

# ariel

◆ **CONDUCTOR BEN FOSTER** leads the BBC Concert Orchestra in recording composer Richard Blair-Oliphant's music for BBC coverage of the election campaign. All services are ready for a hectic six weeks **Pages 8-9**

## POISED FOR THE ELECTION

◆ **Huggers changes Future Media organisation** **Page 2**

◆ **Third series of comedy that's got your family's number** **Page 7**

◆ **Is the nation ready for digital radio switchover?** **Page 10**





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**JAMES CRIDLAND** considers the lessons for the BBC in new ways of making radio around the world. **Page 6**

**CAREN DAVIES**, head of communications at Radio 1, on biscuits and rock stars. **Page 15**

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## FM&T

# Newman leaves as Huggers restructures

by Candida Watson

**FUTURE MEDIA STAFF** were shocked to learn of the immediate departure of journalism controller Nic Newman when director of FM&T Erik Huggers announced the restructuring of FM management last Wednesday.

Newman, who left the next day, worked closely with the news division on the ongoing development of the hugely successful news website. That role now falls to Phil Fearnley, who becomes general manager, news and knowledge, in the new structure. The World Service FM team will also become part of this group, with the intention of unifying the on-line service around the world.

One other senior manager's departure had already been announced, with Antony Rose going to Project Canvas. Huggers's announcement also revealed that Seetha Kumar, controller online, will move on once the three year on-line strategy has been decided.

In an email to staff Huggers said: 'We are strengthening our approach to BBC Online.'

He's replaced the Online board with an Online Direction Group, whose first task is to decide on the smaller number of online categories and products which were called for in the strategy review.

The new, flatter structure means managers bringing together specialisms in groups and taking on extra responsibilities; for example Rahul Chakkara becomes general manager children's, sport and applications, adding the oversight of the teams who design and build online products for those divisions to his current responsibilities for television platforms.

There are also two wholly new posts, which will be advertised externally. The director, digital media, will be responsible for all FM resources in FM&T, with responsibility for online, iPlayer, mobile and Red Button services. Until the post is filled Huggers will do it.

The other role is general manager, on-demand, leading a new group working on the continuing development of the iPlayer and on demand services for output.



## Kevill quits after Global changes

**SIAN KEVILL**, director of BBC World News, has decided to leave the BBC following the recent restructure of global news management by division director Peter Horrocks.



Her post was closed in the changes and Kevill has chosen not to seek either of the

two new senior roles created at the same time.

Kevill has been at the BBC for 24 years, and in her current post since 2008. Starting in current affairs she rose to become *Newsnight's* only female editor, moving on to lead a review of

political programmes, from which came *This Week* and *The Politics Show*.

Horrocks said: 'As director, BBC World News, Sian has charted the channel through an exceptionally challenging period.' Kevill herself said: 'It has been an honour to work for the BBC – it remains one of the most wonderful, creative places to work in broadcasting.'

## Call to reveal even more on pay

**MPs HAVE CALLED** on the BBC to be even more open about staff and talent pay – saying the reward packages of the director general and senior management are 'out of step with the current economic climate'.

In a review of the 2008-09 annual report, the Culture, Media and Sport select committee said that – 'at minimum' – the BBC should publish details of headcount by salary band for all staff, and lay out the number of people in each payment band for 'talent'. They suggest bands ranging from those earning £250,000-500,000 to those earning £1m-5m, adding that they don't expect to see any entries in a £5m plus category.

The committee also scrutinised audience reach, saying the figures for people who don't consume any BBC output for at least 15 minutes a week, as well as the services used by only a minority of their target audiences, suggest that the value of the licence fee is not being de-

livered to enough people.

They also said: 'We consider that some of the claims regarding BBC Three made by the trust and executive are not fully supported by the evidence. The BBC has been more ready to highlight favourable over unfavourable information and its implications. In particular, we note that the trust's claim of 'BBC Three's effectiveness in reaching young people' is not supported by its audience reach. We are also surprised that the test of the value of BBC 6 Music and the Asian Network in the latest strategy review appears not to have been applied to BBC Three.'

In a statement BBC Three said: 'Audience data from Barb shows clearly that BBC Three reaches more 16-34 year olds than any other digital channel during the hours it broadcasts. This year alone it already means a reach of 75 percent to the 16-34 age group.'

Turning to the MPs comments about the value test, the statement quotes the strategic review: 'BBC Three's role as a test-bed for the talent and formats of the future, and as a means of engaging younger audiences with content which meets the BBC's five priorities will become even more important in the years after switch-over.' And concludes: 'Consequently there are no plans to apply the test of value.'

A trust spokesperson said: 'We thank the committee for its report and its recommendations. As a publicly funded organisation, the BBC takes openness and transparency in its operations very seriously. The trust works closely with the executive and liaises with Parliament to ensure that the information we provide enables licence fee payers to hold us to account, and to help us deliver the quality programmes that audiences want.'

## NEWS BITES

**SOMALIA REPORTER** Mohammed Olad Hassan has won the 2010 Press Gallery's Speaker Abbot award for his courageous reporting. Hassan, the BBC's main English language reporter in Mogadishu, has been injured by a mortar round, caught up in a bombing and repeatedly threatened by warring factions. He says he wants 'to inform the world, and help bring peace and democracy to my own country'.

**POLITICAL SATIRE** *The Thick of It* is to return for a fourth series, series creator Armando Iannucci has revealed. Iannucci made the announcement – which has since been confirmed by the BBC – via his Twitter feed. Eight episodes of the comedy have been commissioned and will tx next year.

**THE BBC'S** election guidelines are up to scratch, the BBC Trust has concluded after a two-week consultation that attracted just 15 responses. Concerns about aspects of representation during the election period, raised by Plaid Cymru, UKIP and the Green Party, were all covered adequately in the existing code, the trust said.

**BBC LOCAL** sites for Cambridgeshire, Bristol, South East Wales and Wear have launched a new feature to encourage external linking from their pages to local newspapers. The move to aggregate headline RSS feeds from the top four local newspaper sites in each area will eventually be rolled out across all BBC Local websites.

## AINTREE: HIGH DEFINITION HORSES

**HORSES, RIDERS** and BBC tv and radio are jockeying into position for this weekend's coverage of the Grand National.

The world-famous steeplechase from Liverpool will be the first horse race to be broadcast in high definition when it airs on BBC HD.

Radio 5 live teams will also be trotting up to Merseyside for the three-day horse racing festival at Aintree racecourse.

Richard Bacon, Mark Pougatch and Colin Murray will be presenting their shows in front of live audiences at Liverpool John Moores University.

'It's not just about on-air events though,' says commissioning editor Jonathan Wall. 'We want to get out and about as a station and this is a great opportunity without spending a lot of extra resources since we'll already be covering the races.'

Members of the public will have the chance to meet racing reporters Claire Balding and John Hunt. For tv, two new high-speed cameras will be used to capture the chase over the famous fences The Chair and Becher's Brook. Fans can also get extra news and colour from Aintree via Twitter for the first time by following racing commentator Cornelius Lysaght.



## Benbow will lead CBeebies North

Kay Benbow has been appointed controller of CBeebies. Currently head of production at the channel, Benbow has worked in children's television for 20 years on shows including *Get Your Own Back* and *Bodger and Badger*. She has also worked in children's presentation, and at indie Tell Tale as producer on the *Tweenies*. Her appointment coincides with Children's becoming part of BBC North. Director of children's Joe Godwin said Benbow would 'lead CBeebies on its journey to Salford'. He described her as a 'great programme maker and creative leader' who is 'well known and highly respected on the global stage, where so much of CBeebies business takes place'. Director of vision Jana Bennett also congratulated Benbow on her new role.



Breakfast with a smile: Paul Ross, Gaby Roslyn and John Torode

## Sausages and salmon in Spitalfields

BBC London 94.9 Breakfast Show hosts Paul Ross and Gaby Roslyn held an election campaign breakfast challenge at Spitalfields' Luxe restaurant, inviting members of the public to pick their favourite from food cooked by four London MPs. Masterchef host John Torode helped the MPs' culinary efforts, which ranged from the full English to smoked salmon and scrambled egg bagels. Ross said: 'It was a fantastic morning. John Torode was a good sport and a great chief. May the best MP win. My vote is on the sausage sandwich.' Roslyn added: 'I can't say who I voted for but, needless to say, the salmon stayed in my teeth.'

## Johnston sorry for salary suggestion

by Cathy Loughran

BBC Reward director Robert Johnston has issued an apology after a Freedom of Information request revealed that he had proposed altering salary bands to make it appear that fewer BBC staff were in the £100,000-plus bracket.

The change would have resulted in people earning between £80,000-£100,000 being grouped together, but his emailed idea - to 'deliberately disguise the number in the over £100k band' - fell at the first hurdle.

'This proposal was raised at BDG (BBC direction group) but was immediately rejected,' a BBC spokesman said.

'The BBC will continue to publish salaries in the already established bands as ruled upon by the information commissioner's office.

'In fact the BDG has taken a series of decisions that has led to the BBC disclosing more executive salaries than any other public body.'

Formerly the BBC's head of shared services, Johnston admitted: 'With hindsight, I realise this suggestion was wrong and I apologise if it called into question the BBC's commitment to openness and transparency.'



## Guess who we're meeting?

More than 200 excited school children crowded into Salford's Lowry theatre for a preview of the first episode of the new series of Doctor Who. As part of a tour arranged by BBC Outreach, new Who stars Matt Smith and Karen Gillen met the children and answered questions in a session hosted by

North West Tonight presenter Ranvir Singh. Margaret Burgin, BBC Outreach manager in the north, said: 'It was such a nice thing to ring up local schools and invite them to the screening. To see the faces of the kids when Matt and Karen stepped off the bus was just wonderful.'

