

THE BBC NEWSPAPER

# ariel

GET INSPIRED BY CREATORS OF  
THE LATEST BBC SHORT FILMS  
**Page 5 and Ariel online**

◆ **MANISH BHASIN**, presenter of *The Football League Show*, samples mascot madness at White City during filming of tv trails for BBC One's new Championship and League coverage. 'We support your team' was the campaign message to the 47 mascots. The show starts on August 8



PHOTOGRAPH: SUE FOLL

## CHAMPIONSHIP AHOY!

### Exec expenses round two

◆ **IT WAS THE TRIVIA** and the cost of a coffee that caught the critical eye of people lower down the pay scale, as some saw a gap opening up between executive and regular staff expenses claims **Page 4**

### Milestone in the W1 story

◆ **WORK WON'T** finish until 2012, but phase two of the W1 development around Broadcasting House has been topped out in style, now that BH, its extension and Egton Wing are one **Page 3**

### Simpson sees threat to BBC

◆ **BEN BRADSHAW'S** claims of top slicing 'despair' at the BBC are misguided, says John Simpson, but the long term risk to the BBC of sharing the licence fee is very real **Page 10**





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**TOM EVEREST**, senior distribution manager, asks whether medium wave technology still has a place in digital Britain Page 6

**ALEX SOUTH**, a video journalist from Guernsey, enjoys an Olympic Games with a difference in Finland Page 15

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## NEED TO KNOW THE WEEK'S ESSENTIALS

# We don't know what you mean

◆ **AS A FORMER JOURNALIST**, Ben Bradshaw knows how to whip up a headline, and he certainly did that with his comments to the Financial Times last week. '[There] are plenty of people within the BBC that do not feel it is a well-led organisation,' he said.

Opposition by the corporation's bosses to the so-called 'top-slicing' of the licence fee had created 'almost a feeling of despair' among staff, claimed the new secretary of state for culture, who before entering politics was a BBC correspondent.

He went on to say that negative reaction from Mark Thompson and Michael Lyons to the government's proposals, under which licence fee revenue would be shared with other broadcasters, was 'ultimately self-defeating'.

His comments were swiftly rejected by Mark Thompson and Michael Lyons.

'Are there lots of different views [within the BBC]? Yes. Is there a seething discontent? I see no evidence,' Lyons said when called before the culture select committee to answer questions following publication of the annual report.

Thompson told the same meeting that he had received 'emails, comments and messages of support' from all levels of the BBC.

The worrying question for the corporation is whether Bradshaw, who has just started a consultation exercise on top slicing, has already made up his mind.

John Simpson on Bradshaw and top slicing, P10

◆ **MORE THAN 30** MPs of all parties have now signed a Commons motion opposing top slicing. Introduced by Labour's John McDonnell, the EDM (early day motion) argues that the BBC's role as standard setter, significant employer and trainer – as well as the provider of an 'unrivalled range of high quality public service broadcasting' – merits its 'exclusive use of licence fee funding'.

All good stuff. The fact is, though, that very few EDMs are ever debated. Instead, they are used to publicise the views of individual MPs, to draw attention to specific events or campaigns, and to demonstrate the extent of parliamentary support for a particular cause or point of view.

Further backing for the BBC came from consumer group the Voice of the Listener and Viewer, whose chairman Richard Lindley, another former BBC man (he was on *Panorama*), said that while his organisation was campaigning for plurality in broadcasting, the strength and independence of the BBC was even more important.

'Top slicing would weaken the BBC's ability to make good programmes with no guarantee that



they would be made by anyone else. This would do licence fee payers – listeners and viewers – a grave disservice.'

◆ **THE HEADLINES SHRIEKED ABOUT FAT CATS** and the text was barely more restrained as press reaction to last week's annual report concentrated on 'pay rises' for Mark Thompson and Michael Lyons – a 'whopping' £50,000 in his case. While Ariel is exercised about large salaries as anyone else, it is only fair to point out that the press coverage told only part of the story.

Michael Lyons was paid £128k in 2008 for 11 months and he was paid £143k for a full year as chairman of the BBC Trust. The extra month and a 2 percent increase in common with the rest of the BBC makes up the difference. He also worked more days than the three to four he is contracted to spend on BBC business.

His taxable benefits went from £35k to £70k largely because of his travel costs to London from his home in Birmingham and for accommodation. These are classed as taxable benefits.

Mark Thompson's base pay went up from £647k in 2008 to 664k this year, a rise 2.6 percent. This is explained by the fact that the financial year runs from April to March and the remuneration year from August to July. Thompson's pay in the annual report is made up of four months at the 2007-08 rate of 4 percent and eight months at 2 percent rate in 2008-09. From this August, no one earning above £60k will receive a pay rise.

## NEWS BITES

**FILMING STARTED** in Cardiff on Monday on the latest series of *Doctor Who* with a new doctor (Matt Smith) and assistant, played by Karen Gillan. The series has been developed by Steven Moffat, who is also responsible for its overall creative direction. Filming will continue in Wales until March.

**FOLLOWING THE** success of its online debut on BBC Switch last year, *Fresh* (working title), a comedy series set in the world of university freshers, has been commissioned for a seven-part series which will air on BBC Switch (Saturdays, BBC Two) and BBC Three in September.

**CBBC HAS** announced a new adventure game show in which children will go behind the scenes at the British Museum, where they will complete challenges and 'unlock the mysteries' behind its most famous artefacts.

**JEMMA RODGERS**, an independent producer of comedies such as *The League Of Gentlemen*, *Pulling*, *Special* and *Wedding Belles*, has been appointed executive editor to lead comedy from BBC Scotland.

**RADIO CAMBRIDGESHIRE** and the British Heart Foundation have teamed up to host a second charity fund-raising run. The half-marathon run will take place on September 13.

**GARY LINEKER** and his fiancée Danielle Bux feature in a new series of *Northern Exposure*, which starts on July 24, on BBC One Northern Ireland. They start their journey in County Antrim.

**MARK THOMPSON** has been awarded an honorary fellowship from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) for his contribution to communication and the media.

**FORMER SUNDERLAND** striker Marco Gabbiadini and former Newcastle defender Steve Howey have signed as specialist contributors to Radio Newcastle's *Total Sport* show, the first edition of which starts on August 10.

