

# ariel

◆ **THE BOAT RACE** is back on the BBC, and the production team is ready for the off. L-R are Séan Hughes, Michael Jackson, Paul Davies, Stephen Lyle and Jenny Hackett. **Page 5**



# ROWERS RETURN

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# Clearer compliance still needed in A&M

by Cathy Loughran

'SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL CHANGES' have taken place in Audio & Music since the Ross/Brand affair, but tighter rules haven't stifled risk-taking in programmes, an independent review has found.

Lessons from Sachsgate had been 'fully learned', implemented and policed, says the study, commissioned by the BBC Trust.

But it recommends a 'spring clean' of compliance processes to bring more clarity and address inconsistencies; further staff training; and monitoring of the future impact on editorial checks of new media and changes like the move to Salford.

There is acknowledgement of the compliance workload, especially in Radio 4, where extra resourcing might be needed. The general requirement of a 'final listen' by an executive producer needed clarification to 'ease the compliance burden where it can be done without undue risk'.

The review – by Tim Suter, formerly partner for content and standards at Ofcom, and Tony Stoller, former chief executive of the Radio Authority – found 'stringent policing of and notable leadership towards significant cultural changes in the understanding of the importance of compliance across the whole of BBC production'.

Suter and Stoller conclude that creative inno-

vation has survived and that 'there is no evidence that programmes which ought to be made are not being made'.

Trustee Alison Hastings said there had been clear evidence of change after 'an extremely serious breach', but it had not been at the expense of programme-making.

The review calls for clarity, including in compliance language used, and emphasises the importance of training for the key role of executive producer. The BBC Academy's creative leadership course should be completed by all A&M exec producers by the middle of this year.

The BBC executive welcomed the suggestions on clarity and easing of paperwork as well as its finding that creative risk taking was still possible. Some 'spring cleaning' had already begun, with 'many more programmes classed as low risk and the requirement for multiple listens relaxed'.

The double listening burden for Radio 2 alone had been reduced by 90 hours over Christmas, the executive says, adding: 'A&M is happy to allow executive producers and editors to decide how they would like to listen to content'. Meanwhile, the A&M creative leadership course would be rolled out to 80 people by the end of March.

A&M will report to the trust on the implementation of the recommendations in November.

## Lords seek clarity on digital

by Candida Watson

◆ **THE GOVERNMENT** needs to do more to promote and explain digital radio switchover, according to the House of Lords communications committee.

In a report on the transfer of tv and radio to digital the peers warn: 'The case for radio switchover has not been made to the public, although the date is only a few years away.'

The committee says there is 'public confusion and industry uncertainty' over the programme. It notes that up to 100 million radios will be largely redundant and 20 million car radios will need converters when FM and AM services are moved to digital in 2015. It says the lack of public knowledge of the impending change, and the costs consumers will have to bear, could provoke a public backlash.

The committee heard from all sides of the tv and radio industry, as well as from the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, viewers and listeners, as it considered digital switchover.

It says tv switchover is going well, with viewers convinced of the benefits. But it found that the tv campaign

had cost licence fee payers some £300m more than was necessary. This was mainly due to an overestimate of those who would need financial help to make the switch,

The peers are also concerned by the huge cost of providing full national digital radio coverage. The BBC built 90 transmitters to service 85 percent of the population;

to push reach to 90 percent it has to build another 140.

In her evidence to the committee chief operating officer Caroline Thomson said increasing coverage from 90 to 98.5 percent would effectively double what the BBC spent on digital transmission.

The peers felt there was uncertainty around future radio services:

when would digital switchover really be? What would happen to FM services in the long term? What about AM, which is currently still the home of the UK's emergency communications system? Their report concludes with a list of recommendations for the government, from clarifying the switchover date, to better informing the public, to working with the SMMT to get digital in cars, setting up a scrapping scheme for old radios, providing financial help to the disadvantaged. The length of the list shows there is much still to do for radio digital switchover.



## NEWS BITES

**THE BBC** Trust has extended the timetable for its review of the Gaelic service BBC Alba. Originally due to complete ahead of digital switchover in central and northern Scotland in April 2010, the review now will conclude after the trust has published its final view on what the future strategy for the BBC ought to be, currently due later this year.

**FREESAT**, THE subscription-free digital satellite tv service, has achieved sales of one million since its launch in May 2008, adding 250,000 customers over Christmas and New Year. 'Freesat is a great opportunity for millions of homes with existing satellite dishes who are used to quality tv but no longer want to pay a monthly subscription,' says Emma Scott, managing director of Freesat.

**ROB BRYDON** is to get his own comedy entertainment programme on BBC Two later this year. Filmed in front of a live studio audience, it will be produced by Arbie, the indie that Brydon founded last year with comedy exec Miles Ross. It will be a mix of stand-up from Brydon and from a guest comedian each week.

**PROFESSOR STEVE** Jones is to lead the BBC Trust's review of impartiality and accuracy in BBC science coverage. Jones, head of the Department of Genetics, Evolution and Environment at University College, London, will look at science reporting across television, radio and online, particularly where it relates to public policy or matters of controversy.

**RADIO MERSEYSIDE** presenter Sean Styles is asking people to tell him why a certain place is special to them, be it a favourite park bench or a view from a hill. The best will be brought together in a 'style guide' to Merseyside that will go on the BBC website and be broadcast on Radio Merseyside in May.

**SPORTS PRESENTER** Jennie Gow is to present the BBC's MotoGP coverage, joining Charlie Cox, Steve Parrish and Matt Roberts for the first race of the season in Qatar on April 11.

**A REVAMPED** Doctor Who Adventures magazine is to be launched on April 1.

**BBC WORLDWIDE** has launched Red Dwarf: Back to Earth on the iTunes Store in the UK, US, Australia, Canada and Germany.

## Do you remember Jean Sutcliffe?

**AUTHOR CHRISTOPHER WILSON** is seeking reminiscences from staff about **Jean Sutcliffe**, former head of the BBC's Schools Department, creator of *Listen With Mother* and famously the person who banned Enid Blyton's work from the airwaves for being too trivial (as she saw it). Anyone who can help, or who has a copy of her obituary, should email [christowilson@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:christowilson@tiscali.co.uk)



## Staff look over new Salford buildings

◆ CBBC presenters Sonali Shah (Newsround), Alex Winter (CBeebies) and Helen Skelton (Blue Peter) were among the hundreds of staff touring the future home of Children's, Learning and FM&T in Salford last week.

Buildings A and B were handed over this month to the BBC by the Peel Group ahead of schedule. FM&T also demonstrated the technology that will be used at the site to senior managers at the handover events. The BBC now pos-

sesses all of its three buildings at Media City as Building C – which will house 5 live, Sport and regional programmes – was handed over last October.

Peter Salmon, director BBC North, said: 'This marks another important

milestone on the journey to our exciting new home in the north and I am very pleased that the buildings have been handed over on time and on budget.'

It was also announced last week that Andy Waters, currently resources man-

ager at BBC Studios and Post Production, will join Peel as its head of studios at Media City. The company owns and operates the block which includes seven high-definition tv studios and the future base of the BBC Philharmonic.

## Lights, Action, Claudia!

**CLAUDIA WINKLEMAN** will succeed Jonathan Ross as host of BBC One's *Film 2010*. The new series, which starts in September, will also have a revamped format and feature a wide range of cinema and industry experts, as well as studio guests.

Winkleman currently has her own Friday night *Arts Show* on Radio 2, and has covered the Baftas as well as presenting the UK broadcasts of the Oscars and Golden Globes. She said: 'Everyone has an opinion on film and I'm looking forward to debating the biggest news and releases with a whole variety of guests each week. I am completely over the moon

about being given this enormous honour and am incredibly proud to be presenting the new-look *Film 2010*.'

The long-running show started as *Film 72*, presented by film critic Barry Norman until 1998. Jonathan Ross took over in 1999.

**New host for film show  
Claudia Winkleman**



## Record AI for personal view of women's lives in Afghanistan

by Adam Bambury

A BBC Three documentary on women's rights in Afghanistan has secured what is thought to be the highest ever Appreciation Index score for a factual programme, not only on the BBC, but across all reported channels.

High AI scores are more commonly associated with nature programming and high-end drama, but it seems *Women, Weddings, War & Me*, commissioned by head of BBC Three Danny Cohen, has managed to break with tradition. The film follows Nel – a 21 year-old who has lived in London since she was six after her family fled the war in Afghanistan – as she returns to Kabul to learn what life was like for women under the Taliban and whether things have since changed.

Exec producer and *Panorama* editor Tom Giles cites Nel as the key to the programme's success. 'You engage with her on every level – emotional and social. The feelings that she has, the programme makes you feel too. I think for that reason it was very satisfying for viewers,' he told Ariel. 'The Afghan story is one we're told many times, but to see it through those eyes, it's fresh and almost disarming.



Londoner Nel in Kabul for BBC Three's *Women, Weddings, War & Me*

At the end she comes back to meet her mother and you're left with a very powerful feeling.'

The documentary is one of two films the current affairs team has made for the channel that focus on women's rights in warzones. The second, *The World's Most Dangerous Place For Women*, explores the harsh realities of life in the Democratic Republic of Congo through the eyes of a 23 year-old British woman and TXs on March 30. Together with BBC Four documentary series *Women* and forthcoming BBC

One drama *A Passionate Woman*, the films form part of a series of programmes across the BBC on women's lives which was instigated by Vision controller Jana Bennett.

Danny Cohen congratulated the team on their AI success, saying it was a 'wonderful recognition of their creativity and hard work'. 'Serious and thought-provoking factual programmes are a central part of BBC Three's output, and I'm delighted to see audiences responding so very positively to these programmes,' he said.

