



Kia ora and welcome

The banner illustration above comes from a little magazine I found, some years ago, in a second-hand store near Te Aroha in New Zealand. Cue was a fortnightly bulletin produced for soldiers in the 2 NZEF (the Second Expeditionary Force), who fought in North Africa and Italy in the Second World War. My father was one of these soldiers, helping to build railroads across the Libyan Desert, but he was also the ring-leader of a now famous or (infamous) mutiny. But that is another story...

But this is not a site about military history. It is a site designed to gather and record people's memories and experiences of television in New Zealand, with a particular emphasis on the the past 25 years (1985 to 2010).

So, why did I use this image? Well, it is because it is one of the earliest sources ("The Wonders of Television", Cue Feb 1945) I have found which speculates about the arrival of television in New Zealand. Television did not arrive on these shores until the early 1960s and, indeed, June 2010 is the anniversary of the first official transmission of television in New Zealand. Which is another reason for this site!

My Research Project

For a year or so, I have been researching the past twenty five years of television in New Zealand (1985 to 2010). I have focused on these more recent years because the first twenty years have been well recorded (as in Robert Boyd-Bell's 1985 book *New Zealand Television: The First 25 Years*), but the more recent decades not so well—even though, I would argue, they have been years of tremendous change in New Zealand television.

Such research is part of my job, as an academic in Screen and Media Studies at the University of Waikato, where I teach (amongst other things) Television Studies. I write about television (as in the 2002 book *It's All Done With Mirrors: About Television*, which I wrote with Helen Martin), do research on children and media, promote media teaching in schools, and occasionally work with programme makers.

Most importantly—and the real reason I am doing this research—is that I love watching, writing and talking about television. As a consequence, I want to begin a conversation with other folk who share such enthusiasms. If you would like to find out more about this research, or the other things I do, feel free to email me at lealand@waikato.ac.nz



How Did You Find Your Way Here?

You may have found this site by accident or serendipity, but it is more likely that you found it as a result of the Prime Television seven-part series *50 Years of Television* (directed by John Bates) which began on Prime on June 13, 2010 and ran through until late July

What I Would Like You To Do

You should firstly register. This just entails an email address and your choice of password . This is all the information I require from you—unless you want to volunteer any further information in first and subsequent postings. All such information will be kept within the confines of this secure site, and I will observe the usual guidelines of confidentiality as required by my university. If I eventually use any of this material for other purposes (see *What Will I Do With Research?* below), I will seek your consent.

Once I have approved your first posting (which ought to be straight-forward) you can add more material to the pages I will provide.

Your postings—at least in the early days of this site—can be in two forms:

Section 1. Responses to the Prime Television series.

Section 2. More general postings of memories, experiences and opinion about the role of television in New Zealand life.

Section 3. A page I have set aside for students in my second year university course *Television: Medium, Narrative & Audience*. As their first assignment, they write their personal history of television; this year I have asked them to post the stories to this site.

What I Don't Want You To Do

Because this is a public site, I cannot impose strict rules but I would like people to follow general guidelines of courtesy and fairness, especially in respect of:

- * appropriate language (no inflammatory language or personal attacks)
- * considered and well-informed opinions or experiences

What Will I Do With This Research?

Obviously, Prime will be interested in this independent source of feedback on their programmes. I will use the material for academic purposes, for a planned book chapter (an edited collection titled *Remembering Television*, to be published by Cambridge Scholar Publications in the UK), and possibly other publications.

Geoff Lealand: Screen and Media Studies, University of Waikato, New Zealand
<lealand@waikato.ac.nz>

Section 1: Responses to the Prime TV series

geofflealand:

May 20th, 2010 at 10:50 am

More information to come, nearer the screening date.

geofflealand:

June 7th, 2010 at 1:08 pm

Watch for the first episode of 50 Years of Television this coming Sunday (June 13) , at 8.30pm

mjs:

June 13th, 2010 at 10:39 pm

Very impressed with the programme; a very interesting and balanced presentation.

Bring on next week.

David French Says:

June 14th, 2010 at 10:33 am

I watched it last night and thought it was a good overview of the history of New Zealand television in general. A few mistakes crept in (with interviewees referring to TVNZ instead of Television One) and some startling omissions (eg Spot On, What Now, Play School, A Week of It) but I assume that some (if not all) will be mentioned in subsequent episodes.

I also hope that they take a look at the history of the junkings of NZ's TV archive – that's a story that really needs to be told.

geofflealand:

June 14th, 2010 at 10:55 am

Welcome to new arrivals to this discussion. I am attempting to keep two strands going—one on responses to the Prime series which started last night, and one for more general comments and memories. Obviously there will be some crossover so I recommend you view both pages, and contribute where you wish.

The 90 minute opening programme last night was very good and refuted the belief of some that telling a history in a chronological form would be dull and uninspired. There were obvious moments (eg Denis Connor and Paul Holmes) but also moments of surprise. The next 6 programmes will begin to fill in the gaps.

But, of course, I am more interested in your response to the opening programme: did it meet your expectations? Were there any glaring errors or omissions? What did you enjoy most about it, and where did it match with your own experiences*?

*For e4xample, I missed the whole Olly Ohlson thing as he appeared on screen in my before-children phase of life.

geofflealand:

June 14th, 2010 at 12:56 pm

If you missed the first screening, Prime will be repeating the opening 90 minute programme, on Saturday June 26 at 7.30pm

gavinriley:

June 14th, 2010 at 4:22 pm

Prime's first instalment in its "Fifty Years of NZ television" series was superb. It was intelligent, informative, a riveting combination of record and analysis, and in its content and presentation had a quality sadly lacking in much of television today – respect for the viewer. In short, it was the programme that TV1's earlier lamentable effort should have been. I look forward to the rest of the

series. Already it has told us a little more about who we are by recording and explaining where we've come from as a nation this past half-century. Well done, Prime, and all concerned.

Rusty Viewer:

June 14th, 2010 at 6:06 pm

It was interesting. I thought originally each episode might be decade by decade but they've taken a different approach. It's more like they did a general quick browse through the years and will focus of specific aspects in the coming weeks.

There was not a proper explanation of what really happened to Max TV. They were a local independent music Auckland station which ran for about 3 years. They became popular enough that, in order to kill the rising threat, TVNZ broadcast MTV free-to-air (about the only place in the world to do this) and then made an offer to the Max owners that they couldn't or wouldn't refuse. The complaint from the loyal staff at the time was that they had been sold out. Having achieved their goal, and with dismal MTV ratings (it's a pay channel for a reason), they shut it down. In the meantime though, they had also scooped up local frequencies around the country which included CTV in Christchurch. CTV was eventually reborn, and was merged with another regional station which had sprung up, NOW TV I think, or CHTV.

Of noticeable absence was the mention of changing viewing habits due to the introduction of television recorders, first tape, now hard disk. This has changed things considerably. I'd be surprised if this was omitted in a future episode.

No specific mention of any imported favourites. Hope they'll be a focus on that in an upcoming show though, presumably, they will mainly be talking about local production. However, imported shows on the whole is what shaped our viewing habits.

I hope they'll be

I wonder if they'll be any mention of "black easter"? Anyone remember that? It was in the mid-80s, a dark and sad time in the history of NZ television...

Rusty Viewer:

June 14th, 2010 at 6:13 pm

"I hope they'll be"...EEK! Hadn't finished a sentence, would be good to be able to edit our posts, wouldn't it (hint hint admin).

What I think I was going to say was...I hope they'll be more exploration of the regional news in the 70s. It was classic, and funny. Rodney Byrant and Bryan Allpress in Christchurch with their constant ribbing of one another and funny sketches such as "In Search Of The Source Of The Avon" which was a spoof of a popular documentary of the time "In Search Of The Source Of The Nile". I think I got the titles right. Then there was Roger Gasgoine in Wellington with his affectionate wink; he was like a rock star, mobbed by screaming girls wherever he went – or was that an exaggeration?

Rusty Viewer:

June 14th, 2010 at 8:45 pm

Oh, you probably know BTW that TV One are planning another special about 50 years of news and current affairs, and of course they are putting it up against the Prime documentary. I suspect this one will be in a more serious vein because, in spite of the good ratings, their first show was dismal and they need to save face, plus the Prime documentary is showing them up.

Nigel Varcoe:

June 14th, 2010 at 9:58 pm

As a viewer of television (rather than a media professional or commentator) I was struck by the depth and quality of our television history. I appreciated that Prime took 2 hours over this television special – with plenty more to come.

The diversity, quality, and relevance of television in NZ is amazing. As a result, I would love to see this New Zealand treasure trove made accessible year round.

What about a new "NZ television" Freeview channel? Basically take <http://www.nzonscreen.com> and put this on TV – not just online.

I'm sure that this has been thought of ... maybe what is required here is a "movement"? Or is it already happening?

geofflealand:

June 15th, 2010 at 8:46 am

Good comments, Nigel. I guess this the objective behind "Heartland" on Sky. The only problem is that this is on a pay-TV service, when it really ought to be freely available (seeing we have paid for such programming, in one way or another, in the past).

Rusty Viewer:

June 15th, 2010 at 12:36 pm

TVNZ 6 is already showing some local stuff. Not Gloss though unfortunately but I don't see that on Heartland either.

Back to the Prime special – seeing Muldoon again got me all riled up about what an arrogant bully he was. What a shame no one could stand up to him, and those who did either lost their jobs (eg: Tom Scott) and/or got blacklisted (eg: Ian Frasier). Methinks in the end that maybe Muldoon was just a coward full of bluff, and I say coward because he basically avoided any reporter who would ask him the hard questions, actually daring to try to make him accountable for his time in office. And that's why he killed the two competing channels system, because competition makes reporters try all the harder to find the truth. Yep, nine years under a dictator who contrlled the media and squelshed free speech. Was it really much different than under Russia at the time?

geofflealand:

June 15th, 2010 at 1:42 pm

Yes, I agree that Muldoon came across as a spiteful villain. It makes you wonder why we tolerated him for far too long.

Rusty Viewer Says:

June 15th, 2010 at 3:44 pm

Afraid of losing a job or even being arrested? Hmm...maybe knocked off? You know, there's a rumour that's what happened to Norman Kirk. But I digress from the topic at hand.

geofflealand:

June 16th, 2010 at 9:33 pm

Any topics people want to introduce at this point? We could go back to my opening question ie "Were the second 25 years of television in New Zealand different from the first 25 years?"

I guess there is an obvious answer, but the 'why' might be worth exploring.

Rusty Viewer:

June 17th, 2010 at 1:19 am

Different? Yes, because of private competition, aggressive marketing from TVNZ, stckpiling of programs some of which never saw the lgiht of day, and dumbing down caused TV in some respects to deteriorate. What happened to the days when we had different programs on each day? Now they are only different from 7:30pm until about midnight. Will people get too confused if there is something different on at 6 each night now?

Rusty Viewer:

June 17th, 2010 at 1:21 am

Oh, Ok, I see I already answered that question in pg2. Forgive me for repeating, but then again, that's just like television isn't it!

geofflealand:

June 17th, 2010 at 5:24 pm

Thanks, Rusty. As Steve Allen once famously declared, "Imitation is the sincerest form of television"!

geofflealand:

June 20th, 2010 at 10:21 pm

Another excellent episode tonight, on television's role in social change in New Zealand. Some of the footage was familiar; much of it was new.

I do have my doubts about the claims re television news coverage being a primary factor in bringing the Vietnam War to an end. This has become a truism, when the evidence for it is patchy—the futility of conventional warfare against the Vietcong is a more likely explanation.

geofflealand:

June 20th, 2010 at 10:21 pm

I am certainly interested in your responses to this second episode.

Andrew Says:

June 22nd, 2010 at 5:34 pm

Has anyone noticed that the TVNZ 50 years of TVNZ news special is going to screen on a Sunday night at 8.30. The same time as guess what?

Bitter much?

PS have to say I love the Prime Series. Does anyone know if there will be plans to release it on DVD one day?

geofflealand:

June 23rd, 2010 at 10:28 am

Andrew: they will have a job competing with the episode of the Prime series that screened on Sunday. I have a feeling that the TVNZ effort will just replicate what has already been done ie the Denis Connor vs Paul Holmes clip ad naseum.

I will try and find out whether there are plans for a DVD (fortunately we have the ability to record from Sky to a disc).

geofflealand:

June 23rd, 2010 at 10:59 am

More info: there is some discussion about a DVD release of 50 Years, but there are numerous issues of rights to be sorted out first.

bomber Says:

June 23rd, 2010 at 11:21 am

<http://tumeke.blogspot.com/2010/06/rupert-murdoch-does-better-job-of-50.html>

geofflealand:

June 23rd, 2010 at 11:28 am

Welcome, Bomber. I do highly recommend that everyone follow the link above, to view another discussion on Bomber Bradbury's TUMEKE blog. I am a great believer in reciprocity and sharing—which blogs should be about.

David French:

June 28th, 2010 at 10:19 am

Enjoyed the third episode of the Prime Doco. Very interesting clips. Did anyone else spot that the "Week of It" clip that they showed was rather similar to an episode of "The Goodies"? If you have the DVD that has the subheading "Eight Delicious Episodes", watch the episode entitled "Gender Education" and you'll see what I mean.

Alpaca:

June 28th, 2010 at 12:46 pm

Enjoying the series although I missed ep 1.

I thought the repeated statements that TV news had brought about social change were overdone. I remember pre-television days. We had newspapers, newsreels at the cinema (propaganda!) and radio. Much was made of the Springbok Tour. Only one side was interviewed. How did the pro-tour people feel? How did the police feel? I remember taking part in a protest and being horrified when lead protestors screamed at police who were standing still on the side of the road. It didn't seem to me that the NZ police were to blame for apartheid, however badly they might have behaved in Hamilton.

So I think the programme hammered home 'good' social change. On the positive side, it is a very well made documentary and unlike the offerings on One it seems to be made for grown-ups. I enjoyed episode 3 a lot. I remember how much we loved C'mon etc. (But the Chicks. what happened to Suzannes' sister?)

David French:

June 28th, 2010 at 3:16 pm

Alpaca said

"Much was made of the Springbok Tour. Only one side was interviewed. How did the pro-tour people feel? How did the police feel?"

Well, the intention was to look at this from the viewpoint of the journalists and broadcasters that covered the event. How did they feel when reporting on these scenes? What was happening to them personally when they did their stories? It's a side of the tour that's rarely been covered, compared with the pro and anti-tour sides which have been covered.

In his autobiography Keith Quinn recounts some of the animosity that was directed towards him during that tour and how he felt about the scenes he saw.

David French:

June 28th, 2010 at 3:25 pm

Nigel Varcoe: "The diversity, quality, and relevance of television in NZ is amazing. As a result, I would love to see this New Zealand treasure trove made accessible year round. What about a new "NZ television" Freeview channel? Basically take <http://www.nzonscreen.com> and put this on TV – not just online.