## OPEN GOLF... HOW WE SWUNG INTO ACTION ALONGSIDE TOM

By Peggy Walker

**TOM WATSON'S** bid to become the oldest golfer to win the Open at the age of 59 attracted a peak audience of 5.4 million to BBC One on Sunday.

His play-off at Turnberry against the eventual champion Stewart Cink provided a dramatic climax to one of the highest profile and most technically and logistically complicated OBs that BBC sport produces each year.

Jon Mason, head of project management, SIS Live, the biggest OB provider in the UK, led a team of around 300 non-BBC technical staff who helped manoeuvre 150 OB units, cabins and trucks into position. 'The Open is up there with the biggest events we do, says Mason.

The nomadic nature of the tournament means that the infrastructure has to be created from scratch each year. 'It's not like Wimbledon where

everything is already there. Usually we start with nothing in place at all,' he explains. 'We have to level out areas, prepare the vehicles, arrange toilets, drainage, and plumbing.'

This year was no different. To film the action from Turnberry, 40 scaffold towers had to be built to house some of the 55 cameras used on the 18-hole course. Six hoists were also used, of which the Galaxy hoist was the tallest at 72 metres, providing impressive views of the entire site and beyond.

The cameras were a mix of fixed and mobile. Behind every green was a fixed microphone and camera on one of the scaffold towers. Six cableless radio cameras could go pretty much anywhere on the course and transmit over a radio link back to the BBC compound.

A team of 30 volunteers from local golf clubs provided radio mic coverage of each fairway – useful to record the sound from players' second

shots. And for the first time this year play was also filmed on a radio Supermotion camera. They run at 1000 frames per second. Mason explains: 'It meant we could slow the pictures right down but still have clear detail – great for things like analysing a player's swing.'

This year also saw two interactive feeds made available on the red button and online. Fans of holes 8,9,10 and 18 were able to immerse themselves in continuous coverage of these, with added commentary.

Around 60 people produced the television output, Radio 5 Live had 35 people there, and Radio Scotland sent 21 to provide 30 hours of coverage for news and sport.

But there were no swish hotel rooms to go back to after long hours at the course. Rented houses and university halls were as glamorous as it got.

Meetings to discuss next year's Open at St Andrews have already begun.



## Final piece in construction jigsaw links the original BH, the BH Extension and Egton Wing



The view from the top of The Post Office Tower

PHOTOGRAPH: ANNA GORDON WITH THANKS TO BT

# W1 project high point as Phase 2 is topped out

by Sally Hillier

The BBC's largest ever capital development took a further step forward last week when Phase 2 of the W1 project was topped out, marking the completion of its shell.

It means that another piece of the giant property jigsaw in central London is now in place, with the original BH – refurbished in Phase 1 – the BH

Extension and Egton Wing all linked together. To mark this significant milestone, representatives of the BBC, developer Land Securities and building contractor Bovis Lend Lease gathered at the site on Friday for a traditional topping out ceremony in which the final slab of concrete is laid. It meant a trip in a workmen's 'cage' to the roof of Phase 2, high above Portland Place and Regent Street.



Concrete development: W1 project director Keith Beal gets stuck in

PHOTOGRAPH: STEVE HICKEY

Then it was back to the lower ground floor, where the newsroom, which 18 months ago was nothing more than a gigantic hole – the biggest hole in London in fact – is sited. This will be the new home of London-based journalists, including those currently working at World Service, and already Michael Lyons is envisaging it in action.

'Can you imagine [breakfast television presenters] Bill Turnbull and Kate Thornton in here, opening proceedings on the BBC in the morning?' he asked.

Paul Sims, project director of Bovis Lend Lease, described the newsroom, which will be one of the largest and most technically complex in the world, as 'an incredibly beautiful space' which, he believed, would be widely admired both in the UK and internationally.

# Salford decision brings out the emotions in sport

**YES**

**Matthew Griffiths, producer**

*My wife Sheona also works for sport, so it really has been a family decision. We have*



*a little boy, Finlay, who'll be two in September so the timing is just right. I've lived and worked in London all my life so the move to Salford is the chance to try something different. And it will be exciting to be part of something new. There are still a few question marks over our move but we'd rather be part of trying to make it work than sit back and watch it fail or succeed without us. Fingers crossed it'll be good for us and the department.*

by Sue Llewellyn

The turmoil facing some of those whose departments are going to Salford was highlighted this week, following the news that 55 percent of sport managers on grades 8-9 have decided to move.

That represents 61 of the 114 people involved in the latest vote and is the largest percentage so far among the groups that have been asked to decide.

Sport management has welcomed the big 'yes' vote, but acknowledges the difficulties and dilemmas of those affected. 'I've had very emotional conversations with highly valued members of

staff, who love working for sport but who simply can't move,' Nick Dickson, managing editor, sports news, told Ariel on Monday.

'I've promised we'll do our best to help find redeployment and re-training opportunities and will support them in whatever way we can.'

Barbara Slater, director of sport, said that she appreciated 'what a major decision it is for people and that it has not been possible for all colleagues to say yes for a variety of personal and family reasons'.

Among those contacted by Ariel, some said they voted 'yes' because they saw Salford as a

great career opportunity, but others said they felt they had 'little choice' and that a growing fear of unemployment in the current recession forced their hand.

The new figure, on top of those already announced from other divisions, means the combined total saying 'yes' to Salford under the leadership of Peter Salmon is 45 percent.

Around 1400 roles are earmarked to move to the new northern complex across port, children's, Radio 5 Live and parts of future media and technology.

The final round of decisions by 500 staff in grades 2-7 will be made at the end of September.



**NO**

**Suzanne Hughes, production manager**

*My husband works in the City, and there just aren't*

*similar jobs for him up in Salford. We considered ways to make it work but it's just not feasible, particularly now I have a baby, Jess. It has been a very difficult decision and we feel caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. I'm completely devastated because I love my job and am very committed to it. I really want to stay at the Beeb – ideally within sport. Now I'll have to consider all options.*



It's one expenses rule for top earners and another for us, staff complain

# Why claim back 93p coffees when meeting a colleague?

by Cathy Loughran

If the weekend papers had another field day with the second round of expenses revelations, people inside the BBC seem to have been most exercised by the 'them and us' pattern of executive claims.

The line by line details of claims by 30 of the top 50 BBC execs over the last three years, including channel controllers and divisional directors, were in response to a Freedom of Information request, which specified the 30 individuals by name.

