

# ariel

TIME TO TREAT RELIGION WITH  
THE FERVOUR OF FOOTBALL  
**Page 10**



**Q** In the current climate should top managers take a pay cut?

**A** see Page 2

**MARK THOMPSON TALKS TO ARIEL AFTER SALARY AND EXES DETAILS PUBLISHED**

**MAIL Page 11**



Room 2425, White City

201 Wood Lane, London W12 7TS

020 8008 4228

**Editor**

Andrew Harvey 02-84222

**Deputy editors**

Sally Hillier 02-26877

Cathy Loughran 02-27360

**Features editor**

Clare Bolt 02-27445

**Reporters**

Carla Parks 02-27630

Laura Scarrott 02-84224

Peggy Walker 01-43940

**Production editor**

Claire Barrett 02-27368

**Art editor**

Ken Sinyard 02-84229

**Ariel online**

Andy Walker (editor) 02-84227

Alex Goodey 02-27410

**Business co-ordinator**

Silvana Romana 02-84228

**Ariel mail**

claire.barrett@bbc.co.uk

Ariel online [explore.gateway.bbc.co.uk/ariel](http://explore.gateway.bbc.co.uk/ariel)**Guest contributors this week****ANDREW GRAYSTONE** on an opportunity to turn religious tv into dangerous viewing. Page 10**ROOPA SUCHAK** enjoys the glitz, but not the lack of sleep at the marathon Bollywood Oscars. Page 14**BBC Jobs** 0370 333 1330**Jobs textphone** 028 9032 8478**BBC Jobs** John Clarke 02-27143

Room 2120, White City, London W12 7TS

**Advertise in Ariel**

Ten Alps Publishing 020 7878 2314

[www.bbcarielads.com](http://www.bbcarielads.com)**Printing**

Garnett Dickinson Group

Rotherham 01709 768000

**Subscribe to Ariel**

Six months: £26, £36, £40

Twelve months: £50, £60, £68

(prices for UK, Europe, rest of world respectively)

Cheques to: Garnett Dickinson Print, Brookfields Way, Manvers, Wath Upon Dearne, Rotherham S63 5DL Tel 01709 768199

**INFORMATION IN AN EMERGENCY**

Telephone 0800 0688 159

Ceefax Page 159 [www.bbc.co.uk/159](http://www.bbc.co.uk/159)

Ariel is produced by Internal

Communications for people at the BBC

**PLEASE RECYCLE YOUR COPY OF ARIEL**

# Not so much the exes, more the take home pay

**T**HE BBC FOUND ITSELF SPEARED on the point of the media's knives last week and shared some of the discomfort that members of parliament have endured recently. Disclosure just isn't the clean process that Mark Thompson and his advisors might have liked. You can argue that the expenses claims are not especially extravagant for a big media organisation where a certain level of schmoozing of stars, agents and indeed MPs is part of the process of good business. But just as moats, duck houses and packets of biscuits were glorious gifts to press and broadcasters, so Jana Bennett's stolen handbag, the rescue of Mark Thompson's family on holiday and his chauffeur's parking costs were among the colourful examples eagerly seized on by the print, broadcast and online communities to embarrass the BBC. It was a pretty

predictable uproar and will soon fade from the headlines but there's no doubt that public disclosure will have a longer lasting impact. You can't imagine that all the lunches and celebrations and mutual hospitality will continue at quite the same levels. That's not to say they were wrong but a lot of people we've talked to are amazed that highly paid executives still put in claims for the kind of everyday coffee and chat items they would never dream of claiming back. The levels of executive pay have the potential to cause the BBC problems externally and internally where the pay scale has been met with some incredulity. It doesn't help the argument that the licence fee should be reserved exclusively for the BBC when it can pay its managers so handsomely. It was against this background that Ariel asked Mark Thompson for his response...



## 'The salaries are not exceptional'



### Q&A

#### ARIEL IN CONVERSATION WITH MARK THOMPSON

this year and we'll look very hard at whether senior managers should be part of a pay review next year. I don't think we would get the best people to do these important creative and leadership roles if we arbitrarily reduced pay and pretended that we lived in a world without a labour market for top pay. The danger is you would end up with a BBC that is quite inward looking, that can't get people in from outside and therefore relies on a smaller talent pool and you would end up with a BBC that was no longer a world class broadcaster.

**Q Are you concerned that if the public thinks salaries are too high you could lose goodwill at a crucial time for the licence fee?**

**A** The tightrope the BBC has to walk is between the talented people we need to make this a world class broadcaster, alongside legitimate public concern about what we pay – and you end up with a compromise where you pay less than the market in many areas and more than the public, if taken in isolation, would want. But if you ask the public if the BBC should have the best people running its journalism or its operations they'd say yes.

**Q The government seems convinced that money must be found to support an alternative regional tv news and it thinks taking some from the licence fee is best**

**A** We don't believe the case has been made that you need cash for the preservation of regional news. Even if you accept that point, there are a number of possible sources – for instance spectrum tax – that the BBC and other broadcasters are being expected to pay for digital television after 2014. That money could be used to create a fund to support an alternative source of regional news. I believe that a division of the licence fee, which at the outset can sound very innocent and public spirited, is a dangerous path to take.

**Q Do you think a collision with the government is inevitable**

**A** It is not something I or the BBC Trust or the executive are seeking. There is so much in the Digital Britain report we can support. However we will continue to make the argument about why we think top slicing is not in the interests of the BBC and is not in the best interest of the public and is not something the public will support – and that's our case and we will continue to make it. It will be interesting to see how that develops over the summer.

**Q How did you judge the reaction to the publication of the salary and expenses details?**

**A** I think we got on the front foot. We decided to start living with this new philosophy about being open about the expenses we disclosed. Inevitably there was a day of noise in the press but it's what the BBC should be doing.

**Q Do you think in the light of the disclosures the level of expenses will come down?**

**A** The level of expenses has been coming down over a number of years and is already at quite a low level. We have to run the BBC effectively, we should be out there making the case for the BBC and making sure we get the best talent and although I think we should bear down on expenses where we can – the right level for the BBC is not zero. Nothing I've read in the papers has made me think we have a problem. I don't think anyone has been able to stand this up as a scandal.

**Q Do people earning such big salaries need to claim for so many little things like a coffee and sandwich for discussions with staff. A lot of people would pay that themselves and not claim it back?**

**A** That's a matter for individuals. If a member of staff or a manager takes someone, say a presenter or a journalist, out to lunch and claims for it, that manifestly can be a justifiable expense. So if a £40 or £50 lunch is justifiable then cappuccinos for two in Starbucks are also justifiable. It's a matter for individuals if they want to claim everything or not.

**Q Are you still saying that it's necessary to pay such high salaries to attract decent managers?**

**A** I think most people who have friends or family in the rest of the media will know that these salaries in terms of UK media are not in any way exceptional. We pay less than the market. We want to be competitive enough that people will consider joining us and every time we do one of these appointments we lose about half the candidates you might want to attract because of the remuneration – and it's getting harder because top pay outside the BBC has been growing at such a rate. These levels of pay can look high but in the real world, if you restricted the pay you would restrict the kind of people you could get to work for the BBC.

**Q There must also be an argument that there are a lot of people within the organisation who could be brought through and promoted?**

**A** I'm constantly being told there is a danger of a talent drain from the BBC. We know that key talent, especially in areas like entertainment, are constantly in danger of being poached by the rest of the market – and even with internal candidates, the best and the brightest are comparing what they could earn inside and outside the BBC. Nobody is making a decision about working for the BBC because this is where the big bucks are.

**Q In the current climate, would it be appropriate for the senior community to take a pay cut?**

**A** Everyone around the organisation on £60k or more is having a pay freeze. In real terms senior manager pay will go down



# This was just the start

Last week's publication of salary and expenses details was just the start of a process of disclosure that Mark Thompson says will make the BBC more open than any other public organisation.

He announced the new transparency in a speech in Manchester that will be followed, most probably in September, with further details on the website regarding the salaries and expense claims of an additional 50 senior people. They will be selected according to a combination of seniority, salary and responsibility for spending.

In the autumn, the precise salary of the 100 people below executive board level will be published with the present bands of £30k removed. Their expense claims will be published quarterly, line by line. Thompson says that some details will be held back to preserve an individual's security 'but embarrassment is not an excuse' for avoiding openness.

The BBC is sticking to its line on payments paid to top entertainers and presenters, saying it will publish overall payment figures but not the amounts individuals receive.

## How average pay works out

Average pay at the BBC in 2007-08 was approximately £43,000. This is calculated by dividing the public service payroll by the number of public service employees. The average comes down to £31,000 when senior managers are taken out of the reckoning, which means that the salaries of the top 250 or so people at the BBC raise the overall average by £12,000.

Mark Thompson told the *Today* programme that average pay was 'much higher' at the BBC than in the public sector overall. Salaries paid to people in BBC Worldwide and World Service are not included in the averages.

## All that parking

Mark Thompson has explained the ten pages of car parking charges, some for as little as 90p, which appear on his list of expenses claims. These were costs paid by his chauffeur, usually on a company card, while on official business. The BBC also pays the congestion charge for his official car while he pays the costs of personal motoring.

The dg was reimbursed £2236.90 for flying his family home (Al Italia economy) last year after he had to cut short their holiday when he was called back to London to deal with the Ross/Brand phone calls saga.

## THE 50 HIGHEST PAID PEOPLE AT THE BBC

### SENIOR BBC MANAGERS' SALARIES

- Mark Thompson director general **£647k**
- Mark Byford deputy director general **£459k**
- Jana Bennett director BBC Vision **£406k**
- Zarin Patel chief financial officer **£329k**
- John Smith chief executive, BBC Worldwide **£380k**
- Caroline Thomson chief operating officer **£328k**
- Tim Davie director, A&M **£314k**



Peter Salmon, director BBC North, will head the BBC's second biggest operation

### £370K-400K

Peter Salmon director, BBC North

### £310K-340K

Alan Yentob creative director\*  
Erik Huggers director, FM&T  
Helen Boaden director, BBC News  
Sharon Baylay director, MC&A



Helen Boaden, leader of the 6000 members of news

### £280K-£310K

Bal Samra director, BBC Vision operations  
Pat Loughrey former director, nations and regions  
Richard Sambrook director, Global News

### £250K-£280K

Dominic Coles chief operating officer, journalism  
Jay Hunt controller, BBC One  
Roly Keating director of archive content



Jay Hunt, controller BBC One returned after a short spell at Five

### £220K-250K

Danny Cohen controller, BBC Three  
Ed Williams director of communications  
Janice Hadlow controller, BBC Two  
John Linwood chief technology officer, FM&T  
John Yorke controller, drama production  
Julie Gardner head, ind drama commissioning  
Nicholas Kroll director, BBC Trust  
Richard Deverell controller, BBC Children's  
Roger Mosey director, London 2012



Ed Williams, director of communications, joined the BBC from Reuters

### £190K-£220K

Andy Parfitt controller, R1/1Xtra/Asian Network  
Andy Griffie editorial director, Project W1  
Anne Morrison controller, network production  
Chris Day group financial controller  
Chris Kane head of corporate real estate  
Dorothy Prior controller production resources  
Emma Swain head of in-house commissioning, BBC Vision  
Graham Ellis controller production, A&M  
John Vickerman director HR shared services, BBC People  
Liam Keelan controller, daytime television  
Mark Damazer controller, Radio 4 and Radio 7  
Mike Goodie director employee relations and people strategy  
Nicholas Eldred group general counsel; secretary, Operations Group  
Peter Horrocks director, World Service  
Peter White chief executive Switchover Help Scheme  
Richard Klein controller, BBC Four  
Robert Shennan controller, Radio 2 and 6 Music  
Roger Wright controller, R3 and director BBC Proms  
Stephen Mitchell head of multimedia programmes, BBC News  
Tom Archer controller, factual production, BBC Vision



John Vickerman, director of HR shared services, manages Capita contract and policy simplification

### £160K-£190K

George Entwistle controller, knowledge commissioning, BBC Vision  
Jon Beazley controller, entertainment production, BBC Vision  
Nicolas Brown director, drama production, BBC Vision

◆ Basic salaries at May 7, 2009. This list does not include members of BBC Worldwide, Post Production and Studios, BBC World, UKTV  
\* Alan Yentob is part time creative director so does not receive this full salary. He is paid separately as presenter of *Imagine*

## More revelations in the next list

The next most interesting thing about who's on the list of top people is who's not on it. The newest director, Lucy Adams who's in charge at BBC People, arrived on June 1 and so misses the May 7 timeline. Elsewhere, journalism is not particularly well represented with the three national directors for Wales, Scotland and

Northern Ireland missing the cut. The same goes for the editors of the news operation at TVC. The controller of Radio 5 Live, the sports and news station currently on a good run of form, is also outside the 50. Come September, there will be keen interest to see who is included in the next group of 50

## No apologies for 'amazing' Glastonbury

'IT WAS PRETTY BIJOU,' jokes Paul Rodgers, 6 Music editor. 'We had a very small staff and one of our guys was walking with a limp by the end.'