I'm sure that this has been thought of ... maybe what is required here is a "movement"? Or is it already happening?"

geoffleland: "Good comments, Nigel. I guess this the objective behind "Heartland" on Sky. The only problem is that this is on a pay-TV service, when it really ought to be freely available (seeing we have paid for such programming, in one way or another, in the past)."

I've heard this type of comment before and unfortunately I feel that they're not really thinking straight or at least not really placing their thoughts into context. Some of those old shows are indicative of the time they aired and the likelihood is that if you tried to play them on free-to-air they wouldn't do very well in the ratings and eventually be pulled from the schedules.

I mean, do we really believe that TV 1 are quite prepared to play (for example) 1970's editions of "It's in the Bag" on a regular basis? Probably not, which is why channels like TVNZ 6 and TVNZ Heartland were set up – so that those shows could be seen again by those keen to view the old programmes again. Same goes with movie channels like TCM and MGM.
Have to get back to work, so will write more at a later time.

geofflealand:

June 29th, 2010 at 12:18 pm

David: I agree that I wouldn't want to watch endless repeats of It's In The Bag on FTA channels such as TV One but it does seem rather ironic (and a little wrong?) that programmes which were publically funded (through the Broadcasting Fee, or advertising costs*) are made available at cost, on pay-TV?

* the cost here is that we, as consumers, effectively pay for advertising through a proportion of costs added to everything we buy. In the USA, for example, it is estimated that more than \$US600 is spent on advertising from the total cost of buying a new car.

Daza:

June 30th, 2010 at 9:29 am

Just watched episode 1 on the Prime site – nice to see a serious minded survey of the history of TV in New Zealand, the other 50th anniversary material I've managed to find on-line from other channels has been a bit light weight.

Would have been good to see a more critical look at New Zealand TV over the years – even Prime's effort leaves the casual view thinking every tv show made in NZ is a national treasure, and are shows like It's in the Bag or Shortland Street all that viewers have ever wanted from public broadcasting?

geofflealand:

July 5th, 2010 at 11:52 am

I didn't get to watch last night's episode (on the history of sport on TV) but everything is getting recorded on MySky. Any comments on this particular episode. I guess it couldn't incorporate anything about the current WFC.

geofflealand:

July 8th, 2010 at 2:56 pm

I watched the TVNZ 50 Years of News programme last night, whilst I was loading it on to a disc (for research purposes, of course!). Wasn't greatly impressed—it covered the expected and there wasn't much of the unexpected. The pre-advert break 'bloopers' were rather self-indulgent too. But I would be interested in hearing contrary views.

I am viewing this site several times daily, eager for a little more activity. Do feel to ask me any questions. I want to keep the momentum going, even though I am mightily distracted by my current writing task—7,500 words on NZ film history, to be done by the end of the month!

Alpaca:

July 8th, 2010 at 5:36 pm

I enjoyed the sports-themed episode last week although I have little interest in sport. It's a very solid series. (And it's hard to separate sport from the Zeitgeist)

Funnily enough it has got me looking at Prime more and I've started watching Dr Who – first time since my kids were little.

Good on you, Prime:)

geofflealand:

July 8th, 2010 at 8:21 pm

I agree. I don't want to knock TVNZ too much but they have sure tested my loyalty just recently. Prime do have some of the more interesting series around at the moment—True Blood as well as Dr. Who.

I thought the Prime sports episode was particularly good in that it covered quite a wide range of sport.

David French:

July 9th, 2010 at 3:29 pm

geofflealand: "I agree that I wouldn't want to watch endless repeats of It's In The Bag on FTA channels such as TV One but it does seem rather ironic (and a little wrong?) that programmes which were publically funded (through the Broadcasting Fee, or advertising costs*) are made available at cost, on pay-TV?"

On the surface it may seem strange, however I think this is indicative of the way the television industry is working as a whole worldwide. In the US it's not uncommon for old shows (eg "What's My Line?") to end up on cable networks. The reason is because they are no longer sustainable on a free-to-air channel; they're out-of-date and so cable networks make these shows available on their networks to give them a new lease of life, for viewers to rediscover them. Heck, it's a miracle that some of them still survive to this very day.

I realize that on the surface it may seem strange, however I think we're all going to have to accept that if we want to see full episodes, and not just clips, of our old favourites, then we are going to have to swallow our prides and accept the situation as it is.

geofflealand:

July 12th, 2010 at 1:04 pm

Thanks, David. Certainly much that goes on in television scheduling doesn't follow normal rules of logic. I find it quite soothing, after a hard day's teaching, to watch a re-run of M*A*S*H or Seinfeld. It is also an opportunity to introduce my daughter (17) to some old treasures.

Responses to the episode on Prime last night? It focused on locally-made TV drama but I think it might have been stronger if it had drawn some parallels with audience responses to imported (US, UK) drama series too.

Alpaca:

July 12th, 2010 at 8:03 pm

Last night's Prime ep highlighted what I like about this series. People who made the dramas were asked to comment and could speak at reasonable length. There was no on screen "personality" like Simon Dallow telling us what to think. I agree that we needed audience responses too and a comparison with imported drama series.

Rusty Viewer:

July 12th, 2010 at 10:25 pm

In the most recent episode, they failed to mention some prominent dramas such as Shark In The Park & Marlin Bay. Don't know why.

Rusty Viewer:

July 12th, 2010 at 10:27 pm

They also failed to distinguish between season 1 and 2 of Buck House. They were completely different. It was season 1 that wasn't very funny. season2 with John Clakre was notably funny and people began to sit up and take notice. However, the documentary implied that Season 2 wasn't liked. This isn't true.

geofflealand:

July 13th, 2010 at 12:50 pm

Thanks, Rusty (if I may call you that). I too noticed the absence of Shark in the Park and wondered why.

Rusty Viewer Says:

July 14th, 2010 at 6:06 pm

They also forgot to mention Roache. That one's not even in the imdb.

Rusty Viewer Says:

July 14th, 2010 at 6:10 pm

Mispeeled it. It's Roche. Still not in imdb but mentioned at <http://www.andyanderson.com.au/actor/>

geofflealand:

July 15th, 2010 at 10:23 am

I guess there will always be things missing from such a long and detailed history. I did, however, like the contributions from those intimately involved in TV dramas—such as Geoff Murphy on what not to do in respect of TV acting.

Alpaca:

July 18th, 2010 at 9:44 pm

Tonight's look at national identity was superb. I almost cried when they mentioned Kaleidoscope. Ninety minutes of art on prime time and people enjoyed it! Lyn of Tawa. One of my favourites. But most of all the commentary is so interesting – from the horse's mouth – so well edited. It's a documentary about TV which is in itself good television. It's quite painful in a way because what I see on One now in prime time is trivial. It's like Jim Anderton saying, I didn't leave the Labour Party, they left me. Our main free to air channel has left its audience?

Rusty Viewer:

July 18th, 2010 at 11:41 pm

And yet, like dumb sheep, most still watch it, too afraid to take a walk on the "wild" side and try another channel, lest the wrath of God fall upon them.

Choices – most are still in the mode of watch TV One first, and if nothing is on there they like, then try TV 2 etc. The more intelligent, however, look at the tv listings and decide which program we would actually prefer to watch, never mind the channel. If more people did the latter, the unfairly and undeservedly high TV One ratings would drop, perhaps by quite a substantial amount.

Amazing how, after fifty years, so many still live in the days of one channel, still stuck in TV One first mode.

geofflealand:

July 19th, 2010 at 10:50 am

I did enjoy the episode last night, even though the message after the credits, re this site, wasn't there this time—maybe the episode ran a little longer.

This sort of history is very close to my inclinations regarding the re-telling of history ie involving the participants but drawing broad speculations (rather than certainties) about the social/cultural impact of certain TV moments in New Zealand life eg the idea that being comfortable with the NZ accent (in all its variations) is closely connected to hearing ourselves on TV. Still, I never quite got Lyn of Tawa—there always seemed to be a rather snobby or judgemental undertone to her. Maybe it because I grew up with South Taranaki versions of the NZ accent 😊

Alpaca:

July 20th, 2010 at 9:45 pm

Isn't there a bit of Lynn in Pascale.

Rusty Viewer was right – there is some good telly out there beyond One and some of us just expect our culture to be delivered to us via the same channels: Nat Rad, The Listener and TVNZ. I'm branching out – I've just started watching Outrageous and I love it.

Snobby undertone in Lyn's character? Yes ... but she was lovable ... she held the female accent up to scrutiny.

blair:

July 26th, 2010 at 12:02 am

Now that the documentary series is over I would like to say on the whole a very good series certainly more than what I was expecting to see to mark 50 years of TV. The first was very well done, some of the more specific shows however I think they could have covered more interesting content. Something I think was missing from the series was advertising and news. While advertising is just annoying there have been some really good adverts that we could have looked back at, obviously this could have covered early adverts, also some of the brilliant election advertising and in the past 20 years some of the real good adverts from the nineties such as the Fernleaf/Anchor family, Spot the Dog, the Instant Kiwi adverts and not only the Bugger commercial but also the Barry Crump Toyota adverts.

TVNZ did do a look back at news but that was more about the stories and it was obviously biased towards news covered by TVNZ. Some of what could be looked back at includes regional news, early networked news services, the John Hawkesby saga, Paul Holmes and his show on Prime and also the cheeky darky thing from Paul Holmes.

As for what was included I didn't find the last in the series on the Maori language that interesting at all, I do understand in this day in age you are required to show a high percentage of Maori content but really I think what was in that show should have just been condensed down to fit into the other shows. Also there wasn't much in that show about the story of the protesters invading TVNZ studios in 1995 in response to the Maori news being taken off the air over the Christmas holidays. The most interesting part was the the story of the west coast protester who switched the feed over from TV1 to TV2 at the transmitter so west coasters could see the Maori news which then screened on TV2 through TV1.

Alpaca:

July 26th, 2010 at 7:39 am

I really enjoyed last night's show. In fact it brought a tear to my eye. Some of the commentaries were very insightful and heartfelt. Unlike the other shows, last night's exposed me to material I hadn't seen before. I found it illuminating. Once more I feel sad that we are so rarely delivered such good non-fiction TV these days!

Congratulations to the makers.

Rusty Viewer:

July 26th, 2010 at 7:00 pm

I agree that the Maori TV thing didn't really need a whole episode to itself, maybe just one or two segments. I think it's about bending over backwards from all this political correctness. If there wasn't a whole episode, certain radicals may get "offended".

I agree there should have been some coverage of classic local news shows from the various regions. Rodney Bryant and Bryan Allpress are dear to the hearts of Christchurch. Roger Gascoigne was like a rock star with screaming teenagers in Wellington, unless Roger exaggerates the story he tells with his classic wink. *LOL*

I think there was a 50 year specials for commercials on The Ad Show on TV7. It's probably still online if you search for it.

ConsumerK:

July 27th, 2010 at 4:17 am

The final chapter on Maori TV was an excellent overview of the industry & greatly appreciated. Refreshing in the face of those who would prefer a bleached & sanitised view of history in Aotearoa. I had never heard of Pukemanu before & was surprised such a program was run. When will this episode be placed online?

The whole series was excellent. I was reluctant to watch it after the abortion that was the TVNZ commemoration, then a brief view convinced me it was very good. So many memories & plenty of fresh insights.

Congratulations all involved, Geoff, Prime & Cream Media. Awesome.

geofflealand:

July 27th, 2010 at 1:58 pm

kia ora ConsumerK (a variation on Citizen K?): Many thanks. If you go to the NZ On Screen site (there is a link here) , you will probably find some Pukemanu.

ConsumerK:

July 28th, 2010 at 5:59 pm

Kia Ora Geoff. Ae, it popped into my head. Thanks for the info. I was actually wondering about the episode: Taonga TV & whether it would be put online to share with the others. It looks like the whole series is offline now. That's ok, recorded it on our MySKY box. Though I do believe the series should be available online as it's a great resource. At least it should be aired again.

Cheers

Oh, I found your site from the link on the original Prime page.

Section 2: A place for memories, experiences and opinions

geofflealand:

May 20th, 2010 at 10:56 am

People will be directed to Page One of this website from the Prime TV 7-part documentary series, Fifty Years of Television In New Zealand, which begins in mid-June.

In the meantime, I have provided this page for people who may have already found their way to this site, and would like to post comments, experiences and opinions about the past 25 years of television in New Zealand.

To begin, I will post the question I have been asking as my starter question for this research: "Do you think the second 25 years of television in New Zealand (1985 to 2010) have been significantly different than the first 25 years (1960-1985)? If so, why?"

geofflealand:

May 27th, 2010 at 8:54 pm

If you are in Wellington on Wednesday June 2, The Film Archive is screening "Television & Politics"; a look at how politics has adapted to television and uses advertising*, in both the USA and NZ.

Starts 7pm, 84 Taranaki Street

* Worth posting today's Google quote: " Political advertising ought to be stopped. It's the only really dishonest kind of advertising that's left." Adman David M. Ogilvy

James Littlewood:

June 1st, 2010 at 1:11 pm

Remuera Primary School, the day of Nixon's resignation.

The office admin lady boots off home and brings her horn rimmed B&W set. Black, with gold trim, rabbit ears. There's a whole school assembly, the set's on the stage in the school hall, and we all watch tricky Dick doing his thing.

In the crowd, a media studies student is borne. "Why" he wonders "are we doing this, precisely?"

I don't think that would have happened inside the second 25 years of NZ's TV history.

Robyn:

June 1st, 2010 at 7:06 pm

At school, the day after the very first Mr Bean programme played on New Zealand telly – so I guess that makes it 1990. I walked pass the hall and saw the sixth form monthly form meeting in progress (I was in the fifth form). Rather than talking about academic matters, they entire form was watching the Mr Bean episode, with laughter echoing around the concrete hall.

That's how significant Mr Bean was. It was fresh and new and hilarious. The sort of thing that any decent teacher would share with his pupils.

tom:

June 2nd, 2010 at 8:12 am

After the first 25 years, state television celebrated the anniversary by publishing a 200-page history by Robert Boyd-Bell. At the end of the second quarter century, TVNZ could only manage a cheap celebrity quiz, the sale of some trinkets and a media release announcing the release of its archive for exclusive viewing on SKY.

geofflealand:

June 2nd, 2010 at 1:40 pm

I agree with you, Tom. As one commentator put it, it was a bit like taking a bag of chips and a bottle of Coke to someone's 50th birthday celebration.

Nevertheless, a message on Public Address reports that it was the highest-rating* non-news programme on TVNZ so far this year. As Russell Brown commented, "We are all doomed"

* ratings, schmatings, of course!

Rusty Viewer:

June 2nd, 2010 at 5:26 pm

"Do you think the second 25 years of television in New Zealand (1985 to 2010) have been significantly different than the first 25 years (1960-1985)? If so, why?"