Amid the cup cakes, gifts of champagne and four-figure travel bills, a number of people who spoke

## At a local radio meeting we made do with orange juice

KEVIN STANLEY

to Ariel saw a gap between their own expense claiming experiences and those of the top earners.

This was the experience of one regional bj: 'Details of top managers' expenses came out in the same week that I, in lowly local radio, was having something of an expenses nightmare. When some of our team had to work late due to a weather

emergency, I was asked by a member of our local management team to buy sandwiches to feed everybody. My expenses claim for a measly £30 was rejected several times over intricate technicalities.'

London sbj Nick Serpell echoed a number of colleagues who question the more trivial claims: 'Why do they claim back 93p coffees when they meet a colleague? No one else can do this.'

He adds: 'The main gripe is that execs seem to have totally different expense rules to everyone else – hence five-star hotels rather than a Travelodge, claims for gifts for other BBC personnel, hairdos and lost handbags, all denied to those at the coal face.'

For Radio Nottingham bj Kevin Stanley, it was a different comparison that rankled: 'I can just about see why wedding gifts from a department might be justified – but Andy Parfitt spending £5500 on hospitality at 'strategy' events is obscene. When we learned about a plan called Local Radio 2010 we had a powerpoint presentation and orange juice. It's equally ludicrous that a senior BBC Vision manager spends more than £800 on dinner for three people. Given the recent row over MPs' expenses, it doesn't strike me as having much 'vision'.'

Executive claims in the context of departmental budgets were a common complaint.

Steven Saul, a bj in Manchester,



## The BBC is in the vanguard of public disclosure

CAROLINE THOMSON

told Ariel: 'It is disappointing, when the BBC's local radio network is almost at breaking point, shifts not being covered, difficult decisions being taken on what to cut back on and reduce our service.'

'Reasonable expense claims should be allowed for essential BBC business and perhaps each department or manager should have a small nomi-

nal budget to celebrate success and achievement, but some people have been very unreasonable.'

There was a definite shade of staff opinion which thought that the level of executive salaries were a bigger issue than expenses. Sheffield community reporter Andy Kershaw was among those who couldn't see what all the fuss was about: 'It's the BBC and don't you expect this kind of schmooze, or is it sleaze in showbiz, reprehensible though it is?'

Another out-of-London journalist commented: 'My main reaction is surprise that anyone's surprised. I mean, what do they expect? There's nothing too hideous in my opinion, no outlandish claims for strip clubs or anything. Or am I being too naive?'

Caroline Thomson, the BBC's chief operating officer, said that this latest release of information and plans to regularise expense and salary publication, put the BBC 'at the vanguard of public disclosure'.

'Clearly, as this is about spending the public money, we are always careful to spend it wisely,' she said.

'However, like all global media organisations, senior leaders will inevitably incur expenses as part of carrying out their roles.'

'For example, without overseas travel we couldn't secure millions of pounds of new investment in co-production and exports that can be ploughed back into programming to benefit licence fee payers.'



## Stephenson takes on Six and Ten

James Stephenson has been named the new editor of the *Six* and the *Ten O'Clock News*.

Currently Middle East bureau editor, based in Jerusalem, he has been in charge of the BBC's coverage of the Gaza conflict, the Israeli election and the crisis in Iran.

Earlier in his career he was deputy editor of *Newsnight* before launching *The Politics Show* in 2003. He also edited the 2005 general election results programme and was executive editor of *Question Time* before moving to newsgathering in 2007.

Announcing the appointment, director of news Helen Boaden praised outgoing editor Craig Oliver, who has been made deputy head of newsroom. He had been 'an outstanding editor running a highly creative team', she said.

Stephenson and Oliver will start their new roles in August.

## 22 picked for mentoring

The BBC mentoring project that aims to give particular support to talented disabled staff and people from ethnic minorities has recruited 22 new participants to its second scheme.

A joint initiative, launched last year by the diversity and training teams, the mentoring and development programme (MDP) lists Mark Thompson and Peter Salmon, director of BBC North, among its mentors.

Applicants have again faced some rigorous testing to take up a place and assessment will continue over the next 18 months. They will take part in personal and leadership development, master classes, action learning sets and regular mentoring sessions with a BBC senior manager.

## BIG SPENDERS

**£3500:** Roger Wright on taxis between 2006-9

**£4589:** Michael Carrington on business travel to New York

**£827:** Bal Samra on dinner with former culture secretary Tessa Jowell and Jon Zeff of the DCMS

**£5500:** Radio 1 controller Andy Parfitt on events to communicate strategy to presenters and djs

**£3213:** Jane Tranter, in her former role as controller of fiction, for an 'agents' event



## PETTY CASH

**£1.20:** Helen Boaden, director of news, for bus fare

'escaping terrorist attack at Glasgow airport'

**£59.95:** Jay Hunt, BBC One controller, for biscuit jar as wedding present

**£26.97:** Danny Cohen, BBC Three controller, on a box set of *Skins*, which he commissioned at Channel 4

**£10:** Bob Shennan, Radio 2 controller, who got into the wrong minicab and had to pay cash



## WHAT NEXT ON EXPENSES

The salaries and expenses of the BBC's top 50 earners and top 50 decision makers will be published on the BBC website in the autumn – expenses retrospectively over three years, in line with those published last week.

From then on, expenses of the executive board and the top 100 below that level will be published quarterly in what Caroline Thomson calls 'a step-change in the information we disclose to the public'.



## PENSIONS £1000 FOR EXPERT ADVICE

Among the more intriguing claims was one by Radio 4 controller Mark Damazer in September 2006 for **£1175.80** to pay for pensions advice.

Seized on by headline writers, it had Conservative MP Philip Davies demanding

the money be refunded.

The payment – a one-off allowance of **£1000** plus VAT – went to 15 senior managers whose pensions totalled more than **£1.5m**, after government changes to regulation affecting that category of pension.

Stephen Dando, former director of BBC people, was the only executive board member among the 15, the BBC said.

'The BBC offers all employees advice on pensions, including helplines and surgeries, but on this

occasion, because of the significance of the change in the pension law, which affected those on higher salaries, a one-off contribution to the cost of advice was offered,' a spokesman added.

'These were benefits in kind and the BBC declares all benefits in kind directly to the Inland Revenue.'



