

**'Live' Anniversary Event TV as Public Service Ephemera: *Doctor Who*,
Casualty, *Match of the Day*, *EastEnders* and BBC Moments of Attachment**

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Abstract

Considering a range of recent BBC TV programme anniversaries, this article analyses how the BBC has utilised different modes or zones of 'liveness' to promote the value of public service television via 'event' TV. Such anniversary events strategically collapse together the "hyper-ephemeral" (having to be there) with the "anti-ephemeral" (commemorating TV history), as longer-term audience memories of public service television's trustworthiness and durability are evoked. *Contra* scholarly debates which have positioned media anniversaries simply as a matter of (hyper-)commodification, I address *Doctor Who's* 50th, *Casualty's* 30th, *Match of the Day's* 50th and *EastEnders'* 30th anniversary as each shaping a sense of remembered "public service ephemera". Through this process, audiences' recollections of past programmes, and their integration with memories of everyday life, are articulated with emotional attachments to the BBC, thus making an affective case for the British Broadcasting Corporation's cultural legitimation. Very different types of TV that we might not usually think to analyse side-by-side – flagship, returning, and soap dramas, along with sports coverage – can all work coherently as programme brands to defend the BBC's cultural standing, without surrendering to what's been termed 'BBC nostalgia' (Holdsworth 2011: 94—95),

and whilst simultaneously bidding to colonise second-screen 'digital flows' circulating around TV premieres.

Key words : television anniversaries; BBC; event TV; public service; liveness

In this article I address the role of contemporary television anniversaries, described by Amy Holdsworth as 'milestone moments... within serial drama that "reference back" on their own long perspectives' (2011:36). I am interested in how the BBC, as a public service broadcaster, has mobilised a range of programme anniversaries as TV events, and hence I will examine *Doctor Who's* 50th anniversary (2013), *Casualty's* 30th (2016), *Match of the Day's* 50th (2014) and *EastEnders'* 30th (2015). This means analysing programmes that have differing relationships with televisual liveness (e.g. sports coverage/soap opera), as well as a flagship TV drama, and a returning series that typically represents 'ordinary television' (Bonner 2003). At the same time, flagship, returning and soap dramas are embedded in rituals of regular TV consumption and are not usually linked to 'liveness'. The purpose of my focus on BBC anniversaries is to consider how the commemoration of programme brands can implicitly stage an argument for the emotional value of the BBC as a public service broadcaster in the ongoing lives of its audiences; I therefore understand seemingly disparate TV anniversaries as coherent parts of the BBC's contemporary self-legitimation.

A number of writers have argued that cultural anniversaries are simply a matter of commodification: William Johnston attacks such 'commercial overkill' (1991: 66). Barbara Klinger and Ryan Lizardi have set out more nuanced

positions on anniversaries' media-oriented nostalgia, nevertheless focusing on the commercial value of a 'contemporary aftermarket' (Klinger 2010: 4) where 'any year anniversary divisible by five presents media producers with this commodification opportunity' (Lizardi 2015: 123). However, I will argue that UK TV programme anniversaries, in particular public service TV 'events', are not just about commerce. Nor are such events entirely readable as 'BBC nostalgia' (Holdsworth 2011: 94—95) given that each BBC anniversary considered here is just 'as much a social media event as it is a TV show' (McCormick 2016: 112). This is something shared with the Netflix model of releasing an entire season of a drama all at once, inspiring audiences to watch immediately in order to take part in social media conversations. Contemporary TV anniversary events are likewise just as much about the 'hyper-ephemeral' (having to 'be there' at the exact moment of first availability) as the 'anti-ephemeral' (Janes 2016: 194), i.e. a sense of TV history being made and commemorated. Anniversary TV specials tend to be displaced from ordinary TV scheduling's flow, being re-positioned within social media's 'digital flows' (McCormick 2016: 112) and, even more importantly, also being re-contextualised within the commemorative flows of popular memory.

Contemporary public service TV anniversaries, though they may appear 'retro', are very much a part of current digital and cultural flows, aligned with present media valorisations of the 'event' within an attention economy (Groys 2016). Anniversary TV 'events' aim to build "buzz" in the here-and-now as well as underpinning longer-term audience affective relationships. Such TV anniversaries are thus much more present-oriented (Hills 2015: 7) than might be assumed by those theorising them as problematic instances of commodified nostalgia (e.g. Lizardi 2015). Such hybrids of hyper-ephemerality and anti-ephemerality work to

shape *public service ephemera* whereby audiences' memories of past programmes can be articulated with ongoing emotional attachments to the BBC.

I will begin by looking at *Doctor Who* and *Casualty* as recorded TV dramas that do not display traditional televisual 'liveness'. Rather than structuring my analyses chronologically, I have organised them via differing versions of liveness, moving from what Andrew Crisell (2012: 45) calls the 'zone of liveness' through to *Match of the Day's* 'temporal doubling' (Scannell 2014: 175) that paratextually frames as-if-live highlights, and finally on to *EastEnders'* deployment of performed liveness emphasising actorly/technical skill and specially extended amounts of preparation time (Hewett 2015: 74—75).