## Play will sign up new audience

by Claire Barrett

A RADIO 4 afternoon play has been signed, filmed and will be made available to view online by a deaf audience.

A *Small Piece of Silence*, which was written especially for its deaf star David Bower, is the first radio play to have a sign language interpretation.

As well as the signtheatre version of the play - signtheatre language is a mix of Sign Supported English, British Sign Language and international sign - the script will also be available online to allow hearing impaired people to access the play more fully.

The play came about following Bower's 'striking' performance as Quasimodo in Radio 4's production of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, explains Sue Roberts, the play's producer. 'I suggested a contemporary play be written for him. And after many conversations with David, Katie Hims's story began to emerge.'

Described as 'a love story and detective story', *A Small Piece of Silence* tells the story of council worker Joe (Bower). He makes the same journey to work each day by bus, seeing the same people, until one day, a young girl signs her name to him - ANGEL.

Back in the office, new recruit Shelly (Maxine Peake) is falling for Joe, but he discovers she is already involved with the leader of the council.

When he learns that ANGEL is one of the victims of a huge fire in a nearby block of flats - just a week after Shelly's arrival - Joe begins a quest to find out what really happened.

The play examines the issues around how society deals with deafness, and uses sound to convey how someone who can't hear experiences the world. 'Liran Donin provides specially composed music and a soundscape that underscores Joe's condition - he suffers from tinnitus - in sound,' says Roberts.

**A Small Piece of Silence, Radio 4, April 9**

View the signed film at [www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/afternoon-play](http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/afternoon-play)



# SALFORD

## THE NEXT CHAPTER

**A YEAR FROM NOW**, the three BBC buildings at Salford Quays will be fitted out, the technology will be going through final tests, the first wave of staff will be weeks away from moving in and hundreds of new people will have been hired.

Already ensconced in Peel Media's new studio block, the musicians of the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra may be contemplating outdoor performances in the waterfront piazza and *Blue Peter* will be eyeing its own al fresco options for breaking out of the studio to broadcast from around the MediaCityUK site.

To get from here to there, says a candid Peter Salmon, is like planning D-Day: 'It's just as well we're not all landing on the beach at the same time.' The complexity of the move is why people relocating with Children's, Learning, Sport, Radio 5 live and parts of FM&T from London and

colleagues from Manchester's Oxford Road (comedy, entertainment, religion & ethics, local and regional programming, current affairs, network radio and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra) have only been given 'broad brush indications' of likely moving dates, says the director of BBC North.

'We take planning very seriously because people are changing their lives, but we reserve the right to shuffle the pack,' he adds, as happened re-



Artist's impression of Salford interior

cently when people in 5 live learned they could be moving later than expected, although Salmon insists the undertaking was always that the station would be broadcasting from MediaCityUK by the end of 2011.

As a green field site, BBC North won't just be in the vanguard of the BBC's DMI roll-out but, because of its scale, will be one of the end-to-end digital technology project's biggest milestones and challenges.

The final moving timetable will be confirmed in September, with light technology users in the first wave and broadcast units with more complicated requirements later.

Meanwhile, plenty of foundations will continue to be laid, to help Salmon's newly constituted BBC group hit the ground running, whether it's Hot Shoes North placements, DMI trialling, the development of the phenomenally busy BBC North jobs site



or dry runs of hot-desking and the kind of bold collaboration that Salford was designed to allow.

'New operating models are already being built in each department, within the overall BBC North model – and within the BBC North ethos of no silos, no duplication, sharing of assets,' says Alice Webb, BBC North programme director. 'Where we can, we're getting a head start.'

Peter Salmon: 'like planning D-Day'



As BBC North becomes a group in its own right, Cathy Loughran and Rumeana Jahangir report on the challenge of the year ahead

## 8000 apply in weeks to Jobs North website

**OUT OF MORE** than 500 people from the migrating departments who have decided not to make the move north, 17 have now been redeployed.

Due to the number of roles that have to be filled, applications from everyone interested in working at Salford are being handled through the BBC Jobs North website. Launched in February, the site has more than 8000 applications – 86 percent external and the rest from internal candidates.

People supply details of their skills and experience and upload a CV. Applicants then complete online assessments to help recruiters match them

to suitable vacancies. Details of those roles will then be sent to candidates who may wish to be put forward for interview.

The process has been designed to allow managers to recruit more easily and so that people who are interested in a number of roles need only apply once, explains Fiona Wright, senior resourcing manager.

'Highlighting key skills is very important. If you have live gallery experience, then say that. If you want to be a broadcast assistant, put it at the top of your CV.'

She urges applicants to submit an up-to-date CV as ear-

ly as possible. Nine out of ten jobs moving to Salford will be recruited through the Jobs North website, Wright says.

People who have already submitted CVs but may gain significant new experience over the coming months can email updated resumes to careers@bbchrdirect.co.uk

Specific roles will also be advertised on the Ariel jobs page and Jobs North applicants can still express interest for particular posts by contacting the HR team or relevant departmental managers. They will also receive regular updates about vacancies.

Visit [bbc.co.uk/jobs/north/](http://bbc.co.uk/jobs/north/)

## A tram to Manchester centre every six minutes

**OWNED AND OPERATED** by Peel Media, the MediaCityUK site will be unrecognisable by May 2011.

Improved **public transport** will see tram services every six minutes to Manchester city centre. The two-mile journey into Piccadilly railway station will take 15 minutes. Regular buses linking Salford Crescent station to MediaCityUK will also start in 2011.

For **car drivers**, a new link road with the M602 will offer better access to the site and put Manchester Airport a 20-minute drive away. A total of 800 parking spaces will be allocated to BBC users in the

multi-storey car park behind the studio block and 280 free cycle bays will be available across the site.

The BBC buildings will surround a five-acre **public area** down to the waterside – about twice the size of Trafalgar Square. A piazza that can hold 5000 people for public events will be overlooked by a large screen at the front of the studio block, and the adjoining landscaped park will contain the new tram stop.

A **pedestrian** bridge from behind BBC building C will span the Manchester Ship Canal, linking Salford Quays to Trafford Wharf, home to Impe-

rial War Museum North.

There are plans for **canteens** on the top floors of all three buildings but final decisions will be made later this year on the basis of whether they'd be commercially viable. No space will be provided for BBC Club, but there will be cafes, restaurants and bars in the studio block and fronting onto the piazza. Booths supermarket will also open a branch.

Joining existing **tenants** like The Pie Factory studios and North West Vision and Media, will be a Holiday Inn and the University of Salford. ITV remain in discussions with Peel.



## Northern exposure: early movers tell it like it is

**Forty people have opted to move to Manchester early, for a variety of personal reasons and where operationally possible.**

**The rest of the 580 relocation won't have to choose their relocation packages until September and a programme of briefings – on anything from house prices to school admissions – will continue in London, led by former North West estate agent Hayley Hadfield.**

**'The combined emotions of moving house, arranging finance, accommodating family needs and changing workplace mean the process is never going to be stress-free. So the experience of the early movers is a valuable insight,' the relocation manager said.**



**↑ ANDREW EVANS**, principal software engineer, FM&T, moved to Oxford Road in September with wife Gemma, a senior software engineer in the same department.

'On a personal level, it's worked really well. We were looking for a new start anyway but with this we can work in the same department, in the same role, but in a different

environment. It's also good because we're more focused on new technology here.

'The familiarisation tour opened my eyes about what Manchester was like when I had previously been quite negative [about the move]. We've bought a home which we would never have been able to afford in London. I'm further away from my family in the Isle of Wight but other than that it's worked well. I wouldn't go back to London.'

**↗ GILL FARRINGTON**, assistant editor for the *Tony Livesey* and *Stephen Nolan* programmes on *Radio 5 live*, is the mother of two pre-school children. She moved in November. 'I'm originally from Manches-



ter but spent 12 years working in London so I was always very keen on moving back because my family are here and because of my children. I asked to move early because it was more convenient to get my daughter into a school.

'We were lucky in that our house sold very quickly. I knew where I wanted to live but moving was relatively stress-

ful – because moving house always is.

'My husband is an analyst but he has managed to negotiate with his boss to work alternate weeks in London and Manchester. We had to strike a compromise but we have been very lucky that his employer has been understanding.'

**→ SIMON LUMB**, senior software engineer, FM&T, moved in September as part of the first wave of FM&T relocation.

'The moving process has been very good. The familiarisation tour was especially useful. I had great support from management but the general system for finding a home to rent could have been smoother. 'Manchester's excellent.



I don't know what everyone in London has been moaning about. I understand it can be difficult [moving north] if you have family or property in the capital but if you have no ties, I think the city is awesome. It's great fun and it's miles cheaper than London. I now live in a flat in the city centre which I wouldn't have been able to do before.'

### TIMELINE >

**APRIL 1:** BBC North now a group in its own right

**APRIL:** Fit out starts of buildings A and B

**JUNE:** Hot Shoes North phase three

**SEPTEMBER:** Site services agreed, eg catering

**SEPTEMBER:** Moving dates confirmed

**DECEMBER:** Workplace fit out of buildings A, B and C complete

**2011 JANUARY:** User testing begins

**JANUARY:** Studio Block operational

**MID JANUARY:** BBC Philharmonic move

**MID MAY:** staff migration starts from London and Oxford Road

**DECEMBER:** BBC North fully operational



# A world of ideas for future radio

When he left the BBC last year, former head of FM&T for Audio & Music **James Cridland** set off on a tour of radio stations around the world. Here, he asks what can the BBC learn from them

**RADIO IS A BIT DIFFERENT TO TELEVISION.** Yes, I know you're shocked.

You'll be familiar with *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. It's shown in over 100 countries; tellingly, in China it's called *Who Deserves to be a Millionaire*, while in Ghana it's simply *Who Wants to be Rich*. But, in over 100 countries, it's the same format, with the same set, the same graphics, the same scoring system, and the same cheesy local version of Chris Tarrant.

