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A festive walloping; MEDIA, ON TELEVISION

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ITV seemed to be trying just a little bit harder at Christmas. Much good it did them, at least up to Boxing Day. As the **Barb** figures for the week ending 25 December show, the BBC gave their rivals a festive walloping. In terms of hours spent viewing, a category that takes on greater significance at such a time, the BBC share was 48.1 per cent, ITV 35.3, and Channel 4 10 per cent. A slight improvement for ITV over 1993 when the percentage share was thus: BBC 50.7, ITV 34.3, and Channel 4 9.0.

The BBC's Christmas 1994 audience figures break down: BBC1 37.1 per cent, BBC2 11.

The biggest turkey feather in the BBC's cap is being worn courtesy of Victor Meldrew. The first episode of the comedy *One Foot In The Grave* (though not strictly speaking a Christmas edition: it was filmed in the summer and all that snow we saw was artificial) simply blew away ITV's Christmas *Heartbeat*. Indeed, BBC's Christmas Night schedule was triumphant throughout, with Cilla Black no match for Kevin Costner's *Robin Hood* and Victoria Wood leaving Robin Williams and his dolphins stranded on *Also Ran Beach*.

ITV's traditional excuse is, of course, that it is not worth trying too hard at Christmas because the shops are shut and there is nowhere for viewers, their appetites whetted by commercials, to spend their money. With the insidious slide towards a 365-day shopping year, how long will that excuse remain valid? Christmas Eve saw a similar story of BBC success, though in screening the movie *Wildcats*, ITV had run up the white flag even before *Casualty*'s hospital trolleys had started rolling.

Despite widespread carping, the BBC's national lottery show is keeping its numbers up: 15 million was several light years ahead of ITV's *Stars In Their Eyes* special.

BBC2's solid showing is due mainly to *Have I Got News For You?* - 7.22 million is not its highest figure but the audience for the first showing on the Friday night was well up on the norm at 5.24 million. Apart from another A1 showing by *X-Files*, two episodes of *Steptoe* also helped put a rosy glow on the BBC2 audience share.

On the soap front, *EastEnders* is keeping its nose just in front of *Coronation Street*. The extra Christmas Day edition at 6.15pm, which brought the long-running *Sharongate* saga to yet another mini-climax, appears only at No 11 in the BBC1 Top 30 but this was a one-show audience: it looks better when compared with first-showing figures of 15.5, 15.58 and 12.98 million for the Tuesday, Thursday and Monday episodes respectively.

Channel 4, which was having its unusual Christmas as usual, managed to squeeze *Sex In A Cold Climate* (a programme about the new marketing strategies of the Ann Summers organisation) up to No 4 in its own Top 30. Only *Brookside* did better, suggesting that either sex or retailing is a popular subject with Channel 4 viewers. Further research awaited with interest.

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BBC2 Have I/News You? (Fri/Sat)7.22

X-Files (Thu)5.76

Food and Drink (Tue/Thu)4.70

Steptoe and Son (Sat)4.65

Top Gear (Thu)4.20

Steptoe and Son (Mon)3.74

Travel Show (Thu)3.71

Star Trek (Wed)3.49

KYTV (Mon)3.34

Buck Rogers (Mon)3.07

Rumble in/ Jungle (Fri)3.03

Randall/Hopkirk (Fri)2.94

Fresh Prince/B Air (Tue)2.94

World at War (Mon)2.93

Rhodes/Christmas (Wed)2.88

She Devil (Sat)2.87

Butchers Wife (Sun)2.86

Today's The Day (Sun)2.85

Picture This (Mon)2.80

Wildlife Showcse (Thur)2.79

Today's The Day (Tue)2.72

Carols from Kings (Sat)2.70

Flame and/Arrow (Thur)2.68

More Front Gardns (Fri)2.60

Rough Guide (Wed)2.54

Doctor Doolittle (Sun)2.52

Today's The Day (Fri)2.50

Carpenters (Sun)2.48

Christmas/Vienna (Fri)2.46

Heartbreak High (Tue)2.39

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BBC 1 EastEnders (Thu/Sun)19.88

EastEnders (Tue/Sun)19.71

EastEnders (Mon/Sun)16.78

Casualty (Sat)15.21

One Foot/Grave (Sun)15.14

National Lottery (Sat)15.07

Neighbours (Fri)14.49

Neighbours (Mon)14.49

Neighbours (Tue)14.35

Robin Hood (Sun)14.32

EastEnders (Sun)14.23

Neighbours (Thu)13.87

Birds/a Feather (Sat)13.79

Keep/Appearances (Sun)13.69

Neighbours (Weds)13.65

Victoria Wood (Sun)13.39

This/Your Life (Wed)11.12

Noel Edmonds (Sun)10.44

Brittas Empire (Mon)9.62

Generation Game (Sat)9.53

Wrong Trousers (Sun)9.50

News, Weather (Sat)9.30

Telly Addicts (Mon)9.12

Animal Hospital (Sun)8.81

Holiday (Tue)8.62

Morecambe/Wise (Sun)8.53

Top of The Pops (Sun)8.50

Questn of Sport (Tue)8.39

Crocodile Shoes (Thu)8.22

How Do/Do That? (Wed)7.69

ITV

Coronation St (Mon/Wed)19.70

Coronation St (Wed/Fri)18.90

Coronation St (Fri)17.61

Heartbeat (Sun)13.79

The Bill (Fri)13.75

Police Cam/Action (Tue)13.12

Emmerdale (Tue/Thu)13.06

Coronation St (Sun)12.38

Gladiators Celebs (Sat)12.27

Home and Away (Mon)12.08

Home and Away (Wed)12.02

The Bill (Tue)11.97

Blind Date (Sun)11.96

Home and Away (Fri)11.74

Home and Away (Tue)11.39

Home and Away (Thu)11.27

Schofield's TV (Tue)11.19

Catchphrase (Fri)11.10

The Bill (Thu)11.01

Emmerdale (Thu)10.25

Police Academy 5 (Fri)10.01

Hollywood Kids (Wed)9.55

Stars In Their Eyes (Sat)9.37

Cook Report (Thu)9.24

Wish You/Here (Mon/Tue)8.89

Des O'Connor (Wed)8.76

Robin Williams (Sun)8.18

Rocketeer (Mon)8.17

Sleeping Beauty (Sun)8.07

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Baywatch (Sat)7.89

CHANNEL 4 FIGS

Brookside (Wed/Sat)5.65

Brookside (Fri/Sat)5.27

Brookside (Tue/Sat)4.40

Sex/Cld Climate (Tue)4.24

Fifteen to One (Fri)4.00

Fifteen to One (Tue)3.87

Fifteen to One (Thu)3.49

Jo Brand (Fri)3.09

Fifteen to One (Wed)3.06

Fifteen to One (Mon)2.94

Roseanne (Thu)2.82

Into the West (Wed)2.78

Don't/Tbrush (Sat/Sun)2.75

Night/Mt Edna (Thu)2.74

Eurotrash (Sat)2.36

Clive Anderson (Fri)2.32

Desmond's (Mon)2.30

Cosby Show (Mon)2.29

Take That (Sun)2.28

Jack Dee Special (Sat)2.22

Father Christmas (Sat)2.15

Saved by/Bell (Sun)1.93

Gamesmaster (Tue)1.91

Crystal Maze (Wed)1.88

Jules Verne (Fri)1.84

Ricki Lake (Thu)1.82

Home Imprvmnt (Thu)1.80

Ricki Lake (Tue)1.78

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Penn/Teller (Sat)1.77

NYPD Blue (Wed)1.74

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