From 'Day of the Doctor' to Day of the Doctors: *Doctor Who's* 50th and *Casualty's* 30th

Doctor Who has celebrated many anniversaries across its cultural career. The BBC science fiction series, focusing on an alien 'Time Lord' called 'the Doctor' who can regenerate his physical appearance, was first broadcast on 23 November 1963. Its tenth anniversary was marked by a four-part story called 'The Three Doctors' which was shown in weekly instalments across 1972 and 1973. This early anniversary attempt at bringing together different eras of the programme was not linked to the date of 23 November at all: episode one was, in fact, screened on 30 December 1972. There was seemingly little sense of needing to schedule this in relation to precise calendrical time, and it can be described as a naïve anniversary, lacking the highly self-reflexive quality of later instances. By 1983, 'The Five Doctors' was more of a hybrid anniversary, targeting fandom – and its exact

knowledge of the anniversary date – as well as presenting a ‘special’ that would entertain a mass audience.

‘The Day of the Doctor’, broadcast on BBC1 on 23 November 2013, marked out another kind of anniversary event TV. Whereas programme branding was becoming an issue in the 1980s, by 2013 it had become a dominant discursive practice, with television operating in a social media-orientated attention economy marked by a glut of possible viewing options (Johnson 2012). As such, ‘Day of the Doctor’ – complete with its own Twitter hashtag #savetheday – now represented a *hyped* anniversary, conceptualised as brand reinforcement, and as a hub for paratextual brand extensions into commemorative merchandise, publicity, and secondary texts, e.g. a webisode, a docudrama, a science programme, even a televised “after party”.

Although some of this paratextual proliferation has subsequently been reproduced on DVD/blu-ray releases or archived on YouTube by fans, there can be no doubting Jonathan Gray’s warning that ‘[p]aratextual ephemerality... poses a clear... danger to the quality of our analysis... as regularly just a month or two later, many paratexts have disappeared’ (2016: 39). But it should be noted that this mode of TV anniversary aims, in part, to be ‘hyper-ephemeral’ precisely because this privileges ‘the present moment in a manner similar to the “media event” described by Dayan and Katz [1992]’ (Janes 2016: 186), even if conventional ‘liveness’ is not involved.

As a title, ‘The Day of the Doctor’ makes relatively little sense in relation to the episode’s actual events, and much more sense as a marker of the need for audiences to participate in the ‘day’ of the anniversary itself on 23 November. Likewise, #savetheday refers partly to the Doctor’s heroic saving of his home

world, Gallifrey, but it also addresses audiences pre-textually as needing to ‘save the day’, i.e. clear their schedules for the anniversary date. The story was also self-consciously rendered more of an ‘event’ by being filmed in 3D and shown in UK cinemas, timed to coincide with its BBC1 premiere. Furthermore the ‘day’ of the Doctor was marked by a convention event held at London’s ExCeL Centre (for more on this, and the anniversary use of 3D cinema/TV, see Hills 2015: 68—76 and 92—104).

Although ‘Day of the Doctor’ was recorded, aligning cinema screenings and the initial TV broadcast – as well as following the transmission with *Doctor Who Live: The Afterparty* – helped to craft a ‘zone of liveness’ around the anniversary evening. Andrew Crisell defines this as featuring ‘kinds of recording which... exist within a “zone of liveness” because, if they are not... viewed soon after the occurrence of the events they capture, they will cease to be of value’ (2012: 45). And to participate in the anniversary’s social media conversations, viewers needed to see ‘Day’ when it went out, or very soon thereafter. Positioning this as a time-sensitive TV event linked to 23 November 2013, *Doctor Who* thereby sought to convert ‘extensive’ into ‘intensive’ culture, in Scott Lash’s terms:

Things and beings in extensive culture... consist of units of equivalence. The intensive, in contrast, consists of ...the one-off, of the singular. For example, the commodity – which is extensive – consists of ...identical units of value. The brand, in contradistinction, is intensive. Each brand constitutes itself as different from every other. (2010: 3)

But this fails to see the extensive/intensive binary as a fractal distinction. At the

level of the TV programme brand, branded commodities can be ‘extensive’: *Doctor Who*’s anniversary had its own logo which was stamped onto all sorts of products, from stamp sets to jewellery, with all these paratexts comprising the ‘set’ of BBC Worldwide-licensed merchandising. Yet the anniversary episode itself was both at the hub of this paratextual array, and simultaneously excluded from it – rather than being simply part of a branded set of tie-ins, ‘Day of the Doctor’ was *intensive Doctor Who*; ‘the one-off. The story also boasted John Hurt playing an unusually short-lived or ‘mayfly’ Doctor (Steven Moffat quoted in Hills 2014: 109). This description evokes etymologies of the hyper-ephemeral, since in

Entomology the name of a genus of pseudo-neuropterus insects belong[s] to the group *Ephemeridae* (Day-flies, May-flies)... The mayfly literalised the ancients’ understanding of the transitory, granting it an iridescent form and fleeting yet pristine beauty that lingers on as an object lesson in our language. But to our contemporary ears, this definition of the ephemeral-as-transitory generally skews differently, evoking... modernity... [rather than nature]. (Uricchio 2011: 24—25)