Compare that to UK radio, and the difference is stark. By and large, UK radio is made in the UK, by UK people, for UK audiences. There are a few imported programmes: but in a country with hundreds of radio stations, those exceptions can be counted on the fingers of one hand. After a gruesome farming accident. And not using your thumb.

When I left the BBC, I was aware that I'd been in something of a cocoon. There's precious little mention of commercial radio when you work at the BBC, let alone international radio. And for someone like me, who looks at the areas where

the robots at Google: resulting in much better results in Google searches.

NPR also has a proper API – a way for computers to access the content from their website. It enables anyone to build things with NPR content, subject to a few terms and conditions. A fireman who codes 'for fun' in the evenings used this API to build an unofficial iPhone app – so good, it was actually better than the official NPR app. So NPR raised their game and the official NPR iPhone app now accounts for a huge 33 percent of all of the traffic to their website. By comparison, the best API that BBC News can offer is an unformatted RSS feed containing just one sentence.

The public service broadcaster in Canada, CBC, runs a new-music station on digital platforms. The only thing CBC Radio 3 plays is new Canadian music, uploaded by the artists themselves. On their website are over 20,000 artists, and 90,000 tracks; and these tracks are available by podcast, on-demand or on the live radio station. It broadcasts live from Vancouver, while the rest of CBC's networks come from Toronto or Montréal; and as a result, it's been able to act as a kind of mini pirate ra-



*James Cridland on air*

erators have to rebroadcast state-controlled news programmes during peak breakfast hours, I ended up in Australia, a country that not only has the best weather in the world but probably the most positive radio culture.

All radio in Australia comes with pictures on new DAB+ units; and Australian advertisers now provide images and URLs along with their audio copy.

The recession didn't really bite here. When DAB+ launched in June last year, ABC launched 'pop-up' radio stations on DAB+ – stations which

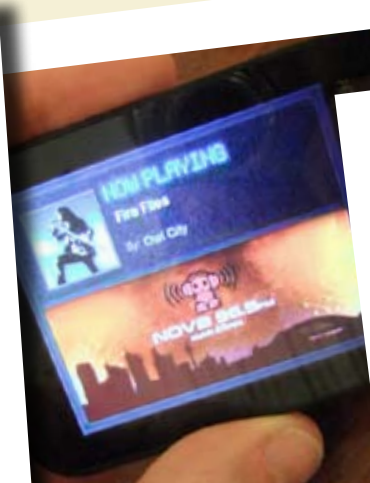
*The joy of radio*



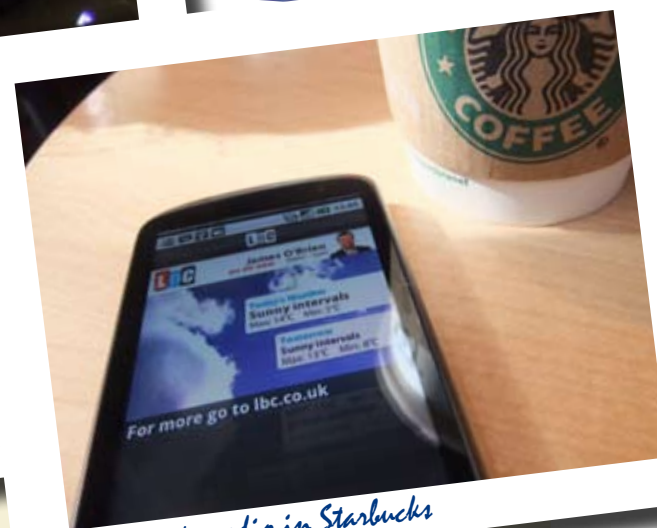
*Norwegian radio*



*In the studio in Ghana*



*Slideshow on Dab+*



*Listening to radio in Starbucks*

radio and new platforms collide, I felt there was a lot that UK radio could learn from other countries. This was the excuse I needed to go on a round the world trip: to visit radio stations, drink beer, and otherwise have a bit of a rest: a rest that my accountant assured me would probably be tax-deductable, if only I'd keep the receipts and bother to answer his emails every now and again.

I visited over 20 different radio stations and companies, across North America, Australia and the Far East. I learnt lots.

NPR, the public radio organisation based in Washington DC, was fascinating. Unlike BBC Radio, they produce transcripts of their interviews and programmes: mostly automatically, by using speech-to-text computer programs then an editor to tidy the transcripts up. This makes their content available to many more people, including

radio station inside the organisation: not forced to work the same way and carry the same 'it's always been this way' baggage of the larger networks. If the BBC Trust rejects the proposed closure of 6 Music, surely this is how the BBC should refashion the radio station: give it a building of its own in Bristol, remove any traditional radio programmers, and give it the licence to reinvent itself as a social, new-music network: something that genuinely adds to British musical culture, and breaks the rules as often as John Peel would have done.

Via Japan, where global broadcast standards mean little, and Thailand, where commercial op-

last weeks or even days. A 24-hour, non-stop talk radio station for the Melbourne Arts Festival was aired for only two weeks by the ABC: and run with a staffing level of two people. Yes, just two.

Australian radio is edgy, fun to listen to, and full of content. No 'ten great songs in a row' here: it's the kind of radio we used to broadcast: while we now judge good radio by a zero complaint tally at Ofcom, Australian radio judges it by its entertainment value.

Touching back down in the UK, I'm struck by how television is now a global market, but most

of our radio simply isn't. From CBC's Spark to NPR's Wait Wait Don't Tell Me and Kyle and Jackie O on 2day FM, I've been lucky enough to hear some great radio. It's a mystery why radio doesn't act more like television, and share great programming worldwide.

Radio might be different to television, but perhaps television might be able to teach radio something after all.

James Cridland is a radio futurologist. For more information on his trip, see his blog at [james.cridland.net/blog/](http://james.cridland.net/blog/)



# OUR PLACE OR YOURS

As it starts its third series, **Claire Barrett** speaks to the creators and stars of the Hat Trick comedy that holds a mirror to family life and refuses to distort it for the cameras

**PROJECTS** are a cruel joke played by primary school teachers on middle class parents. After the ballet classes, clarinet practice and angst over their child's move from red table to blue (colours are no mask for the fact this is a retrograde step) are dealt with, fraught parents have to stay up half the night fashioning words and pictures into an informative, but somehow childlike, presentation.

The writers, directors and producers of BBC One's *Outnumbered*, Andy Hamilton and Guy Jenkin, have clearly fallen victim to the prank. In the last series, we saw a bleary-eyed Claire Skinner (Sue) pleading with daughter Karen (Ramona Marquez) to add her name to the animal project her mother had crafted until the early hours. 'You do it,' returns the six year-old breezily, before skipping off to play.

School projects return to haunt the Brockman family in the new series opener. Karen's World War Two assignment sparks a historical day out in London. While history teacher Pete (Hugh Dennis) regards each landmark as an educational opportunity, his offspring are either fishing coins from Trafalgar Square fountains ('only idiots would throw money in some water to make a wish'), scaling HMS Belfast's mast ('die, Nazi scum, die') or passing judgement on modern art ('it was rubbish - bits of carpet stuck to walls'). 'I hope she comes last with her bloody project,' rants an exasperated Dad.

'It's about family days out,' Hamil-



Day trippers: Hugh Dennis, Daniel Roche, Tyger Drew-Honey, Romana Marquez and Claire Skinner

learn their lines too well', and often have to complete domestic chores while taking on the kids in verbal combat. 'You have your objective in a scene - cook a meal or wash up - and your focus is so split,' says Skinner. 'That's why it feels accurate as a parent.'

Improvisation is a small but crucial part of the package, say the creators. Roche is often armed with fact books to fuel his tangents, while Marquez's imagination visits some 'subterranean places'. 'She can hold an argument in her head,' says Skinner. 'She's very fluent and logical.'

Her inquisitorial spirit sometimes spills off set. 'When someone says, shall we do another take, Ramona will say, why? Can I have a biscuit? What's for lunch? - which is what everyone else is really thinking,' confesses Dennis.

Despite a 'crazily fast' filming schedule - one series in seven weeks - a relaxed atmosphere prevails. The writers strip the set of elements of filming disliked by children - make up ladies fiddling with their faces or shouting - and provide them with easy sanctuary in the giant green room of a house next door. 'It's where they are tutored, where they play computer games... it's as informal as you can get,' judges Hamilton.

If the pressure's been turned up on the writers, who've garnered a host of awards, an earlier timeslot and even an American pilot, it's yet to have an impact. 'We were writing this before any of that happened. Maybe it will affect series four.'

Meantime, what message can its devotees take from *Outnumbered*? It doesn't have one, of course, 'but if it did,' confides Hamilton, 'it would be, don't worry; there aren't any perfect parents, just loving ones.'

**Outnumbered, BBC One, April 8**

ton tells Ariel. 'It captures the hopeless, futile experience of trying to show your children something that is interesting.'

If that strikes a chord with viewers, it's no accident. The series is steeped in the chaos, unpredictability and disappointment of family existence. 'Many are universal experiences,' confirms Hamilton. 'None are exotic. It's the grist of everyday life.'

'We write the plot and it seems to happen to us,' interjects Jenkin. 'We must write about winning the lottery...'

Life is changing for the Brockmans in series three. Their house is up for sale and their eldest son Jake (Tyger Drew-Honey) is a proper teenager, with the concomitant strains that brings. 'He's a bit more of a handful,' agrees the writer, 'and the problems are a bit more complex.'