## Online's Olympic summer

**BBC ONLINE** will launch a London 2012 portal this summer, it was revealed at a multimedia conference in BBC Bristol last week.

'It will be a representation of all BBC activities including cultural and sporting events,' said Nic Newman, FM&T controller for journalism.

'We'll have news about London 2012, updates on the buildings and follow athletes.'

The site will include content from BBC London and start a one-year

countdown in July next year.

Newman also outlined that a redesigned News Online will be launched by early June and the weather website will be updated for mobile devices.

The announcements were made at a conference exploring future ways of working and was organised by the BBC Academy and Bristol Anchor Partnership, which is a joint venture between venture between the BBC and city of Bristol.

## iPhone apps on hold

Plans to release dedicated BBC smartphone applications (apps) have been put on hold until an assessment by the BBC Trust has been completed.

In a statement the trust said that, following 'representations from the industry', it would look at whether the plans 'constitute a significant change to BBC services'.

It will examine the plans in four areas: how much they might affect users, their financial impact, the extent the BBC would be involved in an area of untested activity, and how long this activity would last.

The plans were originally announced on February 17, with the first release - a News app for iPhone - scheduled for next month.

## Job losses and strike ballot

BBC Studios and Post Production management is proposing to close 44 posts within the New Business and Entertainment department - including the loss of all camera operators and almost half the support staff who look after scenery and lighting.

After initially planning some compulsory redundancies, management has agreed to look for redundancy volunteers among those performing similar jobs in other parts of S&PP.

'We have made progress in managing to reduce the risk of compulsory redundancies,' Bectu's Tony Lennon told Ariel. He said the proposed cuts were the result of a 'haemorrhage' of entertainment programmes away from studios in Television Centre and towards Scotland's Pacific Quay as well as a fall in commissions.

Red Bee Media staff are voting on whether to take industrial action over plans to cut their redundancy terms. Bectu has balloted members at Red Bee - the company that provides playout services, promos, trails, subtitling and signing to the BBC - over proposals to halve their redundancy rights in future from a month's pay for every year of service to two weeks' pay.

The ballot closes on April 15 and the union has not ruled out strike action.

# Afghanistan trip for DG

by Candida Watson

Mark Thompson spent last week in Pakistan and Afghanistan, meeting staff, opening new offices and talking to senior politicians, military officials and opinion formers in both countries.

Accompanied by head of news-gathering Fran Unsworth the dg went first to Pakistan, where he visited the new Islamabad office.

He told Ariel: 'In both countries we got a real sense of the team working and total commitment to the stories, to informing the public. In Afghanistan the BBC is a really important provider of radio - outside the cities there is little tv so radio is a lifeline - and the BBC service is highly valued.'

In Afghanistan he formally opened the new Kabul bureau - then made a lightning trip south, flying from Kabul to Kandahar and on to Camp Bastion.

Thompson said: 'I think we got about 90 minutes sleep in 30 hours, but we had good briefings and met the US commander General McChrystal and the British ambassador.'

He paid tribute to all the staff working in such a dangerous area,



Mark Thompson talks to BBC Persian and Pashto radio staff at the Kabul office

not just on the front line, but in the towns and cities where the risk is random bombings and kidnap.

He said: 'Our purpose was to meet and talk to everyone, to learn about

their lives and convey to them how proud we are of all their work - not just the British journalists who are familiar to audiences here but also all our Afghan staff.'

The BBC has some 200 staff in Afghanistan, many of them locals, most of whom work on the radio 'soap' *New Home, New Life*, and its magazine, books and outreach projects.

## BBC Four season launch

by Sally Hillier

Want to know why BBC Four is putting the spotlight on *Coronation Street*?

Controller Richard Klein, who has lined up a drama telling the story of the birth of ITV's famous programme 50 years ago, has the answer.

He says the drama, titled *Florizel Street* (also the original name of the ITV soap), 'pinpoints a moment when Britain emerged from the greyness



BBC Four will show HG Wells's *The First Men in the Moon*

of the Fifties, led by a resurgence of culture in the north of England. Only BBC Four would engage in popular culture in this way.'

Culture is the big theme running through Klein's spring and summer schedule, unveiled last week. The channel is taking a key role in *A Passion for Opera*, a season also running on BBC Two, Radio 3 and Radio 2. Among BBC Four's output is *Opera Italia*, tracing the history of opera in Italy, *Stephen Fry on Wagner*, and *Diva Diaries*.

The channel will also provide extensive coverage of the BBC Proms

and a special documentary about the Glastonbury festival, *P Is For Pyramid: An A-Z Of 40 Years Of Glastonbury*.

Drama highlights include *Lennon Naked*, charting the transition of John Lennon (played by Christopher Eccleston) 'from Beatle to enigmatic icon', and HG Wells's *The First Men in the Moon*.

The Outdoor Season includes *Britain By Bike*, presented by Clare Balding, and *Wild Swimming With Alice Roberts*.

'BBC Four's aim is to be as enjoyable as it is knowledgeable and insightful,' says Klein.

## Awards for news, comedy and drama

**PM PRESENTER** Eddie Mair was named broadcaster of the year at the Broadcasting Press Guild Awards, and *Desert Island Discs* was radio programme of the year. Terry Wogan received the Harvey Lee Award for outstanding contribution to broadcasting.

BBC Two political satire *The Thick of It* took three awards. Peter Capaldi won best actor for his performance as Malcolm Tucker, with Armando Iannucci and the writing team taking the Writer's Award. In addition, the series was named best comedy/entertainment show.

Another BBC Four original, *Enid*, about the life of Enid Blyton was best single drama, with *Occupation* winning best drama series. Andrew Marr's *The Making of Modern Britain* won best documentary

series, while the best single documentary prize went to BBC Two's *Man on Wire*.

Choirmaster Gareth Malone won two awards - best tv performer in a non-acting role, and for *The Choir: Unsung Town*, which was named best factual entertainment show.

There were also two awards for actress Maxine Peake - for her roles in *Criminal Justice* and *The Street*.

■ The BBC's Democracy Live site, launched last November, has won the 2010 Media Guardian innovation award for best use of web platforms. Judges said the website 'filled a huge gap in the accessibility of political information' and was 'a hugely useful and important use of web based technologies'.

## From BA to DJ in one extra smooth move

by Adam Bambury

A student and community DJ working as a BA on Radio 1Xtra takes over his own brand new show on the network next month, just four days after he hands in his dissertation.

**Nick Bright, 23**, thought he was lucky to land a three month contract as a broadcast assistant on his favourite BBC station, as he completed his radio production and media studies course at London's University of Westminster. Undeterred by an unsuccessful job interview, he had worked for free until he was offered a regular freelance shift, and then the BA post he'd originally applied for.

But an unexpected break came after an appear-

ance on MistaJam's weekday evening show revealed his on-air talents.

'MistaJam gets his BA to read out text messages, and has a bit of banter with them,' explained Bright. 'Everyone was saying it sounded really good. I thought nothing of it, but later my exec Rebecca Frank said they'd be making some changes on the station and suggested I put in a pilot.'

The student BA turned presenter recorded the pilot at midnight after his shift. 'Next thing I know I'm sitting in the Radio 1 boardroom and they were offering me a show. It was a bit mental.'

Bright will host 1Xtra's six day a week 4am-7am early breakfast show as part of the station's new-look schedule, which is launched on April 26.



# OARSOME OCCASION

The BBC is back at the helm for one of Britain's oldest and most famous sporting events. **Adam Bambury** reports

**THE BOAT RACE** is so well established that it can go simply by the name 'The Boat Race'. It was first held in 1829, has been broadcast since 1938 and ITV have had the rights since 2004. But this weekend the annual rowing competition between teams from the Oxford and Cambridge universities is back on the BBC.

Compared to the relatively straightforward nature of Olympic rowing, where crews paddle in a straight line from point a to point b on flat water, covering the race presents a unique set of challenges. The 4.25 mile course down the River Thames is surrounded by houses and buildings and subject to changeable weather conditions – boats sinking in rough water are not unheard of.

'Production-wise it's a hugely expensive event to cover,' admits exec producer Paul Davies, who produced the race from 2002 to 2004. He again takes the reins this year after his in-house team's pitch beat the indies in what was Sport's first WOCC-ed (window of creative competition) event. Davies reckons part of the bid's success was down to their relationship with SIS (buyer of BBC Resources, the outside broadcast division, two years ago) which is providing the technical equipment vital to covering the event in the hi-tech manner people have come to expect of their sports cov-



**Water's edge:** the production team outside the Thames Rowing Club. **Jenny Hackett, Séan Hughes, Paul Davies, Michael Jackson, Stephen Lyle**

erage. For The Boat Race this means cameras – and plenty of them.

Nine boat-based cameras will capture the action from the river itself. Two are fitted to each of the competing boats, while side-on shots are provided by a catamaran that keeps alongside the two crews. Two other boats in the flotilla trailing the racers – one carrying water-borne commentator Wayne Pommen and Olympic rower turned race reporter Matthew Pinsent – have also been fitted with cameras, while a helicopter will give an aerial view of the winding course

from Putney to Mortlake.

Back on shore, another 25 cameras have been located at various positions around the course to provide the land-based images of the race.

Lead presenter Clare Balding will break with ITV's tradition of having a static studio set-up by mixing with some of the average 250,000 spectators clustered around the boat houses at the start of the race, while presenter Riz Lateef, familiar to BBC London viewers, will be stationed at the Ship Pub in Mortlake where it ends.

The two hour programme begins

an hour and 20 minutes before the race commences – plenty of time for an appropriate build-up. A series of features has been commissioned to build anticipation, handled by producer in charge of VT features Michael Jackson. 'We're looking to introduce the crews to the viewers, get across its great history, and take quirkier looks at this unusual event as well,' explains Davies.