The teams who worked around the clock at Glastonbury certainly weren't feeling bloated, despite what the critics claimed. The Daily Mail and the Times noted that the corporation had sent 407 members of staff to the festival, 'almost as many as it flew out to film Beijing', while Tory MP Philip Davies fell back on the line that the numbers were 'yet another example of how the BBC is bloated'.

The BBC has been quick with its riposte, pointing out that as the official broadcast partner of Glastonbury it is responsible for all of the broadcast infrastructure and transmission from the festival: 130 of the 407 were short-term contractors employed to rig and de-rig the site and provide security.

That left 125 members of staff and around 150 freelancers - a mix of presenters, producers, directors, camera and sound crews, lighting and design, web producers, vt engineers and runners, including 18 staff dedicated to the interactive content.

Between them they produced a staggering 111 hours of television coverage, 60 hours of radio output, 600 website pages and 57 hours of video, in addition to running the BBC's Introducing stage.

And their efforts haven't gone unnoticed - 16m people tuned in to watch the television coverage.

**AN EXASPERATED** director general told Ariel that the tabloid criticism of the BBC's Glastonbury coverage was 'Pavlovian'. 'What is the right number? Do the critics know?' he said. 'Glastonbury has become an amazing part of our summer at the BBC. Our people are working around the clock to bring a great occasion to the British public.'

This year 6 Music provided the BBC's live coverage for the first time. 'It's been a bit of a stretch, but we had a defining weekend,' said editor Rodgers. He defended the spread of coverage across the BBC's tv and radio stations. 'It was amicably shared out,' he said. 'There are a lot of things to fit in and there's so much cultural activity going on in one place - it doesn't easily fit in one portfolio.'

Clare Bolt



Neil Young: still rockin in the free world



# Pension fund stays 'strong' despite shortfall

by Sally Hillier

People who are concerned about their pensions, given that the BBC pension scheme has a deficit of more than £400m, should take heart from the fact that it remains one of the best funds in the UK and still has a positive cash flow.

That is the message from Jeremy Peat, chairman of the scheme's trustees, whose latest report was published on Monday.

The current position is that if the scheme were suddenly to be

wound up (an unlikely scenario), and tried to meet all its liabilities, it would have a shortfall of £470m.

This is in contrast to the £274m surplus that was recorded in 2007, when the economy was buoyant and companies were enjoying good returns on their investments.

Since then the economic situation has deteriorated and stock markets have fallen, with disastrous consequences for many company pension funds.

The BBC scheme, which has 58,744 members and is worth

£6.5bn, is in a relatively healthy state, thanks to the BBC's contributions, members' contributions and returns on its investments, although these have reduced.

'These are unprecedented times but the trustees recognise that the investments are long term in nature,' Peat explains. 'The scheme has a positive cash flow so does not need to sell equities at depressed rates to fund the payment of pensions.'

He adds that the trustees have taken professional advice and 'are

satisfied that the BBC's covenant [its willingness and ability to continue funding the scheme] remain strong. 'In particular, the trustees are mindful that the charter and licence fee agreement give the BBC a level of stability and guarantee of income that is not available to most employers.'

Even so, Peat is blunt about the future. The downturn in the markets will mean that the current deficit 'will undoubtedly have increased by the time the next funding report is produced', he says.

## News storm after death of Jackson

by Sally Hillier

Michael Jackson's death meant a frantic Friday for many BBC people on both sides of the Atlantic, not least broadcast journalist Natasha Grüneberg in the news obituary unit.

She arrived at work at Television Centre at 5.15am and spent the day doing live two-ways with the BBC's network of local radio stations, answering questions about the singer and his career, the circumstances surrounding his death, and what was likely to happen next.

'I did one broadcast after another, in eight minute slots,' she explains. 'I spoke to 22 stations at breakfast and 12 at lunchtime. In addition, Betty Redondo [senior broadcast journalist] did ten stations.'

'I had been preparing material about Farrah Fawcett, who died on Thursday, when the news came through about Jackson,' Grüneberg added.

His death caused a huge surge at news online, where 11m pages were viewed on Friday alone.

On tv and radio, schedules were rearranged to make way for documentaries and tribute programmes.

A news special on Friday evening, pushing *EastEnders* (which itself referred to Jackson's death in a hastily written new scene) back by half an hour, drew an audience of 2.9m, while a *Newsnight* Review special on BBC Two, drew 1.3m.

On Saturday, BBC Two showed a special edition of *Top of the Pops 2* as well as the documentary *The Essential Michael Jackson*.

Radio 1, 1Xtra, Radio 2, Radio 4, and Radio 5 live all scheduled themed Michael Jackson programmes,

# Iran crisis calls for rolling news service

by Claire Barrett

As diplomatic tensions between Iran and Britain increased over the weekend, the BBC was again accused by government supporters of stoking up unrest.

BBC Persian tv - the Farsi language channel watched by an estimated 6-8m in Iran - has also been criticised by the opposition faithful for failing to be more outspoken in their defence. But acting head of the channel Rob Beynon remains impassive in his pursuit of a 'dispassionate and impartial' service.

If the channel that was launched in January did play a part in the post-election turmoil, it was simply in 'providing information for people that they may not have received in any other way', he argues. 'But we have been assiduous in not becoming a channel for the opposition in an unchallenged way. We would only refer to claims of vote rigging, for instance, but didn't venture an opinion - it's not what we do.'

With reporters unable to gather news from inside Iran, and the risks too high for them to do so



Despite jamming, Persian tv broadcasts continue, including online

without permission, the London-based BBC Persian team turned to user generated content to tell the story. 'Striking pictures' - like that of protester Neda Agha-Soltan bleeding to death after being shot - continued to arrive despite sluggish web connections.

Every item is verified and assessed before broadcast - 'we're not YouTube, we're the BBC and we can't just throw stuff on air' - and

painstakingly dated: 'It's easy to use images as wallpaper but that's both risky and wrong.'

Pro-government material, such as the supreme leader's speech at Friday prayers, has been broadcast, courtesy of Iranian state tv. 'That helps create something of a balance,' reasons Beynon.

But this hasn't kept the jammers at bay. Strong signals are being sent up from inside Iran to interfere with BBC Persian transmissions from the main Hotbird satellite. Engineers have got the channel on to another satellite that is more difficult to jam, while it remains on a secondary satellite as well as being streamed online.

The staff - many recruited from Iran - are working long shifts to cover developments. Broadcasts increased from eight to 14 hours a day at the height of the protests. 'We went from being a mixed channel, with scheduled bulletins, to a rolling news service,' says Beynon, who paid special tribute to the professionalism of colleagues with family and friends in Iran: 'They managed to leave any personal and political allegiances at the door.'

## Big screens pack in summer crowds

**BBC Big Screens are proving a big attraction for Wimbledon fans, with thousands enjoying the action in city centres across the UK.**

**The London Olympics organising committee has paid for the latest 12 screens, including those in Plymouth, Cardiff, Derby and a replacement screen for Manchester which was the original pilot. It brings the total across the UK to 21.**

**Anita Bhalla, editor public space broadcasting, says the programme for the next few months is particularly packed: 'The summer is a busy time with Royal Opera House [events], Proms in the Park, Formula 1, and the Olympics open weekend.**

## Deadline for Salford moves

This Tuesday (June 30) is decision day for most people in salary bands 8-11, whose jobs are ear-marked to move to Salford.

Numbers declaring their intention to relocate won't be known until the end of the week. About 100 people in bands 8-9 in sport have an agreed two week extension, to give staff on lower grades a clearer picture of promotion prospects in Salford before they make their decision.

In total, 375 jobs are affected at this stage. Staff in bands 2-7 have until September 30 to decide.

## How green is Albert Square?

**The environmental impact of producing EastEnders will be revealed later this year.**

**Environmentally sustainable productions - a branch of BBC environment - has announced it is working with the soap to find ways of reducing its carbon emissions.**

**ESP has invited the Energy Saving Trust to visit the Elstree set and develop a carbon calculator to measure the environmental impact of the series.**

**Charles Simmonds, who leads the ESP team, said that EastEnders was an ideal partner. 'It's high volume, long-running, self-contained and extremely well known,' he said.**

## NEWS BITES

**TOPPING OUT** ceremony will be held on July 8 to mark the completion of the highest point of MediaCityUK in Salford Quays. The ceremony will be on the 19th floor of the South Tower of the Studio Block, which is more than 300ft. The following week, the redeveloped Broadcasting House in London will be topped out

**BREAKFAST NEWS** plinth - the programme's homage to the fourth plinth 'living monument' in Trafalgar Square - will tour the UK from July 6, inviting people who have performed acts of selflessness to take their moment in the spotlight. Candidates include Cornish lifeguards and Oldham masseuses.

**A SCHEME** has been launched offering aspiring filmmakers a £5000 budget to make a music-based short film with a professional production company and have it premiered at the BBC Electric Proms in October. See [bbc.co.uk/electricproms/2009/newmusicshorts](http://bbc.co.uk/electricproms/2009/newmusicshorts)

**WORLD'S LONGEST** running sitcom *Last Of The Summer Wine*, has been recommissioned for a further six half-hours. Filming will take place this summer, in and around Holmfirth, for transmission in 2010.

**RADIO 2** is marking the 50th anniversary of Billie Holiday's death with two new documentaries: *All Of Me - The Betrayal Of Billie Holiday* on July 7 and *Billy [Crystal] on Billie*, on July 14.

**THE GRUFFALO**, Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's best-selling children's picture book, will be shown on BBC One this Christmas. Produced by Magic Light Pictures, the 30-minute animation is currently in production

**CONOR MCNICHOLAS** currently editing IPC's music title NME, has been appointed editor of BBC's *Top Gear* magazine, which overtook FHM last year as the UK's most widely-read men's monthly, with a readership of 1.9m.

**ROZINA BREEN**, a lecturer in radio at Leeds Trinity and All Saints College, has been appointed editor of Radio Leeds. She will start in September, marking a return to the BBC where she used to work in radio current affairs. She replaces Mike Bettison, who will return to his substantive post as editor of Radio Nottingham. Bettison left to take over at BBC WM on attachment, before becoming editor at Radio Leeds.

## Is HR working?

Lucy Adams, new director of BBC People, wants to hear colleagues' perceptions of how well the HR function works for them. Is it too bureaucratic? Does it make life simpler or harder? Does it add value to the business? You have until July 8 to complete her ten-minute confidential online survey, via Gateway.