But it's Karen who poses the greater parental challenge. 'Her barrister-like qualities have got stronger - she won't let them get away with anything,' says

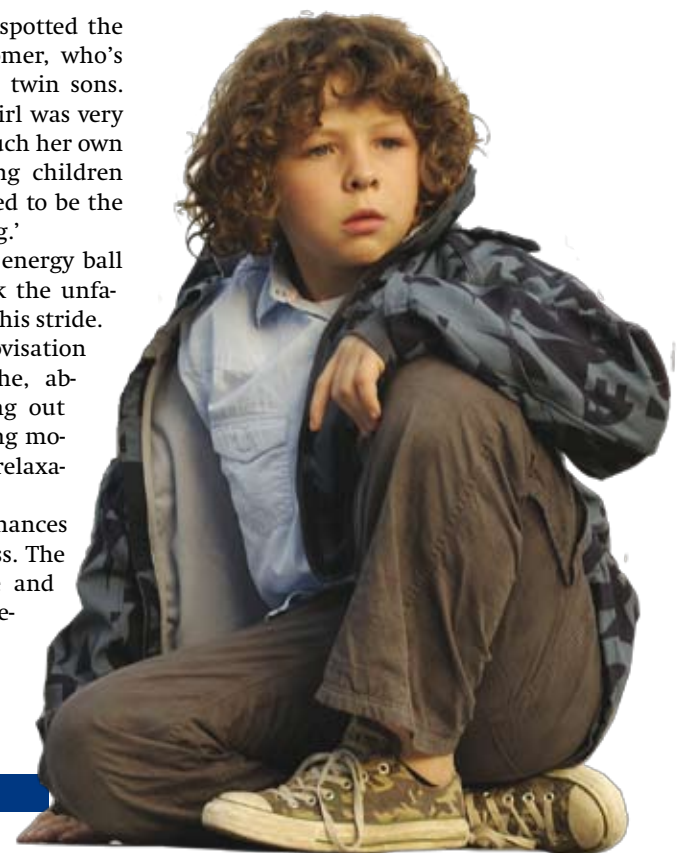
**'Many are universal experiences. None are exotic. It's the grist of everyday life'**

**ANDY HAMILTON**

Jenkin, whose partner first spotted the best British Comedy newcomer, who's at school with the couple's twin sons. 'She commented that this girl was very confident in herself, very much her own person. The most interesting children we saw during casting tended to be the ones who did the least acting.'

Daniel Roche, who plays energy ball (putting it kindly) Ben, took the unfamiliar casting experience in his stride. Hamilton recalls an improvisation session during which Roche, absentmindedly, began peering out the window. 'If not a defining moment, it showed a level of relaxation that we remarked on.'

The naturalistic performances are key to the show's success. The child actors don't rehearse and are fed their lines minutes before a scene, requiring them to approximate and use their own language. The adult stars are told 'not to





# READY FOR THE VOTE

When the country goes to the polls, the BBC goes too. With the final countdown to the big day under way, **Sally Hillier** talks to some of the key players behind the effort to cover this huge and complex story

**TO BORROW A LINE** from Michael Jackson, this is it. Show time. Like Wimbledon, Christmas Day and royal weddings, general elections are when eyes turn to the BBC.

'If you were trying to boil down what the BBC is for, covering elections is high on the list,' observes Craig Oliver, general election editor and the man in charge of the flagship tv results operation.

Election 2010 embraces hundreds of people across the organisation, from the evergreen David Dimbleby to the enthusiastic 20-somethings who have signed up as runners, stringers, chasers, checkers and emergency inputters 'ready to take over in the event of a power failure at TVC'.

The power failure horror is among numerous 'what ifs' that have been pondered over and rehearsed during two years of election planning. Two years!

## What the parties stand for

All that hard work will now come to fruition on screen, on radio and online. Get ready for special programmes, extended programmes, audience interaction programmes, not to mention reams of information, updates and features on the web and the regular news and current affairs outlets – at local, national, network and international level.

'There will be a huge amount of coverage,' Oliver promises, and that's before a single vote has been cast. Just wait until polling day itself when the BBC's efforts will culminate in a spectacular multimedia, multiplatform and, it has to be said, multi-long results fest.

As ever, the election night programme is a massive project involving

more than 300 cameras and 100 OBs. With an uncertain outcome and the possibility of a hung parliament, it has the makings of a fascinating not to say historic occasion.

So what other factors make this poll stand out? The most obvious is the presidential-style tv debates – a first for the UK (see separate piece). The encounters between the three main leaders 'will help to define the campaign in a way that has never happened before', Oliver believes.

Another difference, at least compared to 1997, 2001 and 2005, is the greater onus on the contenders to spell out what they won't do if elected, given likely budget constraints, rather than what they will do.

'Drawing out of them precisely what they plan to do in the next few years will be difficult,' Oliver notes. 'I think that's probably our main job – to help people understand what the parties stand for.'

The web has a key role here, providing information, explanation and insight. A special page tracking the opinion polls has been available on the news website for a while – the precursor to a dedicated election site that will cover events as they happen, provide national guides and local details, and a speedy results service.

'The challenge is to make the site feel live, not just on polling day but for the entire month of the campaign,' explains Gareth Owen, senior product manager, news website.

He and his team, comprising three designers, three developers and a journalist, have been 'working like mad' to create the best possible online service as part of a 'joined-up, multiplatform election experience'.

Then there is the new kid on the block in the shape of social media. Step forward Rory Cellan-Jones, appointed digital election correspondent with a brief to cover 'every blog and tweet' and monitor activity in cyber space.

While he is blogging, tweeting and monitoring away, audiences will be getting familiar with the 'look' of the general election coverage, with branding and graphics introduced throughout the campaign, rather than unveiled on results night.

The idea is to have the same brand for everything: news bulletins, politics shows, debate programmes, online and the red button, rather than all the different output areas doing their own thing,' explains senior graphic design-

er Julie Tritton.

She and her team – a handful of people with decades of experience between them – have spent the last ten months working on Election 2010. The aim, she says, was to come up with sophisticated, eye-catching images without them being too whiz-bang clever for their own good. 'They had to be clear and engaging, particularly for viewers who don't usually watch political programmes.'

## Swingometer

Huge creative effort has gone into the 'swingometer' graphics to be used by Jeremy Vine, who is stepping into Peter Snow's shoes for the first time at a general election.

Joining Vine and Dimbleby (on his eighth general election) in the tv studio on results night will be Emily Maitlis, equipped with a giant touch screen enabling her to call up any seat in the country and talk in detail about what is happening. Political commentator Peter Kellner will be on hand too, number crunching and trend calling, while Nick Robinson will 'shape the narrative' and Fiona Bruce will present a news bulletin every hour.

Jeremy Paxman will assume his usual role as 'grand inquisitor' and Andrew Neil will be on the South Bank by the London Eye, anchoring a discussion among 'the great and the good'.

The election night programme has three key objectives, Craig Oliver says. 'The first is to use it as a showcase for BBC talent on and off air. The second, to paraphrase James Carville [lead strategist on Bill Clinton's presidential campaign] is 'it's the results, stupid'. You can spend an awful lot of time on peripheries like packaging but if you're not getting the results done accurately and clearly, and telling the story from those results, you fail as a programme.'

The third is history. The BBC has been covering elections for a long time, and they all form part of our collective political consciousness and our sense of ourselves as a country. We really want to get a sense of history across in the programme.'

## ELECTION 2010

BBC NEWS

Entering the unknown: Daniel Pearl

## PRIME MINISTERIAL DEBATES THERE'S NEVER BEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT

**ASK DANIEL PEARL** his biggest fear over the prime ministerial debates and he replies with a laugh: 'That they won't turn up.'

They'll turn up all right, making history as the first party leaders to go head to head in such a way. The three debates, each lasting 90 minutes, will be shown on consecutive weeks by ITV, Sky and the BBC in that order.

Pearl is in charge of the BBC programme, to be broadcast from the Midlands a week before polling day. 'There's a real sense of the unknown about these events,' he says. 'What will they [Brown, Cameron and Clegg] do? Play it safe all the way or go steady on the first debate, then loosen up for the third when they might think they have nothing to lose. It should be fasci-

nating.' Each debate has a theme (domestic affairs for ITV's, from the north west, moderated by Alastair Stewart; foreign affairs for Sky's, from the south west, chaired by Adam Boulton). The broadcasters drew lots to determine the order of the debates and allocation of themes, and Pearl is delighted to have the economy as the subject of the BBC programme, to be hosted by David Dimbleby.

'The economy affects everyone's lives, and is also the area where there are significant differences between the parties. Crucially, the GDP figures will be published the Friday beforehand, so there will be plenty to discuss.'

Because of the topic and the fact that many people leave it until the last few days to decide where to cast their

vote, Pearl expects the third showdown to be a big attraction.

He doesn't go along with the notion that viewers will be bored with the PM wannabes by then. Nor does he agree that the discussion could be a bit sterile due to the limitations that will be placed on each 200-strong audience recruited by market research organisation ICM ('no applauding, jeering, booing or heckling while the leaders are speaking').

'I don't think it will be too restrictive, certainly not compared to the US. Have you ever seen a memorandum of understanding there [for presidential head-to-heads]? It's huge.'

Various attempts have been made over the years to set up leaders' debates in the UK, but have always run into

roadblocks, usually because one party or another considered it too risky.

'What really helped this time was the BBC, ITV and Sky working together to make a joint proposal,' says Pearl. 'It made things so much easier and simpler for the parties.'

He pays tribute to Sue English, head of political programming, for her negotiating efforts as part of the joint team.

Because of the landmark nature of the debates, intense media interest is expected and Pearl is working closely with newsgathering on logistics and planning. 'We're making space for BBC journalists, lobby correspondents and overseas reporters.'

Make way, Midlands – here they come.