To stress this sense of ephemeral television as articulated with visions of (late) modernity, I am quite deliberately using a number of terms drawn from outside of TV Studies in my analysis here, in particular Stephanie Janes’ (2016) work on hyper-ephemeral Alternate Reality Games (ARGs) that have to be played in real life and so leave limited media traces, though players recall the intensity of their gaming experience, rendering it ‘anti-ephemeral’ in a sense. In addition, I also deploy Scott Lash’s (2010) work on sacredness and ‘intensive’ culture. Janes’

terms are useful because they illustrate how the most ephemeral of forms – the TV anniversary special self-reflexively seeking to possess meaning and value primarily in the very moment of its transmission premiere – can exist in a dialectical relationship with anti-ephemerality, here figured as popular memory or personal history. Likewise, Scott Lash’s use of ‘extensive’ to mean commodified equivalence (e.g. any episode of *Doctor Who* should ideally be equivalent in terms of carrying brand values) highlights how anniversary specials can dialectically take on an elevated value and significance, becoming more akin to what Lash views as ‘intensive’ one-offs rather than only carrying a branded stamp of identification. Viewed as such, anniversary event TV is brand-reinforcing by virtue of transcending brand value *per se*; and it is instantaneously ephemeral by virtue of evoking temporal intervals of TV-as-heritage.

Hyped as an event that some audiences felt they had to ‘be there’ for, ‘Day of the Doctor’ made a bid to colonise the ‘digital flows’ of Twitter and Facebook around its transmission time (McCormick 2016: 112). However, as an intensive rather than extensive brand actualisation, ‘Day of the Doctor’ also necessarily made a simultaneous bid for anti-ephemerality (Janes 2016: 188). Lash argues that material, existent instances of a brand are necessarily ‘extensive’, or marked by equivalence (2010: 3–4). This neglects to consider that although programme brands can give rise to ‘ordinary’ TV within televisual flow (Williams 1974), as well as ‘ordinary’ merchandise predictable in its brand coherence, they can also seek to elevate themselves self-relationally into extraordinary status. Indeed, this de-differentiation of ‘*intensive material*’ (Lash 2010: 19) is part of the appeal of a relatively rare TV anniversary such as a 50th or a 30th. By concentrating a heightened degree of attention on themselves at moments of commemoration,

programme brands such as *Doctor Who* and *Casualty* can inhabit a ‘zone of liveness’ whilst simultaneously occupying “multiple temporalities” akin to Alternate Reality Games (Janes 2016: 189). This is because anniversary specials are designed to be consumed in the moment of first broadcast *and* to evoke longer histories and affective relationships with audiences. Such multiplicity arises through a drive towards anti-ephemerality, occasioned by the high level of engagement that anniversary celebrations can evoke:

[T]hey have the potential to make a far longer lasting impact on audiences, which is reflected in ...passionate and committed... responses... This could be extremely valuable for marketers and producers in their continuing struggle to survive in a perceived ‘attention economy’. (Janes 2016: 194)

By deliberately trading an ‘extensive’ identity as a weekly TV series (Lash 2010: 2) for an intensive singularity, anniversary specials draw on series’ memory as strongly as possible. They thus tend to display ‘extended seriality’ (Pearson and Messenger Davies 2014: 128), linking different entries in a franchise (2014: 134), or temporarily integrating different versions of a long-running series made by various production teams. The denouement of ‘Day of the Doctor’ approximates to a repurposed clip show, for example, as brief sequences of all of the different incarnations of the regenerated Doctor (taken from archived episodes) accompany their collective narrative involvement. And lacking the alibi of time travel, hospital drama *Casualty*’s 30th anniversary episode, ‘Too Old for this Shift’ (broadcast 27/8/16), utilises to-camera messages of congratulation from past

characters that are addressed to the long-serving nurse Charlie Fairhead (Derek Thompson) on the occasion of his thirtieth anniversary working at Holby City Hospital. (*Casualty* itself was first shown on 6 September 1986). This means, pragmatically, that all the actors involved didn't need to attend filming; short messages could easily be recorded and sent in to the production team. As if in order to avoid accusations that *Casualty's* commemoration was being 'phoned in', major characters from the show's history appear in the current narrative rather than merely being featured diegetically as recorded talking heads. Both Lisa 'Duffy' Duffin (Cathy Shipton) and Josh Griffiths (Ian Bleasdale) re-join Charlie as part of the hospital's – and the show's – 'old guard'.

Extended seriality is one method for elevating the TV anniversary out of 'ordinary' TV and into the domain of memorialised flow and the cultural timeline of collective/popular memory. Anniversaries can also be celebrated via these TV dramas entering the museum, often construed as an agent of cultural 'legitimation' (Newman and Levine 2012: 47; Holdsworth 2011: 127). *Doctor Who's* 50th was marked by an exhibition at the National Media Museum, '*Doctor Who and Me: Fifty Years of Doctor Who Fans*', which ran from the 50th anniversary date of 23 November 2013 through to 9 February 2014