PHOTOGRAPH: SUE FOLL

Revelations

Two young policemen knelt beside six suitcases filled with gold dust, found in storage lockers

miles outside the city – kept watch in protective suits like

shepherds at Nativity, their faces charged with the soft glow of what they had revealed.

Two monks, earlier by a thousand years, sat beneath a mulberry tree, each longing to unscrew and shake his hollow bamboo cane

of silkworm eggs from China – priceless, weightless, smuggled out – wondering how the airy specks would fall.

# THE QUIET POET

It was her last chance to win a major competition – poet and bj Alex McRae talks to Laura Scarrott

**YOU WON'T FIND** Alex McRae meditatively tapping her quill in the newsroom. Despite being presented The Eric Gregory award for poetry last week, she has been shy about revealing her 'geeky pursuit' to colleagues.

'I didn't want to tell people I was a poet. You either get horrified stares or people feel intimidated,' admits the World Service bj.

McRae was one of five people to be given The Society of Writers' annual award, which consists of a £2400 grant.

This is the third time McRae has applied for it, having been shortlisted last year. 'This year was my last chance as you have to be under 30

to apply so I really went for it,' she explains, describing the win as a 'great honour' and an 'awesome' accomplishment for any young poet.

McRae tells me that many of her poems, including those submitted for consideration for the award, were inspired by her experiences at work. 'News stories provide great content because they're usually stranger and more wonderful than anything you would normally hear about,' she says.

One such news story, in which the police uncovered six suitcases filled with gold dust, resulted in the poem Revelations (above). 'It was such a cool image,' enthuses McRae. 'I

decided to use it as a starting point for a poem about discovering amazing things in ordinary places.'

McRae also points to the similarities between writing poetry and journalism. 'I try to write clearly, originally and with integrity. In both cases I also try to show two sides of an idea

– I'm really aware of impartiality in my writing. Of course poems can be surreal and playful but some of the most moving poems have truth at their core.'

Although past winners of the award include poet laureate Andrew Motion, McRae says she has modest ambitions; to publish a book and use the grant to help fund an MA.

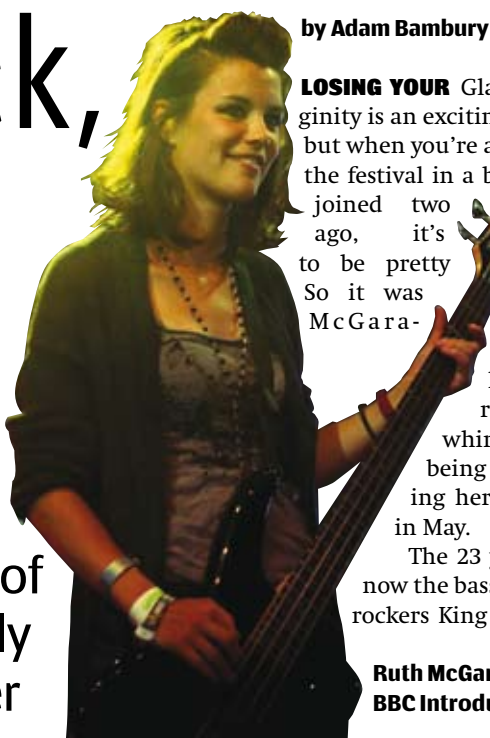
'I have a full time job – which is quite exotic among poets – so I fit my writing around shifts. I've also never done a creative writing course so I plan to be really self-indulgent and take a career break. I would definitely come back to the BBC though, I love my job.'

**YOUR POEMS**

We'll be publishing the best entries from our BBC-themed poetry competition on July 14. Our judge, Robert Seatter is head of history and a published poet.

## Funky chick, traditional instincts

Glastonbury debut is climax of PA's double life as a classically trained rock'n'roll bass player



by Adam Bambury

**LOSING YOUR** Glastonbury virginity is an exciting experience, but when you're also playing at the festival in a band you only joined two months ago, it's going to be pretty special. So it was for Ruth McGarahan, who has found herself in a rock'n'roll whirlwind since being spotted playing her local church in May.

The 23 year old PA is now the bassist in eclectic rockers King Charles, who

Ruth McGarahan on the BBC Introducing stage

played the BBC Introducing stage. A good place to be, as the underground music brand has hosted many an act to have exploded into the mainstream – MGMT and Florence and the Machine being two.

It was a suitable end to a busy month for Ruth, which began with her first gig with the band on June 1, followed by a show at Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, and a filmed session at Maida Vale for the Huw Stephens radio show.

But fitting in with the whims of a group of full time musicians isn't always easy. 'The band don't really understand I have a job. They'll say: 'We're going to rehearse at 3pm, come down'. I'll get into work really early so I can leave early, then I get there and they'll be like 'nah, we can't be bothered today,' laughs Ruth over a fruit tea in TV Centre.

Luckily the rehearsal studio is in

nearby Acton, and Ruth has a very understanding boss in *Blue Peter* editor Tim Levell, who describes her as a 'right funky chick'.

Funky or not, she still hasn't quite left her years of classical training behind: 'I've always found it hard to play without sheet music,' says Ruth. 'But the band don't use that, they tell me to 'just feel it'.

'Well I can't just feel it! I've got a tiny piece of paper with the chords on that I stick to the floor where no one can see. It's so un-rock'n'roll.'

She's quite happy with her current arrangement of bassist by night, PA by day, but would she ditch the BBC to tour European toilet venues in the back of a mini van? Ruth's playing it safe for now: 'My attachment contract is up in December, so we'll see what happens,' she smiles.

To see Ruth rock Glastonbury go to [tinyurl.com/kingcharles09](http://tinyurl.com/kingcharles09)



## Don't be cowed but do be careful

Producers should beware of 'crossing the line' on standards says Alan Yentob

by Sally Hillier

**WHEN IT COMES** to taste and decency, you can get away with quite a lot in the right context. Take *Fiona's Story*. The single drama was shown in peaktime on BBC One and included the c-word. There were no complaints – probably because the story was about paedophilia and viewers knew what to expect.

Because they usually deal with clearly defined subjects, drama and documentary are less likely to offend than other kinds of output, observes creative director Alan Yentob.

'The difficulties come in entertainment areas such as talk shows, reality shows and panel games.'

Now, though, producers have been told to exercise greater control. 'If you're doing a certain kind of programme you need to sit down with the commissioner and work out what the boundaries are.'

'Language should be scrutinised, to ensure it is not gratuitously offensive. The combination of aggressive language and aggressive behaviour is particularly dangerous, and if lines are crossed we will get tough.'

Yentob is co-author, with archive content director Roly Keating, of the BBC's taste and standards report that was commissioned last autumn after the Ross/Brand affair.

**AMONG ITS FINDINGS** are that audiences value creativity and the BBC's right potentially to offend, but that they have higher expectations of the corporation than of other broadcasters. Strong language on tv was a concern for many (33 percent of respondents mentioned it unprompted).

Last week's publication of the long-awaited report, which was informed by the most comprehensive research of its kind, including a survey of almost 3000 people, was accompanied by a series of BBC recommendations.

One of these is that the report's findings should be used to inform the ongoing revision of the editorial guidelines, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

New guidance is to be drawn up on malicious intrusion, intimidation and humiliation, and greater care is to be taken over programmes transferring from one channel to another, especially to BBC One.

In fact this is already happening. The last run of *The Apprentice* on BBC One, for example, contained far less swearing than in previous series on BBC Two.

The message from Yentob is that the BBC has always taken taste and standards seriously, and that its new recommendations should be seen as 'a reaffirmation and a reminder' of its responsibilities.

'The important thing is to ask if you're not sure. David Jordan and Claire Powell of editorial policy are exceptionally helpful and are there to advise. Programme makers shouldn't feel cowed, because we still want to reflect the world as it is, and to continue to be bold.'

He's one of the BBC's best known voices and faces, who's about to launch an album and still finds time to host the radio festival. Nicky Campbell talks to Cathy Loughran

## Can't imagine not doing radio

**NICKY CAMPBELL** is one of those annoying people who makes most of us, even on our busiest days, feel like we're only in the slow lane. Or as he puts it: 'When I was working on *Watchdog*, I was doing 11 days a week; now it's just seven.'

He has off-loaded the consumer programme from his string of commitments after eight years on the show. Anne Robinson returns in the autumn as solo host.

But Campbell is still live on air six mornings a week, co-presenting Radio 5 Live breakfast with Shelagh Fogarty, Monday to Friday, and fronting BBC One's Sunday morning debate *The Big Questions* from a different location each time. The Sunday programme has been recommissioned until June 2010.

Between times, he has undisclosed tv ideas in development and an album to launch. *Moonlight's Back in Style* is a jazz/swing collaboration with Mark Moraghan, his partner on BBC One's singing show *Just the Two of Us*.

Campbell co-produced and wrote 12 of the 14 new songs, including a love song he composed in 1995 when he met his journalist wife Tina Ritchie. The couple have four daughters, all under 11.

Radio is the other love of his life: 'I can't imagine not doing it,' he says. The former Radio 1 jock has partnered Fogarty on 5 Live since 2004. The duo recently collected the Sony breakfast show award – Campbell's fifth. 'There's great connection between us, as well as trust, and we make each other laugh. I feel incredibly lucky.'

Fogarty does a good impression of reining in Campbell's excesses – usually of enthusiasm – and gives as good as she gets. Her on-air story about overhearing two elderly women discussing the presenter of *The Big Questions* – 'that Scots chap, quite good looking but a bit scrawny for my liking' – was delivered without warning, amid giggles.

Campbell calls what they pull off on a good morning 'quality banter'. But if live

broadcasting is fun, it's also dangerous. His spat with right-wing blogger Guido Fawkes (Paul Staines), in which Campbell unguardedly called him a 'fascist', required an immediate apology and another at the end of the show. 'Sometimes we get it right and sometimes we mess up.'

When he spectacularly mispronounced 'the West Kent Hunt' he says: 'I felt my life drain away. But there wasn't one complaint.'

The response he gets to his hour-long phone-in, part of 5 Live's revamped morning line-up, is about quality as much as

### We're moving to Salford, it's not Helmand province

volume, he says. Devoted to the day's big story, it often taps into the personal and produces some of the highest AI scores on the network.

'When we have touched on areas like autism, domestic violence or child abuse we have had very high quality callers. It would take weeks to get the same contributions together for a tv documentary, but that's the

**Music man: visit his Making Moonlight video on YouTube**

beauty of a live radio phone-in.'

For the former Capital Radio dj, whose try-out with the station was to do the handover with his idol Kenny Everett, the decision to pre-record the Jonathan Ross show on Radio 2 was 'unfortunate'.

'The great thing about his live show was that it was near the knuckle, on the line, spontaneous [see Bob Shennan, below].'

Does he sense a climate of caution, post Brand-Ross? 'There's just a bit more form-filling. I suppose we're suffering for the sins of our colleagues and from the paranoia that's around.'

It's clear that the BBC intends to shave the top end off presenter pay, but should star salaries be revealed? Campbell is fairly relaxed: 'I can understand the argument in favour but there are commercial sensitivities. I'm not very exercised by the whole thing.'

Running is his antidote to pressure and the six mile jogs home after his morning show are when the former jingle-writer composed much of his album.

Campbell first caught the radio bug as a teenage rogue caller to his local station, Radio Forth in Edinburgh, impersonating vets, vandals and eccentric old ladies.

Campbell's own children will stay at home in London when he becomes a Monday-Friday commuter to Salford. With Peter Allen, he is one of the most high profile presenters to commit to the move in 2011 and is looking forward to it.