## SOME OF THEM MIGHT NEED A LIE DOWN

### RADIO 4

'For many people, general election night is more than who's in and who's out. It is late night guilty pleasure.'

So says Rupert Allman, election editor for Radio 4. 'Our audience is the best informed in the country and overwhelmingly engaged in politics. It demands detail and intelligent debate.'

And that is what they will get, courtesy of 'a cast of the most gifted radio broadcasters'. They include Jim Naughtie and Carolyn Quinn, who will present the results programme, with John Simpson, Ed Stourton, Libby Purves, Jenni Murray, Kate Adie and Andrew Marr reporting from around the UK.

Ahead of May 6, much airtime will be devoted to the month-long campaign. Schedule changes include extending *The World at One* to an hour, during which listeners will be able to question Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Nick Clegg.

Part of the extra time will be used for broader political discussions, with Martha Kearney inviting guests to chat on red benches brought in specially. 'With so many MPs standing down, we hope the benches will provide a suitable perch for lively debate,' says Allman. 'They might also double as a place for those needing a lie down.'

### RADIO 5 LIVE

Like Radio 4, Radio 5 live will have comprehensive coverage. But, says Christopher Hunter, who is looking after the results programme: 'I'm keen for us to sound very different. As a basic rule of thumb, they will concentrate on the politicians and we will concentrate on the people.'

Victoria Derbyshire and John Pienaar will be in the hot seat on the big night, with other presenters at the headquarters of the three main parties.

'In addition,' says Hunter, 'I'm going to have reporters around the country: at counts and places like 24hr supermarkets, meat and flower markets and cabbies' cafes.'

'I'm also going to race two of our reporters against each other to see who can get to the most declarations.'

Throughout the campaign, the channel will give the public plenty of chance to have their say, via phone calls, emails, texts and other social media.

Radio 5 live's coverage in the run-up to May 6 is being handled by Jonathan Crawford, who hopes the party leaders will participate in a breakfast phone-in with Nicky Campbell. He also plans to send Peter Allen on the road with each leader for a day, and Victoria Derbyshire will be presenting four big OBs, looking at immigration, the economy, crime and trust in politicians.

### RADIO 1

*Newsbeat* will have a prominent role in delivering coverage on Radio 1, where a panel of first time voters, the focus of the network's election output, is being recruited. 'We will have their profiles on our website interactive map, and return to them as case studies on various issues,' explains *Newsbeat* editor Rod McKenzie. 'We're going for a young single mum, someone who has lost their job, a squaddie, a cannabis user and so on.'

The channel's on-the-road strategy involves politics reporters Robin Brant and Dave Howard going to various regions to explore issues such as crime, drink, drugs, defence and jobs. 'We'll use our *Newsbeat*/1X branded inflatable sofas as a running visual/audio device to get guests sitting down and talking,' says McKenzie.

Online features will include a series of election guides (how to vote, for example), celebrities explaining what they would do 'if I were PM', and Tim Westwood compering a 'politically balanced battle' between three djs.



As a House of Lords committee warns of a public backlash against digital radio switchover **Claire Barrett** has been looking at the drive to get us all tuned in and converted by 2015.

**TOM EVEREST HAD A DREAM.** A dream in which Jenny Abramsky drove from one end of the country to the other listening to uninterrupted BBC digital radio, her head bobbing in beat or perhaps in affirmation of a job well done.

It didn't happen, of course. Senior distribution manager Everest is still more than a few transmitters short of continuous coverage, while Abramsky traded in her audio and music fiefdom for the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

'We're not quite in Land's End,' Everest concedes. 'We're a mile or so short, and there's a gap around Elgin which we're hoping to fix soon, but we have gone all the way to John O'Groats.'

It seems you can't move for DAB transmitters these days. They're popping up at a rate of one a week, courtesy of contractor Arqiva, with the first 100 of them delivering digital radio coverage to 85 percent of the population. 'We've put a transmitter on Orkney, stuck a couple in the Cairngorms, eight in the Welsh valleys – they're now in some communities as small as 3000 people,' says Everest. 'But we're also reinforcing signals – building three more transmitters for London, for instance. We're grinding away, improving stuff bit by bit.'

By the end of 2011, he confirms, the target of 90 percent coverage, via 120 additional transmitters, will be achieved. But that's still some way short of the 98-99 percent – comparable to FM coverage – that the government is demanding before it will switch off analogue transmissions. 'That's the scary bit,' Everest admits. 'To go from 90 to 99 percent coverage we'll need a further 400 to 600 transmitters – that's almost down to the level of transmitting from lamp posts at the end of people's streets.'

Digital requires more transmitters than FM, he points out. FM signals travel further, while DAB signals aren't too hot at climbing hills. 'There are 220 FM transmitters; we'll need hundreds more for DAB. Bear in mind, too, that FM was planned for rooftop aerials while digital radio is designed to cover the road networks as well.'

#### Strategic clarity

Of course it can be done – but at a cost. Within the current licence fee settlement there is no budget for delivering those tricky final few percent required to complete both the BBC network and its commercial counterpart, which carries the BBC local radio and nations services – something that a senior BBC contingent impressed upon the House of Lords communication committee in February. 'In order to take the next step we need strategic clarity,' Graham Plumb, acting controller, BBC distribution, tells Ariel. That's clarity on funding and on whether analogue transmissions can be suspended once DAB is in place. 'It is not sensible to pay twice,' Plumb reasons.

As part of the digital economy bill that is currently going through Parliament, the government has earmarked 2015 for digital radio switchover – a date the BBC describes as 'ambitious' and some commercial operators deride as 'farcical'. One condition of switcho-

# DAB RADIO

## REALISING THE DREAM



Will Jackson hopes the benefits of DAB will win the public over

PHOTOGRAPH: KEN SINWARD

ver is that 50 percent of all radio listening is done digitally. Currently that figure lags at 21 percent.

'If everything is going in the right direction, I could just about imagine a 2015 switchover,' says Plumb, 'but it is more likely to take place a few years later. Whether that's two, three or five years depends on the will of government, industry and the BBC Trust.'

Meantime a big sell is needed to convince listeners to cast aside their trusty transistors and fork out for funky digital sets. 'Some of them are design pieces,' agrees Everest, who regards the sale of 10m digital radios to date as a considerable feat. 'People simply aren't used to going out and buying radios. They buy cars with radios or cd players with radios. Digital radio is having to reinvent the buying a radio market.'

Perceived cost has been a barrier, believes Will Jackson, A&M head of strategy, who regards it as part of his role – together with industry body Digital Radio UK – to spread the word. 'People still think they are expensive, but you can walk in to Tesco today and pick one up for around £20,' he says. A scrappage scheme has been mooted for analogue radios, but no firm details have emerged.

So a small outlay has secured you a digital radio. What then? Well, the BBC's digital multiplex will bring you its 11 national services – that's seven more than on FM. But before you get hooked on Shaun Keaveny over breakfast, remember that 6 Music, along with the Asian Network – two of the five digital stations launched in 2002 to drive digital uptake – are earmarked for the chop. Isn't that a contradictory message for consumers?

Jackson disagrees, pointing out that, regardless of the outcome of the strategy review, investment in digital radio services will stay constant. It's more about delivering a digital proposition that listeners un-

derstand, he says. 'BBC 7, for instance, is our most popular digital station, with an audience of 900,000, yet awareness of the service is only around 20 percent. It's even low among Radio 4 listeners.'

Its rebranding as 4 Extra would ally it more obviously with Radio 4 – in the same way that 1Xtra and 5 live Extra work as tag ons to Radio 1 and 5 live.

Expect further announcements about the BBC's digital portfolio this year, but Jackson stresses that the BBC cannot do it all. He bemoans the lack of high quality national digital commercial networks – Planet Rock being perhaps the only exception – with Channel 4's withdrawal from the market delivering the biggest body blow to the digital cause. 'It may sound counter intuitive, but we believe in competition,' asserts Jackson. 'We support innovative new services on digital.'

What would really give digital take-up a Turbo-charged boost is for car manufacturers to hitch a ride. Past concerns that drivers might lose their digital signals halfway up the M1 have largely been allayed, with major road networks and motorways now well covered.

While agreement has been reached on a standardised digital radio chip which will make sets effective across all European markets, not just in the UK.

#### There was no other way

It's been enough for Ford and Vauxhall to commit to fitting their vehicles with digital radios as standard, rolled out over the next couple of years. 'A couple of hundred quid at the factory gates for digital radio was a tough ask,' says Everest. 'Just as it was when there was a cost premium on integrated tvs. They didn't sell well then, but now they are flying off the shelves.'

Conversion kits also need to become cheaper and simpler, believes Jackson. 'We need to work with people like Tom Tom to get digital radio into sat navs or with Kwik Fit so that when people bring their cars in for a service they can get an easy upgrade to digital.'

Not everybody, however, is convinced that digital sound is superior to FM. The bit rate reduction nine years ago that enabled the BBC to squeeze more services onto its multiplex triggered complaints of sonic depreciation. Plumb takes the point, conceding that some classical music buffs, accustomed to crystal clear signals via rooftop FM aerials, may detect some loss of quality. 'The vast majority, though, buy or recommend DAB specifically because of the improved sound quality. We've had a lot of surveys done and the most recent sees 88 percent judging it as good or better than FM.'

Another thorn in Plumb's side is DAB+ – the DAB upgrade favoured in Europe. 'We get lobbied on bit rate and we get lobbied on DAB+', he sighs. 'It sounds better because it's got a plus, but basically it allows you to squeeze more services into the spectrum.'

Transmissions can be simply switched from DAB to DAB+, but that would render many digital receivers defunct. Newer versions can receive both types of signal, however.