(<http://www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk/planavisit/exhibitions/doctorwhoandme/introduction>). *Casualty*, by contrast, has been viewed as a stronger

component of "ordinary" TV drama: it is analysed by Robin Nelson 'as a typical example of a more everyday use of flexi-narrative in the series genre' (1997: 32), and has been mocked for its standardised 'insistence on sketching the lives of its patients before they become sick or injured' (Jacobs 2003: 24), resulting in a formula where guest characters' ailments or injuries can be anticipated by long-

term viewers. Breaking with this format, ‘Too Old for this Shift’ marked its unusual status by focusing on lead characters as the injured parties (Senior Consultant Connie Beauchamp and her daughter Grace Beauchamp-Strachan), and by introducing guest characters outside the hospital – the Swift family – much later in the episode than normal, and in relation to a reconfigured game of anticipation. As soon as audiences realise that the child Kai Swift has been given a drone as a birthday present by his absent father, whilst a medical helicopter pilot has somewhat unusually been featured in the episode, then it seems likely that this drone will bring down the helicopter transporting Connie and Grace to Holby City. The anniversary episode hence draws on, but reworks, the show’s characteristic sense of melancholic anticipation – i.e. what fate is going to befall the characters?

Casualty’s bid for cultural legitimation through an anniversary special may be less secure than *Doctor Who* – unlike *Who*, it wasn’t transferred especially to a 3D cinema release, nor accompanied by a British Film Institute season of screenings (see Hills 2015: 84—91). However, ‘Too Old for this Shift’ was promoted as a “feature-length event” in a BBC trailer (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/NLPcg36XGgGTwknYxYRxpl/casualty-30th-first-look-trailer-breakdown>). Akin to ‘Day of the Doctor’, then, this episode also interpellated the audience’s

empathy with the event... In the case of a television drama, being present at the event coincides precisely with the time when it is broadcast. ...This consideration has maximum validity when the broadcast is a premiere. ...[T]he premiere of a television drama... has

the flavour and status of a live programme: for viewers it is a special and unrepeatable opportunity. (Buonanno 2008: 57)

Yet this 'event-like dimension' carrying a 'specific inflection of "liveness"' is not maximised merely by a premiere, since it is additionally boosted by an *anniversary premiere*. Not 'just any programme being broadcast for the first time is suitable for inclusion in the events genre' (ibid).

Casualty's 30th anniversary may still have been less event-like, and less anti-ephemeral than *Doctor Who*, given its lack of 'museumification'. The title 'Too Old for this Shift' also seems to playfully acknowledge the show's more 'ordinary', earthy or abject status as a 'body trauma'/hospital drama (Jacobs 2003), with the last word replacing the more usual, colloquial phrasing of '...shit'. Even a behind-the-scenes paratext such as a "making of" for the episode's major physical stunt – the helicopter crash – showed this supposedly one-time-only stunt going wrong, and the helicopter shell having to be unexpectedly bodged back together with gaffer tape for a second try (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p045y771>). Rather than being self-mythologising, this again acknowledges physical precarity and emergent abjection: bodies and things can always threaten to fall apart and fail to work, both textually and extra-textually.

However, to assume that recontextualisation in the National Media Museum aided *Doctor Who's* anniversary legitimisation (and anti-ephemerality) whilst *Casualty* suffered from a lack of such valorisation may be problematic. For Derek Kompare, TV's 'long-term legitimisation' has been achieved 'through more venerated cultural forms. Enter the Museum and the Archive: arguably, the most vaunted sites of cultural legitimisation imaginable in modern societies' (Kompare

2005: 111). But Maeve Connolly has recently counter-argued that such statements

envisage the art museum as a cultural temple with the power to sacralise and elevate culture... Yet,... the social function of the museum as public institution... has clearly altered over time. Like public broadcasters, museums cannot *confer* cultural status unless they maintain and assert their own legitimacy. (Connolly 2014: 74)

Indeed, it is striking that cultural theorist Boris Groys uses the same term that has long been taken to characterise television when discussing the current situation of museums: flow. Groys argues that museums have become ‘immersed in the flow of time’, producing ‘information about art events’ (2016: 3—4) instead of contemplation of a canon. Rather than housing permanent collections, museums in a neoliberal, digital context become ‘compatible with the Internet’ in terms of offering events within an ever-changing flow of happenings, tracked by social media activity. Both public museums and television drama have therefore arguably been reconfigured in relation to ‘digital flows’, participating in the attention economy’s legitimating logic of “intensive” one-off, distinctive events.

It may be tempting to view the BBC’s recurrent programme anniversaries as inciting the audience subjectivity of a ‘perpetual individual nostalgic’ (Lizardi 2015: 3), i.e. a consumer who constantly re-consumes media from his/her past, constructing a personalised archive out of ‘their own media-soaked past’ (2015:4). But this individualised, consumerist reading does not fully consider the calendrical objectivity of brand anniversaries, and the fact that they seek, here, to

fuse personal memories to narratives of the BBC given that '*the brand anniversary enumerates affect*' (Hills 2015: 4). Individual memories are thus placed into dialogue with institutional and popular memory: the subjectively affective is lent a culturally objectified and objective framing. As Ann Gray and Erin Bell observe, anniversaries enable national broadcasters to 'demonstrate their own role as part of national history. For public service broadcasters such as the BBC, commemorative programming emphasizes their role in creating and maintaining a memory of the past' (2013: 100).