'It's Salford, it's not Helmand province, and it's a great chance to refresh the station.'

Campbell is the main presenter of this week's Radio Academy festival in Nottingham.



## We look like a great monster

by Sally Hillier

**COULD** **RUSSELL**  
Brand make a comeback on Radio 2?  
Bob Shennan doesn't rule it out.



Asked whether he envisaged the presenter ever returning to the network, Shennan, four months into his new job as controller of Radio 2 and 6 Music, said, intriguingly: 'Never say never.'

He also declared himself 'very happy' with Jonathan Ross's radio show, and said it had not lost anything by being pre-recorded. 'If anything it had gained because it was now easier to attract guests. 'It wouldn't have got Katy Perry or Jerry Springer if they'd had to come in on a Saturday.'

In any case, he continued, even before the new compliance rules were introduced, the programme was sometimes pre-recorded [if Ross was

**It's not true that I left because of Salford: Bob Shennan tells all**

unavailable at the weekend for example] 'although nobody realised it'.

Shennan was speaking in the Broadcasting House Council Chamber at a Never Stop Learning event organised by training and development.

Questioned about what he had learned when he quit as controller of Radio 5 Live to become director of radio at Channel 4, he said the experience had given him a clearer idea of how the BBC was seen by its rivals.

'From the outside we look like a great big monster with huge power and weight.'

When Channel 4's radio plans were scrapped, he had not wanted to be seen to be 'immediately scuttling back to the BBC', he explained. He had been talking to Channel 4 about other

projects as well as looking elsewhere when Lesley Douglas resigned and the Radio 2/6 Music controllership became vacant.

What would have happened, a questioner from the floor wanted to know, had he not left Radio 5 Live 18 months ago. Would he have signed up for Salford?

'Everyone thinks I [left the corporation] because I didn't want to go to Salford, but that's not true,' he replied.

The reality was, if he had carried on, by the time of the move in 2011, he would have been controller of Radio 5 Live for 12 years – an unlikely scenario, he thought.

There was one final insight. Never mind Ross, Terry Wogan or Chris Evans. One of Shennan's favourite Radio 2 stars is David Jacobs. 'He plays the most fantastic mood music. Have a listen.'



With the kids of the 60s now in their sixties, BBC Four is looking at the new ways of growing old, Claire Barrett reports

**GRANDFATHERS** used to come in two types; the genial model who, twinkly eyed, would press a coin into your palm for some sherbert lemons before settling down with the football pools and a fig roll.

His sterner counterpart would interrogate you about your school grades, pick you up on poor posture and demand your respect rather than your affection.

Neither kind were 'pretty cool', which is how one of Ian Batten's seven grandchildren describes him. He's a 66 year-old fashion designer and the subject of one of three films in the *Grandparent Diaries* series at the heart of BBC Four's *Grey Expectations* season. He's also one of the new generation of grandparents who were in their prime in the 60s. Just as they revolutionised fashion, music and relationships, these flower children are now reinventing the art of grandparenting with a flourish of free spirit.

The laid back Batten may not be typical of the new breed but, like many of his contemporaries, he continues to work full-time, with 'retirement neither a desire nor an option'.

Increasingly, grandparents are providing childcare support to enable their children to return to work. Others are picking up the pieces of their children's failed relationships: In an extreme example, the subject of one of the films became guardian of her grandchildren after their mother was murdered.

The low key, closely observed *Grandparent Diaries* shine a light on what exec producer Emma Willis calls 'a key relationship which can be more important than siblings'.



# GLAD TO BE GREY

Leaving Nan behind: actress Liz Smith leaves The Royale Family sofa for a cafe seat in St Mark's Square, Venice, one of the stops on her summer cruise

In broader terms, the series and the wider season will put some mature faces – long lamented for their absence – on our screens. 'That's incredibly important,' Willis believes. 'Old people do become invisible on telly – even before they reach their sixties – but they bring with them all kinds of insights. You understand being 18 better at 50 than you do at 18.'

Richard Klein, BBC Four controller, regards the season as a natural follow on to the channel's focus last year on childhood. 'It's the other end of the spectrum,' he tells Ariel. 'Every generation thinks they've discovered old

## Old people can become invisible on telly

Emma Willis

age, but this is more a celebration of what that phase of life is like now. Advances in health are keeping us active and healthier for longer – but divorce and economic factors are also making things more complicated.'

*Grey Expectations*, though, is less about making statements than making people smile. In one 'charming' documentary, octogenarian actress Liz Smith changes the habits of a lifetime by going on a cruise. 'She's not really a joiner inner,' says Willis.

*Getting On* – a wry, single camera comedy set in a geriatric ward – doesn't play it for laughs; they just come naturally. The script, penned by cast members Joanna Scanlon, Vicky Pepperdine and Jo Brand, is rooted in real life and draws on Brand's experiences as a psychiatric nurse. 'Director Peter Capaldi and the writers did a great

deal of research and were supported by terrific advisors to ensure it's as authentic as possible,' says exec Simon Lupton. With supporting characters who may be spitting distance from death, Lupton believes the trick is to present the show in a way that gives it broad appeal.

Klein, too, is hoping to attract as many as possible to the season. 'BBC Four will look at getting old in its usual intelligent way, acknowledging that it can be messy, complicated and busy, but doing so with a twinkle in its eye.'

**Grey Expectations season BBC Four, starts July 8**

# No regrets as Tara takes a short cut

by Carla Parks

**IT WASN'T THE LENGTH** of Rapunzel's flowing locks, but some women would pay a lot of money to have Tara Button's hair. The sub editor from *Girl Talk* had spent nearly her whole life with the kind of hair you could swish, but she's swapped this for a short crop. The reason? She wanted to give something to a charity that helps children who have cancer.

About a year ago, one of her closest friends wrote a successful book called *Ways to Live Forever*, told from the fictional point of view of Sam, an 11-year-old boy dying of leukaemia.



The subject deeply affected Button, who had been close to the project. After reading more about cancer in children, she came across the Little Princess Trust, a charity that provides real hair wigs for children suffering hair loss because of chemotherapy. Although it mainly helps little girls, boys benefit from wigs too.

Button admits that she was already thinking of getting her hair cut, but the result – losing nearly 12 inches – still took some getting used to. 'It was a bit of a shock,' she says, 'and I

**The final swish: Tara hopes her gesture will inspire others**

needed reassurance that I didn't look like a boy.' The last time Button had short hair was when she was nine and changed her name to Thomas for a month. The biggest shock, she adds, was running her hand across the back of the neck. Despite this, she has no regrets, even though child protection laws will prevent her from knowing which child she helped.

The sub editor hopes more people will be moved to do the same – real hair wigs are extraordinarily expensive and there's a shortage, particularly for certain types of hair.

For more info, go to [littleprincess.org.uk](http://littleprincess.org.uk)



# week@work

**Belinda Artingstoll** special feats producer at Radio Cumbria, has a week of health, wealth and happiness

**WE'VE BEEN RUNNING** county shows for many years, but this summer we wanted to find a way of reaching into urban Cumbria – places like Carlisle, Whitehaven and Barrow. Our initial idea of a health roadshow (a touch too worthy?) evolved into the Health, Wealth and Happiness Tour – three days of activities, advice and information.

With health in mind, we invited the NHS along to give people lifestyle

advice and free healthchecks. They were joined by local alternative therapists who provided head massages and reflexology.

The Citizens Advice Bureau, Credit Union and BBC Raw Money set up stalls advising on 'wealth' and to ensure 'happiness' we had everything from cookery demonstrations and gardeners' question time to dancing and make-up advice.

Although we'd had articles in the

local paper and had plugged like mad online and on air, we were nervous in case no one came. But when we opened the doors at the first event in Carlisle, they flooded in – and stayed for hours, watching the demonstrations and chatting to our presenters.

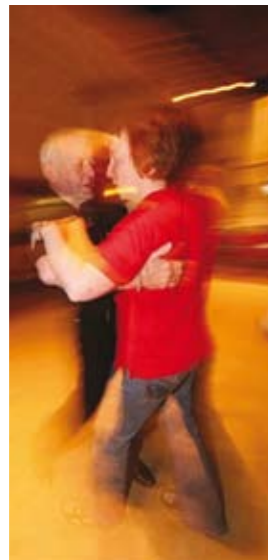
The NHS tables were mobbed. At the first roadshow they referred more than 40 people to their GPs as a result of checks they'd had that day. In Whitehaven the NHS actually sent two people to the emergency out of hours doctors' service.

The visitors' feedback forms were overwhelmingly positive and a lot of people asked when we would run it again. One of the great things was that we had all our new BBC branded gear, which looks fab. Last year we had one working pull-up banner, but now we have a press wall, flags, table skirts and banners galore.

There were some funny moments of course...in Whitehaven EIGHT members of St John's Ambulance turned up to provide first aid cover. We'd only asked for two but they said they all wanted to come because it was a BBC Cumbria event. I told them they would frighten the punters away and that some of them would have to leave. Which they did eventually...



Radio Cumbria's Health, wealth and happiness roadshow at Whitehaven



## SHAMELESS PLUG

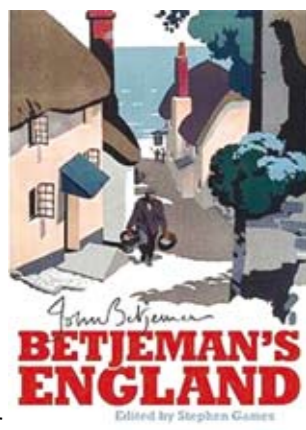
◆ **STEPHEN GAMES, FORMER RADIO 3 PRESENTER**

My anthology of John Betjeman's scripts brings together 60 of his films for the first time and looks at how he transferred his poetry skills to tv.

The poet laureate spent years trying to get a job at the BBC, but it was only after he made a series of shorts for ITV in 1955, that he was spotted by director Ken Russell and started work on the BBC's television arts series *Monitor*.

Betjeman had an instinctive understanding of what television could do – and a poet's sense of rhythm and flow in the writing of his own scripts. He regarded the BBC films he went on to make as 'satisfying and stimulating as any work in prose or verse I have ever done'.

*Betjeman's England* by Stephen Games, John Murray, £18.99.



## CHANGING PLACES

Radio Shropshire's weekend presenter **MATTHEW CARR** (pictured) leaves the BBC after 23 years... Brand strategy exec **JENNY REDMAN** moves to training and development... **LAURA ZETTERBERG**, currently in the

corporate press office, joins the news publicity team... Radio Gloucester bj **RUPERT UPSHON** becomes an sbj at BBC Hereford and Worcester... **COLIN ROOBOTTOM** becomes West Midlands news editor... He replaces **NINA JONES** who starts a three month attachment at the radio reporter pool at TVC.

## SPEECH PATTERNS

◆ **WITH DIGITAL BRITAIN** promising endless rivers of broadband streaming from the information taps of every UK citizen, it's conceivable there will come a time when almost all the population has an online presence, one that will live on when their physical form has ceased to function.

It's 'Foreverism' in action, says Trendwatching.com. Blogs, profiles, videos, everyone you have ever vaguely known, they're all there and they can all be traced, forever trapped like flies in the oozing amber of the internet for future investigators to observe and puzzle over (and



perhaps resurrect your identity with some toad genes a la Jurassic Park?).

But your life is still proceeding, and its digital work is never done – there is always one more 'friend' to add, one more hilariously observed comment to tweet to the world. Tiring isn't it? Welcome to foreverism fatigue.