# SHOOT YOUR DREAM

Adam Bambury met some budding BBC filmmakers who know exactly what they'll do if they ever give up the day job

**IF YOU COULD** make your own film, what would it be like? Being your own filmmaker means you can do what you want, with no target audiences, ratings or execs to worry about (unless you want to). So it was no surprise that the third annual BBC Shorts film festival this month was crammed with BBC filmmakers eager to show off their wares to an appreciative yet discerning audience.

But it wasn't just the a/v crowd who were letting loose their artistic side. The showcase event, held in the Council Chamber at Broadcasting House and presented by Francine Stock of Radio 4's *The Film Programme*, featured many an auteur who wouldn't go anywhere near a camera in their day job.

Take Stephen Fingleton: 'After getting my first feature film made I thought I was on the yellow brick road to emerald city.'

It turned out to be White City, in the finance department,' says the 25 year-old purchasing and agency spend administrator ('Invoice Detective, if you're a girl at a party'), who



**Big ideas: Jessica Dickenson and Stephen Fingleton seek inspiration from master of suspense Alfred Hitchcock at London's Gainsborough Studios**

wrote the still unreleased film while at university.

On show was his latest work, *Driver*, a quirky comedy about a passive man driving his friend's girlfriend around one night, which he wrote and directed in his spare time. 'I hadn't really thought about how to manage a crew of 25 people for *Driver*, and it was quite a challenge,' admits Stephen, who has a film on tax in the works for the BBC Three *Mischief* strand. 'I spent the days before shoots making loads of pasta sauce to keep everyone happy.'

Utterly different in terms of budget, crew and genre, yet no less accomplished was *Helmut's House* by

Jessica Dickenson, which was shot on a 14-month, 50,000km road trip around Australia in a customised jeep. En route she heard rumours of a mysterious old man living in the bush on his own at the bottom of a riverbed: 'I got someone to draw me a map and off we went,' explains Jes-

**'A crew of 25 was quite a challenge'**

**STEPHEN FINGLETON**

sica. 'We didn't set out to film him, but I'd never met anyone quite like Helmut. After he sent us off on a beer run - a two-hour round trip - we thought it would be okay to set up a camera.' She and her boyfriend ended up spending the night next to Helmut's ramshackle house before returning in the morning.

The resulting film edits hours of conversation to a concise six and a half minutes, combining footage of the idiosyncratic Helmut discussing his unusual abode and laughing at the folly of western civilisation with breathtaking shots of the Australian outback. Jessica, who is currently working on CBBC's *Me and My Movie*

film competition, has more than 12 hours of footage from the trip still to edit.

Though the free BBC Shorts bottles of wine looked decidedly empty by the end of the night, they were hardly needed to add entertainment value to an evening with everything from sombre black and white experimentalism to glossy two-minute comedies about the word 'virgin'.

Anyone inspired by all this creativity should get going - the next event takes place in December.

Watch *Driver*, *Helmut's House* and other BBC Shorts at Ariel Online.

For more information about the event, email [bbcshorts@bbc.co.uk](mailto:bbcshorts@bbc.co.uk)



**Torchwood's Ianto, Captain Jack and Gwen**

## ...BUT PLEASE DON'T SHOOT THE WRITER

by Andrew Wong

**A FORTNIGHT AGO**, the epic mini-series *Torchwood: Children of Earth* saw the British government despatching an army to sacrifice ten percent of the UK's children to an alien race who threatened to unleash a killer virus and wanted the children's biochemicals to get high. If that wasn't enough, it also showed senior civil servants killing their families to save themselves from this fate. However, none of this compares with what really annoyed some *Torchwood* fans - the death of Ianto Jones, one of the *Torchwood* team.

The loss was just too much for some fans. Ordinarily, they might console themselves by writing a stern letter to the BBC, mounting

a petition, moaning down the local pub or at conventions. But now fans have blogs, websites - and of course Twitter - to vent their frustrations. James Moran was one of the writers for the mini-series, and prides himself on having an open blog and Twitter account through which the process of writing can be discussed.

Although Moran didn't write the episode in question, the death of Ianto saw his blog and Twitter feed overwhelmed by angry, frustrated, grieving fans asking him to shoot executive producer Russell T. Davies.

They accused him of homophobia, lying about the future of *Torchwood* and exacerbating their depression and laughing at the viewers - 'all things that nobody would dare to say to me

in person', as Moran says on his blog.

The abuse has now led the writer to step away from his blog, signing off with 'Talk about the "work", all you want. But lay off the person behind the work. Because I'm simply trying to tell you good stories. In the end, that is all I can do.'

Of course, Moran is not the first television writer to interact with fans only to find that they sometimes bite back online. Steven Moffat - now show-runner for the next *Doctor Who* series starring Matt Smith - wrote some episodes of *Doctor Who*, one of which included a few in-jokes among users of one of the programme's most popular forums. Unfortunately, some of the other regular forum posters didn't like being part of an in-joke - and let it be known.



Live, experimental science promo could have been too hot to handle



Fired up: Presenters Liz Bonnin, Yan Wong, Jem Stansfield and Dallas Campbell rehearse for the live test

# Trail blazers bang the drum

by Sue Llewellyn

**LIVE TV IS ALWAYS RISKY** and experiments don't always work, so the combination could have been a recipe for disaster. There must have been a collective sigh of relief after last week's three-minute live trail to launch *Bang Goes The Theory* went with...a bang.

Aired between *The One Show* and *EastEnders*, the BBC's first ever live trail featured a giant Heath Robinson type contraption made up of a curious range of objects including a temperamental inflatable rabbit. The experiment started with a pushbike that powered a Van de Graaf generator which in turn triggered a domino style chain reaction. It all ended in flames, not tears.

An enthusiastic Dallas Campbell, presenter of the new primetime BBC One science show, said the experience had been 'a blast'. And even though the live promo went to plan, he adds: 'A science test live is a great way of showing how imprecise science can be.'

The successful blast off is the start of an ongoing marketing campaign that aims to get the nation talking about

science. *Bang* series editor Dermot Caulfield says: 'The 7.30pm slot is a perfect time for this type of family programme. The wide range of subjects being covered, everything from space technology to animal psychology to quantum physics, means that there is something for everyone.'

Deemed a priority for the channel by the MC&A board, *Bang's* target audience is 25-44 year-olds with young families

**A live test is a great way of showing how imprecise science can be**

and the marketing campaign has been specifically designed to create awareness, stimulate curiosity and persuade audiences to join in.