In a nutshell – yes, built not necessarily in a good way. The rot set in with the arrival of Julian Mounter who clearly had no respect for the unique viewing patterns that New Zealanders had developed over the years, really didn't care about us, and was primarily in it for the money. In order to prepare for the upcoming TV war with the first private channel in this country – TV3 – they hijacked the airwaves with "overseas trends" ideas, which wasn't us, but which they hammered into us over the years until it was. We use to have different programs every day during the day, now weekday programming is almost identical except for from 7:30pm to about midnight. Also, we use to have only one ad break in a half hour show and three breaks in an hour show. They also had an ad break between shows. They don't do that anymore because they are afraid that while the ads are on between shows, viewers may switch to a rival channel, the height of paranoia IMO. So they've moved the extra break to during the show, thus giving two breaks for a half hour show and four for an hour. Also, to fit exact half hour and one hour slots, shows are edited. When there was one channel, there was a looser format. If you look at listings from the sixties, you see shows scheduled to the exact minute instead of rounded.

There is room for a classic TV station in the old type of programming and ad format. This is one of my dreams.

I wrote an article on my views about television while on a journalism course about three years ago which I'll try to put up on Throng soon.

Daza:

June 3rd, 2010 at 4:55 am

50 years of media history as trivia – oh well, at least they don't take their own profession too seriously, and won't be surprised that no one else does either...

Alpaca:

June 3rd, 2010 at 10:22 am

I didn't watch the One special on Tuesday night because the promotion made it sound irritating. What I'd really like is a replay of substantial chunks of Pukemanu and Close to Home. They were ground breaking.

My earliest memory of television in NZ is going to a rich neighbour's place to watch it in the 60s when I was a teenager and not really seeing the point. Highlights are my now 32 year old son's heartfelt response to The Littlest Hobo in the early 80s. He'd burst into tears every time it finished and my knee jerk reaction (I would be cooking dinner) was always to tell his older brother off for making him cry. He's still a sucker for cute animals!

geofflealand:

June 3rd, 2010 at 10:34 am

Thank you all for your starting comments. This is the kind of material I am looking for. Page A3 of this morning's New Zealand Herald has a piece "Viewers pan TVNZ's 50-year celebration" (including comments from yours truly). There is also a very interesting conversation going on over at the Public Address System , under "The Futrure of the Future". I will provide a link to PAS.

Rusty Viewer:

June 3rd, 2010 at 7:30 pm

"What I'd really like is a replay of substantial chunks of Pukemanu and Close to Home." Some episodes of Pukemanu were played on Maori TV a little while ago.

Rusty Viewer:

June 3rd, 2010 at 8:21 pm

Article is up.

<http://www.throng.co.nz/50-years-tv/do-we-really-need-more-channels-or-less>

Ben:

June 4th, 2010 at 2:06 pm

The password is brilliant; worthy of MI5!

I think there is a bit of 'distance lending enchantment to the view' at play. Over the last 20/30 years there has been as much dross as there is now, the main difference being that it was not interrupted quite so often.

My only good memories of TVNZ are the days when one got some decent drama on a Sunday night and the days when occasional classical concerts and the opera were televised. Very little home grown programming sticks in my mind, the memorable TV coming from the BBC. The only TVNZ documentary that stays around was a truly awful documentary on WW2 which kept referring to the Africa Corpse.

NZ comedy by and large has been dire and one good drama series, Shark in the Park disappeared after one season.

The new TVNZ channel on Sky demonstrates the paucity of programming over the years; Country Calendar and Marcus Lush. God help us! By and large a forgettable 50 years.

Rusty Viewer:

June 5th, 2010 at 6:40 pm

The warehouse sells many classic shows, some long forgotten not shown on our screens in may be 40 years or more, and some maybe never shown at all (such as Father Knows Best), on DVD at quite reasonable prices. You can get a full series of some dramas and sitcoms for under \$20.

The wonders of DVDs – often digitally remastered, no ads, no logos on the screen, complete and uncut – the commercial half hour has changed and old shows can be edited quite a lot on broadcast TV reruns so there are "lost" scenes you will only rediscover on the DVD. eg: Mash.

Rusty Viewer:

June 6th, 2010 at 12:42 pm

Well, it looks like my article on Throng is being spammed by some idiot getting all bent out of shape about the difference between "station" and "channel". I couldn't find a way to report spam over there. Does anyone know how?

geofflealand:

June 6th, 2010 at 2:32 pm

kia ora Rusty: it is not being meddled with here, I hope. This is the reason why I have a registering/posting approval process, to avoid such distractions as much as possible.

An interesting discussion on Mediawatch (Radio New Zealand) this morning, on the current state of TV in New Zealand. It will be repeated tonight @ 10pm, or you can access it via the RNZ website.

geofflealand:

June 7th, 2010 at 1:18 pm

A rather perplexing editorial in today's New Zealand Herald ("Talk stopped when TV came to stay", A 16), suggest that the arrival of TV in NZ in 1960 'killed the art of conversation'. I wonder what fantasy this opinion writer is indulging in but I suspect there was much less to talk about before TV. I have dim memories of life-before-TV in NZ and it was a very dull, insular place.

Rusty Viewer:

June 7th, 2010 at 7:27 pm

Thx for the mediawatch tip. There's also a look at 50 years of TV on Insight for May 30th. All on Radio NZ Podcasts.

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/podcasts>

Rusty Viewer:

June 7th, 2010 at 8:04 pm

NZ Herald article: http://www.nzherald.co.nz/television/news/article.cfm?c_id=339&objectid=10650209&pnum=0

Rusty Viewer:

June 7th, 2010 at 8:25 pm

This is interesting – a documentary on 25 years of television, from 25 years ago.

<http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/25-years-of-television-1985>

stewart1:

June 10th, 2010 at 5:36 pm

How can I send you a jpg of an item from 1962

geofflealand:

June 10th, 2010 at 8:37 pm

Welcome, Stewart. I will have to ask around about this. Will get back to you asap.

blair:

June 13th, 2010 at 11:37 pm

I have been drawn here thanks to the Prime documentry and I am pleased to say it was the documentry I was expecting to see to mark 50 years of TV very well covered. I do see there are further parts to this doco and will watch the later parts. TVNZ really should have produced something similar as opposed to that joke of a quiz show they had to mark 50 years of TV. TVNZ have their from the Archives Show on their new Heartland channel some parts aren't that interesting others are I am looking forward to seeing the later parts but I think they should of made this series available to everyone.

My favourite TV memories one people don't talk about much is the moment Thingy hatched out of the egg, they only talk about his eye falling out. Do people just not remember that, yeah I suppose the eye thing was funny though.

The arrival of TV3 is another great memory it seemed such a big thing finally having 3 channels. We were worried what would happen if there were 3 good shows on a once you could watch one record another but what the third.

In the future I would like to see the HD service rolled out on Freeview across all of New Zealand not just the main centres I don't think we should have to pay \$70 a month to get HD TV through Sky here in Southland. Also hope to see Prime in HD in time for the 2012 Olympics since they will be covering it.

Then there is regional TV would be great if we could go back down that road, digital technology has changed things here we don't even see local adverts through Satellite anymore I think Prime is the only network that does this. It would be great to see a regional news show again. Also shows like It's in the Bag brought back in it's original format, they had a go with Top Town but it should have been an on the road show filmed from a different town each week not just filmed every week in Christchurch.

Rusty Viewer:

June 14th, 2010 at 5:46 pm

Regional stations, such as CTV, have a regional news show, in fact have had for many years. They're not in the main listings, that's why you may not know about them. They have a local news bulletin at 5:30pm which is then repeated at 9:30pm. On the weekend, they have a summary of the week's local news.

Rusty Viewer:

June 14th, 2010 at 5:47 pm

Not as much fun as the 70s regional news shows though.

Rusty Viewer:

June 14th, 2010 at 9:41 pm

Three decades of News: <http://www.nzonscreen.com/title/here-is-the-news-1992>

ruth:

June 15th, 2010 at 11:15 am

Ben (June 4th) is wrong about Shark in the Park finishing after one season. In fact there were three seasons. Series 2 is playing at the moment on TVNZ7.

jazzbo28:

June 15th, 2010 at 2:20 pm

Ahh the days of watching the black and white telly in the Farmers window.

Town and Around, Country Calendar Still!!

Telethon. – I got a glimpse of myself as one of the phone answerers in the studio and what a great time that was. I was a Telegraph operator in Christchurch during these early years. I remember having to work late the night the Wahine went down in order to get copy and wire pix out for the journo's from all around the country.

I remember 'Nam being filmed (not taped) and showing in our lounges in stark monochrome bringing the war to our homes. Many a commentator has espoused that the televising of the Vietnam Conflict played a part in the protests here in NZ and around the world and bringing the American departure leaving the country to the Viet Cong and NVa.

a grand show is this doco' and I look forward to the rest. I hope Prime puts it out in a series of dvds for posterity.

Jazzbo Christchurch

rob stowell:

June 17th, 2010 at 9:00 pm

Shark in the Park was, at its best, terrific. So was an odd children's series the Gibson Group made called Cuckooland- featuring Paul Holmes as narrator. And... ahm, On the Mat!

How was the second 25 years different? 1989 and TV3, for a start. That's when we really lost public broadcasting. TVNZ in general were absolutely terrified, and they over-reacted all over the place.

That's when the news-readers were coached (in the US?) on how to appropriately emote; when Holmes arrived with that folksy talk-radio schtick; when ratings ruled every decision.

I was around TV in Chch at the time, and it was very neurotic- not helped by massive lay-offs. There were, I seem to remember, 419 TVNZ employees in the city in 1988. By mid-1991 there were about 50.

TV3 were much more nonchalant, even as they went into receivership.

Regional television took off in 1991- and in Chch, and that was a mini-saga in itself (think Dynasty crossed with Fawlty Towers?!))

geofflealand:

June 18th, 2010 at 3:45 pm

Welcome, Rob! I think Shark in the Park is back on screen (TVNZ6 or Heartland?)

Malcolm:

June 26th, 2010 at 9:19 pm

Geoff

Firstly, thanks for this forum, and allowing us to share our thoughts.

My over riding opinion is that quantity of channels does not necessarily equal quality – I think the NZ shows produced in the 70's and 80's were, for their time, damn good! I really wish shows like Rabbits Rest, A Haunting We Will Go, Chit Chat, Beauty and the Beast, and of course Gliding On were available on DVD -I'd buy them like a shot!

This might sound a bit disloyal, but in recent times I've been buying a lot of (overseas) TV series on DVD – as I type this I'm watching The Muppet Show! – and to give TVNZ and TV3 credit, I do believe that we EVENTUALLY got to see the best shows from overseas, mixed in with our own programming.

What do I miss – the continuity announcers, the technical hitches they use to suffer, and the Goodnight Kiwi. Remember that vision mixers strike in the mid/late 80's? And I'll never forget the newsreader that continued reading the news while everyone else was leaving the building during a fire alarm evacuation. Eventually after it seemed all the camera men and vision mixers, etc had gone, he said "I'm sorry but I've got to leave now". Priceless!

Malcolm

Viewer since I was born in the 70's.

David French:

June 28th, 2010 at 10:22 am

A pity we don't have the option of replying to posts by quoting them, however...

Malcolm says:

"This might sound a bit disloyal, but in recent times I've been buying a lot of (overseas) TV series on DVD – as I type this I'm watching The Muppet Show! – and to give TVNZ and TV3 credit, I do believe that we EVENTUALLY got to see the best shows from overseas, mixed in with our own programming."

Malcolm you have great taste in programming; I rank the Muppet Show as one of my all time favourites.

Ralph G:

June 29th, 2010 at 5:45 pm

There is a huge story of engineering ingenuity underlying the expansion of the television transmission system in NZ. Many of the original technicians and engineers are now in their 60's and 70's, and to my knowledge there is currently no centralised resource that captures the rich and colourful stories and anecdotes of these early pioneers. Their contribution is truly heroic and I'm sure would be of interest beyond those of a technical bent.

In my collection of VHS tapes (for which I no longer have a machine upon which to view) I have a copy of a one hour special broadcast commissioned by the BCNZ (I think in the 80's) entitled (circa) "A Day In The Life of TVNZ", and which portrays a concise 24 hour snapshot of the many and varied activities of TVNZ staff including many of the faces currently screening on the Prime TV series. It's well worth looking at – kind of a time-capsule of how it used to be.

geofflealand:

June 30th, 2010 at 11:06 am

Ralph: I recall a recommendation from Frank Stark, who heads the NZ Film Archive. He suggested that we should all buy a VCR and store it away, as there could come a time when DVDs will degrade (due to the glues, apparently) and we may have to turn back to videotape for historical material. Certainly, I still use video in my teaching (much easier to cue up, for a start)—such as a TV One resource on 'Making the News' from the 1990s. It makes transparent the processes of TV news and how choices are made, based around 'news values'.

Alpaca:

July 12th, 2010 at 8:06 pm

A memory of TVNZ (or was it NZBC?) ... Ian Fraser interviewed the Shah of Persia and asked him tough questions. I was horrified. He was being rude to royalty! Not long after that I discovered that the questions were well justified, of course. When Russell Norman staged his Free Tibet protest a couple of weeks ago I had to refer back to Ian Fraser's interview in order to process my reactions. Hmmmm.

fionakiwi:

July 24th, 2010 at 7:27 pm

I have very few memories of television before I bought my own really. As a child my parents chose what was on TV and we generally weren't that interested in the news or hours and hours of cricket test matches. I do remember Under the Mountain, What Now, Telethons, Spot on... but not really a lot of the content. I remember as a child I always wanted to see the TV Kiwi but it was played in the middle of the night. One night when I was at my Dad's house he said he'd wake me up to see it and I woke up in the morning VERY disappointed that he'd forgotten. He said he tried to wake me but I didn't want to get up, or something. Hmmmm.... still mighty suspicious, especially now that I know his propensity for falling asleep watching TV at night....

blair:

July 25th, 2010 at 10:59 pm

In response to the whole 50 years of TV thing I have started putting this page together on my own website for all to view. This page is my own written look back at some of what I remember seeing on TV this pretty much covers 1985 – today, a little hard for me to look back before then as I was too young to remember.

I have looked at some moments certainly not covered anywhere else than I can remember, provided a few YouTube videos and found some old TV listings so you can see what TV shows were on in the past.

Anyhow the page is at <http://www.howden.net.nz/funstuff.php?page=tvpage>

I still have to do a bit of work to tidy this page up, condense the info down a bit but hopefully an interesting read.

geofflealand:

July 27th, 2010 at 1:55 pm

Many thanks, Blair. Your site is O for Awesome! I will direct my students attention to it.