## BBC IN ACTION



◆ **SPOTTED THE BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA** anywhere unusual this month? Now in its seventh year, BBC Proms Out and About has been travelling around London this month to take classical music to a wider audience. From a full orchestra concert at London's Westfield shopping centre to a string

trio taking up a position with Diplodocus at the Natural History Museum, Proms learning manager Ellara Wakely says: 'It's a way of letting people know that the Proms are about having a relaxing and enjoyable summer's evening.' Pictured here are violinists Anna Smith and Kate Read and cellist Michael Atkinson.

Photo: BBC Proms

## COMING UP

◆ **6 Music** presenters Adam and Joe will feature in a new comedy series for BBC Two. Based on the pilot, **THE SCUM ALSO RISES**, the 6x30 minute series will be made by Bwark. It was commissioned by Lucy Lumsden, controller of comedy commissioning, and will be exec produced by Simon Wilson. It is expected to tx later this year.

◆ Controller of CBeebies, Michael Carrington, has commissioned a children's cookery show for the channel. The 26x15 minute series called **I CAN COOK** will teach

children how to grow, cook and eat food. Made by Initial it will be exec produced by Sarah Colclough and is expected to tx in the autumn.

◆ Children's book **THE GRUFFALO** is to be turned into a 30 minute animation for BBC One. The programme, which will be made by Magic Light Pictures, will form part of the channel's Christmas schedule and was commissioned by controller of drama commissioning Ben Stephenson. It will be exec produced by Poly Hill.

## FREE CYCLING LESSONS

◆ **CENTRAL LONDON** boroughs are offering free cycling lessons to people wanting to improve their confidence on the road. Anyone living, working or studying in Kensington and Chelsea, Camden or Westminster is eligible for the lessons. The classes are run by former

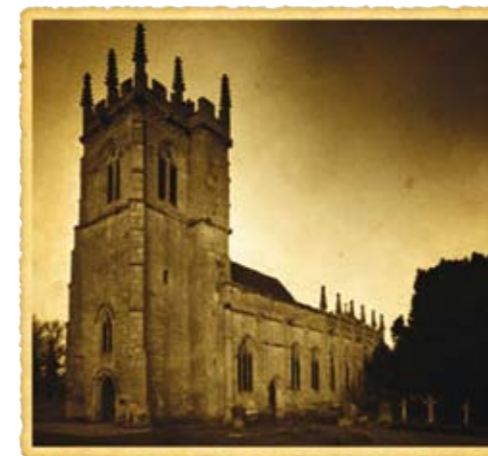


World Service producer Philippa Robb who works in partnership with the councils. For more information email [philippa.robb@googlemail.com](mailto:philippa.robb@googlemail.com)

## ONE MILE RADIUS

◆ **JO GARVIN, BJ, RADIO SHROPSHIRE**

If you've got a free lunch hour, it costs nothing to visit the tiny church to the east of Radio Shropshire – **St Mary Magdalene or Battlefield Church** as it's known. Here you can stand and relive the Battle of Shrewsbury, described as the bloodiest battle in English history, which was fought between the Percy family of Northumberland and the Lancastrian King, Henry IV in 1403. In a mass grave under your feet lie the bodies of the hundreds of soldiers who died there. It's an amazing and spooky place steeped in its violent past and is perfect for spending a quiet half hour imagining the scene all those years ago.



## SPEAK EASY

**TOPICAL UPDATES FROM THE PRONUNCIATION UNIT**

Two frequently mentioned names in the news this week include Iranian president **Mahmoud Amadinejad** and presidential candidate **Mirhossein Mousavi Khamaneh**. Ahmadinejad is commonly mispronounced to sound like 'I'm a dinner jacket'. Based on advice from native Persian speakers, BBC Persian and BBC Monitoring we recommend Mahmoud Amadinejad is pronounced mah-MOOD ah-mad-in-uh-

ZHAAD (-zh as 's' in measure, -aa as in father, stressed syllables in upper case). A common mispronunciation of Mousavi is to put the stress on the second syllable. Instead it should be on the first: meer-huuss-AYN muuss-av-EE khaa-muh-ne-E (-uu as in book, -ay as in say, -ee as in meet, -kh as in Scottish loch, -e as in bet, stressed syllables in upper case).

If you have a pronunciation query contact [pronunciation@bbc.co.uk](mailto:pronunciation@bbc.co.uk) / 0282277 / [pron.gateway.bbc.co.uk](http://pron.gateway.bbc.co.uk)

## blogbites

**Monday**  
**Speak - er, erm?**

The Speaker is dead, long live er, erm, someone who'll do it better. Westminster has waited and watched in the hope that someone would emerge as a strong consensus candidate to fill his seat. No one has. In part, this is because the Speaker is being asked to fill a bewildering array of roles – parliamentary figurehead, presiding officer, protector of parliament's rights, reformer, backbench shop steward, public spokesman, chief executive and saint.  
**Nick Robinson, political editor**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/nickrobinson/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/nickrobinson/)

**Tuesday**  
**Breakfast at Wimbledon**

There is always a lot of exaggerated hope for British tennis players during the Wimbledon fortnight but somehow this year seems a bit different...or is that me just falling for the same old hype again. I'm trying not to get too carried away but having a World Ranked number 3 player in Andy Murray – someone who has just won the Queen's title – somehow makes this year's excitement seem a touch more justified.  
**Olie D'Albertanson, assistant producer**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/fivelivebreakfast/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/fivelivebreakfast/)

**Wednesday**

The plan is still to launch Freeview HD on December 2 at the Winter Hill transmitter serving Manchester and Liverpool... As with any major technical project, there is always a risk of slippage due to circumstances beyond anyone's control. However, there is industry-wide commitment to rolling out Freeview HD as soon as possible, and good progress is being made on all fronts.  
**Graham Plumb, head of distribution Technology, BBC Operations Group**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbcinternat/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbcinternat/)

**Thursday**

Do big brains stem from cooler climates? Big brains need cool climates to evolve, according to journal Climatic Change. If you've been wondering who to thank for your extraordinarily large brain thank the Earth's last 50 million years of chilly weather, says David Schwartzman, chief author of the report. Without it, our savannah-savvy, tool-wielding ancestors Homo habilis and Homo erectus might not have emerged. Why? Because big brains generate a lot of heat, and we get rid of heat much more easily when the climate's cool. Burning fossil fuels and warming the planet will make it harder for our struggling brains to cool down.  
**Shanta Barley, online researcher**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/climatechange/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/climatechange/)

**Friday**

**Michael Jackson Tributes**  
If you'd have asked me yesterday I wouldn't have thought that the intersection of Michael Jackson fans and Glastonbury attendees on the great musical Venn diagram would be particularly large, but our BBC News colleagues have reported 'shock and disbelief' among the drenched hordes here. Emily Eavis announced on the official Glastonbury Twitter account that 'There will be tributes all over the site all weekend'. Any guesses at what those tributes might be? I reckon the E-Street Band could pull a pretty tasty Billie Jean out of the bag and I imagine that Jarvis Cocker, ever the showman, will pay his respects in his own particular way.  
**Nigel Smith, senior content producer, A&M**  
[bbc.co.uk/bbcmusic/](http://bbc.co.uk/bbcmusic/)



## WHAT TO WEAR

◆ **ELAINE WATSON, LOCAL RADIO ADMINISTRATOR, BBC TEES, AND ASSISTANT TO HRLP NORTH EAST & CUMBRIA**

**Where did you buy the outfit you're wearing in the photo?**

The shoes are from Clarks, the blouse is from Marks & Spencer Autograph collection and the pinafore was a bargain sale purchase from Wallis for £12. It fits beautifully, making me appear thinner than I am.  
**Where have you taken inspiration from?**  
Princess Diana – she had such style and presence.

**Are you experimental in your style?**  
No. I'm quite old-fashioned and conservative in the way I dress – I don't dare experiment because I know I'll get it wrong.  
**Whose wardrobe would you most like to rummage through?**  
Mary Portas – she has style and isn't afraid to dress a little outrageously from time to time. I'm sure she'd have something in that wardrobe for me.

**What's the worst outfit you were made to wear as a child?**  
I once had to borrow a school friend's leotard for a gymnastics show because I'd forgotten mine. It was horrible and made from some sort of scratchy material. I didn't stop scratching all the way through and I was covered in red blotches for days afterwards.



arielview



ANDREW HARVEY

## Top slicing that would be bold

**IF THERE'S ONE ISSUE** where you will not find agreement from top to bottom it is the assertion that the BBC needs to pay super wages to attract executives of sufficient talent to run the organisation. Publication last week of the salary bands of the 50 highest paid people was greeted with surprise and even anger in some areas – and this from a staff that has long been used to reading about bosses whose pay outstrips their own.

Mark Thompson is unmoved. In an interview with Ariel, he gave the classic defence, namely that the BBC had to operate in a market for talent whether this was to sign its stars or its support service executives. You won't get rich at the BBC, he implied although that may depend on who's doing the counting.

In the present climate where commercial media businesses are in trouble, the BBC can appear more than usually insulated. The pension pots of the long serving seniors add to a picture of a privileged organisation – and to judge from the audience at *Any Questions* on Friday the public is far more exercised by what the BBC pays its top people than the expenses they claim.

While you can't allow every public show of hands or media furore to dictate internal policies, there is a case for greater restraint from the top tier than simply sharing the pay freeze that will be felt all the way down to £60k. It would be a brave move by those above £150k to accept a level of salary top slicing. But it might be for a greater good. If the public takes hold of the 'bloated BBC' line they'll be less likely to defend the licence fee from similar treatment.

## Phew! it's 34°

**WITH A THROWAWAY COMMENT** during the round-up of the newspapers on *Today*, Evan Davis put his finger to an old tabloid foible. The Daily Mirror was reporting that temperatures inside Wimbledon's centre court had reached 93 degrees. 'Why do they always say Fahrenheit?' mused Davis. 'It's stupid, we use centigrade now.'

He's right. 93F is the same as 34C and we all know that's a hot day with no need to hark back to the temperature table of a generation ago. You wouldn't expect to hear someone complain they had just been charged 18 shillings and sixpence for a cup of tea.

We're with Davis on centigrade (or celsius to be strictly accurate) and while he's at it, he might like to clean up weather reporting on his own programme where we continue to get random conversions into Fahrenheit.

Radio 4 is a forward looking station complete with blog and podcasts. Whatever is it doing clinging to the past? Television weather is always in celsius and if forecasters on radio did the same the remaining listeners who haven't yet made the adjustment would soon get the message.

Andrew Harvey is editor of Ariel

# We should treat religion with the same fervour as football

As Aaqil Ahmed prepares to join the BBC as head of religion and ethics, Andrew Graystone senses an opportunity for some new thinking

**SOMETIMES A WHOLE** broadcasting genre goes through a kind of renewal. It happened to science in the 1990s. Not just new formats, but a whole new approach seemed to emerge that allowed science to leap from the margins to the mainstream where it belongs. I'm hoping and praying that the same thing will happen to religion on tv.

If that is going to be born again, programme-makers will need to take note of some of the significant changes that have happened over the past two decades. In greater London for instance, more than half of Sunday morning church-goers are black or Asian. You would hardly guess that from the portrayal of Christianity on television. Patterns of believing have changed.

### Fewer going to church

When I was a child I went to church on Sunday mornings with my family. So did 6m other people in Great Britain. In 2009 the number has fallen well below 4m. For a lot of people in my parents' generation, going to church was simply what you did – part of the routine along with Sunday roast and *The Archers*.

In many ways the decline in church attendance represents an increase in honesty. Nowadays almost no one goes to church because they feel they ought to. There's been a sharp decline in religiosity – and I welcome it. To acknowledge publicly that you are a Christian is counter-cultural. Most of the religious life of the UK takes place outside of the walls of any church. And large swathes of the Christian community are far more passionate, engaged and subversive than anything Dot Cotton would recognise. At its worst this expresses itself in mistrust, hatred and exclusion. But at its best – and it mostly is good – it turns into great acts of self-sacrifice, passionate campaigning and creativity. It is never, never dull.