It may all seem a lot of effort for a university rowing race that usually takes around 20 minutes to complete, but the rewards have often

proven worthwhile. 'Historically you can get seven or eight million viewers for a sport that most people don't know very well. They have no affinity with Oxford or Cambridge, but they do watch it,' says Davies.

'It does break the mould – no one can seem to explain why it can get so many viewers. If we get five million we'll be very happy.'

**The Boat Race, BBC One, April 3. Also available on Radio 5 live sports extra and the BBC Sport website.**

## I JUST MENTIONED THE PLAY AND STRUCK **GOLD**



**Leading light:** Ian McKellen and other cast members

by **Lisette Johnston**

**HOW WONDERFUL WOULD** it be to pick up the phone, dial, and have actor Ian McKellen at the other end for a quick catch up? You mention a wonderful play you are doing, he asks to see the script and reads it that very night. He rings back and simply says: 'I'm in'.

An impossible scenario for most, but that is exactly what happened when Martin Jarvis approached his old friend with a radio adaptation of Ian Fleming's *Goldfinger*.

Directed by Jarvis, the cast is led by McKellen as the villain, with John Standing as M and Rosamund Pike as Pussy Galore. Toby Stephens steps into 007's shoes.

Jarvis, who is also the voice of Fleming, wanted the play to be faithful to the 1958 book. The character of Bond also remains true to the period compared to the modern twist often given to him on the silver screen.

This is the second Bond story Jarvis's production company has developed for radio; the first was *Dr No*, which it produced after being approached by Fleming's estate during the writer's centenary.

While it was no challenge to get the stellar cast on board for *Goldfinger*, Jarvis says it was more about who was right for the role than getting big names. 'I thought who would be a good *Goldfinger*, and I rang up Ian McKellen, sent him the script and he thought it hilarious.

'Toby Stephens [who played 007 in the radio production of *Dr No*] was thrilled to do another James Bond.'

One challenge was taking an 85,000 word book and fitting it into a 90 minute piece of around 18,000 words.

'Archie Scottney is a great dramatist and he found a way of refining the story but losing nothing important,' says Jarvis. 'We

retained the storyteller in the voice of Ian Fleming and sometimes we have his voice and the thoughts of Bond intertwined, which is very interesting.'

Jarvis argues that radio in some ways can be more adventurous than film as it lets listeners use their own imaginations.

'You can create marvellous images in radio. Our radio was truer in one sense than the film. For example, in the book *Dr No*, Honey Ryder comes out of the sea naked; you can [create an image of] nakedness on the radio.'

In *Goldfinger*, he adds, 'there is an extraordinary scene on a plane which has a lot of physical behaviour and rushing air at 25,000 feet and all that was carried through in our imaginations. Ian McKellen, Jon David Yu, who is Oddjob, and Toby Stephens gave a most unbelievable performance'.

**Goldfinger, April 3, Radio 4**



# NOW ATTENTION ALL TWEETING ...

Radio 4 announcer Zeb Soanes needed only a nudge to take the studio-bound Shipping Forecast back to the sea

**IN THE DARK MONTH** of January I received a tweet from a listener to tell me that Orfordness lighthouse, just down the coast from where I was born, was threatened with closure.

'G'wan @zebsoanes, give the old dear a nice Suffolk send-off. It'd be great if you did the shipping forecast from here just once.' - @rfenwick

It remained a romantic idea until, weeks later, Radio Suffolk invited me on to the afternoon show to talk about the



'Dogger, Fisher, German Bight...': Born romantic Zeb Soanes forecasts to the sound of the waves

Shipping Forecast, providing the perfect excuse for a trip to the lighthouse.

I borrowed a radio car and set out from Ipswich on the most beautiful morning of the year. I've long felt that this stretch of the Suffolk coast was heavy with unresolved history,

**'It was wonderful to gaze out and read to the distant boats on the horizon...that depend on Shipping Forecast data'**

and Orfordness is littered with relics of its top-secret military past. The parachute was developed here, along with aerial photography, camouflage and what once housed the top secret Anglo-American Cobra Mist radar system, which now transmits the World Service.

Keith Seaman, the appropriately named lighthouse-keeper, comes from a long line of keepers. We met over tea in a former MOD hut, then drove across the shingle-spit, past ominous warnings of unexploded bombs (they find up to 15 a year), to the lighthouse, candy-striped in red and white. Keith told me the stripes were as much a sig-



To the lighthouse: the 'old dear' with candy stripes was given 'a nice Suffolk send-off' by Radio 4

nal to sailors as the light itself, identifying the lighthouse by day as Orford. 'There's another red and white lighthouse at Happisburg,' he informed me, 'but that has three stripes'.

Standing only metres from the eroding shoreline it seems poignant and rather fitting that a landmark that has survived flying-bombs and machine-gun fire may ultimately be swallowed by the sea.

Like all lighthouses it is battery-powered, charged by the mains to ensure continuity of service in the event of a power-cut. The four-tonne lens floats on a bath of mercury; Keith switched-off the motor and showed how, with a mere touch of my finger, I could start it revolving again.

On such a day we had a clear view from the top. I unfolded a copy of the morning's shipping forecast, faced out to sea and read.

At Radio 4 we broadcast from a windowless studio in Broadcasting House, so it was wonderful to gaze out and read to the distant boats on the horizon that, far from the landlubbers who enjoy its poetry, depend on the Shipping Forecast's maritime data.

It all made perfect sense to Keith, of course. 'My grandfather always said, before you leave, sweep your eyes over the horizon.' And before we left, we did.

**Orfordness is owned by the National Trust and opens to the public on Easter Saturday**

## Norfolk trackside for Lotus position

Norwich station broadcasts from Bahrain on the final lap of an historic Formula One comeback

by Nicky Price, bj, Radio Norfolk

**YOU MIGHT NOT EXPECT** Norfolk to be at the centre of the worldwide sporting event of the weekend but, for the first time in 16 years, the name Lotus was back on the Formula One grid.

While the new 2010 Lotus Racing team is backed with millions of pounds worth of Malaysian cash, the car was built in a factory in the Norfolk countryside. The team had just six months to build the new F1 car and at Radio Norfolk we've followed their progress every step of the way.

We were at the empty factory in

September when chief technical officer Mike Gascoyne and three members of staff began designing the car. We interviewed the drivers as they had their seats fitted in deepest winter, we were there when the team fired up the engine for the very first time and we reported live from the launch of the new car at the Royal Horticultural Hall in London.

Having developed close links with the team during the build-up to the first Grand Prix, we just had to be in Bahrain to bring listeners the drama of the opening race.

Despite all the brilliant BBC tv and radio coverage, we wanted to focus exclusively on Lotus and the people behind the team. Understandable, when you consider that the mere mention of the iconic name reduces Norfolk sports fans to misty eyed nostalgia of the championship-winning years of the 1960s and 70s.

The support of BBC Sport's F1 team was invaluable in planning this trip and Lotus Racing granted us behind-the-scenes access that we



Nicky Price with Lotus technical director Mike Gascoyne at the Grand Prix

could have only dreamed about. I brought listeners daily interviews with the engineers and the drivers and, among the other interviewees, the team chef. He revealed that Heikki Kovalainen likes to have a three egg omelette (with no oil) for breakfast while Jarno Trulli starts the day with a glass of warm milk.

BBC F1 presenters Jake Humphrey

(schooled in Norwich) and Martin Brundle (from King's Lynn) discussed Lotus' chances and, as the weekend progressed, more Norfolk links emerged. Heikki Kovalainen's girlfriend was from King's Lynn and so careful to check when the interview would go out so her grandparents in Downham Market wouldn't miss it.

Alongside the main event of the

weekend, there was a special celebration of 60 years of Formula One. The circuit was positively crawling with former Lotus drivers from the team's heyday. I interviewed ex-champion Mario Andretti and brought our listeners the moment when Damon Hill congratulated his son Josh on driving his grandfather's (Graham Hill's) 1967 Lotus 49 around the track.

What I didn't realise about F1 circuits was the distance I'd have to hurry from the commentary box to the tv compound and then to the end of the paddock where the Lotus garages were. I did 60 reports over three days with features and updates for our programmes and bulletins

As for the race itself, when Jarno Trulli's car limped to the finish line with hydraulic problems, there were emotional celebrations in the Lotus garage. The team was delighted that both cars had completed the 49 laps and Radio Norfolk was there to capture what could be one of the county's most significant sporting moments of the year.

## CHANGING PLACES

**PAUL DEAL**, who set up and managed the Journalism Talent Pool during an attachment from the radio newsroom, is leaving the BBC after 15 years to work closer to his home in the West Country.

Sbj **CAROL BUNDOCK** (pictured) is leaving *BBC Look East* after 21 years to enjoy early retirement.

**STUART ROWSON** has been appointed to the role of tv editor for *Look North* in East Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, covering **MARK HAYMAN'S** attachment to BBC West Midlands.

**NINA GOSWAMI** joins the Radio Merseyside newsroom as cover for **LUCINDA MOORE** who is on maternity leave.

Bj **SUZY STEER-FOWLER** of BBC Radio

Jersey is going to live political programmes at Millbank for six weeks to help cover the UK General Election.

**LAURA MURRAY** becomes editor of the About The BBC Blog this month, again on a six-month attachment, to fill the vacancy left by **CHRIS JONES**.



