Monday 2nd November

90 years ago today, at 3pm on 2nd November 1936, around 400 “lookers-in” watched the launch of the BBC Television Service with a live broadcast from Alexandra Palace in London. Perhaps disappointing viewing figures today, but in reality there were only around 400 TV sets within broadcast range of Alexandra Palace (London and the South East) - so perhaps everyone watched! After all, they couldn’t switch channels, it was the first regular TV broadcast in the country and only the second (behind Germany) in the world.

The hour-long live **broadcast** included speeches from government and BBC officials before a variety show of music and plate spinning! At four o’clock it was over, The BBC Director of television worried about ‘eye-strain’ and didn’t want the broadcast to interfere with people’s lives and the putting of children to bed, so there was a 5-hour break until the next hour broadcast between 9 and 10pm. There was no TV at all on Sundays.

Although no footage of that first day survives, BBC Newsreel footage of the first day was broadcast a week later (seen here).



- Imagine how viewers at home would have felt watching this first broadcast.
- How would you cope with just one TV channel broadcasting just two hours of TV each day?
- What do we gain and lose when we all watch the same programme on TV at the same time?

Monday 2nd November

90 years ago today, at 3pm on 2nd November 1936, around 400 “lookers-in” watched the launch of the BBC Television Service with a live broadcast from Alexandra Palace in London.

That was good viewing figures given only around 400 TV sets were within range. The hour-long live **broadcast** included speeches before a variety show of music and plate spinning!

At 4pm it was over until a second hour at 9pm after dinner and children were in bed. TV was not to get in the way of people’s lives! (News footage of the broadcast)



- Imagine how viewers at home would have felt watching this first broadcast.
- How would you cope with just one TV channel broadcasting just two hours of TV each day?