Rusty Viewer:

August 11th, 2010 at 8:46 pm

BTW, in case you are interested in classic Australian TV, some of which is relevant here since we imported some Australian shows for viewing, go to <http://www.classicaustraliantv.com/>

geofflealand:

August 12th, 2010 at 8:57 am

Thanks, Rusty. Have you also checked out the treasure trove that is NZ On Screen? Things have gone a bit quiet here but I am pleased with the feedback I have had—maybe not a roaring success but at least a modest success! There certainly has been more activity here than on the flash Australian TV history site (I know the folk who set it up).

Rusty Viewer:

August 13th, 2010 at 6:31 pm

It's frustrating that I haven't been able to find out the state of the archives on two of my most favourite Australian imports of the 60s – The Magic Boomerang (which has n'tbeen screened anywhere since about 1975) and Adventures Of The Seaspray. I've emailed ABC who were the Australian network to air it and so far no reply. They simply don't do children's shows of that quality anymore.

GeoffT:

August 26th, 2010 at 4:32 pm

50 Years of New Zealand TV – A Perspective

The fact that Prime TV (a relative new comer to the channel selection) is showing a detailed seven part documentary on the 50 years of New Zealand TV , seems to typify the present state of affairs. Whereas TVNZ's contribution of a two hour quiz show ("Cheers to 50 Years"), although amusing was comparatively poor.

Times have changed and none more so than telecommunications. Television is not the 1 or 2 channel TV we once remembered. In many ways it has changed for the better in the accessibility and versatility of cell phone internet and on-line streaming of TV shows. However, as Jim Hopkins pointed out the atmosphere is not the same. The nation is not all watching the same one of two shows per night and talking about them the next day in the smoko room or the playground.

Foreign shows such as The A-Team, Logan's Run, Dynasty and Dallas, were incredibly popular, however, but the homegrown dramas were especially so. Who doesn't remember Under the Mountain, Count Homogenized in A Haunting we will go, Olly Ohlson and "After School". New Zealanders like to see television that looks, sounds and acts like themselves.

An interesting addition to this is the current study of viewers of Maori TV, with an unprecedented 75% non-Maori viewing audience. New Zealanders tune into local content. This fact has largely been avoided by TVNZ, while TV3 continues it's hit Outrageous Fortune Westie series.

TVNZ is not without its local drama content with the staple soap Shortland Street and the recent example Go Girls.

Many new icons were born through the media of television, including the black singleted John Clarke as Fred Dagg, rugby shirt and Stubbies wearing Billy T James "Choice eh!"

My first memories of television as with many others was visiting the neighbours house and watching movies on a Saturday night back in the 70s. In the summer of '78, my uncle kindly gave us their old set as a hand-my-down along with my hand-me-down clothes. My father immediately ran out to the shed and fashioned together a pair of "rabbit ears" out of a couple of pieces of wood and some No. 8 wire. The first image was a test cricket match (NZ vs England I believe) with the red ball almost impossible to follow through the grainy black & white. I was transfixed!

There were only two channels ONE and something that was referred to in my house as "the Otherside" as in "What's on the Otherside?" As if whatever was on on the other channel was in some strange and slightly better parallel universe.

My father's cheeky answer to the question "What's on the other side?" was always "Wires".

Many of the early shows, plays and telemovies have never been repeated and have therefore faded into obscurity. Finally, decades later to be dusted off and transferred onto shiny DVD (e.g. Children of Fire Mountain) or streamed on the internet (www.nzonscreen.com). Even whole entire new channels (Heartland) devoted to archive material. The retro-revolution is here! The 50 year celebration has taken place but in a more diverse format to that in 1985 with the 25 year celebration. The only "old school" channel celebration is the Prime TV documentary "50 Years of New Zealand Television",¹ ignoring the embarrassing TVNZ "quiz show". Prime TV has produced the goods and we can revel in the nostalgia. Indeed the raw unpolitically correctness of the archive shows such as Pukemanu and Kingi's Story is refreshing and startling in their honesty.

For the first 25 years of New Zealand television, TVNZ did us proud by having 2 weeks worth of repeated classics, a documentary and of course the now-well-thumbed Robert Boyd-Bell book . In addition, there used to be New Zealand film week once a year where the New Zealand feature films produced that year were shown in consecutive nights and a mini-home grown annual film festival.

In regard to the last 25 years (1985-2010), some personal highlight shows are as follows. My own bias is towards drama and comedy:

1980-1989

After School – with Olly Olhson. Cartoons such as Fangface, Hong Kong Phooey, Scooby Doo and Top Cat.

What Now – compulsory Saturday viewing. 'Get out of your Lazy Bed' by Matt Bianco was the theme song memorable to a generations of Kiwi kids.

1985

Inside Straight – classic kiwi cab driver drama

Hanlon – legal drama written by Ken Catran

Roche – unfortunately short-lived drama starring John Bach and Andy Anderson

Terry Teo – Based on Terry and the Gunrunners graphic novel.

1986

Fire Raiser – children's drama written by Maurice Gee and produced by Ginette McDonald

The Haunting of Barney Palmer – Margaret Mahy written TV Movie

1987

Gloss – the classic soap

Adventurer – Oliver Tobias in a sequel to The Smuggler travels as a convict ending up in New Zealand. Featured many great Kiwi actors and location shooting.

Steel Riders – children's series. Who can forget the menacing figure on the motorbike and the series made you want to jump on your BMX and have your own adventure.

Peppermint Twist – general disliked by most people, I found this refreshingly different and unmissable

1988

Erebus: The Aftermath – powerful and moving docudrama based around the events of the NZ tragedy

1989

The Champion – based on the Maurice Gee book

Laugh Inz

Shadow Trader – excellent thriller with locations including University of Auckland.

Billy T James show – sit com

Holmes – Dennis Conner leaving the show on the first episode

1990

Star Runner – great children's drama

Issues – more satirical sketches

Shark in the Park – quality Police drama

1991

Boy from Andromeda – somewhat of a re-version of Children of the Dogstar but enjoyable

1992

Marlin Bay

1993

Typon's people – scifi from the pen of Margaret Mahy

1994

Skitz classic

1995

Letter from Blanche – a cult classic

Forgotten Silver – JP's great spoof, which had us all fooled for the first half hour, then when we realized it couldn't possibly be, still wanting to believe.

1997

McPhail & Gadsby – made us laugh and they showed up these politicians. McPhail's Rob Muldoon is seminal

Duggan – detective series starring John Bach and lots of nice location shooting

1998

Market Forces – great to see the team from Gliding On back together

1999

Jacksons Wharf

2000

Street Legal

2001

Willy Nilly – critically slammed this is a clever cult classic with Sean Duffy and Mark Hadlow

Spin Doctors

2002

The Strip

Mataku

2004

Insiders guide to Happiness – thought provoking and whimsical drama.

Bro'Town

2005

Maddigan's Quest – more great glossy scifi from Margaret Mahy

Outrageous Fortune – Westie drama. Brings back those memories of parties in Henderson.

Seven periods with Mr Gormsby – the brilliant David McPhail in comedy drama

2006

Doves of War – thriller mini-series

The Last Children – a return to classic children's drama

The Market – gritty South Auckland drama

Insiders Guide to Love – prequel to the 2004 series.

2007

Rude Awakenings – great suburban drama

2009

Go Girls

New Zealand is a relatively new country that has had to grow up very rapidly. We have had to find our cultural identity of which we are proud and we cherish our idiosyncrasies and unique style; Marmite and Weetbix, kiwifruit Pavlova, Gumboots and Jandels, Billy T and Fred Dagg, Sam Hunt and Gary McCormick, McPhail & Gadsby. In summary, television helped shaped our landscape of the heart and mind.

1. "50 Years of New Zealand Television", Prime TV, June10-, 2010
2. "Television's magic has been lost forever" by Jim Hopkins 4:00 AM Friday Jun 4, 2010 NZ Herald.
3. Editorial: Talk stopped when TV came to stay, NZ Herald, June 23, 2010.
4. Robert Boyd-Bell, "New Zealand Television: The First 25 Years", 1985.

geofflealand:

August 26th, 2010 at 8:05 pm

GeoffT;

Many thanks for such a fullsome and interesting contribution

geofflealand:

September 8th, 2010 at 9:48 am

Things have gone quiet here but I check every day for new contributions (as well as bumping off the occasional dodgy attempts to register from Russian addresses!).

So, do feel free to add your comments and thoughts as I intend to keep this site running for a while longer.

the_narth:

November 2nd, 2010 at 1:25 am

Interesting article on TVNZ's Dunedin home in Dowling Street's Garrison Hall.

<http://www.odt.co.nz/lifestyle/magazine/76360/130-years-a-centre-distraction?page=0%2C1>

geofflealand:

January 18th, 2011 at 3:59 pm

Do not fear—this material is not gathering dust (so to speak). I am currently working on a book chapter for an Australian edited book "Misremembering Television: History, Memory and Technologies"

geofflealand:

March 15th, 2011 at 2:30 pm

...and it is nearing completion (with a deadline of March 30). I have renewed the site licence for this blog, so it will remain available for another year.

My next venture will be to set up a blog to locate and describe small/independent cinemas around New Zealand. You can read more about this under "Travels With Peter" (Parts 1 to III on <http://www.kiwiboomers.com>). More on this shortly.

geofflealand:

April 4th, 2011 at 3:16 pm

Sent my chapter off to the Australian editors last week. Quite pleased with my 7000+ words and hope to see it in print before the close of 2011.

geofflealand:

September 24th, 2013 at 1:46 pm

This chapter has now been published as: 'What Anniversary? New Zealand "Celebrates" Fifty Years of Television' iKate Darian-Smith & Sue Turnbull eds (2012), Remembering Television: Histories, Technologies, Memories, Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Schloars Publishing, pp. 228-248. ISBN 1-4438-3970-1

geofflealand:

September 24th, 2013 at 1:48 pm

May not extend the life of this website beyond 2013 as it is now only attracting spurious/junk sign-ups. I may find a way of archiving it as it is of historical interest.

GL

Section 3: The younger generation have their say

CE:

July 22nd, 2010 at 8:45 pm

First and foremost, for me television is a source of entertainment and a chance to escape into another world for a time. It began in that way as a young girl, and although my reasons for watching have evolved over time, being entertained is still the top reason why I watch television. I now also watch television to become informed about current events and to learn new things. I watch the news daily (I never had to when I was younger as we were a multiple television household). However, I do watch the news and current affairs with a degree of cynicism. I feel that the news can come across as a form of scaremongering, and I find that they can blow things out of proportion.

Reality television is a guilty pleasure of mine. We have Sky television, and while channel surfing I have found myself watching some of the reality television like Keeping up with the Kardashians and Jersey Shore, which are offered on channels such as E and MTV. It is fun to see how other people live, and I marvel at how they behave in front of the cameras, with their sole purpose seemingly to only gain notoriety and fame.

As a teenager, I found television as a way to examine how other people live their lives. I watched a lot of teenage programmes such as Dawson's Creek and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. I would compare their lives to mine. It was a way for me to somewhat gauge if my life could be considered normal. Looking back, I think I would sometimes base my ideas on what I thought I should be allowed to do, to what the people on those programmes were doing. I did understand that those programmes were fiction, but nevertheless I would continue to make comparisons.

Even now as an adult, my interests are still really different to the viewing habits of my parents. They enjoy watching lots of British programming, such as Keeping up Appearances and 'Allo 'Allo. This could be because there was much more of a British influence in what content was shown on television when they were growing up. They also enjoyed some American programmes from earlier decades, such as The Dukes of Hazzard and The A-Team, but these would be in the minority in their viewing habits. I tend to watch more American programmes. Some of my favourites at present would be Grey's Anatomy, How I Met Your Mother, Nurse Jackie and Police 10 7. Now that my parents are older and have travelled, I have noticed that they now also like to watch programmes and documentaries that are made in places where they have been.

Steven McTainsh:

July 25th, 2010 at 2:09 am

The first time I recall watching television was during the early 1990's; engrossed in the early morning cartoons before school, I'd enjoy watching the typical problem-then-resolution style of cartoon that still exists today, loving the excitement they held for me as a child. Shows such as Doug, Pepper-Ann, and misadventures involving the Looney Tunes topped my list of favourites. Evenings never really had much in store for me, except for the odd movie that played during the school holidays or weekends. Films watched in the evening would be more of a family affair than later years, catering to all ages. I still remember watching Jack Frost, and the emotional ending that unfolded; a memory that remains with me to this day. It was more-so for general entertainment that I watched television, not delving into the characters and plot as much as I would do later.

As I entered my teenage years, my television watching habits changed, focusing less on cartoons and more on movies playing on free-to-air television – especially those outside of the family genre. I recall seeing Scream for the first time, and how much scarier I found it to be then, compared with now. I began to develop more of an interest in comedy, sticking around for shows such as The Simpsons, Futurama, Friends and Spin City, watching as a means of taking a break from the inevitable homework accompanying school, and paying attention to the plot and underlying intentions of the characters.

Originally, I didn't have a particular interest in drama, but this established itself as I grew older, allowing me to experience the emotions of others and watch characters grow and evolve through the course of a series, which I find rewarding. I watch unexpected programmes for my demographic, such as Desperate Housewives, Ugly Betty and Glee. Outside of that list is Outrageous Fortune, a piece of drama that constantly amazes me, and as music plays more of a role, I also pay particular attention to C4 and C42. I continue to be immersed in the world of animation, finding the methods in which they examine society to be subtle and clever – in particular, Family Guy. Recording television makes it easier to watch it when I want, allowing me to use it as a flexible break within my schedule. It is now that I more deeply observe plot and immerse myself in the minds of the characters, to gauge more thoroughly their experiences.

On the other hand, my parents watch television to be informed rather than entertained. The usual mix of news, current affairs, and documentaries (especially my Dad's favourite, The Deadliest Catch) are staple programmes. Soaps popular with older audiences, such as Coronation Street and Emmerdale are relatively high on their list, enjoying the development of plot and characters as much as I do, yet opting for doses of older people and storylines in place of the often potentially offensive storylines seen today; this can be attributed to the significant generational differences between us.

alexwalker:

July 25th, 2010 at 9:55 pm

Television has played a babysitter role in my life from a very young age. I have always enjoyed falling asleep to the sound of the news at 6pm, and waking up every morning to watch cartoons to help me revitalize myself. Television means so many things to me. It was my babysitter, it is my friend and it will be with me for my existence. Television is not going anywhere for me. I am too addicted.

At a young age I developed the addiction as my parents would sit my baby bouncer in front of the screen and allow me to watch Barney over and over again while they tended to their busy lives. Mum is a special needs teacher and works pretty much full time at a surf shop in town and Dad is a commercial fisherman chasing Yellow Fin Tuna he sends to Hong Kong for big bucks. So before my baby brother came along I had my baby bouncer, the square box called TV and Barney. After I grew out of Barney my favourite yellow family known as The Simpsons came into my life and they have never left. I was shocked when I was recently in Fiji that The Simpsons is rated AO (adults only). This dumfounded me as I have been watching this television show for most of my life and Fijian children are deprived of knowing every detail of these yellow cartoon characters antics. This made me think about cultural differences which allow these television shows to be accepted or not. In New Zealand the Simpsons are part of almost all children's, teenagers and adults lives. My parents watch The Simpsons with us looking for a good laugh.