But somewhere along the line a doctrine seemed to emerge that nothing should be broadcast in the name of religion if it might offend anyone. Tony Blair, speaking to this month's Church and Media Conference, described this as the negative narrative of 'thin religiosity'.

I suspect commissioners find this 'lowest common denominator' approach so bland that they



Peter Owen Jones in Ethiopia for *Around the World in 80 Faiths ... but did he catch the fire*

don't want it on their channels. Or if they do feel a residual duty to commission, they place it in the margins of the schedules. Religion on tv ought to be as dangerous as the stuff it depicts.

Too often, when believers of all shades watch televised religion we don't recognise our-

**I'm not looking for programmes for card-carrying believers**

selves. We don't see the compelling, energetic, mysterious stories and experiences that draw us in to faith. Instead we often see ourselves portrayed as freaks, geeks or antiques. Many of us feel cheated. Some give up and opt for the narrow religious channels.

Let me be clear. I'm not looking for programming that will only be of interest to card-carrying believers. Sometimes people of faith are treated like a special interest group – like vegetarians or train-spotters. (Every now and then it's our duty to make a programme for them...or should that be a programme about them?) Of course the BBC has a mandate to reflect the life of the nation. And in the last census only 16 percent

of the population said that they had no religious affiliation.

But I would reject any suggestion that the BBC 'owes' coverage to various faith communities in proportion to their numerical strength. People of faith are not 'them' but 'us'. The central questions of belief – why are we here; where are we heading; are we alone; don't belong to conventionally religious people, but to everyone.

It just won't do to treat religion as a historical artefact or an anthropological specimen. It's a living reality for millions of people. So although I enjoyed *Around the World in 80 Faiths* and I'm looking forward to BBC Four's *History of Christianity*, what I really want to see is programming that captures the fire of contemporary lived religion with all the energy of a football commentary.

Religion is made up of all the stuff we love, hate, worship, hope for and believe in. It can't be put in a box. That's why it crops up in drama, music, arts and current affairs as well as specialist factual programming of the sort that the BBC's Manchester department can do so well.

### Journalists don't understand

The complaint I hear most from people of faith is not that the media is biased against religion – though some people feel that way. More often I hear complaints that journalists simply don't understand what they are reporting. It's frustrating to hear fundamental mistakes in a report on a subject you care about: roles misunderstood, names mispronounced and so on.

When religion hits the news it often seems as if journalists don't quite know how to handle it. So they turn to the same models they use to report politics. Differing faiths or religious groups are portrayed like political parties – competitive, confrontational and vying for public support. Ideas are represented by personalities – the owlish archbishop versus the strident professor of atheism. The implication is that religion – like politics – is ultimately a battle for influence, with success measured not in votes on a ballot, but bums on pews. That's why BBC One's *The Big Questions* – surely the bastard child of *Question Time* and a 1970s late night ITV show, falls flat. Thank God it's shown on Sunday mornings when most Christians are otherwise engaged!

Aaqil Ahmed, who takes up his job as head of religion and ethics in early July, has an opportunity to build on the BBC's existing expertise and authority. Creating understanding of people's beliefs is a core part of the BBC's public service function. There's a particular opportunity to grow in understanding of British Islam and smaller faiths. The European elections demonstrated just how vital that is. The revitalisation of religion on tv is imperative,



Andrew Graystone is director of the church and media network, secretary to the standing conference on religion and belief and a producer/presenter on Radio 4



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

■ The dg has said all the claims for car parking and the London congestion charge related to his official car and the parking fees were paid by his driver while the dg was on BBC business. My question is why does Mark Thompson need an official car for what I imagine are meetings mainly held in London?

When I've been filming with a dv kit I've managed to get on and off the tube – perhaps the dg would consider this mode of transport saving some public pennies and the environment...

**Alan Clayton**  
*ap, news and current affairs, Manchester*

■ I'd just like to offer my cake making services to any members of BBC senior management wishing to spend £400 on celebration cakes.

Like many of my network radio producer colleagues, I fret about how I can make my programmes on tiny budgets. I'm rather startled to see that tv programmes can justify £400 on one cake. It must be a really big cake. Is it iced in gold leaf?

At any rate, this represents more than the contributor budget I have for many of my programmes.

If any more tv cakes are needed, I will make them for you for the bargain price of £200. My costs will be no more than £20 and I will put the remaining £180 into my programme budget. If you want a fruit cake, that will be £220. Scones come in slightly cheaper.

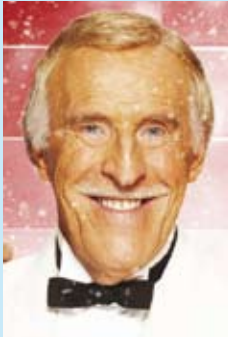
**Sarah Taylor** *senior producer (and moonlighting cakemaker), radio docs*

■ It's great to see the BBC being so upfront about the expenses claims of top bosses. Interesting to read about the amount that's spent on external business lunches. I was pretty hungry when I read the details.

If Mark Thompson or any other executive would like to invite me out to lunch to talk about 'current projects' I'd be very happy to accept.

## NO EXPENSE SPARED

May I say how pleased I was that Mark Thompson treated Bruce to a bottle of half decent champagne to mark the latter's 80th birthday. Nice that he could claim it back, too. I cannot claim the one bottle of £15.99 champagne



that I treated the staff of BBC Hereford & Worcester to the night after we scooped two Sony Radio Academy awards this year. It's against BBC policy for me to claim for champagne for deserving staff and broadcasters. I am also not in the top 50 of earners in the BBC. I would estimate I am about 21,350th.

**Keith Gooden**  
*sbj, BBC Hereford & Worcester*

Promise I won't order the champagne....

**Simon Ward**  
*freelance presenter/reporter*

■ I think it is a good idea for senior BBC managers to release details of their expenses. Some of the claims may seem a bit strange but at least Mark Thompson is being honest about it. No one seems to have made as big a fuss about them as they did with the MPs. I'm all for it.

But I still would like to know why a certain presenter on the News Channel is getting paid £92,000 for a two hour shift. And they should stop paying Jonathan Ross all that money; giving everyone else £1000 rather than £450 would be better.

**Inderjeet Sanghera**  
*ba, Look North, Hull*

■ I can't \*\*\*\*ing believe it (don't worry I have referred up all my \*\*\*\*ing and bleeps to my controller and my editor has checked my compliance form for 'Letters, the writing of to Ariel'.

Please can someone tell me: How Zarin Patel can claim so much for room and breakfast and then have the cheek to say that BBC dia-

ries are too expensive. (I won't let the diary issue drop – it was a false economy). Also why doesn't she have to follow the same guidelines as the rest of us have to do when booking hotels?

**Gillian Darlington**  
*ba, Radio 4 documentaries*

■ Just looked through the BBC exec expenses

– and couldn't help notice that Mark Byford took Alan Johnston out for lunch – following his release and safe return to home shores after an appalling ordeal.

Bill = £37.90 ... 'Welcome home, Alan ... Good to have you back ... Pizza Hut?'

**Ben Thomson**  
*assistant editor, Radio Lancashire*

■ On the train to London yesterday (standard class off peak return with zone 1&2 travelcard £71.70), while consuming an orange juice and a Twirl (bought it myself, none of your business what it cost), I called up BBC Online on my mobile (personal



account, I pay it) and read with interest the long list of expenses that our managers have incurred.

Just because an expense seems huge – £2000 for flights – doesn't mean it's wrong. £2000 might be perfectly justifiable. Likewise a very small expense of £5 could be dishonestly claimed. When I make my claim for yesterday's trip to London, I'll keep in mind the image of its appearance in a national newspaper sometime soon. I'll be happy to answer questions about it.

**Mark Warburton**  
*Manchester*

■ The greed shown in some of the expenses claims, published last week, is unbelievable. Despite earning such ridiculous sums, certain people can't even pay their congestion charge.

And how is it that someone can claim for a bottle of water and a snack? Surely they are paid a wage to keep themselves healthy and to feed themselves. Apparently when you join the BBC and end up as one of the chosen few you can have everything laid on a plate for you.

With £640k a year couldn't our boss have bought champagne for

Bruce Forsyth out of his own pocket? Short arms or what?

**David Tutt**  
*FM&T*

■ I'm confused now. I went to South Africa for the BBC earlier in the year, and when I was reporting from one of the townships, someone ran a razor blade down my back-pack, presumably to get inside and steal stuff. I didn't dream of claiming the £17 the replacement bag cost me. After all, I have a fabulous job and the trip was a privilege so I wasn't going to get greedy. But given Jana's claim for her £1000 bag, was I being naive? What is the policy on replacing stolen or damaged bags?

**Stephen Evans**  
*World Service*

Read the BBC's policy on compensation for personal property lost, stolen or damaged while on duty at [tinyurl.com/bbcpolicy](http://tinyurl.com/bbcpolicy) – mail ed.

■ I think there's nothing to be ashamed of in the expenses revealed so far. But here's an idea ... as well as the BBC revealing the earnings of its best paid 100 employees in the autumn as promised, why not also reveal how much some of the BBC's less well paid staff earn? Otherwise some people might think we're all raking in as much as MPs.

**Chris Arundel**  
*bj, Radio Humberside*

■ Since the Guardian, in particular, seems keen managers should avoid all expenses in the course of their jobs, I have come up with a way of cutting back further.

Why doesn't the BBC skip the Media Guardian TV Festival in Edinburgh this summer?

Saving on hotels and also the £400 cost of a ticket. I'm sure it's what the Guardian would want.

**David Gregory**  
*science and environment correspondent*

## OBITUARY

### MATT GOODLET

A big guy who was larger than life, Matt Goodlet was an ever present member of the FM&T HR team.

Whether it was his sharp wit, his cheeky grin, or even the fish based lunches (he ate at the desk in an open plan office), Matt sparked his audience and created a moment and often a barrel of laughs.

He worked closely with Tony Ageh, Julie Light, Erik Huggers, Andrew Scotland and many of the former new media central team where he brought a fun, light hearted and effective approach to HR. Matt had a generous and energising approach to work challenges, always having time for those who needed it.

He joined the team in 2006 and quickly educated everyone of his pas-

sion for rugby, his love for the All Blacks, and the comedy genius of *Flight of the Conchords* (he'd tirelessly recount the scenes and couldn't believe 'the BBC passed this up when it had the chance!').

The team came to understand Matt's 'healthy' diet. He was never happier than after indulging his body with alternate Friday lunchtime sessions at the all you can eat Chinese or Indian restaurant down 'SheBu' or Tiffin Bites at White City canteen.

An avid sportsman, Matt encountered the odd injury from an extracurricular rugby game or 'session' and, from time to time, milked the sympathy of colleagues for a shoulder injury which ruled him out for the season. But instead of sitting on his hands, he would be out there coaching others or using his entre-



preneurial spirit to devise the ultimate rugby aid. He even sourced a manufacturer in China – he just needed financial backers!

Matt left the BBC after 18 months to return to his New Zealand homeland and his family near North Island.

His personality was infectious, real and not wrapped up in layers. What you saw was generally what you got and people took to this. It was no surprise to see so many tributes on Facebook following the fatal car crash and to learn that more than 1000 people went to his funeral.

Many will miss Matt. His family, his partner, friends, rugby buddies and drinking pals. And his old team from Broadcast Centre – Deb, Viv, David and Chris – who have been left saying 'you egg!', shocked and saddened by the loss of their friend and colleague.

*Christopher Bowen*

## FROM THE VAULT

### June, 1990

Your correspondent asks for early examples of television's use of telephone helplines. He may be interested to know that BBC Television's relationship with the telephone goes back at least as far as 1938.