Health centre: Presenter Joanne Malin speaks to actress Diane Keen on the *Doctors* set

## SHAMELESS PLUG

**Alexis Haycock-Hadden, Lily Howson, Joanne Lea and Elizabeth Pencave – PAs for BBC Academy, BBC Sport, FM&T and BBC Vision**

**SO IF EDDIE IZZARD** can run 1132 miles in 51 days, then surely four young, fit PAs can run 150 in a week? That's the aim and we're running for a very good charity – Sport Relief, whose aim is to transform the lives of poor and vulnerable people. We will be running from London to Cardiff in seven days in October. We are starting the run on Saturday October 9 from London. The exact starting point is to be confirmed but we are discussing starting from White City. We aim to finish in Cardiff on Friday, October 15, possibly at the BBC offices. Our route will loosely follow that covered by Eddie Izzard in the London-Cardiff leg of his marathon challenge.

Originally, we decided to run from London to Cardiff as Alexis's family is half English, half Welsh. We have seven months to train, and are hopefully



going to enlist the help of some professionals experienced in Iron Man races and the link. We all have experience of running, and we're all hoping that friends and family will come, either for stints along the way or at least to meet us at the end.

We officially launched our training by each running the London Sport Relief mile and we hope to raise an ambitious £5000. Our fundraising page is [uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/londontocardiff](http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/londontocardiff)

**A DECADE SINCE GPS** in the fictional Midlands town of Letherbridge started monitoring heartbeats in BBC One's *Doctors*, BBC West Midlands made an appointment to visit the soap's Birmingham set for its tenth anniversary. Mid-morning presenter Joanne Malin met with actors and crew including longest-serving cast member Diane Keen, who

plays Julia Parsons. 'I didn't realise that it's the biggest employer of actors in the UK and that 150 people work on it every day,' muses BBC WM producer Gary Butcher. 'It's great for Birmingham. A lot of local people have been learning skills and that encourages other productions to come to the area.' Listeners phoned in with anecdotes of their

involvement with the soap including one man who recalled his car being driven by Andrew Sachs during a guest appearance. 'He apparently burnt the gearbox out,' says Butcher. Dodgy gearboxes aside, the show looks like it's in rude health with an audience of two million viewers and nominations for this year's British Soap Awards.

## TRADE SECRETS

◆ I recently made a documentary with Dan Snow called *The Battle for North America* for BBC Two, which tells the story of the Battle of Quebec in 1759. We wanted to make the documentary feel cinematic and visually rich – but as always we had a limited budget. So we turned to new technology, and one of our key tools was the new generation of stills cameras that shoot HD video.

The Canon 5D mk ii is the most famous of these, but I opted for the Panasonic Lumix GH1. It's smaller and cheaper than the 5D and at the time it was the only camera that shot at PAL friendly frame rates. It would be hard (though not impossible) to shoot an entire documentary on one. Instead we used the GH1 as a B-camera, allowing us to get additional beauty shots and shots which would have been impossible with a conventional camera. The advantages of these stills cameras are significant: a larger sensor than

standard professional video cameras gives a filmic look and a controllable depth of field; the ability to use interchangeable lenses at the fraction of the price of any other system; and the fact that you can fit the camera, batteries

and a set of prime lenses in small backpack. The footage from the GH1 cuts in with the main camera seamlessly.

**EXPOSE RIGHT**  
Because of the way the video files are compressed you've got much less ability to grade in post, so it's very important to get the exposure and colour balance correct when you're shooting. Learn to use the histogram function – it's a helpful guide.

**STABILISE**  
As ever a good tripod is vital – but if you want movement there are lots of options, including shoulder mounts and hand holding rigs. I used a home-built slider to get smooth tracking. [www.zazaslider.com/](http://www.zazaslider.com/)

**RECORD SOUND SEPARATELY**  
HD stills cameras record sound but the quality isn't really good enough to use. I used a Zoom H4N – a small good quality digital audio recorder. There is software which syncs sound to pictures with no clapper board needed. [singularsoftware.com/pluraleyes.html](http://singularsoftware.com/pluraleyes.html)

**GET ND FILTERS**  
To get natural motion, you should generally set your shutter speed to 1/50th sec. Aperture is determined by the depth of field you want, so to control exposure you'll need neutral density filters. A good set of ND filters (up to at least ND 8) is essential.

**ADAPT OLD LENSES**  
The GH1 can use almost any stills lens with the right adapter. I had some old manual Canon primes lying unused. Now I use them for video, giving give them a new lease of life.

**FACTOR IN POST PRODUCTION TIME**  
The cameras can save you time and money on the shoot, but there is a cost in terms of post production time. You'll probably need to transcode your files into an edit friendly format and may need to spend time syncing sound.

Used in the right way these cameras can create stunning images and enable you to be more creative and cost-effective.

**NATHAN WILLIAMS**



Still life: Nathan Williams uses traditional cameras to get the most from his budget

## FACT OF LIFE

Skillset report reveals graduates now make up 73 percent of the media workforce, compared to 66 percent in 2003. And more than half (53 per cent) of all degrees held are media related. Yet, overall, the proportion of people with relevant technical or vocational qualifications is low at seven percent.

# THERE'S A WHOLE NEW WORLD OUT THERE

It is the end of the financial year and, for those who have chosen to take redundancy, the end of their careers with the BBC. 'Going early' is a chance to start again in a new direction, bringing both challenges and rewards, as these ex-staffers explain

## A different life, but I go with the flow



Boatman: Rory Maclean on the Regent's Park canal

**RORY MACLEAN**, former correspondent

**'IS THAT SEQUENCE** going to cut off?'

The words were out before I realised I wasn't the reporter any more. I was the interviewee. A regional BBC news team was filming me at one of my new places of work – the London Waterbus Company, based at Camden Lock. This time I was the 'real' person.

I was being used as an example of someone adversely affected by a 37 per cent fare increase imposed on off peak commuters coming into Euston. It was a great moment when my name appeared on the bulletin with the title Skipper. It was also a partial answer to the question that everyone who is leaving the BBC is asked in every corridor: 'What are you going to do?'

What I had done was ring up Maggie French, the London Waterbus Company boss, to see if there were any jobs. I had a Marine and Coastguard agency 'Boat Master' certificate and some experience of working on canal boats.

'So what have you been doing before this,' she asked with a worried look. I wasn't sure if, having worked as a BBC correspondent, with more than a passing interest in terrorism, was a plus or a minus in this particular situation.

'I worked for the BBC,' I said a bit tentatively. Her face cleared and she looked relieved. 'At least you weren't in prison,' she said. An image of the newsroom at TV Centre flashed involuntarily across my mind.

The training started. I was steering a 70-year-old ex working narrow boat called Gardenia. She can carry 68 passengers. The waterbus service runs between Little Venice and Camden Lock, with a stop inside the grounds of London Zoo at Regent's Park. The service has been running for more than 50 years.

The most difficult bit is the turn at Camden Lock. It's right angled and 70 feet of boat has to negotiate it without a bump. This usually takes place in front of a large and appreciative crowd of spectators who are drawn to the lock side by the market. Everyone fouls it up now and then, especially if the wind catches the side of the boat. The key, rather like appearing on the News Channel or doing a *Today* programme two way, is not to look or sound as though you have completely lost it.

The training was followed by several question and answer sessions about safety and what to do if one of the passengers falls in or, as has happened, deliberately jumps into the canal. I started steering one weekend in three, and then every other weekend and this season, which starts at Easter. I am one of the full time skippers on the boats. In the meantime I am working for STV on a comedy drama and have gone some, if not all, of the way to answering the question I kept asking myself after every corridor inquisition: **WHAT AM I REALLY GOING TO DO?**

## I love being my own boss

**JO RUXTON**, former NHU producer

**MOST OF THE FILMS** I worked on in the NHU involved underwater filming. Being labelled an underwater specialist was both blessing and curse: it prevented me gaining experience in other areas of filming, which slowed my career progression. So I volunteered for redundancy and set up my own company, Media Dive Crews Ltd. As well as being an HSE diving contractor, I'm able to think like a producer/director – while I'm assessing locations for safety and logistics I think visually, so I have a sto-

ryline in mind when I create diving plans.

My production skills came into play on a Blue Peter shoot in the Maldives last year. It was a dream gig, until the topside cameraman was taken ill. While the underwater cameraman covered all the filming, I took on the topside directing and sound.

Now I'm working on Plastic Oceans, my biggest project and hopefully the most worthwhile (see [plasticoceans.net](http://plasticoceans.net)).

I don't regret taking redundancy and love being my own boss.

Into the deep: Jo Ruxton at work



## This was never part of my plans

**CAROL SMITH**, former senior producer, Radio Comedy

**I REALLY SURPRISED MYSELF**

when I applied for voluntary redundancy from the Radio Comedy department. I'd been in the BBC since I was 19 and now, 31 years later, I hadn't really given any serious thought to life after the Beeb. Suddenly I heard myself asking my head of department if I could put my name forward. Flash forward seven months and I was waving goodbye to everyone, feeling excited, terrified and still not convinced that the marbles hadn't done a runner!

Flash forward again two years and I understand exactly why I did it. I now organise (part-time) a charity in London's Tower Hamlets, one of the poorest boroughs in the country, helping young people in secondary school to utilise their artistic, craft and music talents to connect with enterprise.

I'm based in the school where I've been volunteering since last September. The Ian Mikardo High School is a school for boys with severe social, educational and behavioural difficulties, who have all been permanently excluded from mainstream education, but are now thriving under the care, dedication and enthusiasm of the most extraordinary teaching and support staff I've ever encountered. It's probably the most challenging thing I've ever done, but it's certainly the most rewarding. Tough, sure, but often a lot of fun.

I never planned to move into education. I began by working in a volunteer bureau in Newham, learning about the charity sector in general and fundraising in particular. Then, when I was ready to move on, a chance remark to a friend working in social regeneration led to a visit to Ian Mikardo High and now, after a term and a half volunteering both in fundraising and classroom support, here I am, an established part of the team.