During my teenage years I focused towards television drama such as Shortland Street, Friends and Desperate Housewives because this is what my mum was watching; and if I was going to gain her trust I needed to act like an adult. This is what every teenage girl must do. They must gain trust from their mother therefore act as though they are interested in the dramatised lives of these television shows. Another addiction started. I started to love drama. This led to my addiction towards reality television shows. When MTV entered our screens via Sky TV my heart became full. I was suddenly immersed into real life drama. This was a whole new level of cattiness and bitch fights. The Hills, The City, Laguna Beach, The life of Ryan and Real World became my newest hobby. My parents and little brother suffered. As I claimed the couch the remote came with it. What my mind wanted to see it got. So the only solution was for my parents to treat my brother to his own Sky decoder in his upstairs lounge. As I only live at home in the weekends it seemed silly. But it was necessary.

TV is my weekend getaway. It takes me to mysterious destinations and has been my worldwide guide for many years now. When my mum was four years old her family was the first in her neighbourhood to get a television. She told me that her whole neighbourhood would come and watch TV at their home, while my brother and I get our own screens.

Through only two generations within my family television has evolved into a private entertainer rather than a social event. To me television will always be a hideaway, an escape, and will forever entertain me through my long years of life.

ajc60:

July 27th, 2010 at 2:45 pm

The role of television has always played a big part in my life growing up, this is because it has fulfilled my need and love for music, and has helped me keep myself entertained for when I am bored. TV has always been one of those things that have been there to fulfil a need for something, whether it has been to research something; see what everyone's on about when they are talking about a new TV show; to spend time with the family; or just to fill in time when I have nothing else to do.

It could be said that I use television as a family event to spend time with one another; for an example, watching cartoons with my younger sister when we were children, was a way for us to spend civilised time with each other, and it also made my parents happy.

As a teenager, television has made assignments for school a lot easier to work with as TV has made documentaries and movies a lot easier to get hold of. But when looking at watching television for entertainment reasons, television has brought enjoyable programmes from all over the world conveniently to my living room. Television still plays a big part in my life today as it has done since I was little.

With studies done on how television is unhealthy, and how it has caused health problems for some individuals in the past, it still hasn't stopped me from watching it.

I personally feel as if television has helped us as humans communicate better with one another, and has also given us the ability to share our knowledge and talents to one another.

I believe that every individual uses television for a different reasons; this is because everyone has different interests, different interests tend to lead people to watch and observe different things that they enjoy.

An example of this is my father; an ex jaguar race car driver, he has a tendency to watch every car-related programme shown on TV.

When comparing this to my interests- my interests being music and fashion, it is shown that we both enjoy different things and may tend to watch different channels. This could explain why it has become popular for every household may have more than one television set in each house.

In conclusion, television has had a huge affect on my life; I believe without TV human beings wouldn't be the intellectual beings they are today. TV has made it easier on an individual to obtain information about something, and also has a great role in keeping the odd person entertained when times get boring. I have also come to the conclusion that we use TV as a social device and a group activity for the family or for when friends come over; this is because TV is something everyone has in common and everyone likes watching it.

Caitlin:

July 27th, 2010 at 9:08 pm

My first recollection of when Television became a prominent part of my life was the year 1997, I was eight years old and there was a show that aired called McDonald's young entertainers. Yes, there were various Disney cartoon shows that I enjoyed before this point in my life but it wasn't until this show that I found a way of living my dream. I aspired to be like all the other young contestants who sung, danced and performed away, all the things that I loved to do. I also enjoyed creating my own unique version each and every week for which I would perform for members of my family and my closest friends.

From here I discovered music shows such as the New Zealand top 40, which played all my favourite songs and videos of my favourite pop artists, where of course I had to learn and mimic there choreographed dance moves. I enjoyed watching soap operas such as Home and Away and Shortland Street and I was also a fan of shows such as Charmed and Buffy the vampire slayer throughout my early teens.

However, I never religiously followed any of these shows because I wasn't in charge of who controlled the channels in the household, that role went to my Parents. Every night at 6pm the News was turned on so this usually meant anytime after 6pm my parents occupied the television. This continued up until we owned more than one television in our household. Besides the News, television shows my parents enjoyed viewing included programmes such as Coronation Street and for my Dad any sport, especially the rugby – none of which held any interest to me.

The way in which I use television today has not changed a whole lot from when I was younger. I continue to watch plenty of music channels such as Juice TV, C4, MTV, and I enjoy shows such as American idol. Anything that involves music and dance I love to view. I also enjoy watching entertainment shows such as E News on the E channel and Entertainment tonight and although some may question my choice of programmes, I also thoroughly enjoy watching reality shows such as The Hills, Keeping up with the Kardashians and Kendra – purely for entertainment. Although when I was younger I did not enjoy as such watching the 6pm News or the sports channels, I now appreciate them a whole lot more. They deliver up to date although perhaps biased commentaries on the world in which I am currently living, and after all this is the world that I have to find my way within.

hannah:

July 28th, 2010 at 1:25 pm

My earliest years of television are a non-existent memory, but from about the age of 6 I do remember that mum made it a privilege only letting me watch programmes after school if I had finished all my chores. I used to look forward to after school so I could enjoy programmes such as Captain Planet, Carmen San Diego and Suzy Cato. I enjoyed these programmes on a non digital old, big brown box like television, with only the basic channels. I still remember being able to sit there for hours engrossed in the programmes. I was always really upset when my programmes had finished and it was time for the adults to watch the television and I got sent to do my homework.

Over the years changing from a child to a teenager, my television experiences changed as well. I was allowed to stay up later and watch more adult programmes. Although my parents programmes were more of a priority than mine I was still always allowed to watch Shortland St which became one of my favourite shows. I have one distinct memory from my teenage years of thinking that I was old and mature enough to watch a murder documentary with my parents. Although I was told to go to bed because I would have nightmares, being the stubborn teenager that I was I ignored them. Watching that programme resulted in my still existent fear of the dark, around about that time I was sent to boarding school which meant television hours were limited. Which due to my prior experience with scary television I was not bothered about at all.

Now that I have moved out of home and flatting I have no rules about my television watching hours or what programmes I sit there watching as the day wastes away. I still enjoy Shortland St and even programmes such as CSI and Criminal Minds even after my terrifying experience as a teenager. However now I enjoy these programmes on a 42 inch plasma screen TV with all the channels that Sky has to offer. With so many channels to choose from I end up spending hours engrossed in the television rather than the couple of hours I was allowed after school as a child. There are many times during weekends that I fall asleep in front of the television and when I wake up the next morning I start it all over again. However although I can now watch whatever I like whenever I like, I still miss programmes from my child hood like Captain Planet.

Kezia:

July 28th, 2010 at 4:42 pm

Television is so prominent in the lives of many families today. I don't remember my first memories of television but I do remember the different ways in which television affected my life as I grew up. I am glad I was not raised with playstations or X-Box because the amount of time I use to spend watching TV was so often, I cannot imagine the amount of time I would have spent in front of it if those things were in my life.

TV was always a family norm as we sat in front of it for dinner, even though my mum sat at the table hoping me and my other siblings and my dad would join her, we never did though.

My parents aren't into the types of programmes I'm into. I do admit that I watch the mindless celebrity reality programmes (that don't impact my life or help me gain knowledge in any way) such as many the shows on E! and MTV.

These types of programmes I know for a fact irritate my parents, when they ask what 'rubbish' am I watching this time.

I remember when I was form 2 at intermediate school and liked watching cartoons such as Yu-gi-oh, pokemon and dragon ball Z. My Brother was already older and at highschool, so I remember him telling me that if I still watch cartoons when I reach highschool that it is such an immature thing to do. I am not sure why, but that has always stuck in my head and when I got to highschool I cut out my cartoons because I didn't want to be immature.

I loved it when What now was on back in the days when Jason Gunn was on with thingy and then later Jason Fa'foi, Carolyn Talor and Props boy. It use to be the thing to do on Sunday's, wake up and watch that with the telephone sitting by me. waiting to ring up and then after that New Zealand's top 40 count down was on and they played every song then, so it went for about 2 hours.

I feel like since I have moved out of home I have no control over the remote when I return anymore and I have to sit there and mainly watch what my dad likes to watch, such as motorsport cars going around and around in circles or fishing or other 'interesting' programmes he likes to watch on the discovery or history channel about ancient rome and gardening etc or mum who only watches shine.

I definately don't watch tv as much now compared to what I use to do. Some of my friends don't have tv's and I use to think that was weird. But it is probably a good thing, gives you time to go outside and amuse yourself in different ways unlike many young kids today who have been consumed by the excitement of video games and all those type of things who spend all their free time on them.

gds11:

July 28th, 2010 at 9:55 pm

When I think about the role television has played in my life, it doesn't seem like a very significant aspect. But as I continue to look back I begin to remember how it has changed over the years and also how my use of it has altered.

My family has had a television in the house for longer than I can remember. When I was younger my brother and I would get up early every school morning to watch a show before we left. It used to be so important that we not miss an episode in a series. With the internet facilities today this hardly matters anymore but back then I did not know what the internet was as my family was fairly late in getting a computer. On Saturday's we would be out of bed early again to watch all of the morning cartoons and on Sunday to watch What Now with the likes of Jason Gunn hosting. I always enjoy coming across a cartoon that I used to watch but have completely forgot about. Most of the time these are Warner Brothers' productions such as The Animaniacs and Bugs Bunny, with Tom and Jerry still an entertaining watch today.

During my teenage years the main time I would watch television was after school, again for mostly cartoons. I always participated in a sport so this was looked forward to as it was nice to have an afternoon off between practices and homework. In those days quite a lot of the toys and collectables people my age played with were associated with a programme such as Pokemon. This made it somewhat vital that I keep up with the series in order to stay up to date with what was happening. My household always has had dinner together at the dining table and usually around the time the news was on. So I have watched the news for a long time although I was quite disinterested in it back then, focusing only on sports and weather.

Today my consumption of television is widespread. It is on most of the time I am home and with no commitment other than university along with no curfew; I end up watching it probably more than I should. The types of shows I view have changed and now consist of more informative productions including documentaries and consumer aimed shows such as Target. I now watch the news most nights and find myself following stories that progress over a week or more. This behaviour is similar to my parents; they are always up to date with what is going on in the world particularly to do with the economy of New Zealand.

jk159:

July 28th, 2010 at 10:58 pm

Television has been a major entertainment medium in my life for as long as I can remember. From the many hours watching animated cartoons during my childhood in the mid 1990's, to the more primetime mature television shows in my mid to late teens, television has allowed me to experience fascinating and thought-provoking ideologies that weren't present in my normal life.

As a child in my early primary school years, television was introduced to me in the form of cartoons. At that age, I saw them as something entertaining, humorous and a way to pass the time. The joyous hours spent laughing watching classic Hanna-Barbera shows on Cartoon Network such as The Jetsons, Tom and Jerry and The Flintstones will never leave me. My parents on the other hand were concerned with soap operas, dramas and current affairs shows; shows that did not gather my interest at all. Family viewing was usually during the evening, consisting of a drama show or film. Though at that age, I did not pay much attention to what was on.

Growing up as teenager, I became interested in a wider range of shows. Cartoons were still part of my daily diet of television in my early teens, including Pokémon and Dragon Ball Z. However as I progressed through my teenage years, I began watching more dramatic shows such as Lost, Heroes and House. Following intricate storylines and plot became more stimulating for me, allowing me to submerge myself into the characters and their ordeals. More mature animated shows also gained my interest such as Family Guy and South Park. It amazes me how much controversy these shows have caused in the media over the years. This is mostly true with South Park, a program that has managed to push the boundaries of humour with provocative topics and satire. Reality game shows were also a favourite of mine during my mid-teens such as Survivor and The Amazing Race. However the saturation of this genre coupled with typecast contestants caused my interest to drop rapidly – I didn't want to experience reality, I wanted to escape from it.

More recently, I began to experiment with different genres of television. Primetime comedy shows such as The Big Bang Theory, comedy-drama Glee and British dramas such as Skins and Misfits. These shows have been a fresh addition to my typical viewing as I have found the ideas in them to be quite relatable, while being engrossing and entertaining. Keeping updated with news and current events occurring around me also became a priority. This resulted in current affairs shows such as TV3 News and Campbell Live something to be watched every day; a habit that to my surprise mirrored that of my parents. But this is where the similarities ended as my parents watched shows that reflected and informed them of the real world, whereas I watched shows that attempted to question and escape this notion. This is an excellent example of how viewing habits vary between different demographics.

Campbell Weal:

July 28th, 2010 at 11:37 pm

Television has been one of the constants throughout my life. From my baby years, through childhood, teenage and early adult years, it is become and remained an integral part of my life. Ever since I was a toddler, I would have been sat down in front of the television to watch educational and nurturing cartoons, your typical Sesame Street or Barney shows which work to school little kids on the world they are emerging into.

As I entered primary school however, the cartoons I frequently watched turned into ones aimed at my pleasure, ones the other kids were watching, ones that everyone talked about at school the very next day. Adventure, fantasy and action cartoons became my favourite television shows, as I recall my 5th birthday present involving a video tape of Aladdin. Television was an escape in my childhood. Spending all day at school socialising, learning and working caused home to become that place I dreamt of. It was the television cartoons afterschool that I couldn't wait to get home to see, as I grew up and started watching things that most kids were watching, like Pokemon or Dragon Ball Z.

I still remember in my childhood when our family got Sky Television, cartoon network instantly became my favourite and more frequented channel. However, as I grew into a teenager, my viewing of cartoons decreased, and I became far more interested in the movie and sports channels, along with mature television programmes such as Lost. Starting at high school, I was already deeply interested in Cricket, and spent a large amount of my television watching time viewing cricket games, tournaments, the 2003 World Cup and so fourth. I was also a big Rugby League fan, and spent my time watching the Warriors too. Mid way through my teenage years is probably around the time my family upgraded to Sky Digital, and while I had far more channels to choose from, my obsession with Rugby League grew, and to this very day I find myself mostly watching the sports channels on offer.