On the evening of December 23, the first director of television Gerald Cock, answered viewers' questions by telephone in the studio in what was probably the first ever phone-in-cum-helpline.

Questions posed during the live 40 minute programme included: 'Has the cathode ray receiver any harmful effect on the eye?'; 'Would it help to have a special licence for television?'; 'When are television sets going to be as common in the English home as sound receivers are at present?'

According to contemporary press reports, only a few calls were expected at the Alexandra Palace studios, but there was an avalanche with which the local 'Tudor' exchange could not cope.

Viewers knew they were on to a good thing, even then.

*Nicholas Moss, chief assistant, directorate co-ordination, network tv*



## PROGRAMME MAKING

**Executive Editor, Comedy**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
11D/Ref: 12583909  
09-Jul-09 12 months

**Producer, River City**  
Dumbarton  
9D/Ref: 11747509  
30-Jun-09 05 months

**Content Producer, Ouch!**  
London  
TV Centre  
7D/Ref: 13346809  
07-Jul-09 09 months

**Producer, Radio 1**  
London  
Yalding House  
7D/Ref: 13340609  
08-Jul-09

**Content Producer, Radio 4**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
7D/Ref: 13322309  
13-Jul-09 Continuing

**Assistant Producer, Comedy**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
7D/Ref: 12729009  
09-Jul-09 12 months

**Production Co-ordinator**  
Aberdeen  
5H/Ref: 11722509  
05-Jul-09 12 months

**Researcher, Sport**  
Cardiff  
5D/Ref: 13316209  
10-Jul-09 07 months

**Production Co-ordinator, Sport**  
Cardiff  
5D/Ref: 13241609  
10-Jul-09 12 months

**Broadcast Assistant/Cynorthwy ydd Darlledu Radio W**  
Cardiff  
3D/Ref: 11721609  
05-Jul-09 06 months

**Broadcast Assistant, Symphony Orchestra**  
London  
Maida Vale  
3/4D/Ref: 12526609  
06-Jul-09

## JOURNALISM

**Senior Broadcast Journalist, Radio Current Affairs**  
Manchester  
9D/Ref: 10973909  
12-Jul-09 12 months

**Multi-platform SBJ, BBC World News Programmes**  
London  
8/9D/Ref: 13684009  
09-Jul-09 12 months

**Senior Broadcast Journalist, BBC Tees**  
Middlesbrough  
8D/Ref: 13675609  
09-Jul-09

**Video Journalist - BBC Look North**  
Hull  
7D/Ref: 13218909  
06-Jul-09

**Broadcast Journalist - BBC Newcastle**  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
5/7D/Ref: 13602009  
06-Jul-09 03 months

**Broadcast Journalist, Radio Berkshire**  
Reading  
5/7D/Ref: 13501009  
07-Jul-09

**Broadcast Journalists, BBC Radio Derby**  
Derby  
5/7D/Ref: 12140109  
09-Jul-09 09 months

**Political Analyst**  
London  
Millbank  
5D/Ref: 13717209  
06-Jul-09 06 months

**Researcher, BBC Arabic**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
5D/Ref: 10933609  
08-Jul-09 06 months

## BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

**Head of Audience Services & Operations, MC&A**  
London  
White City  
SM2/Ref: 13603009  
13-Jul-09

**Director of MC&A, BBC Vision**  
London, TV Centre  
SM1/Ref: 13497209  
05-Jul-09

**Director of MC&A, Future Media & Technology**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
SM1/Ref: 13496809  
05-Jul-09

**Head of Development and Events, BBC North**  
London / Salford Quays  
11D/Ref: 13685009  
13-Jul-09

**Research Manager, Audio & Music - Audiences**  
London  
Henry Wood House  
9D/Ref: 12669709  
09-Jul-09

**Business Accountant/Cyfrifyddwr Busnes**  
Cardiff  
8D/Ref: 13661309  
05-Jul-09 03 months

**Production Accountant (South/South East)**  
Multi Location - South  
7P/Ref: 13661509  
05-Jul-09 05 months

**Audience Insights Senior Executive - Africa**  
London  
Bush House  
7D/Ref: 13655409  
05-Jul-09 12 months

**Project Researcher**  
Multi Location  
5D/Ref: 13373809  
13-Jul-09 12 months

**Regional Team Assistant, BBC Monitoring**  
Reading  
4D/Ref: 9891009  
13-Jul-09 12 months

**Correspondence Assistant (part-time), BBC Trust**  
London  
Marylebone High Street  
4D/Ref: 13291009  
06-Jul-09 06 months

**PA to Head of BBC Workplace**  
London  
White City  
4D/Ref: 13178709  
06-Jul-09 08 months

**Commercial Assistant**  
London  
White City  
4D/Ref: 10796509  
05-Jul-09 06 months

## NEW MEDIA

**Editor, Content Structure, Metadata & Navigation**  
London  
Media Centre  
9D/Ref: 13729109  
12-Jul-09 09 months

**Content Producer Watchdog**  
London  
Media Centre  
8D/Ref: 13735109  
09-Jul-09 08 months

**Assistant Content Producer Watchdog**  
London, Media Centre  
8D/Ref: 13728709  
09-Jul-09 08 months

**Web Designer**  
London, Bush House  
7D/Ref: 12591709  
12-Jul-09

**Search Engine Optimisation Specialist**  
London, Media Centre  
7D/Ref: 10605209  
12-Jul-09 12 months

**Assistant Content Producer, Metadata**  
London  
Henry Wood House  
6D/Ref: 13692209  
14-Jul-09 12 months

**Researcher Watchdog**  
London, Media Centre  
5D/Ref: 13730109  
09-Jul-09 08 months

**Web Assistant**  
London, Media Centre  
4D/Ref: 13535109  
13-Jul-09 06 months

**Editorial Assistant Watchdog**  
London, Media Centre  
3D/Ref: 13729909  
09-Jul-09 08 months

## TECHNOLOGY

**Business Case Analyst**  
London, White City  
9D/Ref: 12511009  
08-Jul-09 06 months

**Senior Software Engineer (Perl)**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
8D/Ref: 13657909  
09-Jul-09

**Project Manager**  
London  
Henry Wood House  
8D/Ref: 13105709  
05-Jul-09

**Project Manager**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
8D/Ref: 13104709  
08-Jul-09 2 years

## BBC WORLDWIDE

**Picture Researcher, Radio Times**  
London  
Media Centre  
3W/Ref: 13485209  
02-Jul-09 09 months

## See Attachment

## Haunted house...

## Paul Organe had some spooky moments while at BBC London 94.9

**AS A STUDIO MANAGER** for the Africa and Middle East region, my average day is spent behind sound desks or travelling abroad to set up and mix OBs. Last year I decided to widen my horizons and used a year's leave, and a bought week, to do a BJTC (British Journalism Training Council) accredited radio and production course. It paid off, and at the end I was accepted on a Stepping Stones placement to work in the BBC London 94.9 newsroom.

My first big assignment was to spend a day with a pensioner to record a day-in-the-life package for the Vanessa Feltz programme. The four part piece portrayed how someone living alone on a state pension in council accommodation felt the effects of recession.



**I set up the OB kit in the cold, dark club**  
Paul Organe

My experience as a studio manager helped me with the OB equipment, editing and playout systems and mixing desks, and at times I assisted the team with editing or technical issues. From early on I was writing bulletin scripts on ENPS, setting up guests, recording short interviews and vox pops, and going out in the radio car with the reporters. Everyone at the station made me feel welcome.

My first taste of reporting live came when I offered an idea to the Big George Webley show. Paranormal investigators were being sent in to an allegedly haunted nightclub in Streatham on Friday 13, and the public was invited.

I took the live OB equipment and set myself up in the cold, dark environs of the club, while visitors tried out ouija boards and held séances late into the night. I was given a long and dramatic introduction by George on the show. I started by describing what was happening and introducing guests for Big George to interrogate.

After being trained in the radio car, I was given more opportunities to report on my own, including a flash mob event in St Pancras and a murder site where I spoke to the victim's brother.

Then, my big moment: the Laurence Olivier Awards 2009, where I found myself on the red carpet. I interviewed Patrick Stewart, Jason Donovan and Sadie Frost, with a special live piece into the 6pm news bulletin that evening.

The Stepping Stones attachment was a fantastic step into radio journalism and programme production and I am now looking ahead for ways that I can combine my audio skills with my journalism experience.

**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/tp/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. Textphone: 028 9032 8478



**VENERA KOICHIEVA**  
**PRODUCER**  
**BBC KYRGYZ**  
**WORLD SERVICE**

**BBC Kyrgyz is the World Service's smallest language service. What can you tell me about the country?**

Almost 95 percent of Kyrgyzstan is mountainous, with a population of about 5.3m. Nearly 53 percent of those are Kyrgyz, but there are also Uzbeks, Russians and Ukrainians. It was hailed as an island of democracy in central Asia, but things are changing. There is freedom of speech, but the government is taking steps to control people more, especially in the last few months.

**The Kyrgyz are nomads...**

Yes, they settled during Soviet times and are known for their hospitality. Some people still use yurts, the traditional houses built of wood and felt. Since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, there has been a revival of nomadic culture, alongside the market economy. That's modern Kyrgyzstan.

**Why the tightening of government controls?**

The country is going to have presidential elections on July 23 and there is tension between the opposition leaders and the current president, who is also taking part in the elections. There has been an increase in the number of journalists who have been beaten up and detained. Newspapers have been sued and heavily fined or closed down.

Recently, a law was adopted that allows the security forces to listen to telephone conversations, and emails can be checked. The government doesn't dare oppress openly and aggressively yet, but there is intimidation.

**And also murders...**

Since the current president came to power there has been a number of political murders. At least three or four MPs were killed in broad daylight. Recently the head of the presidential administration, who quit his job and was known to have plans to help the opposition, died in mysterious circumstances.

**Could what happened in Iran also happen in Kyrgyzstan?**

In 2005 the president came to power as the result of a popular uprising – demonstrations turned violent and there was a revolution one day and then voting took place. But having won as an opposition leader, he became almost an exact copy of the previous president. So the opposition thinks that he betrayed them. There is no guarantee – there could be an uprising or rebellion. I am going to Bishkek to cover the elections.

The government, however, tends to leave us alone. BBC Kyrgyz is the only Western news provider in the country, and our reporters are well loved by the population. Over the years the BBC has established itself as reliable, honest and objective; we are respected for this.

**When did you join the BBC?**

I joined in 1996 when the Kyrgyz service opened. I was employed by the BBC in Kyrgyzstan through a competition. At the time I was a part-time lecturer at the university on the history of culture, and I was an interpreter in parliament, providing translation from Russian to Kyrgyz during parliament sessions.

**How big is the team you are in now?**

There are three of us: Arslan Koichiev, Gulnara Kasmambet and myself. At the very begin-



It took uprooting to London for Venera Koichieva to appreciate the wonders of her homeland, Kyrgyzstan

**CV** VENERA KOICHIEVA

**Education:** MA sociology and history  
**First job:** language consultant  
**Career highlights:** Interpreter for Kyrgyz parliament; lecturer, Institute of Pedagogy; World Service producer  
**Award:** Ministry of culture medal for best cultural contribution, Kyrgyz Republic  
**Family:** Married with four children

ning there were four of us doing 15 minutes of news and current affairs, five days a week. Then we extended our programme to half an hour. When a colleague left, he wasn't replaced. We went down to two and a half producers.

**Was that reduction in numbers hard?**

It was suggested that if we couldn't cope we could go back to 15 minutes each day or five-minute news bulletins. We didn't want to go backwards, so we kept our format. Today we are seven days a week. We maintained our audience through all this and it became stronger too. We also have two correspondents in Bishkek and one in the second city, Osh.