So that's why I had to leave. It was time to give something back. Do I miss the BBC? Of course. Do I regret asking for redundancy? Not for a second. Sure, I never know what challenge will come hurtling through the door with each of our boys, but I love finding out.

Down with the kids: Carol Smith and some of the boys she now helps



PHOTOGRAPH: ANNA GORDON

## I'm more multiskilled than ever

**JANE-LOUISE GREEN**

Former tv director and online producer

**'IT'LL HIT YOU AFTER** about a month,' said colleagues who'd already taken redundancy. Well, maybe I've been lucky – it hasn't hit me, because after 20 years with the corporation I honestly still feel very BBC.

I'd had a marvellous and varied career, starting off as a runner at Pebble Mill before directing the *One*, the *Six* and the *Nine O'Clock News*. Along the way I directed *The Clothes Show* and launched three *Where I Live* websites. But most of my generation had already left and I felt that it was the right time for me to go.

As a single mum with a small child and no child support, friends thought I was mad to give up a good job with all the benefits the BBC provides. But I had an idea for a business and knew I'd regret it if I didn't give it a go.

As BBC online producer, I wasted a lot of time every day searching for images to illustrate features. My department didn't have a budget for pictures and the marketing and press officers who sent me stories had the same problem. I wanted to set up an online supermarket of ordinary snapshots that could be bought for very little and used for websites and print. There were few online image libraries at the time, and nothing cost effective for editorial producers.

After leaving the BBC I pitched my idea to Staffordshire University and won an enterprise fellowship, which gave me access to business training and funding. Being part of a large, 'not for profit' institution again definitely softened the blow of leaving Auntie. *Picturenation.co.uk* launched at the end of 2006 and I persuaded the university to invest in my business. Today they are shareholders. It's a good marriage, but what a rollercoaster it has been.

I'm now an approved supplier to the BBC, and I have some impressive clients, including banks, government departments and publishers. I have 11,000 members worldwide and more than 100,000 individually checked live images for licensed use. It's not been easy – the recession hasn't helped, and you can't plan for personal traumas slowing you down. I've had more than my fair share recently, including

my daughter being diagnosed with a chronic illness. I had to make business calls from her hospital bedside. You can't stop. There's no sick pay or compassionate leave.

Am I glad I left? Yes. Do I miss the BBC? Yes. I'm enjoying being in the commercial world, though creativity seems to be pushed to the bottom of the 'to do' list after accounts, VAT and managing people. I get my artistic fix from freelance writing, which I love. My BBC standards and ethics have helped a lot – I can squeeze a lot out of small budgets, and I'm more multiskilled than ever.



In the picture: Jane-Louise-Green

## When the hard work's worth it

**JUDE HABIB** was formerly with *Special Features*

**IN THE SPECIAL FEATURES** unit, I ran social action campaigns tackling everything from domestic violence to carers' needs. That was my true love. We worked on issues that often didn't get much media attention, at a grassroots level.

When I took redundancy I truly didn't know what I was going to do, other than I wanted to work in the not-for-profit sector. But I knew that I enjoyed working on social action campaigns and giving a voice to topics and people unrepresented by mainstream media.

I started going to the School of Social Entrepreneurship which provides training and opportunities to help people use their creative and entrepreneurial abilities for social benefit. A year later I set up sound-delivery, a digital media training and

production company working predominantly with charities and community groups, looking at people and issues which are under represented in media.

We aim to help charities get their messages across in new and dynamic ways. For our last project we worked with the Museum of London, helping them to create podcasts for visually impaired people. We're basically



teaching charities that in this multi-platform age they don't need to wait for traditional media to get their stories out – they can create their own content.

Working at the BBC helped me to be a good storyteller and to be confident training different groups of people who had important stories to tell. When I left, podcasting was just starting and my background in radio was a massive help.

I've a team of three and the aim is to make profit, which is then ploughed back into social projects. We recently used money to provide 12 carers with respite for five days each. That makes the hard work worth it.

I've had ongoing support from Careerlink Plus and they've been fantastic. The BBC was a big part of my life but it's important to remember there is a life afterwards. It is not easy dealing with redundancy but there is a world of opportunity out there.



# BACK TO BACK MEETINGS LEAVE NO TIME TO THINK

Less than a year after he joined the BBC from Yahoo! John Linwood, chief technology officer, fears that the BBC's meetings culture is stopping people doing the jobs they were hired to do



**I AM WRITING** this article at 6am, not because I like starting work so early, but rather because my days at the BBC

are completely filled with back to back meetings.

I know that I am not alone in this; many of us rush from meeting to meeting, building to building, with no time for lunch breaks, a cup of coffee or even a quick chat with colleagues. The 150 or so emails I get each day pile up in my inbox and my assistant vainly tries to placate a steady stream of people who demand my time and simply don't believe that the next 20 minutes free is three weeks away.

Prior to joining the BBC, I spent many years with US technology giants where the pressure, pace and drive of the organisation is phenomenal, and yet in all those years I rarely had a day without breaks between meetings. So why, I wonder, are things so different here at the BBC?

The first question that I considered is whether it matters that we spend our days in a steady stream of meetings. Perhaps that is where the real work gets done and what can be more productive than communicating face to face with colleagues on a shared objective?

Well, firstly I am pretty sure that most of us were recruited for our intellectual capability and yet how much of our days do we spend just thinking, using the key attribute that the BBC hired us for?

Secondly, when do we get to all those emails, unwritten or unread reports or implement those important changes or actions that never quite make it to the top of our 'to do' list, which are always pushed down by urgent meetings?

I am someone who needs time to gather input through reading, listening and



ILLUSTRATION CHRIS DUGAN

**'One issue in decision making is the risk averse nature of individuals'**

watching key information sources and then space to mull things and wrestle with the complex challenges that I face in my role. My conclusion is that it does matter that we don't have time to do these things.

The next key question for me is why we have so many meetings in the BBC. Is there something culturally different about us, is it a systemic attribute of a media organisation or is it, perhaps, simply a necessary part of being in the public sector? My personal view is that there are a number of reasons, not directly connected.

Firstly we are in a privileged position of being funded largely by licence fees and that means we have a duty and responsibility to spend this money wisely and effectively on behalf of the UK public. To do this requires transparent governance. Every penny we spend is open to scrutiny and challenge by the National Audit Office, parliamentary select committees and the general public through the Freedom of Information Act.

This governance requires a substantial process to approve spend that consists of

many meetings. For example a technology spend of £2m or more requires three levels of approval, each requiring a paper and a meeting. Larger spends often require six or more meetings to ensure sign off by all the relevant divisional boards and review panels as well as the finance committee.

The second reason for our meeting culture is rooted in accountability and ownership around decisions. It is often not clear in the BBC who owns a decision and is therefore authorised to make it. Some of this issue is organisational and comes from ambiguous responsibilities, while another part is the risk averse nature of individuals. I am more used to a corporate culture of taking ownership and responsibility as an individual, where it is clear who makes a decision and therefore who takes the kudos or the fall depending on the success or otherwise of the chosen path.

In the BBC, I find that decisions tend not to be made independently, even though performance management is low key and individuals are less likely to be held accountable. Instead decisions tend

to be made in concert with many others, often requiring a number of meetings and a great deal of discussion. I often find myself having to justify why I've made a decision, which I am perfectly qualified and authorised to make, to a stream of people who feel they should have been party to it.

Finally, I wonder if people at the BBC simply like meetings and this is deeply rooted in the BBC psyche. The BBC is a sociable, friendly environment and we like spending time with our colleagues.

So what can we do about it? Are we doomed to spend our days in meetings, making decisions by committee and doing our email and reports late at night or on weekends? I hope not. I have started to do a number of things to change my meeting load and perhaps if more of us follow suit we could change things for the better.

**1** Limit most meetings to 30 minutes. It is amazing how much can get done when time is short.

**2** Ensure that there is clear ownership and accountability in your organisation and delegate the decision making to the people who have the detailed knowledge and information to make a good decision. Use meetings as a last resort for decisions.

**3** Put thinking and catch up time in your calendar and lock it down, it is not available for meetings.

**4** Ruthlessly prioritise meetings. Time one on one with my key direct reports and my manager is the most valuable time I spend to ensure I am effective. If it is not critical that I attend a meeting I de-prioritise it and often decline it.

**5** End meetings early if the purpose is achieved. Meetings have an amazing ability to fill the time available.

**6** Keep attendee lists down to those who need to be there. Fewer people typically mean a shorter meeting.

**7** Don't insist upon physical presence. Phone or video conferences work well, cut down travelling time and our carbon footprint and, crucially, are often shorter since people are more likely to get on with the business in hand.

**8** Reduce the frequency of recurring meetings – or don't make them recurring and just schedule them as necessary.

**9** Some senior boards in the BBC are now limiting the length of papers for submission, I intend to try this too.

**10** Go home at 6pm. Clearly this is aspirational but you never know, it may occasionally happen.

This is the page that everybody reads. Please email [claire.barrett@bbc.co.uk](mailto:claire.barrett@bbc.co.uk)  
You can also contribute to the mail page directly from the Ariel Online home page

## Panorama had a say

Shelley Jofre describes the BBC Trust's finding against *Panorama*, *What's Next for Craig* as 'flawed', and the complaints process as 'deeply flawed' and biased in favour of the complainant. I would like to point out that she is wrong on both counts.

The complaints process will be reviewed this year and programme makers will be very welcome to give their views. But as with all complaints under the current process, BBC News – and Shelley Jofre herself – were treated in the same way as the complainant, with ample opportunity to give their views to the ECU and again to the trust's independent editorial adviser.

The paperwork was, in fact, sent to BBC management and shared with the programme team before the Editorial Standards Committee met and the BBC was given the opportunity to challenge the finding in terms of factual accuracy and process before publication.