My family's use of the television largely centres around sport, as Dad is an avid All Blacks fan, and my three brothers are all very big fans of most sporting codes. One variable from me, is how my mother uses the television for the arts and living channel, more factual, tutorial based programmes, whereas Dad is only interested in sports or a good action movie. With me, I haven't followed the trend of my friends and got into mass liked programmes such as Outrageous Fortune. In my early adult years I find myself only using the television to watch sport games, and if I'm not watching sport then I am most likely not watching television. This differs from me as a child because when I was younger, television was all about providing me with the means to escape, to relax and be creative, whereas now it is my way of keeping up to date with my favourite sports team, watching them play and sharing a sporting interest with my friends and family.

geofflealand:

July 29th, 2010 at 10:49 am

Very good commentaries so far, everyone. I especially like the comment " I didn't want to experience reality; I wanted to escape from it" !

pj26:

July 29th, 2010 at 2:41 pm

My first impression of Television was in my grand-grand father's home when I was quite little about six or seven years old. I could still remember the gray box with two or three rotating buttons and the signal receiver. The black and white Television, which can only receive less than eight channels and it, always, had blurred images. I was so interested in the gray box whenever I went my grand-grand father's house. Not because of the program it played, but the adjustment which required making the images clear. I could spend a lot of time turning the rotating buttons, which I thought is very funny.

For me, Television played a quite big part in my childhood. I was raised up by my grandfather and grandmother. The central activities of our home were getting together and watch Television. The most important thing could be the weather forecast. Each evening, grandfather will turn the Television on time to the channel. So, in the next day all the family will know the weather and prepare for it. Grandmother's favorites are dramas and operas. Sometimes, I had a fight with my grandmother about the program that we watch. My grandmother likes operas so much and always watching, but it is difficult for me to understand and I do not like the singing in it. So we always fight for the programs that we watch.

After I went to school, the time that I could spend on Television was limited. So I only watch the programs that interest me. News, music videos, cartoons and fashion programs, so I could talk with my classmates about what watched. In a certain way, Television was used to get information and interactive with friends. Under a thought, do not want be isolated about the messages.

Nowadays, as the computer are more widely used. I spend much more time on computer and very less time on Television. Because I can almost get everything from internet, while the Television programs have limited choice and get a whole bunch of advertisements which are extremely annoying. But as a form of family activity, I will still watch with my parents sometimes. News and weather forecast are still my first choice for Television programs.

ilr1:

July 29th, 2010 at 4:32 pm

For me, television has been a medium in many ways. It has helped me learn fundamentals, acquire certain skills and it is constantly giving me necessary information. It is also my primary source of entertainment.

I grew up watching television as a child. I cannot really say when, where and how I encountered TV for the first time. It just has always been there and it will always be a part of me. As a non-native English speaker, my constant TV-watching as a child has helped me with my English proficiency and it has helped me gain background knowledge on some of the important school subjects that I have yet to learn. Often my parents would tell me stories of how I would watch cartoons everyday especially Disney movies. I watched them so much that it came to a point that I have memorized the lines to the movie Cinderella.

When I started school, I also started watching educational TV shows in the Philippines. There, I learned the basics of math, science, and Philippine history. As the years went on to my elementary years (around primary school here in NZ), I have stuck to watching these educational shows but I have added a few to the mix. I started watching Dexter's Laboratory, Powerpuff Girls, and Captain Planet. I also remember watching Japanese anime weekday afternoons after school and every Saturday mornings. Because of that I have developed a great interest and curiosity for other cultures. I think I was around 12 years old when we first had cable TV. It was a luxury at the time and I thought that, then, we were a part of something great and exclusive. We had more channels and more stuff to watch. I remember my parents saying that back in their days they just had black and white TV and there were not many shows to choose from but with cable TV and today's technology, there are just so much possibilities.

Some time during my adolescence, I have stopped watching 'kiddie' shows and started watching 'teen' shows. We had this teen show called 'Click' in the Philippines. It is about a group of teenage friends discovering themselves, making and breaking relationships with a mix of good old Filipino drama. It was relatable for those who were in the same age as I am. During my high school years, we used TV as a medium that brings the class together. Often we would talk about the things that we watched the day before or during the weekend. The jokes could last for days and we would all have a good time; if you missed a certain show or punch line, you'd be left out. It is also around this time that I became hooked on American shows like One Tree Hill, The OC, CSI, Veronica Mars, Entertainment Tonight, etc. Aside from these shows, I also developed an interest in watching cooking shows like 30 Minute Meals by Rachel Ray. Because of this influence, I have grown up to realize that I would love to make a career in the hospitality industry which I am studying now.

About two years ago, our family moved to New Zealand. I used TV to help me cope with the NZ accent. A friend suggested that I always tune in to the local news to get used to the accent. It was hard at first as it is different to the American accent that I was accustomed to hearing but I managed to get my ears used to hearing and understanding the local accent. Nowadays, I often watch Internet TV to keep me updated with what's happening back home in the Philippines. I also watch Glee, Heroes, Flash Forward, House, and all three of the CSIs.

jac47:

July 29th, 2010 at 7:28 pm

My first memory of Television is watching Dinosaurs it was a childhood favourite of mine. I remember our TV set being much different than today's Plasma and LCD TVs. We had that TV long past its due date and only replaced it 3 years ago for a Plasma. I do remember having free to air TV for most of my early years but then when we moved to the Mount from Putaruru we upgraded to UHF sky and that was a big step up from free to air TV.

When we got sky UHF I remember being jealous of friends that had Sky digital with the 40+ channels whereas we only had 9. Nickelodeon was the channel that we watched throughout the day and before school when we could, but it changed to Sky1 at 7pm, which did not please me as a child. After moaning at our parents for years to upgrade to Sky Digital my dad finally gave in to getting it but I was in college at this point and didn't watch as much TV as when I was younger. I remember seeing sky digital at a friend's house for the first time and being absolutely amazed by it, the sheer amount of channels compared to our UHF sky was amazing. It was great for us as kids to go somewhere that had sky digital because there was so much stuff we didn't have at home. Now that Sky digital is the norm for me, I sort of take all the channels for granted. In my years flatting we have always had Sky Digital because we all don't mind paying a little bit extra for it. I mainly use Sky for watching the NBA when it's on but still that is only on twice a week during the 7-month season. We use sky movies a lot as a flat because on Sundays when you can't be bothered doing anything it's easy to just put a movie on and relax. I watch the free to air channels a lot because they have things like the news, target, fair go and Moon TV something that sky just doesn't have. In the recent years I've learnt how to download TV series so I don't tend to watch them on Sky or free to air TV. Usually because they come out in the US months before they air here. Some of my favourite TV shows are; How I met your mother, Bored to Death, Scrubs, South Park, Community and The Simpsons. I download and watch all these series as soon as they are made available online. When I watch the NBA if there is a game being played and is not on ESPN NZ I usually stream the game from the internet and I guess this is a form of TV because you are streaming it from the US. This lets me see US programming from NZ it's a great insight into the American way of life and it's interesting to see how many ads they fit in between time outs and how heavily sponsored the games are, that's just something you don't see watching it on ESPN NZ. I feel that TV is a big part of my life because I watch it daily whether it be from my computer through downloading or streaming or simply on the TV in the lounge with the flat. It's been good to see how TV has developed over the years from CRT to Plasma and from normal free to air to sky digital. It's funny how sky digital started off with so little channels whereas now there is 200+.

pedro mercado:

July 29th, 2010 at 7:30 pm

To me television has always been something incredible. I have always seen it as a way of communication between every home and every country. It is incredible to think that everyone can be viewing the same program at the same time anywhere in the world. From when I was a kid I can remember always being not only entertained by television but also amazed. When I was a kid it really didn't mean much to me except that it was a way for me to watch my morning and afternoon cartoons/entertainment. I used to love coming home from school and watch shows like "power-rangers" and "ninja-turtles". But now that I am older I see that it wasn't only a way for me to be entertained it was a way for me to grow and learn about the world, it was a way for me to have something to come to school the next day and interact with people over. I remember always going to school and asking my friends if they had seen last night's show/ episode and making hours of conversation over it.

During my high school year I remember only watching TV to watch music programs and stay connected to the music world, I would watch music videos and music programs to know when new albums were coming out, to find out of any new artists or concerts that were going to happen. I remember always recording my favourite TV program called "the fuse" it would just pass music videos, music news, live sessions and even live forums for people to send their opinions too.

Now I use television differently, I not only use it for entertainment but I use it to stay connected with the world at any time of day. If there is ever a global event it is weird to think that by the press of a button I can be viewing this event. Now a days I rarely ever watch TV, I'm usually out with friends or at school. But when I do it is to watch sports, news and some shows. The latest thing I kept up with in terms of global event was the world cup, back in the United States where I am from I would wake up at 8am to catch the first game of day, coming to new Zealand it was crazy because I would have to watch the games at 1am due to the time difference, but even then it was crazy knowing that my family was back home watching the same thing I was at the same time even though I was half way around the world away from them.

My Mom and Dad usually don't watch TV during the day and instead watch it at night. My mom uses it mostly to watch her drama shows, while my dad enjoys TV to watch movies that are streaming through the channels or on demand. My brother uses TV mostly during the day where he watches things like family guy, 24 and shows of that nature. But even though we all use TV for different reasons it's a way for all of us to be together and spend time with each other, just having everyone's presence around you makes television a greater experience.

whoistom:

July 29th, 2010 at 7:52 pm

The earliest time that I can remember watching TV was probably when I was first going into grammar school. I would always wake up from a call from my mom or dad, and rush down the stair to get ready for school but before school there was always special way to start off the day. I would go into the pantry get a box of my favorite cereal and sit at the kitchen table and watch the early morning cartoons before it was time to go to school. I think those were my earliest and most fond memories growing up on TV.

In my youth I would say that television played a big role in my life because if I was tired or didn't feel like going outside to play there was always TV to keep me entertained. Every Saturday and Sunday I would wake up early to watch the cartoons that's were played, it was a ritual for quite a few years until I learned the wonders of sleeping till noon. Looking back I would say that the television was my babysitter of choice. My favorites shows had to of been: Tom & Jerry, Power Rangers, Scooby Doo, Transformers, Flintstones, Meet the Jetsons.

As a teenager I mainly used TV to watch movies and more educational shows. I liked to watch the Discovery Channel and the History Channel to learn about things that I have never seen before as well as learn more about topics that I only had brief exposure to. I was never a big fan of watching global events for the news because the other options for entertainment far out weighted the reality aspect of TV.

As of today I am still a giant fan of learning through television, whether it's through watching documentaries about animals or ancient life or watch how things are made. I always here people calling TV the idiot box or some other degrading term, but to me TV is probably one of the best ways to learn. It is the ultimate teacher, there is always going to be an example of everything that is being talked about, and visuals are the key for keeping people focused. Overall I think that TV is still an under rated tool in society, it's the king of all forms of entertainment, because no matter what you like whether it be fishing or playing pool or learning about how to cook, it can all be found on a TV channel.

Ashleen:

July 29th, 2010 at 11:23 pm

The world of television is a fascinating one. Especially as a child when TV is your window into the great world cartoons, super heroes and what you want for Christmas.

As a child, TV was my best friend. I watched all the classic morning and afternoon cartoons such as Sailor Moon, Power Rangers, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and Dexter's Lab. I loved re-enacting my favourite scenes and trying to draw my own cartoons. Television stimulated my imagination a lot as I would be fascinated and in awe of these worlds created in cartoons so much so that I would try to create my own.

I wanted to be like the heroes that fought villains and I wanted the toys the TV would show me during the ads.

During primary school I was an avid follower of Pokémon Dragon Ball Z and Yu Gi Oh. This carried on through to my intermediate and early high school years but once I started taking Media Studies from Year 11 onwards, I found a new interest in a lot of TV shows that weren't aired here in NZ. I managed to find a lot of the programmes online and so the Internet became a new source for watching TV.

When I was living at home, we had Sky Digital and so I watched a lot of content that was on Rialto, Alt TV, UK TV, Discovery and Cartoon Network and I had the opportunity to come across some really awesome special interest shows such as The Masters Of Horror and Later with Jools Holland. But once I moved out of home the amount of TV I watched declined immensely and I instead watched more films than TV shows. I still followed what I had already started watching but I didn't go out of my way to watch any new television series.

At the flat we have a small TV set, bunny ears that need constant re-adjustment and only channels 2, 3 and c4. This is a major difference to when I go home and there is Sky, perfect reception and more channels than there are Justin Bieber fans.

Nowadays I don't watch too much TV on an actual TV set or even online. When I do watch TV, it's nothing that I continue to go out of my way to watch and if I do like something, I'll watch it online. Sometimes I watch c4 if I hear something about a band or artist I like on it but I don't really watch any actual TV shows on c4 except maybe The Jono Project. When I visit my family however, I watch a lot of TV because everyone at home does and it's kind of a way to hang out with them. We all watch Survivor and have done so since the very first season. It's almost like an odd tradition but one we all enjoy.

Television has been with me since I was born. I grew with it and don't know life without its existence. For this reason I appreciate what it has given me in regard to entertainment, information and interactivity. Even though how I watch TV has changed with there being new platforms for getting the same content, I still enjoy days of just lying in front of a TV set with friends or family watching whatever's on.

kr:

July 29th, 2010 at 11:29 pm

My earliest memory of television comes from sometime in the 90s when my brother and I were completely obsessed with The Simpsons. For years it was appointment viewing for us. I can remember both being in our rooms playing and hearing the iconic theme music coming from the lounge. We would race each other to the best seat on the couch and then proceed to laugh for an amazing half hour, even if we didn't get the joke. Over the years as The Simpsons has changed it has lost a little of its original magic, but I'll always remember those first few years that led me to discover the simple joy of television.

Television has always been a big part of my life. Ever since I found out that my future career could involve it and it might not be just a hobby I started watching more and more. To me it was also a way to spend time with my family. They'll deny it but my parents raised me on television. I've eaten dinner in front of it for as long as I can remember. We had rules to go along with it too. Basically, we watched whatever my Dad wanted, which was usually the news. The only exception was Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7.30 when my Mum demanded we watch Coronation Street. Because of the whole routine I still watch One News almost every night and I embarrassingly do not hate Coronation Street like the majority of people my age do.

When I finally got my own set in my room at around 13 years old I discovered my own favourite programmes. Shortland Street was a big one, so were many re-runs of Friends and the classic teenage shows, like The OC and One Tree Hill. Growing up I like to think tastes have gotten better. The first show I became completely obsessed with and would research online after each episode was Lost. It was in the years when I decided that I would do a Bachelor of Arts at university so being utterly obsessed with a television show seemed relevant and essential to my future life.

Technology has helped me to aid my obsession as well.