Anyway, DAB+ was released in 2007 and the BBC first started to broadcast digitally back in 1995 when it became apparent that FM had exhausted its potential. 'If we'd stayed with analogue we would have had to find an FM network for 5 live,' reasons Plumb, 'and there simply aren't the available frequencies in many major cities. And what about when we wanted to launch 1Xtra or 6 Music? Radio would never have grown if we hadn't gone digital. There was no other way.'



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You can also contribute to the mail page directly from the Ariel Online home page

## Doctor makes it better

People are forever whinging about how BBC departments never work together, that there's always duplication and that network never lets local radio/tv know what's going on.



Well, that was proven wrong in Northampton on March 31. It was decided that the new Doctor Who, Matt Smith, a Northampton boy, would end his national tour at his former school, Northampton School for Boys.

The event was a huge success, attracting national media attention, but what makes it so special is that it was organised mainly by Radio Northampton, working with the school and keeping in regular contact with the BBC *Doctor Who* team.

I was a mere observer at the event, but it went brilliantly and should be held up as an example of how local radio stations are more than capable of hosting massive national events and how different parts of the BBC can work together, with external partners, very well. All it

takes is proactive members of staff from every department involved, good dialogue and the knowledge of 'the patch' that only local staff can provide.

**Joe Pignatiello**  
*BBC Northampton*

■ I was there when the Doctor Who tour came to Salford (for work!) but as a 'Whovian' I was eager to see what the new Doctor was made of and where the new series could be going. After seeing Matt Smith and Karen Gillan make 110 percent effort with the kids, any concerns I had were put at ease. They made an event become an experience, one the kids won't forget anytime soon.

**Colin Warhurst**  
*technical co-ordinator, Manchester*

## High time for change

How long does it take for BBC facilities to fix a broken light? Five weeks and counting. I reported a flickering fluorescent tube above the main World news website desk on February 20. A day later four staff from facilities came to look at it, shook their heads over the danger likely to ensue from them ascending a ladder to take it out, but reckoned they

could just do it.

Sadly, after turning it off, that seemed to be where their responsibility ended. There was no follow-up to replace it, and still hasn't been to this day, despite repeated complaints. We are told that a scaffold is needed. It must be coming from a very remote corner of the UK.

**Jim Todd**  
*asst editor, World team, BBC News website*

## Starved out

I can't be the only one to notice how catering in TV Centre has steadily been run down in the last few years. It has been the poor relation to the White City canteen, in terms of choice, for ages.

Staff working in departments like Sport and Children's can't help

thinking that the people who make the decisions about catering provision think that everyone at the BBC works a neat nine to five, Monday to Friday. Anyone working outside of those hours is sadly out of luck.

The previously 24 hour second floor News teabar once had a reasonable offering, then it got a stupid redesign and new name and offered less choice and reduced hours. It now stops serving hot food altogether some time in the evening and often runs out of items on the super limited menu. Westfield is only an option when it's open and when we can get away from work long enough.

So what's the real story? There's an agenda to get rid of catering in TVC altogether. Tell us we're wrong.

**Eric Young**  
*studio engineer*

## OBITUARY

### LYNDA DARLINGTON

Lynda joined the research department at Kingswood Warren (now BBC R&D) in 1986, as a secretary, where she worked up until her recent untimely death, aged 51, from cancer. Over her 23 years with the BBC she worked for many different research groups, providing invaluable help and administrative support to a wide range of R&D staff, with her accumulated wisdom in the weird ways in which the BBC works.



Lynda met her future husband, Dave Darlington, while working at Kingswood. She was devoted to their two daughters, Laura and Sophie, and her life revolved around them. Lynda was well known for her cheery manner and infectious laughter. She made lots of friends at R&D over the years, many of whom attended her funeral. She will be sorely missed by her friends, family and colleagues.

*Dr Graham Thomas*

## GRACE WYNDHAM GOLDIE (BBC) TRUST FUND

Applications are invited for grants from the Grace Wyndham Goldie (BBC) Trust Fund, which helps those involved in broadcasting or associated activities, either now or in the past, as well as their children and dependants. The trustees will consider giving financial help towards educational costs as well as to help relieve sickness or continuing hardship.

Those wishing to apply should write for an application form to: BBC Pension Centre, Broadcasting House, Cardiff, CF5 2YQ, returning it no later than July 31.

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**Andalucia, Spain. Villanueva-del-Rosario.** Holiday house with wonderful mountain views from large terrace. Sleeps 4. From £175pw. Easter still available. Malaga 35 minutes. Visit Seville/Granada/Cordoba and the coast. Website www.rosariohouse.co.uk. Telephone 07769 701803

**BBC presenter** is hosting extraordinary 2 week tour of Nepal. Website www.angelholidays.co.uk

**Beach house** featured in Coast magazine. Beach 100 yards. Sleeps 6. Winchelsea Beach, East Sussex. Email ann.sinclair@hotmail.fr Telephone 07880 702959

**Cornwall** rent large manor house for family groups upto 16. Jeanette 01344 751005

**Costa Blanca,** excellently equipped A/C 3 bedroom house, sleeps 6-8, communal pool, suit couple or family, overlooking La Finca championship golf course, near sandy beaches, mountains, leisure activities, historical cities, Alicante 35 minutes. From £2200pw, 10% discount for Ariel readers. Visit www.casa-alta.co.uk for full information/bookings

**Croatia, summer 2010,** 3 double bedroom apartment near split for 350pw. Telephone 07801 198476

**Dalyan, Turkey.** Villa with pool and garden in idyllic riverside town close to Med. Sleeps 4 to 18 in 3 cottages. Website www.manzara.co.uk

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**Fantastic large Devon family farmhouse,** sleeps 8/10 beautiful location, pets welcome, hot tub, garden stream and pond. Close to beaches, walking. local pub 1 mile. Email thom. telford@gmail.com

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**Iceland.** The fly drive of your life... ATOL. protected 6190. Telephone 01773 853300 Website www.icelandholidays.com

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**Italy, Le Marche.** Restored 200yr old farmhouse. Rural setting. Pool. Sleeps 8+. 50 minutes airport. Website www.villagelst.com

**Johannesburg, South Africa.** Secure bungalow for World Cup from 1 June. 2 bedroom, 1 bathroom. Serviced daily. £105.00/day incl JHB airport transfers. Vivian Frittelli: Shazef3@iafrica.com. Telephone +27825513467

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**North Cornwall,** clifftop house. May/ June/July/Sept. summer tide.co.uk

**Paris.** Beautiful spacious apartment steps from Canal St Martin, Place Republique. Contemporary, well equipped. 3 bedrooms. Trendy cafes, great restaurants. Sleeps 6. Weekly/ monthly rent from June 1. Email nadiraf05@yahoo.com

**Private apartment southern Spain** close to beach. Bargain rates. Enquiries elfaro@tiscali.co.uk

**Pure Mediterranean.** 3 bedroom villa sleeps 6 with private pool in stunning North Cyprus. Website www.redbaycyprus.com

**Really lovely house in Mevagissey,** Cornwall. Sleeps 4. Spacious, contemporary, well equipped. Large garden and decking with views over village. Contact Jane 07850 219879. Email janeclarke02@o2.co.uk

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**Tuscany.** Beautiful farmhouse near Barga (sleeps 8). Private pool. Breathtaking views. Website www.montate.co.uk

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**Villas. Holiday villas & apartments** in France & Italy, Website www.deckchairvillas.com. Telephone 01773 850111

WANTED

**Music wanted vinyl records** especially larger quantities preferred telephone. Tony 01484 845999. Email sales@vtmusic.co.uk

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# The Poor School

## Short Course Feedback

“I just wanted say that the poor school is a great school. It made me realize many things about my life. Gosh, what a journey, Sounds so epic and dramatic but very true. I have recommended many people to attend the poor school as those 4 days I learned a lot. The teaching was exceptional. It really was.”

*“It has forced me to shift my outlook, and I feel a different, more self-aware person than I was before.”*

“I enjoyed the course very much and didn’t want it to end. It was most exhilarating, and forces one to learn a lot about oneself in a compressed space of time. What was particularly successful was the mixing up of all the different disciplines e.g. singing and stage combat (different disciplines broken down into one hour slots). The fast pace, and apparent eclecticism of different (though of course complementary) subjects meant that we were constantly stimulated in a way that we are not in ordinary life. It has forced me to shift my outlook, and I feel a different, more self-aware person than I was before.”

“Thank you very much for a great course. I enjoyed it all. I loved the variety, the teachers and the challenges. I now think that "corporate courses (having done many)" are seriously overrated. Throughout the four days, there were many invaluable points and feedback that will help in my career. However any feedback from yourself would be much appreciated too.”

*“I can’t thank you and your staff enough for giving me this wonderful opportunity.”*

**4 DAY ACTING COURSE: £295**  
18th-21st May  
22nd-25th June  
3rd-6th August

**SUMMER ACTING COURSES: £695**  
12th-31st July  
2nd-21st August



“It’s taken me a week to recover from what was the single most amazing experience of my life! I can’t thank you and your staff enough for giving me this wonderful opportunity. It’s true that for myself and I’m sure for many others that when the four day course came to an end life seemed pretty empty! I took the course with a hopeful view to pursue full time training, your input and the fact that you didn’t think I was ready for this, I took as positive advice. I am hoping you still have space on the July summer school as I am looking forward to it already! Thank you again.”

“Thank you and yours’ for the generosity of the spirit and ferocious kindness that makes your course so intensely refreshing. This 62 year-old loved it. I am recommending the course to all. I will stay in touch. Thanks for your excellent celebration of the craft and the impeccable attention you and your staff offer.”

“Just writing to say thanks again to you and your staff at The Poor School for the fantastic Summer Course! I thoroughly enjoyed it and cannot explain how much. I learned from it and how much it increased my confidence. Since returning to Dublin, I have auditioned for the Dublin Shakespeare Company (using your valuable notes) and after a call back this evening, I have been accepted into the company! Thank you all so much, because I know without the course I would have never had the confidence or skills to audition! I am hoping to do another Summer Course next year.”