Pulling that off might be both an art and a science in itself. As Su Fall, *Bang* marketing manager, explains: 'We worked very closely with the programme production team, our creative agency RedBee,

media planning, research and publicity to create a fully integrated marketing and communications campaign. As *Bang* is all about showing not telling and making science fun and exciting we wanted to ensure that the campaign encapsulated that.'

The marketing was designed to work interactively on a range of platforms. On air, online, via the *Bang* website and blog, using sheet posters and a wide range of quirky experiments people can do on the spot.

As transmission approaches a fully integrated campaign will go live. The *Bang* team will also be urging viewers to participate in roadshows and online experiments throughout the series.

Fall says this project has been a marketing dream: '*Bang* isn't just something you sit and watch. It's all about making people curious and integrating science into your everyday life. There are just so many parts of this puzzle and the challenge for us has been in joining it all up.'

**Bang Goes The Theory, BBC One, July 27**  
[bbc.co.uk/bang](http://bbc.co.uk/bang)

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## Broadcasters hunt for happy medium

Does MW technology still have a place in digital Britain?

by Tom Everest

**MEDIUM-WAVE ISN'T** the most glamorous of the technologies the BBC uses. Most people know that it's used for Radio 5 Live and the Asian Network, but few are aware that it's still used for local and national radio services throughout the UK.

The reason why is simple: it's reliable and can cover a large area without much fuss. It's where the BBC started in 1922, after all. But with the rest of the industry going digital, there's a challenge to see whether medium-wave itself can also change. The ideal system would combine the benefits of digital broadcast-

ing - reliable sound quality, easy tuning and enhanced services - with medium-wave's wide area coverage and simplicity of transmission. And the BBC and other broadcasters have been working on just such a technology over the last decade: digital radio mondiale.

At night, though, things are different. In a recent trial, increased interference from continental transmissions after dark meant that some listeners suffered either periods of poor reception or nothing at all. The useful coverage of the transmitter compared to the daytime was much reduced as a result.

It showed that if digital radio mondiale is going to be used extensively in the UK, it will need engineers to plan a different transmission network: perhaps by moving the frequencies around, perhaps even by building more transmitters. It's one more thing to be considered as we build a digital Britain.

Tom Everest is senior distribution manager

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# Where there's a will



**Northern Ireland journalist follows the trail**



Grave thoughts: Julie McCullough in Annalong, in the Mourne mountains, where the headstone was found

PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN BOYES/PRESS EYE

by Cathy Loughran

A CHANCE FIND in a remote river in County Down put journalist Julie McCullough on the trail of a mystery story that will be explored in five special reports next week on Northern Ireland's BBC Newsline programme.

McCullough stumbled on the tale of Robert Kelly Pollin (above) after her husband Robin discovered a submerged gravestone in a stream near the couple's home in the moun-

tains of Mourne, miles from any graveyard.

The carved headstone gave basic family details of the 20 year old second lieutenant in the Royal Irish Rifles, who died on a Belgian battlefield in 1917. The reporter's own enquiries traced Pollin's family, although no living relative who remembered him. From local records offices, McCullough and Belfast newsroom colleague Eimear Flanagan headed to the War Graves Commission and the Menin Gate memorial in Ypres, shooting material for

the nightly news programme and its website. The young soldier's name was listed, but nobody had been found. Among discoveries was a will that Pollin, a trainee solicitor, had written on the battlefield, days before he died and which was unknown to his surviving relatives. McCullough also turned up evidence about the spot where the young officer probably died, on the first day of the Battle of Passchendaele.

'Robert's story was probably no more spe-

cial than any of his contemporaries, but it's a story of a generation,' she says. 'Half a million died in that campaign to gain an advance of five miles that was later lost. What is almost as interesting as his story is just how much you can find out from records, and that journey is followed in our special reports and online.'

The mystery of how the headstone came to be in the river remains just that, although its final resting place may now be in a Belgian war museum. [bbc.co.uk/northernireland/](http://bbc.co.uk/northernireland/)

# Don't assume you know our views

## A BBC Three research project has turned up some surprise findings about young people

by Laura Scarrott

**THE MONEY MEN** and City institutions have become synonymous with recklessness and greed, with many people blaming them for the economic crisis.

But BBC Three's research project *Live Insight* revealed that, contrary to general consensus, 16 to 24 year olds don't blame the bankers.

'We assumed that they would, but they said they understood that capitalism is all about taking risks,' says research manager Alice Kaphan. 'That's what makes *Live Insight* so successful, because it throws up things you otherwise wouldn't know.'

The project was set up in Septem-

ber 2007 to support in-house production teams who were struggling to win BBC Three commissions in the Wocc. The indies, who were accustomed to making programmes for E4, T4 and MTV, already knew the audience. 'The first thing we had to do was to help the in-house teams to understand them better,' says Kaphan.

Her team recruited a group of 50 'insiders', aged between 16-24, and asked them to send in written content, vox pops, photographs and films on different themes, such as crime, fame and the supernatural. Kaphan describes it as an 'ongoing conversation' with the *Live Insight* website updated each month.

The 'insiders' are also invited to



Lot of bottle: Jess, who appears in BBC Three's look at binge-drinking

the BBC to talk to programme makers about new ideas and genres. One session resulted in the decision to commission a teen drama for the channel called *Mirror Mirror*, which is expected to transmit next year.

*Born Survivors*, a series examining the lives of young people in Britain, started life as 'downbeat and judgemental' of binge-drinking and pregnant teens. But after discussions revealed that 16-24 year olds admired

people who had 'been through it' the tone changed and became a celebration of their survival.

The marketing campaign for the Adult Season, which started last week on the channel, was also informed by their research. 'We asked our audience what it meant to them to be an adult and we used their responses in the trail,' says Kaphan. 'Anecdotally there are definitely more in-house commissions coming through.'

By removing the distance between programme makers and the audience she says it has given the in-house teams the confidence to pitch their ideas. Although developed for in-house teams, BBC Three is open to letting indies access *Live Insight*'s findings. 'It's becoming part and parcel of the channel,' says Kaphan.

And the idea's spreading. Next to get the *Live Insight* habit will be BBC Knowledge which is planning its own household-based research later this year.