The identity of the complainant is irrelevant: it would have been upheld whoever it came from. The Editorial Complaints Unit and the Editorial Standards Committee separately reached the conclusion that the programme failed to meet required editorial standards as clearly set out in the BBC's own Editorial Guidelines.

**Fran O'Brien**

head of editorial standards, BBC Trust

## Keep Kelvin quiet

Am I the only one who is mystified by the BBC's seeming obsession with using Kelvin McKenzie for his 'expert' views?

Hot on the heels of his contribution

to *Newsnight* in the wake of the strategic review – in which he pilloried the BBC for wasting money, despite being happy to take the Beeb shilling himself – he turns up on the News Channel sharing his pearls of wisdom on the James Bulger/Jon Venables story. I wonder how that went down with the licence fee payers of Merseyside?

This is a man, after all, who was responsible for publishing a series of vile lies in his newspaper in the immediate aftermath of the Hillsborough disaster, disparaging not only the people of Liverpool, but desecrating the memory of those who died there and causing untold anguish to their loved ones.

Despite the paper's claims being discredited, he has refused to apologise or even accept the fact that he may have been wrong.

Mr McKenzie may well have some interesting views on the way the media has reported the re-arrest of Jon Venables – he'd know all about tab-



## Lloyd Webber's dreams really do come true

Last year I wrote complaining about the free publicity give by the BBC to Andrew Lloyd Webber's productions of *The Sound of Music*, *Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* and *Oliver!*

I see this year his forthcoming production of *The Wizard of Oz* will also be given several hours of primetime television. But maybe I was being too critical.

Maybe the dg, or one of his team, meets with Sir Andrew, or one of his team, and they work out the cost of making a 30 second tv advert. Then they work out how much it would cost to show the ad on ITV at primetime, (the roughly 1350 times that equate to the 11 hours plus of



programme time on the BBC), then Sir Andrew's Really Useful Company gives that much money to Children In Need. Of course, I could be wrong again and it is just free advertising.

**Alan Caswell**, senior media assistant (tv intake), I&A

loid sensationalism – I just wonder how the people he accused of urinating on the dead would feel?

**Lee Bennion**

sbj, Radio Merseyside

## Long time sinking in

On March 12 I received an autogenerated email from BBC Workplace regarding work order BBC3467332.

It reads: 'The following work order has been completed.'

Work Order Number BBC3467332  
Reported 21-Aug-2007 09:22 AM  
Site Name TVC - Main Block  
Location Basement//  
Description PLEASE ATTEND TO BASEMENT DRESSING ROOM 25 (RED) TO UNBLOCK A SINK.'

Nice to see that BBC Workplace are on the ball.

**Marc Kingham**

senior technical operator

## My beef with labels

In an era when the BBC strives to embrace diversity, why is it that the caterers at the refectory at BH Manchester are incapable of accurately labelling dishes that contain beef or pork? Muslims, Hindus, Jews and vegetarians need to know the ingredients of the food they are eating.

I have encountered this problem with alarming frequency, most recently when I chose a meal described on the menu as 'Chicken and Rice'. However, part way through consuming the food, I discovered sliced sausages. When I asked the chef to identify all the ingredients, he sheepishly admitted the 'Chicken and Rice' dish contained beef sausages. As a Hindu, I felt sick and angry.

Vegetarians are also at risk. In January, I had chosen a dish described as a 'Bean Medley', but part way through eating it, I found it was laced with diced bacon. In addition, this inadequate labelling process poses a risk to people with allergies, such as nuts.

This is the 21st century, not the 1970s. The BBC should ensure the caterers get their act together.

**Paresh Patel**

vj, North West Tonight

## BBC Workplace's catering team

**replies:** We apologise unreservedly for these errors that have occurred at the BBC Manchester catering outlet. We are standardising all ingredients to ensure that all our customers can eat with confidence knowing exactly what is in their food.

All staff will receive training into understanding the differences in these requirements along with knowing what ingredients are in all dishes to ensure that no errors occur in the future.

If any members of staff are still concerned, please contact us directly at [bbccatering@bbworkplace.com](mailto:bbccatering@bbworkplace.com)

## Look who's talking

I sent Steria what I thought was a quick email to find out the best address to send them a form by snailmail. This generated nine replies; eight automatic, acknowledging my query, allotting me a job number, telling me there was no one in the office, and – after a human being replied – I got another auto response to let me know the 'fault' had been 'remedied'.

By the time the last one came in, I had switched on my out of office reply, and accidentally generated a few more automatic emails. I left my computer chatting to the computers at Steria for the rest of the evening.

**Jonathan Stoneman**, head of International Centre, College of Journalism

## System overload

I am one of the lucky people to be 50 the right side of April 6 so am leaving the BBC on March 31. One of the reasons that pushed me into making this decision was the introduction of the Workplace scheduling system.

I have been in the BBC for nearly 32 years, allocating Radio staff and facilities in Cardiff. In my early years I did this with paper and pencil, then in the early 90s we started using Resbook. It was a bit strange at first but, as it was designed for the job I did, it was easy and fast to use.

About nine years ago we were told it would be replaced with Workplace. I thought someone might come and

sit with me for a day to see how I went about my daily duties, but no. We went 'live' with it last April, although just to manage leave at first. After much worrying (and tears!) on my part I managed to get all the data on to it by mid August.

Everything takes about ten times longer than it did before and, over the past few weeks, the speed of the system has made it almost unusable. Instant answers to Production requests are a thing of the past and so is forward planning as if you don't have a charge code you can't put anything in.

I feel sorry for my colleagues who face a future of frustration, sitting and watching an egg timer for the best part of the day. I've had a great time working here but this system has finished me off.

**Ceri Andrews**

allocator, radio operations, BBC Wales

## Natural selection



The anonymous cowards at Pacific Quay have noticed a striking similarity between News head honcho Atholl Duncan and Ultimate Fighting Championship Hall of Famer Randy 'The Natural' Couture.

**Anonymous Coward**

Pacific Quay

## Better deal for staff

We're sorry to hear that Vaughan Simons was disappointed with his experience of the staff discount offered by BBCShop.com (February 23). The staff discount has been 30 percent off the RRP of any title published by BBC Worldwide (but not charity or licensed products eg toys) for some time now.

It's indicative of the competitive market in which we operate

that these days the discount offered by the big online retailers such as Amazon and by BBCShop.com to all our customers will often be close to or even higher than 30 percent off the RRP. In Vaughan's example the 'standard' selling price of the dvd he wanted was already discounted by 29 percent.

As we do care about our staff customers we are conscious that this undermines the value of the staff discount and are looking at ways to improve it. At the same time we are working hard to make BBCShop.com better value for all of our customers – as fans of our recent 'audio price drop' and other promotions will hopefully have noticed.

**Mary Gledhill**

head of BBCShop.com

## Hit for Six

Director general Mark Thompson in the strategy review Q&A: 'The issue with 6 [Music] is it doesn't reach a very big audience.'

Mark Thompson in the same Q&A, with reference to local radio: 'The hope is by moving the money around we'll improve the quality [and] stem some of the audience losses.'

Is he suggesting that it's unacceptable for local radio to have low audience figures, but not a national network which not only caters for a niche audience, the very definition of public-service broadcasting, but is waving a flag for the future of digital radio?

**Stuart Pinfold**

freelancer, BBC News and World Service

■ The arguments in favour of closing 6 Music and the Asian Network are specious and wrong-headed. FACT: the 'loss' of Jonathan Ross as an expense more than outweighs the cost of 6 Music. Need I go on?

**Simon Calkin**

broadcast systems engineer, FM&T

■ Speaking as a listener, I cannot emphasise enough how important 6 Music is to me.

Although the specialist programming on Radio 1 and Radio 2 does a pretty decent job of delivering content on most genres of music, it is 6 Music that consistently offers quality across the entire schedule.

The breadth of new music it covers is staggering, and I'm concerned about all those artists who are too big to be covered by BBC Introducing, but too interesting or small to be caught up in the uber-pop saccharine world that saturates daytime radio. The presenters offer genuine insight and enthusiasm without patronisation or a reliance on popular culture.

As someone with a passion for BBC radio, I believe the closure of 6Music would let down a large number of people like me who genuinely love new music. It would also leave the BBC in a weaker position to justify its public service remit.