*“I thoroughly enjoyed it and cannot explain how much I learned from it and how much it increased my confidence”*

“Just wanted to write in and say thank you for running the course. It has to be one of the best things I have ever done and certainly one of the most memorable weeks of my life. The course exceeded my expectations in a lot of ways... I have never done any acting in my life and therefore did not know what to expect. Absolutely loved the musical theatre. Still can’t sing and won’t be tempted to try again but the musical theatre stuff was absolutely fantastic.”

www.thepoorschool.com

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PROGRAMME MAKING

**Multi-skilled - Senior Camera Operator / Gweithredwr Aml-sgil - Uwch Weithredwr Camerâu**  
Cardiff  
7D/Ref: 281322  
[E][C] 15-Apr-10

**Scenic Supervisor**  
Glasgow  
4H/Ref: 275582  
[E][C] 14-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

**Script Secretary, Casualty**  
Bristol  
3P/Ref: 285812  
[C] 12-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

JOURNALISM

**Senior Broadcast Journalist, World Desk**  
London  
TV Centre  
8/9D/Ref: 289543  
[C] 19-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

**SBJ ( Multi Media Morning Commissioner)**  
London  
TV Centre  
8/9D/Ref: 289296  
[C] 19-Apr-10 [A] 10 months

**Reporter/Producer, UK Newsgathering**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
8/9D/Ref: 289290  
[C] 19-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

**Senior Broadcast Journalist, Radio York**  
Leeds  
8D/Ref: 286343  
[E][C] 13-Apr-10 [A] 10 months

**Broadcast Journalist, BBC Arabic**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
7D/Ref: 270472  
[E][C] 10-Apr-10

**Broadcast Journalist (Breakfast Producer) BBC Radio Bristol**  
Bristol  
5/7D/Ref: 287728  
[E][C] 19-Apr-10

**Broadcast Journalist - BBC Jersey**  
Jersey  
5/7D/Ref: 287213  
[E][C] 12-Apr-10

**Broadcast Assistants, BBC Radio Norfolk**  
Norwich  
3/4H/Ref: 288262-1  
[C] 11-Apr-10

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

**OD Lead, BBC North**  
London  
TV Centre  
11D/Ref: 288010  
[E][C] 14-Apr-10 [A] 18 months

**Head of Communications, English Regions North**  
Manchester  
10D/Ref: 289725  
[E][C] 19-Apr-10

**Resourcing Manager, BBC North**  
London  
White City  
10D/Ref: 289426  
[E][C] 12-Apr-10 [A] 12 months

**Resourcing Manager, BBC People**  
London  
White City  
10D/Ref: 289424  
[E][C] 12-Apr-10

**Communications Managers - Knowledge & Factual Entertainment**  
London  
TV Centre  
9D/Ref: 288774  
[C] 12-Apr-10 [A] 09 months

**Workplace Manager, Vision**  
London  
8D/Ref: 286964  
[C] 18-Apr-10 [A] 12 months

**Marketing Manager, BBC SSO**  
Glasgow  
8D/Ref: 283458  
[E][C] 12-Apr-10

**Commercial Manager**  
London  
White City  
8D/Ref: 278711  
[E][C] 12-Apr-10

**Senior Trainer, Online Journalism**  
London  
Bush House  
8D/Ref: 277498  
[C] 07-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

**Publicist, Knowledge**  
London  
TV Centre  
7D/Ref: 289993  
[C] 19-Apr-10

**Brand Executive - Radio 2, Radio 4 & 6Music**  
London  
Henry Wood House  
7D/Ref: 289964  
[C] 12-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

**Portfolio Management Office Lead**  
London  
TV Centre  
7D/Ref: 289447  
[C] 11-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

Business Analyst

London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
7D/Ref: 287702  
[C] 13-Apr-10 [A] 12 months

**Editorial Assistant, BBC Proms**  
London  
Henry Wood House  
4D/Ref: 289973  
[E][C] 14-Apr-10 [A] 05 months

**Team Administration Assistant - Solutions**  
London  
White City  
4D/Ref: 289827  
[C] 12-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

**PA to Commissioning Editor Arts & Commissioning Editor to Music and Events**  
London  
4D/Ref: 289789  
[C] 13-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

**Resourcing Project Manager, BBC People**  
London  
White City  
Under Review/Ref: 289427  
[C] 12-Apr-10 [A] 12 months

NEW MEDIA

**Editor, Programme Support**  
London  
TV Centre  
9D/Ref: 289172  
[C] 12-Apr-10 [A] 06 months

TECHNOLOGY

**Senior Information Architect**  
London  
8H/Ref: 284553  
[E][C] 13-Apr-10 [A] 09 months

**Technical Project Manager**  
Glasgow  
8D/Ref: 289824  
[C] 11-Apr-10

**Senior Designer, BBC FM&T**  
Glasgow  
8D/Ref: 289821  
[C] 11-Apr-10

**Software Engineer**  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
8D/Ref: 287998  
[E][C] 11-Apr-10

**Software (Flash) Engineer**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
8D/Ref: 270653  
[E][C] 08-Apr-10 [A] 12 months

Assistant Content Producer

London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
6D/Ref: 288394  
[C] 11-Apr-10 [A] 12 months

BBC WORLDWIDE

**Territory Manager, Northern Med**  
London  
edia Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 288666  
[C] 08-Apr-10

**Territory Manager, Iberia**  
London  
Media Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 288665  
[C] 08-Apr-10

**Head of Marketing**  
London  
Media Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 288319  
[E][C] 11-Apr-10

**Global Channels Systems Administrator**  
London  
Media Centre  
1W/Ref: 289981  
[E][C] 19-Apr-10

**Horticultural Editor**  
London  
Media Centre  
2W/Ref: 290043  
[E][C] 15-Apr-10

**Assistant Management Accountant – Magazines**  
London  
Media Centre  
3W/Ref: 289979  
[E][C] 12-Apr-10 [A] 12 months

BBC NORTH

**BBC North job opportunities**  
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If you are looking for a role with 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 are currently recruiting for:

**Schedule Planner, Childrens.**

See Attachment

# Wind of change

Media planner **Heather Henderson** steps up to the challenge of teaching the public media skills on her placement

**THE LAST SIX MONTHS** of my Stepping Stones placement has been a complete whirlwind. I've been working for Connect and Create as a project manager for Step Up Scotland – a scheme to help members of the public learn media skills and make content for tv, radio and online.

I started out with pretty much a blank sheet, so it was up to me how we ran the project. As well as recruiting the 13 trainees, I was planning workshops, assigning them BBC mentors and organising



the equipment – all of which was completely new to me.

Over the last few weeks, the recruits have produced two stories for BBC Scotland's newsroom. Considering that two months ago they didn't know much about producing a news story, the quality of the work has been brilliant.

One of my objectives was to make a difference to the lives of the people on the scheme, and I really think that has been achieved. Watching them develop has been incredibly rewarding. The central Connect and Create team gave me loads of support and advice and I think we've created a great programme.

As an assistant media planner, my day to day job involves scheduling television and radio trails for BBC Scotland. When I first read the job description for the project manager role I was quite apprehensive, as it was a more senior role. Six months since getting the attachment, my skills have definitely expanded and now I really wonder what I was worried about.

My placement is due to end in a few weeks, and it's been one of the best things I could have done for my career at BBC Scotland. From the contacts I have made, to the knowledge I now have about various operations within the building, it's been a real eye opener.

See the Step Up Scotland film here  
explore.gateway.bbc.co.uk/scotland/default.aspx?page=4219

**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 0808 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.

[C] Date which applications are to be received by

[E] External applicants considered

[A] Attachment/contract



# CAREN DAVIES

## HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS, RADIO 1, 1XTRA, ASIAN NETWORK, SWITCH AND BBC INTRODUCING



PHOTOGRAPH: TAMSI MORGAN

### What did you want to be when you were young?

I have always loved radio. I volunteered on hospital radio in my teens and presented the chart show but I cringe when I think back on it now.

### What does your job involve?

I am the strategic lead for communications on Andy Parfitt's management team. We set and implement the communications strategies for each brand. I lead on key Radio 1 stories and head a team of press and MarComms staff.

### How did you get started at the BBC?

I was a press and PR officer for BBC Midlands at Pebble Mill in Birmingham. I worked with a fab group of people and we organised extra curricular events from football tournaments to quiz nights and the annual Christmas party. I had a great few years in Birmingham.

### Do you think being a press officer is a difficult job?

Yes, and it's often a thankless one. For example, you can spend weeks setting up features for them to drop at the last minute if a big story breaks, and then I have to explain that to production, which isn't easy.

### What sort of skills do you think you need?

Good people and communication skills, common sense, the ability to stay calm in a crisis, good contacts, creativity, resilience and to be able to adapt quickly to changing situations. You never know what is coming next.

### What's the most difficult thing about your job?

Trying to balance my workload as I am across five brands which involve more than 100 presenters.

### What do you enjoy most about working there?

It's a really exciting, vibrant place where no two days are the same. And of course the people. It sounds naff, but Yalding House has a family atmosphere and everyone is passionate about the work they do. We go to great events, like Radio 1's Big Weekend, which are hard work but loads of fun and you meet lots of fab people.

### What do you like to do away from work?

I am a magistrate so I sit in court in West London once a month which puts life in perspective. I like watching all sports and am a Wolves fan. I am also addicted to American tv drama – *Lost*, *Heroes*, *True Blood*, *Entourage*, *Brothers and Sisters* – the list goes on.