When I was younger I used to have to record a show on the VCR if I was going to miss it, but now I can easily watch it online. I even watch American shows that we don't get in New Zealand and have a regular online schedule. My family also had Sky TV for a while and during the school holidays I would watch endless amounts of trash, like E! or MTV and then follow it up with CNN in the afternoon. I loved CNN, and I learnt so much about not only current events in the United States, but also what the media is like in the country. Things like how they choose to present their news, what stories they reported on or did not report on and how they ordered them in the bulletin fascinates me. To make my viewing even easier I can also download programmes and put them on my iPod so I can watch them whenever I please. My passion for television will never end.

carkeys123:

July 30th, 2010 at 12:45 pm

Television is so embedded into my life it seems abnormal to not have a one in the household. As a child, television was a presiding form of sheer entertainment as well a tool to help myself, friends and family escape boredom or was used as something to relax to after working or coming back from school. I followed the schedule of watching The Simpsons with dedication, as did my other siblings. Other shows I had watched as a child included Power Rangers, Xena and Captain Planet. The fantasy in the programmes captured my attention unlike the news. Today, I read about current affairs more than I do watching it however, when I do watch the news, I always find myself questioning the stories presented as well as the angle the story is presented. Also, because I was so constantly exposed to people speaking English on television, I believe it helped me develop my skills to speak English. I became drawn towards programmes that had a range of actors speaking English whereas my older sister and parents, who were exposed to Asian programmes more than myself, preferred viewing programmes that have Asian actors and speak Chinese.

As a teenager, television was a source of social entertainment. It was social in the sense my friends and I would talk about the programmes we watched the previous night and discuss our favourite scenes. Sitcoms such as Fresh Prince of Bel Air, Sabrina and Friends were the most watched programmes in my household. I understood these programmes were fictional programmes but recall comparing my life to some of the storylines in a few episodes of Friends but did not understand how these situations could ever arise. They seemed too comedic to ever come by.

Today I find television is a tool that keeps me occupied and is a form of relaxation for myself. I feel it keeps me company when I am home alone or doing homework. Shows such as Keeping up with the Kardashians and The Hills did not capture my interest as I would only see random episodes at my friends houses and did not understand the characters and who they interacted with. However, Sky has recently been introduced into my household and due to my interest in fashion, I was quickly absorbed into the glamorous lives on the E channel. E and MTV channel seem to have no pressure for the viewers to understand their reality television, so it is always something my friends and I are attracted towards for pure entertainment. However, my parents and older sister find such shows offer no value and prefer more stimulating things such as the news or are drawn towards their Asian programmes.

sbs14:

July 30th, 2010 at 1:06 pm

Well Television has always played a big part in my life and for most of it still does. It has been like a part of the family. For as long as I can remember it has always been a crucial member of our household, and was always a vital instrument in my family's daily life whether we'd like to admit it or not. As a child Television was almost my way of disconnecting myself from the real world. I can still remember when me and my brothers used to come home from Primary school and go straight and sit in front of the TV set in our family room. Watching cartoons was a big pleasure of mine for me and my brothers, and because I had four brothers, no sisters and one TV box in the house back then I had to always watch what they were watching, which was mainly typical programmes little boys would watch like for example Dragon Ball Z, Sonic the hedgehog and Transformers.

I rarely got to make decisions on what we could watch therefore it shaped me to being who I am today. Because I had to watch what my brothers wanted to watch I started to have the same taste in programmes as them, which lead to the same sports as them and eventually the same taste in most things as them and in that, kind of turned me into a tom boy because of it. This is a perfect example of the impact television had in shaping me as a person.

As a teenager, to me, television became more of a socialising medium. It was a useful factor for what to talk about the next day at school. You would hear people talking about a certain programme around school and you knew you were able to join the conversation because you watched those programmes, thus finding a common interest with other students. But now as a young adult, TV is still a socialising tool but I've found that as I get older I have found that I tend to watch the news alot, whereas a child you don't have much interest in the news because we felt it didn't concern us. But now the news has become a big part of my daily consumption of TV, because I want to be informed about issues that are effecting us as I become an Adult.

Another factor is that as a child, there was more family bonding with one Television set in the house. Me and my family would enjoy watching TV together and socialised with each other more. I think, if i had to pick my fondest moments of having one set of Television, it would be the bonding that it bought. And as I child, we took advantage of this pleasure, as now most household obtain up to 3 or more television sets and maybe even one for each family member, therefore taking away the family interaction. Everyone is able to watch what they want when they want in their own rooms. And I for one miss the family bonding it bought and the sense of disconnecting from the real world as we know it to be today.

nicblk:

July 30th, 2010 at 1:31 pm

Looking back my earliest memories are of watching the news on TV1 at my Grandparents house and all of us – my parents and I, and my uncles walking out and leaving my Grandparents to it when the music for Coronation St came on. This lead to sitting in the kitchen making coffee and talking, a kind of forced family get together.

Growing up in Gisborne in the 80's till leaving in 1992 at age 10 meant that television for me was a choice between TV1 and TV2 as TV3 wasn't available till after I moved away. And while I was not allowed to watch television before school, cartoons after school and on Saturday morning were a must see as was watching RTR Countdown and hanging out for the latest Guns 'N' Roses track at a time when Robert Rakete was metal with his long black hair. I remember enjoying The Bugs Bunny Show and then The Cartoon Company that replaced it. My father would come home from work around that time and we would watch the show together. After moving away from Gisborne I finally got to experience TV3 and watch the likes of Transformers and Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles after school, finally being able to see the cartoons that were the basis for the toys I had received before was great.

My parents have always enjoyed Science Fiction shows and I remember sometimes watching old repeats of the original Star Trek on Sunday afternoons but later Star Trek Generations and Stargate SG1 became part of a kind of family night of TV, one my sister was quite happy to ignore.

Over time as I got older and my tastes changed things like MTV while it was available became the channel to watch, it was on 24/7 unless of course my parents vetoed it. From the time I was 14 onwards I began to watch less and less television as I began to spend more and more time online. Now when I look at television and how far behind New Zealand is on the shows I do enjoy it seems to me that over time free to air television might not have much life left in its current manifestation, there is not much choice and online the shows a person wants to watch can be available without waiting a year for our channels to pick them up, and when they do, quite frequently taking them off air for two or three months then putting them back up at a different time without advertising. As New Zealand gets better broadband with cheaper bandwidth television will start to flow from their, it already does for me, the only real shows I watch now on New Zealand TV being during dinner time or things like 60 Minutes and 20/20.

Nick Black.

Jessica:

July 30th, 2010 at 3:08 pm

Television has been both a babysitter and family bonder and has had huge role in showing me diversity and differing morals throughout society differing to my own.

Growing up in Australia with two New Zealand parents insured me a slightly different upbringing then the average kiwi kid. Being carted back and forth every few months to see family back home, insured me a mix of both cultures that extended in to my everyday life including my Television viewing.

My very first recollection of T.V must have been when I was around three or four, living in Australia, I would watch my favourite programme of the time 'playschool' by ABC. This was so exciting for me not only because it was my favourite show but I was allowed to watch it uninterrupted because my older sister was at kindergarten, this was a big deal at the time. Playschool was a children's educational game that had stories, games and songs, the songs were my favourite. Even to this day I can still remember my favourite song off the programme was titled 'ning nang nong', a song which was about a made up place where special things happen. I think one of the big things that play school did was give me the confidence (without being shut down by my older sister) to show exactly who I was, and give my opinions.

Moving to New Zealand at the age of seven was in a way a big shock to me, I was used to being here on holiday for short amounts of time but never too longer. The family moved in with my now deceased grandfather who helped me adjust to New Zealand culture through Television watching such shows as 'you and me' with Suzy Cato then 'Te Karere' the Maori news bulletin. These were to introduce me the Maori culture of New Zealand that I had never experienced in everyday life.

Growing up in New Zealand television became a stable part of my life and was in a way a place for my family to bond and do something together that the whole family could enjoy. The two main shows were the news and Shortland Street, also watching rugby as this is a core part of my family life. Shortland street was a particular must and still is today as we would all sit down at seven o'clock and try and decipher even sometimes including bets of doing the dishes as to what was going to happen in that night's episode.

Leaving my parents house and moving in to a university hall was a big change in my life that also affected my ritual television viewings, and really the only constant viewing that carried on from home was watching rugby, this was also in a different environment no longer being in a small lounge but in a large room with many seats and a big screen.

Leaving the halls and living in an actual house, flattening has returned some normality to television viewing and now I have gotten back in to old rituals and with Shortland Street being first on weeknights viewings!

J L Garner:

July 30th, 2010 at 4:13 pm

Television that oddly shaped box that sits quietly in the corner, patiently waiting for someone to notice it so that it may blow your mind with its lovely display of colour and sound, puzzled together to show us...well pretty much anything we desire.

Unfortunately my first encounter with television is somewhat blurred, as the ever present television has been demanding my time for as long as I can remember. However as a child I remember coming home after school and running into the lounge to watch the greatest television genre ever invented, cartoons. This bubble of afternoon entertainment was often shortly lived, when my mother noticed us watching television we were told to go outside and play. So my time in front of the television was often short, and for the most of it the all powerful control was always in the hands of dad, who to us had a boring taste in TV, The News. However shows I can remember as a child were those such as Suzy's World with the ridiculously catchy song "it's our time, a special time of day" filled with Suzy's cool home inventions of creative everyday crafts to do at home and mess up the carpet. Also, What Now filled much of my TV time with its cool idea of interactive Television where you could ring up and win cool prizes I never won but it never stopped me. My most favourite show was possibly The Son of a Gunn show with Jason Gunn and Thingy.

The reason for this was mostly due to the fact we share the same name, and also because Jason Gunn's funny sense of humour and Thingy's voice and barely semimetal eyes is what kept The Son of a Gunn Show going for years on our TV set.

In my teenage years CSI was my reason for watching TV and for years this TV show was the only sense of drive for a career I could see. Fortunately the show started getting boring after a while, so that career path dissolved along with the love for the show. Once again TV became simply my entertainer when I was bored TV saved me, when I needed a break from homework TV saved me when it got dark outside TV passed my time better than any other means of entertainment. Although watching TV wasn't always my first choice of pastime activity, the beloved TV didn't mind and would wait for me patiently and when I was ready TV would provide me with the perfect amount of entertainment for the moment.

I use Television these days for the same purpose, pure entertainment with the love of such shows as The Big Bang Theory, Two and a Half Men, Family Guy and my favourite show of all time Scrubs. The notion of watching television provides me with ideas and inspiration to write films and potentially TV shows.

Personally I feel the only real difference in regards to Television is its content, due the relaxed nature of today's society. Potentially unsuitable content is being broadcasted at earlier time's therefore younger people watching TV are more likely to be exposed to content unsuitable for their age group. This relaxed notion is what is stopping younger people from being easily entertained by simple television that we grew up with.

topdog:

July 30th, 2010 at 4:18 pm

I can still remember the very first two TV shows that I ever watched which were Postman Pat and Space Strikers. Every morning before school I would get up early and if I was quick enough to get ready for school and have breakfast on time, I would be rewarded with being able to watch my favourite two shows before school.

I then discovered Shortland Street- but only on Thursday nights! And my parents let me think it was only on Thursday nights until I heard from someone at school that it was on every night. You can imagine the excitement and joy I felt that day!

As a family when I was a kid, we would always sit down all together as a family on Sunday night and watch "Young Entertainers", which then turned into "NZ Idol" throughout my teenage years. Each of us would give the NZ idol contestant a rating and then it was my job to collate all the scores and work out which contestant we would ring up and vote for.

In my father's days, there was no television. The only form of entertainment he had as a boy was a half an hour comedy radio show once a week – and he only got to listen to it if he had behaved himself the past week! My mother grew up with a black and white television that was dominated mainly by watching Judge Judy, One News, Paul Holmes and Coronation Street. Nothing had changed because my grandparents were still watching that every night when I would visit them as a kid in my school holidays. My mum got to watch a few movies with her siblings when she was a kid, but whenever my grandma heard gunshots of fighting in the movie, the TV got turned off, so they quickly learnt when to turn the volume down.

As a teenager, I absolutely loved reality TV. By this stage technology was advancing and all the reality TV shows had their own websites and episode guides online. And as Fear Factor, The Amazing Race and Survivor were all American shows, I had read about what happened on each episode online long before it aired in New Zealand so I already knew who would do what in each episode before I even watched it. And even today, I can still recite the opening speech that the fear factor host Joe Rogan gives at the beginning of every episode.

Unfortunately I don't have any time for television these days, nor do I have a TV in my flat.

However I still manage to keep in touch with my two favourite shows "Police 10 7" and "Neighbours at War" by watching it on the internet. Technology seems to have dramatically changed television over the years. From black and white TV's to video and then DVD players, to now having it all online and not requiring an actual TV, what's in store for us next?

Oscar Lynn

gms23:

July 30th, 2010 at 5:05 pm

I remember this first television we owned, nothing like the ones of today, it was big, bulky and had no remote. This particular TV had little dials to change the channel; Dad always dictated what we watched, subsequently us children were his remote. Watching TV was a form of entertainment, rather a family affair, we watched Louis and Clark, Home Improvements, Stargate, and of course everyone's family favourite, The Simpsons. Excluding The Simpsons I never really liked these other family pastimes as I was too young to fully understand the jokes and concepts that everyone else did, but watched them nonetheless as it was a family thing and being the youngest, I wanted to be a part of the family too.

In later years television was still used for entertainment, I was now watching age appropriate programmes and became absolutely absorbed in the early morning cartoons before school. I was captivated by the comical situations the characters got themselves into which utterly immerses a child into the show. I was so mesmerized I hardly had time to finish my breakfast, which resulted in me running late for school on more than one occasion, but I never missed an episode of AHH Real Monsters. After school was always a race between my brother and me to get home first to control the remote, he usually won which consequently meant the dreaded Dragon Ball Z.

In my teenage years I watched less cartoons and more comedy and drama which my parents also watched such as Shortland Street and Friends, though still for entertainment purposes. I found I became more interested in the lives of the characters, their good fortunes and the inevitable problems they encountered which was then resolved throughout the episode or the series, than the hilarious antics of Tom and Jerry. During this time TV became less about family and more of an individual solitude, a chance to get away from my parents as we now had multiple TV's in the house. When we disagreed on what Dad wanted to watch such as Police Ten 7, my brother and I would escape to the next room and watch Prison Break or Lost, something a little more interesting and more character involved which had become top of my priority list when it came to watching TV.

Now I watch less TV, and when I do it's often for educational purposes, I watch more of The News, which I had only reluctantly done in the past. I also watch a wide range of documentaries on the History and Discovery Sky channels, covering a variety of topics which I find interesting, educational and often quite enjoyable, something I certainly never had done in the past. However, TV is still primarily a source of entertainment and I still like to sit back with my old favourite, Grey's Anatomy.

As we grow and mature, our TV watching priorities change, what was unimportant as a child becomes very important to us later in life, much the same as our favourite cartoons as children are no longer something we can watch and enjoy as adults.

mke4:

July 30th, 2010 at 7:01 pm

I do not believe that television (TV) is an 'idiot box'. Given that the majority of the knowledge I acquired when I was younger came from it, I say TV is a 'learning box'. It is just that the lessons are not exclusively formal. Some are educational; some are life lessons.