**Toby Field**

broadcast assistant, Radio 4



PROGRAMME MAKING

**Head of Documentaries, A&M Production**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
SM2/Ref: 285653  
C 12-Apr-10

**Editor Bitesize**  
London / Salford Quays  
9D/Ref: NNP283859  
E C 06-Apr-10

**Senior Producer One Show / Uwch Gynhyrhydd One Show**  
Cardiff  
9D/Ref: 283251  
E C 08-Apr-10 A 10 months

**Production Manager / Rheolwr Cynhyrchu**  
Cardiff  
8D/Ref: 284301  
C 08-Apr-10

**Programmes Executive CBBC Acquisitions & Animation**  
London / Salford Quays  
7D/Ref: NNP279243  
C 06-Apr-10

**Producer, The Archers**  
Birmingham  
7D/Ref: 285694  
C 05-Apr-10

**Cynhyrhydd Rhaglenni Crefyddol a Rhaglenni Cyffredinol**  
Bangor  
7D/Ref: 278519  
C 11-Apr-10

**Production Manager, Blue Peter**  
London  
6P/Ref: 287395  
C 12-Apr-10 A 12 months

**Script Researcher, EastEnders**  
Elstree  
5P/Ref: 285813  
C 06-Apr-10 A 11 months

**Technical Operator**  
Inverness  
5H/Ref: 285762  
E C 11-Apr-10 A 12 months

**Production Co-ordinator, Goldie's Crown Jewels**  
London  
White City  
5D/Ref: 286438  
C 06-Apr-10 A 06 months

**Learning & Audience Development Administrator**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
4D/Ref: 283444  
E C 05-Apr-10 A 05 months

**Head of Drama**  
Belfast Broadcasting House  
Under Review/Ref: 269095  
E C 12-Apr-10

JOURNALISM

**Strand Editor, Persian TV**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
10S/Ref: 276725  
C 05-Apr-10

**Senior Broadcast Journalist (Production)**  
Birmingham  
8D/Ref: 287158  
C 12-Apr-10 A 06 months

**Senior Broadcast Journalist, Radio Manchester**  
Manchester  
8D/Ref: 285195  
C 06-Apr-10

**Senior Broadcast Journalist, Persian TV**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
8D/Ref: 280290  
C 05-Apr-10

**Regional Co-ordinator (Senior Broadcast Journalist)**  
Manchester  
8D/Ref: 277348  
C 06-Apr-10 A 11 months

**Broadcast Journalist, World Desk**  
London  
TV Centre  
7D/Ref: 286342  
C 11-Apr-10 A 06 months

**Broadcast Assistant, Newsbeat**  
London  
Yalding House  
5D/Ref: 287304  
C 11-Apr-10 A 06 months

**Researcher/BA, The Andrew Marr Show & NewsWatch**  
London  
5D/Ref: 282327  
C 08-Apr-10 A 12 months

**Broadcast Journalist, BBC Hereford & Worcester**  
Worcester  
5/7D/Ref: 280962  
E C 12-Apr-10 A Continuing

**Broadcast Assistant (Part-time), BBC Look East**  
Norwich  
3/4H/Ref: 285196  
E C 06-Apr-10 A 06 months

**Producer, Radio & Online, Hindi Service**  
Delhi Bureau  
Local Recruit/Ref: 280756  
E C 08-Apr-10 A 12 months

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

**Senior Manager, Investments and Major Projects**  
London  
White City  
SM2/Ref: 275700  
E C 15-Apr-10

**Commercial Manager, Children's**  
London  
9D/Ref: 287045  
C 18-Apr-10

**Learning Project Manager**  
Brighton  
8D/Ref: 284938  
E C 31-Mar-10 A 09 months

**Billing Analyst**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
5D/Ref: 284792  
E C 05-Apr-10 A 12 months

**Commercial Assistant, Commercial Agency**  
London  
White City  
4D/Ref: 287333  
C 12-Apr-10

**PA to Controller of Drama Commissioning**  
London  
4D/Ref: 287218  
C 05-Apr-10 A 06 months

**Newsroom Assistant, Multimedia Newsroom**  
London  
TV Centre  
4D/Ref: 287170  
C 12-Apr-10 A 06 months

**PA to Commissioning Editor Features & Formats BBC1 & BBC2 & Executive Producers Features & Formats**  
London  
4D/Ref: 285815  
C 06-Apr-10 A 12 months

**Education and Community Assistant / Swyddog Addysg a Chymuned**  
Cardiff  
4D/Ref: 278539  
C 06-Apr-10 A 05 months

**Senior Media Assistant**  
London  
TV Centre  
3H/Ref: 284239  
C 06-Apr-10 A 06 months

**Gweinyddwr Cronfa Ddata**  
Cardiff  
3D/Ref: 273477  
E C 31-Mar-10 A 06 months

NEW MEDIA

**Outreach Manager, Digital Switchover Help Scheme**  
London  
White City  
9D/Ref: 287325  
E C 09-Apr-10 A 2 years

TECHNOLOGY

**Senior R&D Engineer Video Compression**  
London  
9D/Ref: 284546  
C 12-Apr-10

**Technical Project Manager**  
London  
Media Centre  
8D/Ref: 287204  
E C 08-Apr-10 A 12 months

**Senior Web Developer**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
8D/Ref: 287200  
C 08-Apr-10

**Test Engineer**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
7D/Ref: 285802  
E C 07-Apr-10

**Problem Analyst**  
Reading  
6D/Ref: 283496  
C 09-Apr-10

**Knowledge Management and Support Analyst**  
Reading  
6D/Ref: 283490  
C 09-Apr-10

**Service Management Analyst**  
Reading  
4D/Ref: 283493  
C 09-Apr-10

**Test Analyst (Flash), Online Media Group**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
Under Review/Ref: 272026  
E C 21-Apr-10

BBC WORLDWIDE

**Group Head, Radio Times Display**  
London  
Media Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 287231  
C 05-Apr-10

**Credit Manager**  
London  
Media Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 285297  
C 05-Apr-10 A 12 months

**Finance Manager**  
London  
Media Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 285295  
C 05-Apr-10 A 12 months

**Digital Ad Operations Manager EMEA**  
London  
Media Centre  
1W/Ref: 285919  
C 31-Mar-10

**Sales Operations Manager - BBC World News**  
London  
Media Centre  
1W/Ref: 285655  
C 08-Apr-10

**TV Pricing and Inventory Manager**  
London  
Media Centre  
1W/Ref: 285654  
C 08-Apr-10

**Senior Sales Executive, Top Gear**  
London  
Media Centre  
2W/Ref: 286449  
C 31-Mar-10

**Sales Team Assistant, BBC Advertising**  
London  
Media Centre  
4W/Ref: 286101  
E C 05-Apr-10

BBC NORTH

**BBC North job opportunities**  
London/Salford Quays

If you are looking for a role within a London department that is moving to BBC North, apply via job Ref: **NTP207351**.

This includes continuing and fixed term contracts with an end date 3 months after the role has moved to Salford Quays.

Apply once and you will be considered for all relevant BBC North Job opportunities.

We're currently recruiting for:

**Product Manager, FM&T**

See Attachment

At least they don't breathe fire  
Tom Reeves has swapped news and current affairs for a stint with the dragons

WHAT WAS YOUR EUREKA moment? Do you have an exit strategy?

They're just some of the questions I fire at investment-hungry entrepreneurs pitching for the chance to face the dragons. I might not look as scary as the dragons, but the questions need to be just as tough.

I'm on attachment to *Dragons' Den* until June. As an assistant producer from Manchester news and current affairs, I've gone from producing and directing films for *The One Show* to getting my head round the complex world of turnover, business plans and due diligence.



But that's exactly why I wanted the challenge of this attachment. The journalistic and investigative skills I've gained from working in current affairs have helped me hit the ground running. At *Dragons' Den*, it's essential that we carry out a forensic examination of each entrepreneur's background. Company accounts, financial statements, patent applications - all must be meticulously scrutinised before we put them in front of the dragons.

A key part of my job is identifying interesting characters and stories among the thousands of applicants. I'm used to interviewing all kinds of interesting people but I've never had to talk profit and loss with a dancing banana before.

I also audition the entrepreneurs who apply to the series from all over the UK and then pitch them to Manchester's very own dragons...executive producer Sam Lewens, series producer Putul Verma and producer Zoe Thorman. Finding the next Levi Roots or I-Teddy is no mean feat but, fingers crossed, we've found some entrepreneurs who will impress the dragons enough to part with their cash.

It has been a great experience so far and I can't wait for filming to start soon. The production team has made me feel very welcome and I'm enjoying working in a different department and learning new skills. It's fantastic that BBC Manchester offers the opportunity to work between great output like *The One Show* and *Dragons' Den* and I'm excited about the prospects for continued collaboration and career development as we look forward to the move to Media City.

Been anywhere nice?  
Send your attachment stories to Clare Bolt

FULL DETAILS AND HOW TO APPLY

Full details and how to apply are on Gateway at: [https://jobs.bbc.co.uk/fe/tpl\\_bbc02.asp](https://jobs.bbc.co.uk/fe/tpl_bbc02.asp)  
For assistance contact BBC Recruitment's Response Team on: 0800 082 8080 or 0370 333 1330

EXTERNAL APPLICATIONS

Vacancies published on this page are open to BBC Staff. Where indicated (E), external applicants may also be considered. Please contact (quoting the appropriate ref.no.): Recruitment BBC HR Direct, PO Box 1133, Belfast BT1 9GP Tel: 0370 333 1330.



PHOTOGRAPH: MARK BASSETT

**CHRIS JOHNSON**  
PRESENTER, CBBC

**How did you come to work for CBBC?**

I was spotted through my online sketch channel on YouTube doing comedy sketches and monologues. One of the producers at CBBC saw them and invited me in for a screen test.

**What were you doing at the time?**

I had just started doing media and performance at university and had been considering leaving because I wasn't learning anything. Getting the call from CBBC was brilliant and came at exactly the right time because I'd been thinking maybe this course isn't for me.

**Where were you when they called?**

I was standing in the kitchen at my Dad's house about to have fish and chips. They asked if I would be interested and then asked if I could start on January 4. It really was New Year new life for me.

**What did your family say?**

It was a mixed reaction. A lot said 'that's brilliant' while the others, mostly those who wanted me to babysit or do other things, were more worried about me moving away. I think I was the most contained of all of them and just thought how brilliant it was while everyone else was screaming 'ooohh, this is fantastic!'

**Did you always want to be a presenter?**

Originally I wanted to be a graphic designer. I've always loved drawing and still draw now, even making comic books in my spare time. I started doing drama at school and

liked it but got more interested in becoming a director. I decided that when I went to college I'd pick something that covered all angles because a good director needs to know how everything works and how to deal with it.

**How did your YouTube channel come about?**

It started on a bored Sunday afternoon. I had a camera, a box of props, a mate, and had been writing little jokes, so we filmed something daft. I was never one of those big YouTube players but always had decent views in the early thousands.

**Your YouTube channel is called ChrisSnowie. Why?**

It was a nickname I got when I was about 13 because I've got this streak of white hair.