### If you had your time again what would you have done differently?

I always wanted to be a

**'I always wanted to be a sports presenter; I sent a tape of myself to Bob Shennan when I was 17'**

sports presenter; I sent a tape of myself to Bob Shennan when I was 17. He wanted me to come and meet him but I went to Uni instead. I regret not going to see him, but the fact he even replied made my day.

### Do you ever have to deal with troublesome rock stars?

At Radio 1's Big Weekend we run a fully operational press office, and the artists come in to do interviews. No one has been much trouble so far although sometimes they ask for some interesting things. Last year one band had a massage table and another asked for a cheeseboard but I can't possibly say who they were. JLS are our team's current favourites – they are lovely guys.

### Have you ever 'come over all funny' when meeting your hero?

I went funny when I met Chris Moyles. I couldn't talk to him properly because I had listened to his show since he started on Breakfast. It was quite intimidating to meet him and the rest of the team after waking up to them for so long. It didn't help that I met them in a boardroom with them all staring at me and I had to introduce myself and try and say something interesting – I didn't succeed.

### What sort of music do you like?

All sorts from pop to r'n'b to indie, everything that's played on Radio 1 and 1Xtra basically. Although my guilty pleasure is cheesy pop.

### Talking of guilty pleasures, have you got any bad habits or guilty secrets?

Biscuits – every office I have ever worked in has to have an endless supply of biscuits so people around me always blame me if they put on weight. I am also completely addicted to my Blackberry.

### What's the best tip you have been given at the BBC?

My first boss at the BBC (the legendary Simon Chan- non) said: 'Be nice to people on the way up as you may see them again on the way down'. I think that's good – and you should always treat people how you would like to be treated yourself.

Interview by Sue Llewellyn

# foreign report



**CLARK AINSWORTH**

SBJ, TUNBRIDGE WELLS

**WHEN MY AUSTRALIAN** friend Lauren and I decided we couldn't put off our long-talked about trip through Vietnam on Vespas any longer, riding the 1710km from Saigon to Hanoi on a 25-year-old scooter, on trying and often dangerous roads, I offered my limited skills as an amateur photographer to the BBC's Vietnamese service.

And I'm very pleased I did. As a keen snapper I was always going to take lots of photos, but knowing that some would now be featured elsewhere than my Flickr page, or photo album, pushed me to get more interesting shots.

On the day we left Saigon, I got up at 6am and made use of the early morning sun for some street photography. Hanoi is the more photogenic of Vietnam's two biggest cities but Saigon is far more progressive and contains greater contrasts.

High rise buildings are springing up everywhere, replacing more and more of the city's colonial heritage. Legions of high-heeled women and Ray Ban wearing men on scooters rode past the latest luxury western stores, while conical hat-wearing workers clean the streets, residents play badminton in the parks and youths flog knock-off books and DVDs to tourists.

Leaving the city behind us, we headed along the coast, stopping at tourists sites as well as lesser known towns and villages. It struck me, in those less visited areas, that given the slightest opportunity the Vietnamese will pose for photographs.

We stopped for a short break after riding over the 12-mile Hai Van mountain pass which straddles central Vietnam. As usual, the sight of two westerners covered in road dust, riding shabby Vespas, attracted attention. One man sat beside me, looked me up and down and offered me a cigarette. I politely refused and, using a mixture of sign language and a couple of badly spoken Vietnamese words, asked whether I could take his picture as he was wearing a rather fetching green pith helmet. He initially declined, but as soon as he saw Lauren's sunglasses he put them on enthusiastically and posed for his picture.

On another occasion a woman took it upon herself to get all her neighbours and their children to pose for a shot after she spotted me wandering about with my camera.

One abiding memory from my trip is the interest, alongside mirth, that my arrival in the smaller towns caused. Field workers would down tools and approach me to feel my soft 'work-shy' hands and children riding to and from school would try and get me to reciprocate a peace sign or friendly hello.

## CV

**Degree:** BA English, Manchester University

**First job:** At 14 I started working at a boarding kennels for the huge sum of 70p an hour

**Career landmark:** Getting a job at the BBC. Working for the BBC was something I always wanted to do

**Most embarrassing moment:** Telling a really cool Radio 1 exec that I liked boy bands and, in particular, Blue. I have no idea why I said that.



# green room

## THE GREEN ROOM GUIDE TO THE GRAND NATIONAL

With Sport Interactive's horse racing guru **Honest Frank**

**THE DAYS** before Saturday's Grand National are exciting for many, and tricky for me. Novice punters engaged in their office sweepstake ask all manner of questions. Won't the jockeys be tired from the previous race?

Why do they have different weights? Is Red Rum running?

The famous Aintree race, which is on BBC One (and high definition for the first time), Radio 5 live and the BBC Sport website, is due off at 4.15pm.

One of my tasks for [bbc.co.uk/sport](http://bbc.co.uk/sport) is to prepare a pin-stickers' guide to all the runners and riders which is probably viewed by 500,000 people. Oh, and try to pick the winner.

From 75 race entries a week beforehand, this only goes down to a maximum final field of 40 on Thursday. A dry spell, or rain, can affect chances, so a weather watch is needed.



This year, a dream result for romantics would be Dream Alliance, the horse bred on a Welsh coalpit who has bounced back from pioneering stem cell treatment.

I can see former Irish Grand National winner Niche Market and lightly-weighted Ballytrim doing well, if he makes the final cut. But a lot of luck is needed, so good luck one and all.

Get Aintree updates at [twitter.com/honestfrank](https://twitter.com/honestfrank)

## EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...Yep, that's P for pheasant...

...Oh, you're having watercress soup... Are you doing mephedrone yet?...

...It's a good job he nearly died...

...I'll mount your muntjac...

...What was I just doing? Was it nuclear willy number one?...

...I can walk today, I have new jeans...

...Have I crashed into Japan again?...

...You can't tweak his nipples - he's from Radio 4...



## THERE CAN ONLY BE ONE BEARD



THE WIZARD

THE SEA CAPTAIN

**Website:** [justgiving.com/saveorshavewizard](http://justgiving.com/saveorshavewizard)  
**Tagline:** 'The more money the more magical he will become'  
**Age of Beard:** 11 years  
**Beard Attributes:** Magical powers: when stroked at meetings it makes people believe he is cleverer than he actually is.  
**Quote:** 'Magical Interweb powers for awesome come from beards. Don't take mine away'

**Website:** [justgiving.com/saveorshaveseacaptain](http://justgiving.com/saveorshaveseacaptain)  
**Tagline:** 'The more money, the merrier he will be'  
**Age of Beard:** Four years  
**Beard Attributes:** Takes him on many strange and wondrous adventures. The worst adventure however was when his beard became entangled with a baby.  
**Quote:** 'Arr, you can't sail the seas in a sieve, and you can't grow a beard if you shave. Save the Sea Captain or walk the plank. Arr'

**WEB DEVELOPER** for Children's Pete 'The Wizard' McVicar is going up against AP for Children's concept development Ben 'The Sea Captain' Courtney in an epic battle of the beards in aid of Unicef. Whoever makes the least money on their Justgiving page is in for the chop - and as you can see by the above image, the beards are long and the stakes are high.

But who to sponsor in this clash of the titans? With the help of CBBC interactive producer Amy Williams, instigator of this grand challenge, we've compiled the handy cut-out 'n' keep fact sheet above for you to see how the beards match up - and which deserves your cash. Choose wisely - the loser will be publicly shorn at a ceremony, venue to be confirmed, on May 7.

PHOTOGRAPH: VANESSA DEGES

## WE HEAR THAT...

**LOOK OUT** Banksy - Blue Peter editor Tim Levell has been sharing some handy hints on how to avoid street art embarrassment in a recent email to everyone in Children's. 'If you're filming in an 'urban' location,' he counsels, 'double and triple-check the graffiti on the walls in the background.' It seems the team have twice had 'offensive words or images' sneak through that were neither spotted on location ('despite careful checking') or in the edit suite. And don't go thinking it's because he's not down with the kids: 'Trust me, even urban former pirate djs from da streetz like myself can get hoodwinked,' he writes. 'Or maybe it's just coz I'm in my 40s...'

## Win Doctor Who goodies

**DOCTOR WHO ADVENTURES** magazine re-launched last week for its 160th issue, which contains the first in a series of exclusive diary reports from actor Matt Smith, a free Tardis clock and the chance to win a life-size Dalek. Other new features include a new Doctor Who Adventures comic strip, plus the introduction of a secret code which runs through the magazine and allows readers to decode hidden Doctor Who facts and information. Magazine favourites, such as puzzles, quizzes and posters, also feature. Doctor Who Adventures comes out weekly and costs £2.10. **We have a six month subscription to the magazine, plus a Doctor Who goodie bag - including books, audiobooks and a t-shirt - to give away, courtesy of BBC Magazines. To enter to win, tell us: Who played the first Doctor?** Email [ariel.competitions](mailto:ariel.competitions) by April 12.



## BEHIND THE GLAMOUR

**'THE LAST THING** you really need when nine months pregnant,' says BBC Sussex and Surrey presenter Allison Ferns, 'is to be confronted by three glamorous drag artistes in full regalia. Talk about being shown up!' Well, she did bring it upon herself by switching WAG time - a regular slot on her afternoon show where wives and girlfriends talk everything womanly - to the slightly more butch DRAG time, for one week only.

Three local drag artistes joined her in the Brighton stu-

PHOTOGRAPH: MELITA DENNETT



dio to give a compelling insight into the individuals behind the make-up and saucy pseudonyms - though they couldn't help but entertain as well...

'One particularly funny anecdote came from Maisie Trollette, aka David Raven, and involved a gig where he sang 'Sugar in the morning, Sugar in the evening' to stony silence,' says Allison. 'He only realised later that the audience consisted of the Diabetic Society of Hampstead.'