I grew up in the Philippines watching ABS-CBN's Education TV programmes, like Sine'skwela (Science), Math Tinik (Mathematics), Bayani (Geography and History), Hirayamanawari (Values), Epol/Apple (English), Art Jam (Arts), Pahina and Wansapanatym (Literature), every weekdays with my younger sisters. These programmes featured endearing child actors and made use of daily life situations we children could relate to. As a result, making education exciting, engaging and fun.

TV also became the foundation of my relationship with my sisters. Being an only son in our family, I did not fancy playing Barbie dolls with them. However, I found a reason to hang out and to have fun with my sisters in the form of TV. With the programmes that we saw together, especially Japanese animés (e.g. Little Prince Cedie, Remi: Nobody's Girl) and American cartoons (e.g. Dexter's Laboratory, Tom and Jerry), we shared intimate moments.

We laughed, cried, smiled and frowned together. Our mother even told us that we looked crazy crying in front of the screen when it is just TV; that the person who died did not really die in real life, or that it is just a drawing. Yet we did not know back then. What we saw in TV was real for us. It may be a real person or drawn, animal or made with clay still we felt their emotions as if we were one.

When my father moved to work in Saudi Arabia for a year, TV caused my sisters and I closer to my mother by spending time with her watching Spanish/Mexican and Filipino telenovelas. This time, it was her turn to look like crazy.

Meanwhile, my sisters and I were not happy watching 'adult' programmes. We were forced to watch adults crying. Later on, we were engaged as well. I reacted with my family and that was quite funny. The whole family was shouting to the TV, 'Do not do that!' In fact, until before we left the Philippines two years ago, we actively watched telenovelas.

In my early teen years, TV changed its role in my life. It became my escape from reality. I even wanted the reality of TV to be mine. The relationship I have with it, at the same time, became more personal as stations changed their slogan to Kapamilya (Relatives, ABS-CBN), Kapuso (Heartmate, GMA), Kabarkada (Friend, Studio 23) and Kapatid (Sibling, TV5) for instances. They convinced us viewers that they know what we want and they can give it to us. They did.

Moving here in New Zealand drastically changed my viewing habits. I have a long list of programmes I want to see but I do not feel the TV stations were convincing enough to gain my loyalty. I saw Skins because I bought the DVDs. The same goes with Heroes and Chuck. It seems like the Internet is becoming my new 'information box'.

moniqueh:

July 30th, 2010 at 7:27 pm

The earliest memory I have of television was filled with thrill, envy and regret. I was probably about seven at the time, and every morning I would make a concerted effort to catch the first five minutes of Barney. Those first five minutes were all important, you see, as they were the only portion of the episode I was ever allowed to watch. Unlike those lucky children in the show, I had school to attend. Those five minutes would always fly by, in a blur of excitement. But alas, like all good things seem to, Barney always came to a premature end that saw my seven year old self ripped from the fun fantasy and thrust out the front door.

Television has always played a big part of my life. Being a child of the nineties, it was something I have never been without – a constant norm. That is not to say it has never been restricted. My mother used to think The Simpsons was too crude and from this show I was barred for a good couple of years. I still like it to this day. My mother is reluctant to admit it, but I have seen her laugh too.

In general, however, there is a big difference in my household between who watches what. It is lucky now that we all have our own televisions. I tend to favour dramas and the 'smarter' comedies – things like Boston Legal, Nip/Tuck and Fringe to name a few. My brother would choose Family Guy or Supernatural. My mother, on the other hand, watches Coronation Street on a regular basis and rarely switches away from channel One – mainly because of her dislike for "American" programs.

Due to the extreme differences in television preferences in my household, the six o'clock news is an unspoken battle. The rule, never said out loud, is that whoever turns the main television on that night has effectively chosen which station we are watching. My brother does not participate, as apparently current affairs are not important when you are seventeen (they should be), but for my mother and me it is almost a religious practice. Dinner is usually timed around the headlines of the night and everything but the sports section is incorporated into the meal.

I do not know what my life would be like if television did not exist. In fact, if I think about it I find I can chronicle sections of my childhood and teenage years into what television shows I was watching during that time. For me, primary school was the light hearted fun of before and after school cartoons – Scooby Doo, Tom and Jerry, Pokemon and Digimon. High school was a plethora of changing tastes – from The OC to Prison Break to Traveler to House. Television is such an integrated part of my life, and the lives of those around me, that despite the constant developments in technology I refuse to believe I will not still be watching well into my eighties.

G. Smith:

July 30th, 2010 at 7:45 pm

While I was growing up, there were three times during the week where I watched TV. There was the Youth Programming after primary school from about 2pm till 5pm. This involved programs in both English and Afrikaans, sometimes even mixed, directly aimed at children below the age of 13. As I grew older this changed to me watching KTV – Kids TV – on cable. This programming was a mix of superhero cartoons such as The Amazing Spiderman or Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, as well as Live Action programming around adventures extraordinary children get up to. Programs about child scientists who make invisibility potions, young detectives who solves crime the police can't, etc.

The second time I watched TV was on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. This was from around 6pm to 10pm. These shows were more mature and generally were of the action or comedy genre. Things like Mc Gyver, Airwolf, The A Team, etc. were the main attractions for me in the action genre. For comedy I watched programs like Alf, and Friends.

The final period was Saturday mornings from 7am to 10am. This mainly consisted of various Disney cartoons, though a few others like Dino Riders, Bionic Six and He-man were my main interest.

As I grew older I became more involved with watching less cartoons and more Drama and Action programs. I watched The Wonder Years and shows like it more often, my mother started taking more control of the TV and we watched programs closer to the Romance Comedy genre, and occasionally we watched miniseries like the BBC's Pride and Prejudice, which my mother recorded and watched at every opportunity, this lead me to sit in my room, playing on my computer but still hearing all the dialogue. As my mother took more control over what was watched and I watched TV less.

When we moved to NZ and I lost interest in TV, though I started watching downloaded programs which really appealed to me because of the lack of adverts. I found myself noticing the places where – on TV – the programs would pause for a commercial break. It was around this point where I understood that TV programming was done around the adverts. I watched entire seasons of programs I had only caught glimpses of before. Buff the Vampire Slayer was likely the biggest moment for me because I could actually watch entire seasons and follow the story arcs without interruption from either commercial breaks or season breaks.

This new way of watching TV, through downloaded programs, became the norm for me. I now don't even own a TV, I wait for entire seasons to be complete before downloading them or buying the DVD box set and watching them when I want rather than when some TV executive thinks it's a good time to put the show on the air. Now I watch programs like The Wire, Breaking Bad, and even the old programming like Star Trek: The Next Generation and other science fiction that isn't shown when I want it. I get to choose my own programming. I don't think I could go back to watching TV with all the adverts and seasonal breaks now. It seems to be more adverts than programming and after comparing shows I've downloaded or have the DVDs for to those shown on TV I can see many parts missing that were taken out to allow for adverts. It's like I'm now watching the "Director's Cut" of TV programs. Maybe it's just because I'm impatient, but I see scheduled TV as a bad thing. Hundreds of channels and nothing no. Lastly, I hate the idea of scheduling my day around when TV shows I like are on. My time, my choice.

Kirste:

July 31st, 2010 at 11:57 pm

Television has played a significant role in my life. From a very young age television was used as a form of entertainment and education. The earliest memory I have of watching television dates back to the early 1990's with a show called Play School. I remember one of the very first dolls I was given, I named Jemima, after one of the toys on the show.

Once I began primary school, I don't remember watching that much television in the afternoons as I preferred to play outside. Mum wasn't strict, but she always kept a careful eye on the amount of TV my brother and I would watch. What Now with Jason Gunn and Thingee was a favourite, along with Sesame Street and Suzy Kato.

During my pre-teen years I faced an endless battle with my brother over what shows to watch after school before doing our homework. Cartoons such as Power Rangers, Captain Planet and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles were among his favourites, whereas I preferred to watch Sailor Moon and Carmen Sandiego. As I got older, watching TV shows with my parents later in the evenings became a novelty and I remember feeling really chuffed that I got to stay up late (past 8pm).

I think my family is one of the select few in New Zealand that didn't jump on the bandwagon and purchase a subscription to Sky TV when it first came out. Instead it wasn't until I was halfway through High School that I was able to enjoy a wide variety of new and exciting channels and shows. We only got the simple package that didn't include the movie channels and my brother generally watched sport, so it was we didn't have Sky for long. Once my brother and I left home my parents decided to cancel the subscription as neither of them watches much TV themselves. I don't really feel like I miss out on much as we don't have Freeview either and most of the shows I do watch and enjoy are on either channel one or two.

Television plays a bigger role in my life today than when I was younger and I enjoy a variety of different genres. Each night I watch the news as I like to keep up to date with current affairs and I also watch Shortland Street religiously. If I ever miss an episode I generally watch it online on the TVNZ on demand website. I like reality TV shows such as Project Runway and Americas Next Top Model, although these are more like reality game shows. Other shows I enjoy are House as I enjoy his sense of humour and sarcasm and one of my all time favourites is Grand Designs. I like this show because I love interior design and enjoy watching people build their dream home, which is a dream I hope I can fulfil one day.

Rosita:

August 1st, 2010 at 3:36 pm

Personally, television has been appropriated in my life in three different ways. As a child, television was purely entertainment and most likely a tool of distraction for my mum to use. My first memories of television are of classic children's shows like Barney and Friends, Sesame Street and Lamp chop's Play-Along. These take me back to memories of sitting about a metre away from the TV with my cousins, all singing along to 'the song that doesn't end'. When I grew out of these shows, I became addicted to afterschool programming with the shows that were hugely popular then such as Captain Planet, Sailor Moon, Power Rangers and Pokémon. We took television very seriously back then and I distinctly remember when 'Digimon' was created and there was a genuine divide throughout primary school depending on whether you preferred Pokémon or Digimon.

I am an only child from a family that only had one TV, so I often had to watch whatever my parents wanted to watch. Specifically I remember hating watching the news as a kid, but was always forced to from being outvoted. I eventually came to enjoy the news, but now seem to be liking it less as I notice the corny puns and the how the stories deemed 'newsworthy' are getting more ridiculous. Throughout my teen years, television was really only a boredom-buster that I engaged with if I wasn't going out or had time to kill.

My family never had Sky when I was growing up so we only had the free-to-air channels. Even with few options, we would rarely all agree so the outcome would usually be mum and I getting gradually more frustrated dad's channel-surfing habit.

Since I became a university student, I have found television takes on another role in my life. It is escapism for me, to just distract and unwind me from assignments. I have moved out of home, into Orchard Park and my flat doesn't have a television in the lounge, which was definitely strange at first. I brought a tiny, old-fashioned television for my room, but it's deeper than the screen is wide, and has bunny ears so isn't exactly ideal. Often I'll now watch TV in the communal lounge, or On-Demand. Since I left home my parents got Sky, and when I go home in the holidays, I find it quite disappointing compared to what I was expecting. Really, it just gives my dad hundreds more channels to surf through. I cannot fathom my friends' obsessions with trashy reality TV on E and MTV. I feel like I am the only girl my age that doesn't care about 'The Hills' or the Kardashians. I do however regularly watch other popular shows such as Desperate Housewives, Gossip Girl, Outrageous Fortune, and Big Bang Theory and if I miss an episode I will try to catch up online. Television has been a source of entertainment, a boredom buster and a form of escapism for me throughout each stage of my life. With constant technological improvements, new creative shows constantly flowing in from overseas and the immense improvement of New Zealand television in recent years, I can't wait to see what part television will play in the rest of my life.

geofflealand:

August 4th, 2010 at 12:56 pm

Paul writes: At first glance, 500 words seems too few to describe 23 years of television watching. When I think of the endless hours of cartoons, fake wrestling (that I never believed to be fake), murder mystery series or rugby I feel like I have spent months if not years sitting in my 'comfy spot' watching the good old box; and it was an old box too but it seemed to consume hours of my time.

Childhood: My parents were not advocates of me watching endless hours of television but I did get to watch more than my fair share of it. Unthinkable as it is now, I would wake up extra early just to catch one more cartoon before school. For me, a day would not be complete without another episode of Captain Planet. As the years continued morning cartoon watching changed to the much more mature and sophisticated afternoon programmes. The "keep it clean" motto of Captain Planet changed to the epic battles scenes of the Dragon Ball Z series; a must for my friends and me. Some of us even had capes and other paraphernalia to imitate our favourite cartoon heroes; we wanted to become what we saw in the world of television.

Youth: As in my childhood years, age brought change to what I was watching on the television. I moved from Asian kung fu fighting to American comedy. The Simpsons and Family Guy became the new talk topics at school. In order to be seen as 'cool' at school it was a necessity to watch the right shows and the Simpsons was the 'right' show for we all wanted to be a little like Bart.

Social demands moved into night time viewing also. I began to watch reality TV shows like Survivor and The Apprentice and they soon became the television high light of my week. By personal choice I also started to watch the news. I desired to know what was happening in the world around me, admittedly, the sports' news was of particular interest but the national and international news become increasingly important. As well as the news I became extremely interested in Rugby and Rugby League; it became almost become somewhat of a new religion for me.

Adulthood/Present: With my timetable of studies and work, television viewing has become more of a luxury for me. If I can fit some in with school, work and study I am extremely lucky and as luck would have it, I do fit some in. Occasionally, I catch a programme which is riveting enough to hold my attention, the recent television movie "Bloodlines" being an example.

If I was to look back over the last week I would have watched sections of the news, a bit of the E! Channel and several different rugby and rugby league games. Over time I can see how television has influenced in my life. It has gone from an enjoyment to an addiction (yes, I confess to even watching the infomercials) to a luxury. As the years have ticked by so has my inclination to watch the once forbidden channel one as my thirst for current events has increased.



Stewart Macpherson . . . spins the pops.

Challenge brought Stewart to Tv.

The appearances on our Tv. screens of 19-year-old Stewart Macpherson, as compere of the "In the Groove" records-spinning show, have revived an old Macpherson link with entertainment.

Stewart's father, the late Archie Macpherson, was a Scottish tenor and humorist who broadcast regularly from IYA in the early 1930s in a duo, "The Twa Mees."

And his mother, Mrs Mary Macpherson, has been a prominent singer in Auckland.

Though Stewart is conscious of the fact that he is carrying on a family tradition, he has never developed as a singer, or as a Scots style entertainer.

"I did try playing the bag-pipe once," he says, "but that was a long time ago."

His first active association with entertainment was as a drummer in the school band at Penrose High School. Young singer Ricky May, who appeared in last week's "In the Groove" show, was also a member.

Stewart is now a student at Auckland Teachers' Training College and it was the selection of a fellow-student, Delphine Hodoe, to appear as compere of ANTV's children's section that led to his appearance.

He had been ribbing Del about her Tv. work and she challenged him to do something on television. "In the Groove" was the result.

As a future social worker, Stewart has a long-range interest in the use of television for education.