**Your team innovates**

We were the first team in the Central Asian service to go interactive, the first to launch online, and the only team who, apart from radio, also do a tv programme, which is streamed online. These are live debates that are carried on the public station in Kyrgyzstan. We talk about current issues. Once it was beggars, and this made a big impact because they're unusual in Kyrgyzstan. People are usually cared for by their families.

I've done about eight tv shows in London. We've discussed Kyrgyz girls marrying English

guys, Kyrgyzstan as a tourist destination, and people setting up businesses in London.

On the radio it tends to be more news, politics and cultural stories. Our hard work paid off and we were shortlisted for the Reith Awards last year.

**One of your best-received programmes went out last December**

Chingiz Aitmatov, a famous Kyrgyz writer translated into 150 languages, died last year and we organised a special live programme, inviting people from the BBC and from embassies to debate his many books and novels. Students from all over London came to read extracts from his books in their own languages – it was amazing and moving.

**What do you miss about your country?**

Apart from my family and friends, I miss the nature and mountains. Living in Kyrgyzstan I never travelled around the country. Since I moved to London, my husband and I have realised what a beautiful place we've left behind. We visit places we have never been and take our four children. Syyk kul, or the hot lake, is one of the highest lakes in the world and it's absolutely beautiful. It's at the top of a mountain and, in the summer, it's like a Caribbean beach. Everybody in Kyrgyzstan sings. My colleague brought a yurt from Kyrgyzstan to London. She erected it in her back garden for Nooruz [Persian new year] and invited people from the Central Asian service. In such a gathering we all like to sing and just enjoy ourselves.

**Interview by Carla Parks**

**foreign**  
**report**



**BJ ROOPA SUCHAK**

GETS GLITZY IN CHINA AT THE BOLLYWOOD OSCARS

**LOOKING BACK**, it was a great experience but at the time I wondered why I had pitched to go. The International Indian Film Academy Awards in Macao, China meant little sleep and lots of running around mixed with the glitz, glamour and glitterati of the world's largest film industry – Bollywood.

The three day extravaganza, at the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel, included a performance by Cirque du Soleil, a charity celebrity fashion show, film launches, a global business forum and numerous other fringe events, culminating in a seven hour long awards ceremony.

I was there as the multimedia producer for BBC news, working with a team from the Asian Network (attending for their *Love Bollywood* programme) and their entertainment reporter Shabnam Mahmood.

I was overwhelmed by the Venetian Resort's size. Deciding to familiarise myself with the hotel, I went for a walk.... and kept walking, and walking and walking.

Our room was our office. On one desk I set up a mini edit station, and on the other Shabnam set up her mini radio edit suite. It was manic, gathering material during the day, and editing at night. We were there for the arrival of stars, press conferences, fringe events, film launches – you name it and we were there. Both of us were up until 4.30–5am editing and filing for various outlets, making sure that radio, television and online were happy; then, with as little as three hours' sleep, we were up again ready to go go go.

Thousands of fans packed into the Venetian to catch a glimpse of their idols on the green carpets.

**Fans came from across the world, hoping to see their idols**

Why green and not red? It was about the message of being environmentally friendly. The aim of IIFA is not only to take the industry to the world, but to take the message of 'Global Cool' to millions of fans. The awards began in 2000 when the first ceremony was held at London's Millennium Dome. Since then they've been held in Sun City, Amsterdam and Dubai.

Almost 8000 people packed into the Cotai Arena for the main awards show. Guests included Peter Andre, who also performed at the fashion show. Dressed in a traditional Indian style 'kurta' and 'pajama', he hinted that 'he'd like to sing or act in a Bollywood film'.

As the stars headed down the final green carpet, *Love Bollywood* broadcast a live show, and we gathered material for our packages. The atmosphere was electric – with fans who had flown in from across the world, some with tickets to the event and some without, eager to see the who's who of the Indian film industry. As the ceremony started, I made my way to our room to edit, and Shabnam was poised in the winners' enclosure to get the clips she needed for bulletins.

After being up for about 32 hours we decided to grab a power nap for an hour before editing and filing the final pieces. At that point we were overcome with exhaustion and hunger – and relief.

Packing up, the week felt like a blur. Did we really live on chocolate, crisps and room service pizza? Did we really not sleep for all that time? Looking back at the footage... yes, it did happen – and looking at the scales... yes, we did live on junk food, but it was an amazing experience. I heard a rumour that Italy might be the location next year. At least the pizza will be better.

PHOTOGRAPH: MARK BASSETT



# green room

## THE ARIELATOR

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



**UPSIDE** Her feet did not survive the ordeal unscathed, but BBC Cambridge-shire afternoon presenter **Sue Dougan** managed to complete a 46-mile walk to raise funds for Help the Heroes, which provides support for those wounded in Britain's current conflicts. It took Sue 17 hours and 27 minutes to complete the annual Pathfinder March. 'I did my first-ever marathon a few weeks ago and I thought this would be easy by comparison. It was hell,' confided Sue.

The award for the greenest fingers in local radio goes to **Tim Crowther** and **Joe Maiden**, who present a Radio Leeds gardening show. They took home the gong for the UK's favourite regional gardening programme, as voted for by readers of BBC Gardeners' World magazine.

**DOWNSIDE** Tomasz Schafernaker got the giggles on Radio 4 with a classic weather report slip-up. Describing the weather for Glastonbury last weekend, the forecaster said that steamy showers would give way to 'quite a muddy shite'. What he meant to say was 'muddy site'. Tomasz battled through the rest of the minute-long update, nearly losing it. Good thing he wasn't on television or he'd be the unwitting star of YouTube.



## EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...Can you defame a dead dog?...

...I should have done a time lapse video of your receding hairline during this project...

...Vague isn't a problem, as long as it's nailed-down vague...

...You're not to laugh, but you were right. Eight inches really is too small...

...I don't know what you're talking about. I don't have breasts...



## OUT OF RHYME IN THEIR PRIME



Poets in waiting: inspiration has sadly dried up for Dominic Laurie and Natasha Shallice

**MAYBE IT'S THIS SPELL** of good weather, but green room is in a poetic mood. This week we stumbled across two BBC 'poets' whose careers, unlike Alex McRae's (page 5), were tragically halted in the flush of youthful promise. Natasha Shallice and Dominic Laurie, both at *Working Lunch*, won a Haringey borough poetry competition in 1981. Natasha, who works as a deputy editor on the weekly show, took first prize; reporter Dominic had to make do with joint third, a result he blames on being a year younger.

'It was the high point of my poetic career,' sighs Natasha, who has not been inspired since. 'I think it was a case of achieving too much too young.' It can get the best of us, Natasha. Think Harper Lee.

And here are the masterpieces, straight from the mouths of the babes:

**Excerpt of A Piece of China** by Natasha Shallice, age 8

*It had been in the sea for a very long time*

*And the edges had been worn down*  
*Perhaps it was a hundred years old*

*From Victorian Times*

*Maybe it was part of a china tea set*

*In a ship in the captain's cabin*

*When up blew a storm*

*And down went the ship*

*And away floated the crockery bit*

*Onto the shores of Shoe-*

*bury [sic] bay*  
*Where I have found it – to*  
*this very day.*

**Space Poem by** Dominic Laurie, age 7

*I wish I could travel in space*

*It would be quite frightening though*

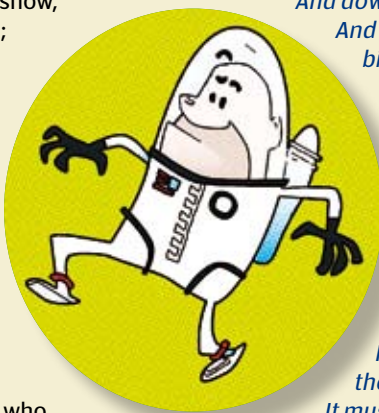
*It must be very black and quiet*

*Probably it feels strange up in space*

*Because there is no oxygen or air. I*

*admire spacemen because of their suits. I'd like to have one. I'd walk*

*up the road and pretend I'm on the moon.*



## WIN TICKETS TO TROILUS & CRESSIDA

**THIS SHAKESPEARE** play takes place seven years after the Greeks began their siege of Troy. The burning love affair between Prince Troilus and Grecian captive Cressida joins the other casualties of war. Cast includes Matthew Kelly, who was most recently in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

**WE HAVE** five pairs of tickets to give away to this play at the Globe Theatre, July 12 to Sept



**Troilus and Cressida** as imagined by the Globe 20. To enter, answer this: Shakespeare drew on a famous English author's

love poem, *Troilus and Criseyde*, as a source for the play. Who was the writer? Email ariel competitions by July 8.

**A JULY** special ticket offer means that the best available seats are just £20, not £33, for the whole of the month.\* Go to: [tickets.shakespeare-globe.org](http://tickets.shakespeare-globe.org) with promotion code 'pcd20best' or call 020 7401 9919 \*except Fri & Sat evenings, & Wed 22.

## WE HEAR THAT...

**GREEN ROOM** is loving Wimbledon, especially without the rain. Suddenly the presenters and pundits are coming across all summery, with a huge jug of frustratingly, nearly full Pimms on the outside table where they gather. But there's one thing marring the joie de vivre: they all appear to be wearing strangely shaped micro-phones that resemble black flowers. It's as if they are all about to trot off to a funeral. Can anyone explain why?

**STICKING WITH** the tennis theme, Dom Joly appeared on 5 Live last week and revealed how he was considered a security risk to the genteel Wimbledon tournament during his *Trigger Happy* era. Fearful that Joly would appear in the crowds, shouting into his oversized mobile phone, his picture was distributed to Wimbledon staff. How times have changed: a more mature Dom Joly will be a roving Wimbledon reporter for 5 Live this year. We're secretly hoping he will have a trick up his sleeve.

**RADIO 1** DJ Scott Mills is looking for someone to play him in a musical at this year's Edinburgh Festival. Scott Mills the Musical started out as an on-air joke, but became a reality after Scott's drivetime listeners took a huge interest in it. Without knowing their *Cats* from their *Chicago*, his team is taking on the challenge of producing a show. 'This is the biggest thing the team and I have tried to do,' reveals a scared Scott. 'We're excited but terrified at the same time.'

**BOB HOSKINS** described playing videogame plumber Mario in flop 90s movie *Super Mario Bros* as 'a f\*\*\*ing nightmare', but surely he isn't still scarred by the experience? Discussing his return to the small screen for the third series of *The Street*, Hoskins said: 'I very rarely watch telly – it's like having a plumber round and showing him your pipes'. As similes go, this one doesn't make much sense. Does the Mario spectre haunt him still? Time to let go, Bob.

**THE DCMS** missed a trick with their non-digital, Digital Britain report: 3500 copies were printed at a cost of more than £25,000, with another £2000 spent on distribution (according to Hansard). Of course, if broadband speeds were a bit better, everyone would have just got the PDF...

**THE UNIVERSALITY** of this Yammer message struck us: 'Just had a work matter settled by rock, paper & scissors. If only all the world's problems could be settled so easily.' Worryingly, it appears to have been sent at 2.43am when most problems are solved either by alcohol or indifference. We're assuming there is something amiss with the timekeeping on Yammer.

**RUSSELL WALKER**, part of Radio York's mid-morning team, has been doing a tour of the hot spots in north Yorkshire, visiting 25 streets in 25 weeks on the BBC's branded bus. 'OBs are one of the local radio five-a-day,' he says. 'We've all done them – some are big events and others are the local townswomen's guild diseased cat fundraiser and cake sale.' We hope he's joking, but we have a feeling he's not employing the use of irony.