# “YOU SAY”

THE BBC WANTS TO BE GREENER. ITS ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS SUGGEST HOW IT MIGHT BECOME MORE ECO-FRIENDLY

**INVEST IN A BOLT-ON FOR SAP** to allow us to calculate our carbon consumption alongside our finances and link this to published performance targets. For example the Radio Times listing for *Panorama* could say: 'This programme used X tonnes of carbon to make.' **MARTIN TWEDDLE, PRODUCTION ACCOUNTANT**

**TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT** could encourage staff to take part in an 'on/off switch awareness' course. This would introduce those unfamiliar to the functions of this feature, which is found on many electrical items. More effort could be put into making the hot water in basins throughout TVC just that - 'hot' rather than 'very hot'. This would save over-heating water - and money as we wouldn't have to buy stupid stickers warning people that the water is very hot. **TIM MATTHEWS, MULTIMEDIA PRODUCER**

**IN THESE DAYS** of paperless billing, I think a great environmental and fiscal saving would be to allow staff to opt to take paperless payslips. I would not make it compulsory, but put heavy significance on the environmental benefits. Your pay information is already available online and can be individually printed if required. **DAVID H JONES, RADIO OPERATIONS COORDINATOR**

**AT THE NEW BBC CAMBRIDGE** building, Pembroke House, we have inherited a water harvesting system. This reduces the call on mains water by collecting rainwater from the flat roof, storing it and re-using it to flush the lavatories. **MARK UNSWORTH, OPERATIONS MANAGER**

**CATERING SHOULD ADVERTISE** a discount on hot drinks if the customer provides a cup. This would give people an incentive to use reusable cups rather than the thousands of polystyrene cups that get thrown out in the BBC every year. **STEVE PEARCE, RESOURCE AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANISER**

**STAFF COULD MAKE** their own stationery boxes and keep them in a central place in the office where all unused files, pens, post-it notes and so on could be left for people to reuse. The quality of 'second hand' stationery is usually high and we should encourage a culture of re-using things rather than being quick to re-order. This would also cut down on transport emissions from deliveries. **KATHERINE EVERITT, ENVIRONMENT AND ETHICAL EXECUTIVE**

**AXE UNDER-DESK BINS** and get recycling points set up so people split their waste then and there. Have only metal knives and forks in our canteens and cafes, and do away with the plastic stuff. **KATHY CLATON, MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT**

**DRINKING TAPS** should be used instead of water coolers and rechargeable batteries given to people going on trips **BETH JINKINSON, BJ**

**SEE WHAT IDEAS WERE SUGGESTED AT THE FIRST BBC ENVIRONMENT DAY LAST WEEK. VISIT EXPLORE.GATEWAY.BBC.CO.UK/ENVIRONMENT/.**

# week@work YAMMER

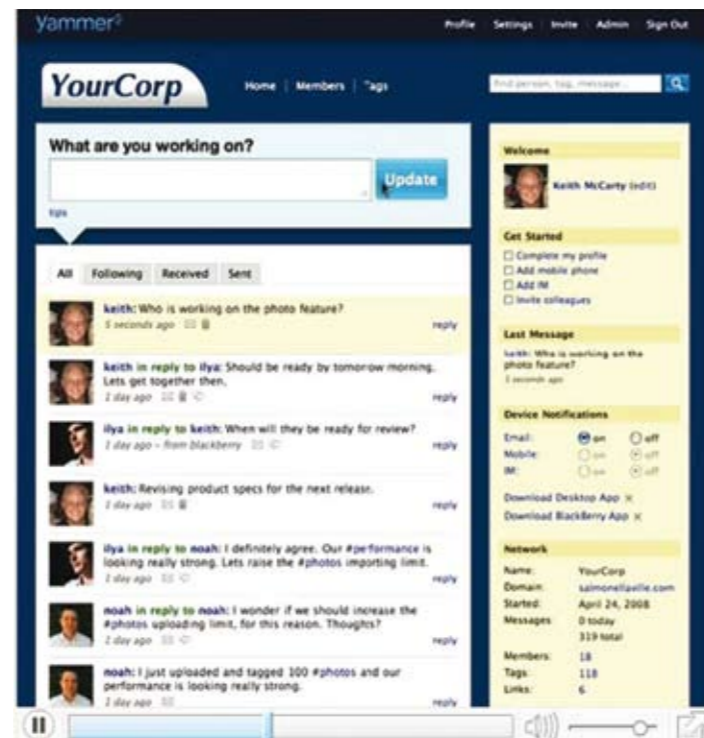
While the BBC air is thick with twitters and tweets we've noticed that more and more people have been finding an outlet for their technical questions and pithy remarks

**YAMMER IS THAT PLACE.** Like Twitter, it allows users to post updates of their activities, follow others' updates and tag content. Unlike Twitter, Yammer focuses on businesses, so only individuals with the same email domain - @bbc.co.uk - can join a given network.

Yammer 'cuts the crap' (the phrase famously coined by former dg Greg Dyke). There are no headers, no fancy formatting...it's as simple as posting a question and, if you're lucky, getting a fast, human-generated answer. It's less a 'social tool' than a knowledge engine, which allows you to search for information which is probably not written down anyway.

Championed by Erik Huggers, director of FM&T, Yammer is like a human Google, powered by BBC brains.

This is why it's an ideal



channel for people in technology and news, where the pace of change is high. By the time a news story breaks, or a 'bleeding edge' piece of software (so cutting edge it bleeds) is launched, you'll probably have read about it on Yammer.

The overnight editors' chat group is currently hosted on Yammer. It's a place for journal-

ists working during the night to discuss their coverage, swap information and advice in a single conversation.

The Yammer group is an extension of our Story Communities pilots, where journalists across news have been using chat software to keep in touch. **yammer.com/groups/overnighteditors**

Andrews. It was commissioned by controller of CBBC Anne Gilchrist.

Head of BBC Switch Geoff Goodwin has commissioned an **INTERACTIVE DRAMA** for BBC Two. Planned to tx in the autumn, online tasks will complement the tv drama which revolves around a derelict building containing a well. Made by Conker Media, it will be exec produced by Goodwin.



Model choice: Sophie Dahl to present cookery show

## COMING UP

Model/author Sophie Dahl (pictured) will present **A NEW COOKERY SHOW** on BBC Two. Made by Fresh One Productions the 6x30 minute series will tx on the channel next year. It was commissioned by Jo Ball, commissioning editor for factual features, and will be exec produced by Lisa Edwards and Alison Kirkham.