This legitimation of the BBC's public service operations can occur as much through its own programme anniversaries as through external historical anniversaries, e.g. the ending of Second World War. As such, the paratextual proliferations and digital flows accompanying *Doctor Who's* 50th and, on a lesser scale, *Casualty's* 30th, are not simply guides to preferred meaning-making for these television franchises (Grainge and Johnson 2015: 35), nor merely incitements to consumption. They are also tokens of *public service ephemera*, seeking to temporarily align personal and collective/popular memory and thus to justify and perform the BBC's cultural agency. Frances Bonner has fruitfully argued that branded artefacts such as ephemeral memorabilia – e.g. *Doctor Who* annuals or toys – collected by fans can act 'not simply as triggers for memories of past television... [but] as technologies of attachment' (2012: 174). And the intensive anniversary, the hyper-ephemeral one-off, can likewise do more than just trigger memories of 1960s *Doctor Who* or 1980s *Casualty*; it can also viscerally remind viewers of their attachment to these BBC texts and to the BBC itself. Acting as 'technologies of attachment' in a discursive and affective sense, programme anniversaries articulate the personal and the collective, layering 'a

rich narrative, bringing together the program[me], the history of viewing it and [viewers'] related biographic details' (Bonner 2012: 179). Public service ephemera, as I am using this phrase, can be equated with a planned dialectic of hyper-ephemerality and anti-ephemerality. Moments of commemoration are intended to open out onto audiences' awareness of the BBC's ongoing presence across their lives. This process presents a doubled justification of the BBC's public service identity: it can unite a collective audience at the moment of broadcast (Piper 2011), and it aims to affirm enduring audience attachments to the BBC.

But if recorded TV dramas can only offer an 'inflection' of liveness, what of other types of public service anniversary programming premised on liveness and replay, such as sports coverage, or utilising conventions of performed liveness such as soaps? It may be presumed that these differing modes of liveness would lead to different modes of the TV anniversary event. This is what I will go on to explore next.

Commentating and Criticising: *MotD's* 50th and *EastEnders'* 30th Anniversary 'Live Week'

Writing in *The Guardian*, TV critic Mark Lawson adopted a trans-anniversary approach by comparing *Match of the Day's* 50th with *Doctor Who's* golden jubilee. Lawson noted that, 'while a drama can more or less decide what it wants to happen in the cake-and-candles edition, a football highlights show is stuck with what actually did happen' (2014). And there was a definite sense of this in *MotD's* anniversary episode, broadcast on Saturday 23 August 2014, as commentator Jonathan Pearce referred to one less than alluring Premier League fixture as 'the

uninvited guest at the *Match of the Day* 50th celebrations'. Another match finished nil-nil, meanwhile, thoroughly lacking in commemorative drama.

By virtue of having to fit into the temporality of professional football's schedules, *MotD* would appear not to fit the template of a hyped anniversary: although the programme had begun on 22 August 1964, the nearest Saturday of Premier League matches in 2014 fell a day late on the 23rd. This seemed to exclude the show from celebrating a precise anniversary date as *Doctor Who* had done in 2013. And unlike the 'inflection' of liveness linked to an anniversary TV drama, where a recorded but special episode can be teased, trailed, and paratextually promoted, football highlights – remaining strongly in the 'zone of liveness' linked to that day's matches – cannot be anticipated by fans and media in quite the same way.

The manner in which liveness is utilized in relation to *MotD*'s brand anniversary is thus somewhat distinct from other cases considered here; the format of a sporting highlights show largely precludes those forms of liveness drawn on by TV drama where, as I've already observed, a hyped-up premiere can take on the 'flavour and status of a live programme: for viewers it is a special and unrepeatable opportunity' (Buonanno 2008: 57). Nor can *MoTD* offer the performed liveness which has become characteristic of TV soap anniversaries. Positioning it as a "special and unrepeatable opportunity" for viewers who have to be there at the moment of initial broadcast hinges, in part, on how the show can evoke paratextual memories of bygone eras, simultaneously invoking *MotD*'s longevity as part of the BBC's public service coverage of football. The paratextual matter which *MoTD* has consistently used to ground its match highlights (themselves edited and shaped into footballing texts) – i.e. title sequence;

commentary; on-screen graphics – becomes a key marker of the show's brand anniversary and its special status. Counter-intuitively, this means attributing an 'event-like dimension' and a 'specific inflection of "liveness"' (Buonanno 2008: 57) to recorded sports coverage. Yet it is exactly via the timely processing/editing of live football from earlier in the day, and through the paratextual framing of such 'recorded live' textuality, that *MotD* offers its audiences a valued service: that of 'expert' commentary within a distinctive 'zone of liveness' (Crisell 2012: 45) on the day. That is to say, *MotD* lives up to its name by always being initially broadcast on the same day as the football matches that it covers. Historically this would have placed *MotD* ahead of detailed press coverage, of course, exploiting television's capacity to respond within a few hours of Saturday afternoon's football fixtures. Now, though, online match reports and social media commentary occupy a differential 'zone of liveness' that gets even closer to the real time of live football, preceding *Match of the Day's* instalments in terms of timeliness but lacking the brand-specific *MotD* punditry which fans at home can dispute, celebrate, and even revel in recalling.

