when I have to say it was not that popular a thing to do. We did what we could to change those things.

The beginning of the end for Pebble Mill

DW: The first indications go back quite a long way, maybe to the mid-eighties and there was a group that was known by the staff as 'black spot'.^{xii} It used to go around the BBC looking for areas where

they could cut expenditure. I know for a fact, because I have been told by two very senior people who were involved, that they came to Pebble Mill to talk to us about 'rationalization' as it's called, and they arrived in a small plane, and as they circled Pebble Mill, one said to the other, 'I'll tell you what, there's an easy way around this cuts target, if you took out Pebble Mill, that would find all the cuts you need and we wouldn't have disrupted the BBC'. That was seriously discussed, not with me, but between the group and it was decided not the thing to do. From that moment on, I'm fairly sure that there was a sort of unspoken belief that maybe we've got one building too many, and if there was, it's Pebble Mill.

The other examples of things that I began to become concerned about are not connected to that conversation. There was then another resource economies group which was looking at ways of cutting the outside broadcast units. We had a quite significant outside broadcast unit in Birmingham, which we defended, because we saw it as an absolutely essential part of the dynamic of the building. You could use it for big outside broadcast like sports, you could use it for things like 'Gardeners World'. It was essential to the building and we lost that argument.

Subsequently, we were told that Studio A, which was the major studio in Pebble Mill, purpose-built studio was going to be closed. We fought a long battle over Studio A, basically on the grounds that we couldn't fulfil the commitment to programmes that we had without it, and we lost that. At the same time there was a constant wish of the BBC centrally to take the name Pebble Mill off the credits of all the programmes that we made and replace it either with 'Midlands', or 'Birmingham', for which there was absolutely no logic whatsoever. Then, in addition, there were huge resource cuts, which were faced by many other areas of the BBC. We lost something like one in five of our resource staff. All the time it was narrowing the number and variety of shows that you were capable of producing. It became clear that something was not right and, we were not being properly included in these conversations and so suspicions inevitably began to grow.

In the end, Pebble Mill went on ten years beyond when I left, but in my last two years, it was becoming increasingly difficult to get new commissions in areas where we had a terrific track record and there was never any real rational reason why.

I was rung by a member of the BBC's Board of Governors who was particularly friendly towards Pebble Mill, and he said, could he come for a strictly private conversation, and would I bring with me one or two senior trusted managers. We had a modest lunch with this governor who made it absolutely clear that in his words, there were enemy forces afoot in London. And as well as we did, it was not going to be good enough to survive. And you had to run the place on the basis of excellence all the time, no mistakes, and take no risks. So, we said to him, you can't run a broadcasting establishment like that. That's just not the way they run, and if we tried it would be the most boring

setup ever invented, to which he said, 'that's the problem'. We all came away from that seriously unnerved.

Some of the things that happened to me when I was trying to run Pebble Mill began to shake my faith in the BBC and some of the policies that were being pursued, I had very little sympathy with. I began to find it very difficult standing up in public day after day, selling the deal I wouldn't have bought myself. So that made it easier to go.

The BBC was being pushed by government, quite rightly, to devolve more to the national regions, but something had to give to pay for all that, and they were not prepared, for reasons best known to themselves, to take a big enough chunk out of London. So, they took one sizeable chunk, maybe ten percent of the BBC at the time, and that money came from Pebble Mill.

Concluding thoughts

DW: When I went to Pebble Mill, I inherited from my predecessor, Phil Sidey, a very vibrant centre, full of committed hard-working people who had been great programme innovators, and I like to think that when I left it in 1994, it was just as strong, if not stronger. Certainly, I'm proud that in the time I was there we built up the volume of output coming from Pebble Mill. We were doing more than 500 hours a year of network television to BBCs One and Two, we were doing thousands of award-winning hours of network radio, including *The Archers*, mainly to Radios Two, Three and Four. Doing that against the backcloth of what we have discussed was a very difficult thing to do.

In more individual things, I am proud that we made some progress in Birmingham in the areas of equalities, gender, ethnic minorities, etc. I'm proud that for a while we set the pace with the reporting of ethnic minority communities, and I'm very proud of the move from *Farming* to *Countryfile* because it brought country life to an increasingly urban country, on a scale that nobody could ever have envisaged.

I am deeply proud to have worked for the BBC and I feel privileged to have done so and not for nothing, when you go around the world, do you find that Britain is revered for the BBC and the National Health Service. I played a very tiny part in that. I am humbled by it really. But, having said that, the BBC is at times, a huge bureaucracy; it can be extremely frustrating to work with, and you spend an awful lot of energy doing things that ought not to have been necessary in the first place, and that debilitates what you're able to give, and that's one of my overall frustrations. But, in terms of the artistic output of the programmes of Pebble Mill, I think we achieved all it was possible to achieve given the circumstances in which we were operating at the time.

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ⁱ It is unclear why Brian Wenham was conducting the Offers round in 1983, when his controllership finished in 1982.

ⁱⁱ Jim Dumighan directed many episodes of the BBC snooker tournament *Pot Black*.

ⁱⁱⁱ This incident chimes with Kate Murphy's observation that 'the [BBC's] 'men's club' atmosphere at the top was seen to be alienating' (2016, p.264), particularly for women.

^{iv} Frances Bonner emphasises that *Top Gear* is 'presenter-dominated', with them central to the series' popularity (2010, p. 33)

^v Gavin Schaffer notes that programme makers on multicultural television dramas were, and still are, predominantly white (2014, p.231). From having worked in drama at Pebble Mill myself, this was certainly my recollection of the late 1980s.

^{vi} Hosted dramas were those produced editorially by teams in London, but resourced by craft departments at Pebble Mill.

^{vii} Central Independent Television was the regional ITV company in Birmingham from 1982-2002 and had various name changes, including Carlton Central.

^{viii} Associated Television (ATV) was the predecessor to Central, it operated from 1956-82.

^{ix} Michael Wearing had been part of the English Regions Drama Department at Pebble Mill from the mid 1970s to the early 1980s, producing *Boys from the Blackstuff*, amongst others. He was Head of Drama at Pebble Mill from 1988-90.

^x Lez Cooke asserts that *Our Friends in the North* had the longest production period in British television drama, with fourteen years of one-off development (2003, p.170).

^{xi} Georgina Born notes the success of promoting women into management across the BBC in the 1990s, but highlights that the same did not happen in relation to ethnic minorities and disabled people (2004, p. 202).

^{xii} The 'Black Spot' features in *Treasure Island* by Robert Louis Stevenson.