Controller of daytime Liam Keelan has commissioned a 5x45 minute series called **RIP-OFF BRITAIN** for BBC One. The series, to be stripped across one week, will investigate immoral high street practices and hidden costs. Made by the current affairs unit in Manchester, it will be exec produced by Carla-Maria Lawson and Sinead Rocks.

## BBC IN ACTION

Street life: John Ryan, managing editor of Radio Manchester; Kirsty Styles, student; Steve Rawling, co-ordinator; Oonagh Jacquest, web/mobile producer; Adam McClean, student; at Manchester's International Festival



From the 'provocative and visceral' work of performance artist Marina Abramovic (four hours long and you can't leave) to Elbow's sell out performance with The Hallé Symphony Orchestra, the BBC captured the best of the Manchester International Festival - 18 days of world premieres, exhibitions and music. The Culture Show team filmed a rare tv in-

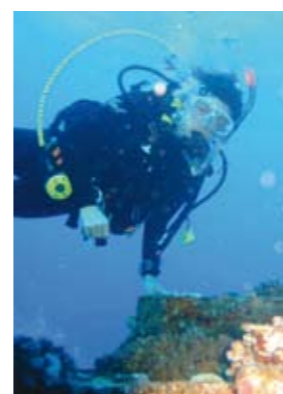
terview with Ralf Hütter, founder member of reclusive German electronic pioneers Kraftwerk, whose set was rumoured to be a favourite of Peter Salmon. Not to be outdone, Radio Manchester sent its reporters to review the exhibitions and broadcast a live nightly show from the Festival Pavilion in Albert Square, presented by the station's Sam Walker. There

was also a chance for a group of 18 year-olds to gain reporting skills, with help from BBC radio, tv and online experts - all thanks to Liza Booth, who manages education partnerships for BBC North.

Steve Rawling, regional coordinator for BBC Manchester, helped the students produce 90 minutes of online video and 50 hours of live

broadcasting...including a film of the opening procession. Catch the Culture Show's third feature on the festival on July 22, BBC Two [bbc.co.uk/manchester](http://bbc.co.uk/manchester)

## SHAMELESS PLUG



KATY YOUNG, PRODUCER RADIO CORNWALL

I am a PADI (Professional Association of Diving Instructors) scuba diving instructor in my spare time. I work

for Truro College Diving School running PADI open water, advance open water, rescue diver and divemaster courses. The school also runs discover scuba diving, which is a taster diving session.

Courses run all summer and I promise the water is not that cold. There's also plenty to see including fish, seals, rays and even basking sharks. Initial training is completed in a swimming pool to build up your confidence.

The Open Water course takes four days and costs £260. The advanced open water course takes two days and costs £180. Prices include tuition fees, study material and equipment hire. You can also stay on site at Tregye, a beautiful 19th century manor house. [trurocollege.ac.uk/diving/](http://trurocollege.ac.uk/diving/)

## CHANGING PLACES

IAIN DAY (pictured), project manager in BBC people, begins a six month attachment with the BBC North project team...

Presenter **STEVE LE FEVRE** becomes Radio Bristol's new breakfast presenter. He replaces **RICHARD WYATT** who is leaving to begin a PhD... Radio Lancashire bj **SEAN MCGINTY** becomes the station's new social network producer... **WILL MALLEY** joins the daytime team in Manchester as part of North West Vision & Media Northern Lights scheme.



## FACT OF LIFE

- Research conducted by audiences shows that only half of the UK's 2.6million **TWITTER** users log on again after registering.
- Men, who account for 56 percent of users, and young people are more likely to continue using Twitter with almost half using it to follow a celebrity. The average number of 'followers' is 126, but Jonathan Ross exceeds this with 350,000.
- 87 percent of users are likely to post their own statuses, while 96 percent read other people's updates.
- Despite having over 1million regular users only 10 percent create 90 percent of the overall content.

## THE IT CROWD

If you're using a BBC networked computer and are working from someone else's login you can still access your own Outlook account:

Open a web browser, type owa (Outlook Web Access) in the address bar and press return. Then enter your login details in the screen that appears to open your Outlook account.



Graham Stewart, presenter, Radio Scotland

[bbc.co.uk/blogs/grahamstewart](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/grahamstewart)

## Thursday

**Harry Potter at the Empire**

The audience was applauding even as the Warner Bros. logo appeared on the screen. Now that's not something you hear a lot of in Inverness, but then this was the Empire cinema in Leicester Square. But applauding a movie has always struck me as odd. I mean, it's not like the actors can hear it. As for the actual movie, Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince - well, it was fun...full of gags about teenage romance, snogging and that kind of stuff. Oh and a main character dies at the end, of course. Cue applause.

**Jeff Zycinski, head of radio, Scotland** [bbc.co.uk/blogs/jeffzycinski/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/jeffzycinski/)

## Friday

**Is golf the only sport where players don't cheat**

Think of the Olympics - events where spectators are not surprised if competitors are caught taking performance enhancing drugs. Sandy Lyle has caused a furore by accusing Colin Montgomerie of cheating four years ago. The R & A say they've introduced drugs tests at this year's Open, but do you expect golfers to be caught doping?

**Harriet Oliver, 5 Live journalist** [bbc.co.uk/blogs/tivelivebreakfast/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/tivelivebreakfast/)

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- 3 Optical Express: **15 percent** off
- 4 House of Fraser: **10 percent** off most merchandise
- 5 The Little Gym Kensington: **free trial class**



For a complete list of Westfield discounts visit Ariel online

## blogbites

What we found trawling the blogosphere

### Monday

**Monday's Quote of the Day**

If there is electricity in every village, then people will watch tv till late at night. They won't get a chance to produce children. When there is no electricity there is nothing else to do but produce babies.

**Ghulam Nabi Azad, India's health and family welfare minister.** [bbc.co.uk/blogs/magazinemonitor](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/magazinemonitor)

### Tuesday

**Is culture too London-centric?**

A UK-wide search for City of Culture has been launched by culture secretary Ben Bradshaw. He says we have been London-centric for too long in our cultural life. I am not sure who the 'we' he is referring to is. It can't be the towns and cities outside the capital with flourishing cultural landscapes. The comment could only come from someone speaking from a London-centric perspective.