Given that the footballing calendar prevented *Match of the Day* from being broadcast on its precise anniversary, a celebratory documentary entitled *Match of the Day at 50* instead took on the role of commemorating (and generating) awareness of the anniversary date, 22 August. Displacing the unpredictability of a day's footballing highlights, this relied on the programme's past as a known quantity that could be archivally narrated, with fans' favourite moments being highlighted. The documentary could also be previewed by journalists such as Lawson, having an 'advantage over the rest of the franchise of being available in advance' (Lawson 2014). *Match of the Day at 50* formed just one part of the

anniversary campaign, though, as a tie-in BBC Book, *Match of the Day: 50 Years*, was also published on Thursday 21 August 2014, adding to the paratextual build-up to the big day (Constable 2014). Additionally, the 50th was prefigured in the 2014-15 title sequence, which moved rapidly through various eras of the show, flicking between historical *Match of the Day* logos, and embedding clips of key commentating moments – e.g. Barry Davies’s gleeful ‘look at his face!’ – into a videographic jumble of related pop-cultural and BBC ephemera (for example, a publicity shot of Tom Baker as the fourth Doctor Who, a role he played between 1974 and 1981, appears beside 1970s footballing action, reminding viewers of BBC1’s Saturday night line-up at the time). Garry Whannel has criticised *Match of the Day*’s opening sequence for ideologically blending football’s past and present:

Popular memory, lived experience, and nostalgia are... repackaged into the cultural form of television football.... A whole aspect of the modern game is masked—we see no glimpses of rich corporate clients in executive boxes... The title sequence of *Match of the Day* offers an imaginary unity of player, fan, manager, and owner, in which the traditions of the past are alive today. (2014: 772)

This blurring of football’s history and currency has been a recurring feature in *MotD*’s title sequences. Yet the 50th anniversary titles work slightly differently, even as they continue to exclude football’s political economy. Here, memorabilia and paratextual memory become as central as images of footballing greats: images are rendered as if they are children’s football stickers, and 1980s representations of Live Aid tickets jostle with on-screen ‘Instant Replay’ graphics

that can be just as precisely dated. *Match of the Day's* logo is shown in various guises, from its initial 1960s lettering through to its gaudy 1980s variants and onwards. Here is a *paratextual sequence obsessed with paratexts*, and with bits of ephemera such as changing styles in superimposed screen graphics. It is these paratexts which were both repeated extensively at the time (and so have accumulated audience attachment, affect and habitual recognition) and yet were also phased out as new paratextual adornments took their place: they are of their time and simultaneously routinised through weekly repetition. "Magic" moments of *MotD* punditry are also recalled, such as Barry Davies's vocalised excitement, Alan Hansen's woefully inaccurate 'you can't win anything with kids', said of a youthful and eventually double-winning 1990s Manchester United team. As Paddy Scannell has argued:

Why else do we watch football games if not for that 'one bit of magic' ...?

In our ordinary understanding an event 'goes on' from moment to moment. An event is made up of moments. But this is to think of moments as the fractional components of ordinary time, like the tick and tock of a clock. What, then, is the moment of magic if not a moment out of time, the moment when time stands still? ...It is a moment 'freed from the order of time'. (2014: 173)

Yet such moments are not simply a matter of footballing highlights; they are also generated through *MotD's* ritualised repetitions, its paratextual memory, where commentators' remarks or Instant Replay graphics can become just as 'magical' for audiences. The commentator evidently has a privileged role here, as

they frame each match, thus becoming celebrated over time in their own right. *Match of the Day's* anniversary episode was marked not only by the temporary reappearance of 'retro' on-screen graphics (team line-ups), but also by the return of Barry Davies, whose finest commentating moment had already been captured in the show's title sequence. This rendered a football highlights show – surely one epitome of 'ordinary' weekly and yearly television – enough of an 'intensive', one-off cultural event that *The Telegraph* actually live-blogged it (Gibbs 2014). Rather than *MotD* remaining normatively invisible in its framing of as-live football (complete with replays nested within the as-live coverage of edited highlights), what Andrew Barnfield (2013: 338) calls the 'medium event' of televised football – i.e. the 'total telecast' of match coverage plus commentary, interviews, analysis and graphics – became the focal point. *Match of the Day* itself even featured in a post-match manager's interview, with Sam Allardyce musing of *Match of the Day at 50*: 'I enjoyed the programme last night [on the 50th anniversary of 22 August] ... it was really pleasing to watch the years go by'. This isn't an 'imaginary unity' of manager and fan, but a performed identity for the occasion.

By making itself and its history a discussion point, *MotD* highlights its role in bringing football coverage to generations of viewers. At the same time, its strong emphasis on paratextual memory – on a bricolage of 'retro' graphics, logos and commentators – uses an emphasis on 'ephemeralisation' (Uricchio 2011: 34), seemingly paradoxically, as a display of *MotD's* anti-ephemeral status. This indicates 'an increased value for the forms that we take as ephemeral' (ibid: 35) within programme branding, as well as stressing the 'relation between... the monumental and the momentary... in a competitive "attention economy"' (Grainge 2011: 13). As public service ephemera, *MotD's* 50th and its paratextual

fixations align ‘popular memory, lived experience, and nostalgia’, just as Whannel notes. But this articulation of personal and collective cultural memory within the hyper-ephemerality of a few days of commemorative TV seeks to remind viewers of their enduring attachment to this BBC programme, *emotionally* legitimating the BBC as a public service broadcaster. It displays a kind of ‘emotional performative labour’ that ‘can take on a variety of forms within football fandom practice’ (Dixon 2013: 87), being distinguishable from ‘regular consumer practices’, as Kevin Dixon argues (2013: 85). That is, both football fandom and attachment to *MoTD*/the BBC are not kinds of emotional labour that can be terminated by customer dissatisfaction; instead they affectively underpin ongoing consumption – of football and of BBC television.