**Is your channel still running?**

Since I've come here I've had to tidy it up a bit and remove any videos with copyright material and bad language. This took three nights and out of the 63 videos on it there are now six remaining. I'm going to keep it going and, while I won't change the tone of the channel, I am obviously going to tone it down a bit.

**So what does your job involve now?**

I'm working with fantastic Ed Petrie and we're basically making kids laugh filling in

**Originally I wanted to be a graphic designer. I still draw now, making comic books in my spare time**

between the programmes on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

**Are your links scripted?**

Yes, but there is always room for us to improvise. We're always working on new stuff and getting involved with the writing or coming up with concepts. I feel I've done and learnt so much here - far more than the time I was at uni.

**Do you get audience feedback?**

This morning some kids on a school trip were sitting opposite me on the train. I was face deep in a book and then I felt a tap on the arm and someone said, 'Excuse me but are you Chris from CBBC?' and we just got chatting.

**How have your friends reacted?**

Mostly they've been amazed. A lot were on my media course at uni and so have been excited to hear

what I've been learning.

**Would you like to do more comedy stuff?**

If possible. Comedy will always be my favourite thing, mostly because I spent most of my childhood watching Morecambe and Wise videos. I love to make people laugh and I hope I make them laugh.

**Is it true that you are completely obsessed with Doctor Who?**

Yes. I own about a third of all the Who episodes from 1963 to 2010. It used to be a guilty passion but since the programme has become popular again, I have a level of coolness.

**How about life outside work?**

I recently moved into a flat in Sidcup - there's a really dull fact for you - and have re-awakened my love of the PS3.

**How have you found the move south?**

I've adjusted to London life but am still not used to the sombre attitude on public transport. I even play a little game: if I ever have that moment of making eye contact with someone by accident I always make it my mission to pull a really daft face and watch the reaction.

**Are you always good natured, happy and smiling?**

I try to be. I don't see room for being sad. I'm 19 with a lot of years ahead of me but you only live once so have fun. Enjoy it.

**What about the future?**

Good question but at the moment I'm not really thinking about that as it's still early days.

Interview by Sue Llewellyn

**foreign bureau**



**DUNCAN KENNEDY**

CORRESPONDENT, ROME

**IN ITALY**, it's not the daffodils that herald the first sign of spring, but the open topped Ferraris. You can't avoid them in Rome's narrow, cobble stone alley ways, pinning you to the walls as they purr past. Everywhere you look, jaws are at half mast. Conversations stop.

Italians, not the greatest embracers of global warming technologies or policies, straighten their spines and poke out their chests in a collective display of national pride at the sight of one of these machines.

It's a spectacle at a time when the news is mostly less appealing. I'm not talking about high unemployment, the budget deficit or immigration, but the prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. He has the nation divided, between those who err on the side of adoration and those who regard him almost as an abomination.

The latest matter to create a polarised frenzy concerns someone called Alfredo Milioni. He was charged by Berlusconi's party with handing in a list of candidates so they could stand

**The fountains get a spring clean, ahead of the Easter services**

in regional elections in the Rome area. Milioni didn't hand in the list, so most of Berlusconi's candidates in the capital have been barred from the ballot. There has been a raft of excuses from Milioni, including (my favourite) that he nipped out for a sandwich and missed the deadline.

Berlusconi tried changing the law to get the candidates reinstated, failed, and so is now livid. If it were not all so serious (threat to democracy, damage to the rule of law, etc etc), you might actually regard politics under Berlusconi as fun. He's never more than a quip away from another scandal or controversy.

Over at the Vatican, Pope Benedict has also had a wretched few weeks because of the paedophile allegations that keep surfacing. Every morning I walk across St Peter's Square to my office and often find myself peering up to the window of the Pope's apartment.

Right now, workmen have emptied the fountains in the square ready for their spring clean, ahead of the Easter services. It could be a metaphor for the type of cleansing some believe has long been needed in the Catholic church - to rid itself of abusers.

Following the Pope and Berlusconi is like watching a circus plate spinner, when you're on the edge of your seat wondering which plate (if any) will end up in pieces. Each seems to attract trouble like a moth to a light.

Pope Benedict doesn't drive a Ferrari and, to my knowledge, despite his billions, nor does Berlusconi. But if they did, I'm sure they would both have the top down, the wind in their hair (such as it is, in Mr B's case), each hoping that the arrival of spring will bring a renewal of their fortunes which, in recent times, have evaded them.

**CV**

**College:** Two-year BTEC performing arts, Pendleton College  
**First job:** Shop assistant in a formal wear hire store. I came in for a tux and they said they were looking for someone young to work there. At least it means I know how to tie a cravat

# green room

## THE ARIELATOR

A weekly take on life at the BBC: who's up, who's down, who's off



**UPSIDE** Well done to BBC Guernsey breakfast presenter **Gary Burgess** who has recently made his debut as a centre-fold in the Guernsey Press, the island's daily newspaper. Calm down, he hasn't pulled a Schafermaker – the presenter has in fact been featured thanks to his astounding weight-loss over the past six months. Last September our man was a sturdy 19 stone, now he's a sprightly 12 and a half. The double-page article was emblazoned with the headline 'Gary's Wake Up Call' and told the story of the presenter's decreasing weight in the months following his weight-loss surgery.



**DOWNSIDE** Radio Humberside presenter **Lara King** recently suffered a nasty knee injury from a gardening accident which made it impossible for her to get to her usual studio base in Grimsby. Not pleasant, but at least she didn't have to take time off – thanks to some technical wizardry she managed to spend last week presenting her mid-morning show, complete with stitches, live from her living room sofa.

## EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...You'll be pleased to know that I have forgotten my clothes today...

...I need to go and phone a vampire hunter...

...That's a real priority once there's time to do it...

...I ought to bring in my megasonic Woof Woof!...

...I knew it began with a P and had a mouth at the end of it...

...We need to put on our spacesuits and jump off the edge...

...It's like one of those Spanish women covered in toilet rolls...



Exemplary conductor: principal flautist Richard Davis

## BREAKING OUT THE BATON

**IT'S NOT OFTEN** that a flute player takes up the conductor's baton but that's exactly what happened when BBC Philharmonic's Richard Davis had to step up as emergency cover for a live Radio 3 show. The principal flautist had only seven hours to prepare for the *Afternoon on 3* concert compared to the usual 40-50 hours, after conductor Pablo Heras Casado fell ill. 'In my dreams, I've always wanted to conduct,' says Davis, who once took a career break to study the art of conducting. 'I really enjoyed it. You get such a brilliant high from the adrenalin rush.' And for those of you who think that conducting an orchestra is nothing

more than waving your arms around, you couldn't be more wrong. 'You need to direct what the players are doing,' explains Davis. 'If they all do their own thing, there'll be chaos. You have to communicate with the orchestra just through your body language, without speaking.' The broadcast, from the Philharmonic's base in BBC Manchester, featured concertos by Mozart and the Spanish composer Manuel de Falla. Despite his comparative lack of experience, Davis received emails and letters of appreciation from colleagues and members of the audience. 'They've been so supportive. I didn't get time to be nervous,' he said.

## SHED SOME LIGHT

**IS IT A CEMENT** mixer? Some kind of sausage making device? The next generation in 3D viewing technology perhaps? We've been approached by the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester asking if we (or, more accurately, our highly intelligent Green Room readers) can provide any information regarding the image to the right.

The device is listed in the museum's catalogue as 'BBC Floodlight', but that's all they know about it and they're eager to find out more. If it looks familiar and you know what it

is, where it was used or indeed anything else that could help the team in their quest for context, contact assistant editor Phil Smith-MR, or Meg McHugh (m.mchugh@mosi.org.uk), who is curator of community history at the museum.



## WE HEAR THAT...

**HAS HEAD** of A&M Tim Davie (right) been moonlighting as an actor in advertisements for furniture company DFS (left)?



**AWARD FOR** trooper of the week goes to Ranvir Singh who, on top of her usual newsreading duties with *North West Tonight*, spent most of the previous week commuting to and from London to fill in as co-presenter on the 5 live breakfast shows. 'After a 7pm finish on Thursday in Manchester, I took the train to London in time to get up at 3.30am for Friday's *5 live Breakfast*,' says Singh. At 9am, she headed back to Manchester for Friday's *NWT* before travelling to the capital again to co-host the *Weekend Breakfast* shows (are you keeping up?). After the Sunday morning programme, she then popped back north in time to stand in for Stephen Nolan on his late night phone-in. 'I was doing my own mini work-style marathon. Worthy of a medal? Maybe not. But a good test of stamina nevertheless!'

## Win DVD box sets

**IT'S GARRY SHANDLING'S SHOW** first went out on BBC Two in the late 80s and proved a cult hit, inspiring a generation of writers and earning him a starring roll in the later *Larry Sanders Show*. The series played with sitcom convention by regularly breaking the 'fourth wall' to let viewers at home see the making of the show and allowing its self-aware host to address them directly. Thanks to Fabulous Films we have three copies of the *It's Garry Shandling's Show* season one dvd box set to give away. To enter to win one, tell us who co-created the show with Garry Shandling? Email ariel competitions by April 6.



**SAVED BY THE BELL** first aired on the BBC in 1989, introducing a nation of adolescents to its catchy theme-song ('It's alright cos I'm saved by the bell!') and humorous portrayal of US college life. The American sitcom follows 'preppy' Zack, 'jock' AC Slater and 'nerd' Screech as they vie for the attention of all-American Kelly while trying to avoid a run-in with the authoritarian Principal Belding. We have three copies of the *Saved By the Bell* season one dvd box set to give away, courtesy of Fabulous Films. To enter to win one, tell us which fictional town the series was set in. Email ariel competitions by April 6.