Ultimately *MoTD*’s 50th approximated to the kind of hyped anniversary displayed by *Doctor Who* and *Casualty*, then, rather than differing from them due to its dependence on that Saturday’s football matches. Of my examples, only *EastEnders*’ 30th anniversary drew consistently on ‘liveness’ construed as a traditional marker of televisual nowness. Its ‘Live Week’ in 2015 integrated elements of live performance, rather than occupying an ‘inflection’ of liveness like TV dramas, or ‘a zone of liveness’ like *MotD*’s highlights. This ‘Live Week’ culminated in an entirely live episode of the soap on Friday 20 February and an *EastEnders: Backstage Live* behind-the-scenes show.

By risking live acting performances and possible technical errors, *EastEnders* inserted itself into the “digital flows” of social media in a way that would normally require a major story revelation. But it offered this hyper-ephemeral and intensive pay-off too; viewers were primed to tune in for the reveal of ‘who killed Lucy Beale?’ (Deller and Bell forthcoming). *EastEnders*’ Live

Week highlighted how the programme's positioning as special/extraordinary TV could be read both as a source of actorly/technical skill and as a production risk, given that '[i]neptitude, performed or otherwise, may well be enough to convince viewers that what they are watching is happening *now*' (Marriott 2007: 43). Like other programme anniversaries, liveness thus reinjected 'the lost aura of the event', restoring 'a sense of presence... to deliver a... concentrated burst of *hereness*' (Marriott 2007: 120). This was 'auratic television' (Scannell 2014: 178) emphasising the production skill required to deliver a live episode of *EastEnders*, especially as soaps are not typically permitted extensive rehearsal time:

increasing economic pressures... within the television industry have resulted in ever-more limited (if any) rehearsal time for actors within many production schedules, particularly in the case of long-running shows where there exists a constant demand for the rapid turn-around and delivery of material. (Cantrell and Hogg 2016: 285)

Performing *EastEnders* live may have risked actors forgetting lines, or technical problems disrupting the episode, but minor disruptions of 'polished' studio recording can work to demarcate auratic liveness, evoking soap's longer history as a live form but also fuelling social media publicity by displaying the 'special' status of a live episode within the contemporary TV industry. (Indeed, *Coronation Street*'s executive producer Kieran Roberts has conceded that he was ultimately pleased by a minor sound fault in the live episode broadcast to commemorate ITV's 60th anniversary in 2015: this proved that the otherwise faultless broadcast was indeed live (Cowell 2016) and thus special.)

In the event of *EastEnders'* 50th, actress Jo Joyner (playing Tanya Branning) fluffed one of her lines by asking 'how's Adam?' of fellow actor Adam Woodyatt rather than using his character's name, Ian Beale. *EastEnders: Backstage Live* did not dwell on the incident, focusing on an on-brand celebration of the cast's (and producers') technical achievements. To the contrary, social media's 'democratisation of criticism... made visible the audience's emotional involvement' (Falero 2016: 97) such as displaying gleeful and astonished wonderment at Jo Joyner's mistake, in this instance. GIFs of the actress's startled face as she realised what she'd said were rapidly circulated online, giving *EastEnders'* 30th a 'spreadable media' currency (Jenkins, Ford and Green 2013).

'How's Adam?' is an intriguing example of public service ephemera – attaining a 'special' status for 'ordinary' TV, and breaking out of televisual flow in order to move into the 'digital flows' of social media chatter, along with cultural flows of celebrated TV moments. At the same time, 'How's Adam?' also figures public service ephemera particularly well by instantiating the 'risk rhetoric' (Becker 2007: 281) characteristic of public service broadcasting, just as *Doctor Who*, *Casualty* and *MoTD* all took unusual risks with their established formats, and used commemorative hyper-ephemerality to remind viewers of their public service profiles (*MoTD's* initial audience in 1964 was staggeringly low; *Casualty* has mounted critiques of National Health Service cuts whilst defending its staff ethos (Jacobs 2003: 22—23); and *Doctor Who* has been nurtured by the BBC through entire cast changes). It is certainly not my intention here to suggest that *EastEnders* should somehow be viewed as a lower cultural form given that one actor made a minor mistake during its live performance, or that sections of the audience celebrated such an error. Rather, *EastEnders'* celebratory and performed

liveness (much like that of *Coronation Street* as a flagship ITV brand; see Garner 2015: 13—14) emphasises technical/actorly skill, converting so-called ‘ordinary’ TV (Bonner 2013) into extraordinary television drama and sharply challenging the dismissal and denigration of soap which has dogged much of its history (Weissmann 2016: 367).

I have argued that *Doctor Who*'s 50th anniversary (2013), *Match of the Day*'s 50th (2014), *EastEnders*' 30th (2015) and *Casualty*'s 30th (2016) can all be analysed in relation to differing versions and inflections of liveness. The anniversary has become a repeated port of call for contemporary TV because it offers an almost unrivalled dialectic of hyper-ephemerality (you have to ‘be there’ as a viewer) and anti-ephemerality (calling up textual and paratextual memories across decades whilst articulating personal and popular memory). This combination can cut through in an attention economy, attracting publicity, boosting ratings, and enhancing merchandise sales.

However, it could be suggested that there is nothing distinctive here about anniversaries as public service ephemera, and their moments of attachment to the BBC. After all, doesn't commercial TV draw just as significantly on logics and discourses of the anniversary event? Although anniversaries have become a normative part of the TV industry, increasingly being expected and anticipated by audiences (especially fans), commercial TV has not always served such constituencies particularly well. For instance, it has been argued in fan-journalism that *Star Trek*'s 50th anniversary was ‘royally screwed up’ by rights owners CBS/Paramount: a new TV series was announced but delayed, whilst *Star Trek Beyond*'s cinema release failed to meaningfully demarcate the original TV show's precise anniversary date (Trendacosta 2016). Discussing *Star Trek*'s 50th

anniversary, SF scholar Gerry Canavan mulls over multiple cycles of ‘invention, exhaustion and reboot’ (2016: 324) rather than discerning any clear industry-led commemoration. Similarly, but with reference to another commercial instance of cult TV, Ross Garner (2016) argues that *Twin Peaks*’ 25th anniversary was a notably ‘dispersed’ one, i.e. it was only commemorated unofficially by fans before eventually being taken up, somewhat awkwardly and paratextually, within the industry (see also Hills 2016). The anniversary commemoration of a commercial TV property not currently in production poses industrial difficulties, to be sure: effectively exploiting such content calls for considerable forward planning, as well as potentially being restricted to paratextual or merchandising concerns rather than offering new canonical TV material.

Being by definition ‘continuous serials’ (Weissmann 2016: 366—367) soap operas offer the clearest example of a blurring between public service/commercial TV anniversaries given that they will always be in active production and are likely to coincide with anniversary dates. Recently, ITV’s *Coronation Street* marked its 50th anniversary in 2010 with a special live episode (produced by Phil Collinson, formerly a producer on BBC Wales’ *Doctor Who*), as well as commemorating ITV’s 60th anniversary with a further live episode in 2015.¹ This latter celebration explicitly integrated one of ITV’s ‘flagship’ programme brands into the channel brand’s celebration, arguably making the articulation between a single show and ITV as a whole far more visible than has ever been the case for the BBC’s public service ephemera. Such an explicit

¹ ITV technically retains a public service remit, but given the erosion of this across at least the past 10 years, the channel can nonetheless be thought of as occupying a predominantly commercial position in the UK TV industry, and certainly one that remains significantly differentiated from the BBC’s public service mission.

programme/channel brand articulation is produced, in part, by the fact that ITV has relatively few very long-running shows: *Coronation Street* really stands in a class of its own in ITV terms, having endured since 1960, only 5 years after ITV's formation. But this marked differentiation from public service ephemera is also, I would say, a result of the fact that public service TV needs to be seen as larger than any one show. In terms of the BBC's self-legitimation, public service broadcasting has to be positioned as an ongoing generative principle rather than as a back catalogue or set of greatest hits – a strategy that would surrender to 'BBC nostalgia' (Holdsworth 2011: 94—95). The BBC's multiplicity of anniversaries (science fiction; returning series; sports; soap) is thus one part of its claim to cultural value beyond commercialism and beyond more narrowly targeted nostalgia. A further element within the differentiation of contemporary public service anniversaries – involving twinned TV/social media 'constellations' of liveness (Van Es 2017) – is their drive to reinstate the value of collective television viewing (Piper 2011: 419), even if this is only periodically achieved (via special events) in the face of on-demand TV. Commercial anniversaries no doubt share a focus on generating large audiences whilst drawing on notions of TV heritage, but such concerns remain nested within financial priorities: larger than usual audiences means greater advertising revenue. By contrast, larger than usual collective and real-time audiences for public service ephemera can work to auto-legitimate and defend this mode of broadcasting. Indeed, this would have been especially important to the BBC ahead of its Charter Renewal on 1st January 2017, making programme anniversaries in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 particularly timely in the sense of shoring up the BBC's distinctiveness and cultural value across a key political phase.

Although anniversaries have been utilised by commercial broadcasters (with a residual public service remit) such as ITV, they have possessed a strategic value for the BBC's public service mission: such commemorations proffer an *affective legitimation* of public service TV and its enduring, trusted diversity in audiences' lives. As public service ephemera, much like branded artefacts of memorabilia and collections of merchandise, brand anniversaries represent 'technologies of attachment' not only to programme brands, but also (in a usefully obscured manner) to the British Broadcasting Corporation itself. Whereas memorialising anniversaries of the BBC *per se* might risk seeming excessively self-interested (not something that is an issue for more commercial broadcasters), under the cover of programme brands and their multiple celebratory moments, the BBC's public service identity can be passionately defended.

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