**Razia Iqbal, arts correspondent** [bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/raziyaiqbal/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/raziyaiqbal/)

### Wednesday

**Should Sundays be sacred?**

Do you think working on Sunday has destroyed our way of life? Caledonian MacBrayne has confirmed it intends to introduce Sunday ferry services from the mainland to Stornoway on Lewis from this weekend. The leader of Western Isles Council, Angus Campbell, was on *Morning Extra* today defending the sanctity of Sundays...it's not just about religion: it's just as much about preserving a way of life that a majority of the islanders support.

**Graham Stewart, presenter, Radio Scotland** [bbc.co.uk/blogs/grahamstewart](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/grahamstewart)

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# How to control the BBC? Cut back on its income



Ben Bradshaw's view on 'despair' inside the BBC is way off beam, says John Simpson, who fears that top-slicing could curtail the organisation in a way that political pressure has failed to do in the past

**LAST WEEK** something happened to make many of us at the BBC feel distinctly gloomy about the corporation's future. On the morning of the day when the BBC published its annual report, the new culture secretary Ben Bradshaw chose to attack the BBC Trust chairman and director-general personally, and announced that their leadership had created 'almost a feeling of despair' among BBC staff.

And why does he maintain we are in despair? Because Michael Lyons and Mark Thompson have dared to criticise the proposal that the government should slice off a sizeable chunk of the BBC's income.

It's a slightly weird argument, when you come to think about it; Bradshaw is saying we're upset because we actually want to have even more cuts than we've had to endure already, and the top brass are selfishly trying to stop it happening.

The best way to damage the BBC is to cut back on its income; attacking it openly doesn't work so well, because most people in Britain can usually be relied on to support the BBC in any row with the government of the day. Various people over the years have understood this and promoted the idea. What's new is the suggestion that the BBC's

staff actively want this too.

I'm not saying that ours is a particularly happy organisation at present; it isn't. The cuts which the Blair government effectively imposed on the BBC have caused a great deal of grief. Suddenly, commercial television isn't the force it was a year or so ago, and we haven't yet come to terms with that.

**AND IT IS PAINFUL** when BBC programme makers have to scrimp and save, or face losing their jobs altogether, over relatively small amounts of money which would transform our programmes if they were pointed in our direction.

Many of us aren't at all happy with all the extra management over the years, either. Like most of us, I've got managers I wouldn't recognise if I passed them in the corridor.

But these are things for us to sort out ourselves, and one of the strengths of the BBC is that people make a noise about issues like these, because we're passionate about the BBC and believe in its future.

That future, though, is largely dependent on the licence fee; and now, for the first time in the BBC's 85 year history, the government suddenly seems to want to change the rules.

## DOES THIS REALLY MATTER?

After all, if a slice of the licence fee goes to rescue Channel 4, won't that do a service to the entire community? Most of us would be all in favour of a strong Channel 4, producing exciting and innovative programmes as it once did. But this isn't an argument about saving Channel 4, it's about saving the BBC.

Take a look across the Atlantic. Like most other Commonwealth broadcasters, CBC in Canada was (and still is) funded by a licence fee. It provided an excellent service, on a par with the BBC, and was Canada's dominant broadcaster. Then, in the mid-1980s, it started to irritate the prime minister of the day, Brian Mulroney.

He decided to top-slice CBC's

**'I'm not saying ours is a happy organisation, at present, it isn't'**

licence fee, announcing that CBC must get more of its income from advertising. The economic climate made that impossible, as Mulroney knew it would, but the licence fee was cut all the same. CBC is still very good, and is certainly a lot better than its commercial rivals.

But the drop in its income means it's certainly not such a powerful force in Canadian broadcasting, or in the life of the nation, any longer. As a result, Canadian governments don't have to worry so much if CBC broadcasts things they don't like.

## CUTTING THE LICENCE FEE

means cutting the broadcaster. It will work far better than anything Harold Wilson or Margaret Thatcher or even Tony Blair managed to do over the years.

The BBC will never be the same again if the politicians of whatever party get their hands on the licence fee. They may promise now that they'll never take off another slice, but at some point in the near-future you can bet that someone will do it again. And again. And again.

We still enjoy the trust and affection of a large majority of our fellow citizens: each of us working for the BBC knows that. We may, as Jean Seton, the leading academic authority on broadcasting, wrote the other day, do a better job of selling British values around the world than any British government. But none of this will matter if the politicians – any politicians – start to get their hooks into our income.

**BEN BRADSHAW** is still supposed to be considering the proposal, though it sounds as though he's made his mind up already. It could be the most serious blow ever inflicted on the BBC.

So if the BBC staff are suffering from a feeling of despair, it's not because we think Lyons and Thompson are wrong to oppose the idea. It's because we know how destructive the consequences will be.

*John Simpson is the BBC's world affairs editor*

arielview



SALLY HILLIER

## Execs who can't stop giving

**ANOTHER WEEK, ANOTHER PR UPSET** for the BBC, with the latest round of details about expenses. The revelations were – pun intended – a gift to the headline writers, who, in a temporary diversion from tales about the recession, gleefully highlighted presents of port and pate, champagne, chocolate, flowers, and cupcakes (£43 for a small box!).

Much was made of the £1579.63 spent by creative director Alan Yentob on an 'executive Christmas dinner' although, as even some of the sharpest critics acknowledged, it was for 27 people.

Yentob's festive bill was among pages of figures released on Friday, since when staff have been pondering how busy execs with some of the most demanding jobs in the industry find the time to 'do' their expenses and why, given their huge salaries, do they bother to claim for trivial purchases – a 99p bottle of water for example.

There is also dismay that while the bosses appear to be smoothly reimbursed for all manner of costs attributable to their work, people further down the line often find their own claims for basic items – sandwiches for the crew on a delayed shoot, for example – rejected (see story Page 4).

Chief operating officer Caroline Thomson is right to point that leaders 'will inevitably incur expenses as part of carrying out their role' and that, compared to the heavily redacted MPs' expenses, the BBC's list is a beacon of transparency.

Even so, this is yet another negative story at a time when the BBC needs all the positive press it can get. And the story won't go away, because the pay and expenses of its top managers are to be published as a matter of routine. Surely this will curb some of the spending. Fancy cookie jars and cashmere socks? Don't take the biscuit.

*Sally Hillier is deputy editor of Ariel*

## Other side of the story

It feels like open season on BBC drama, with the BBC Trust calling for more ambition and originality and then *Cathy Come Home* and *This Life* producer Tony Garnett's broadside about top heavy executive control of drama commissioning.

Garnett's complaints about layers of supervision holding up projects for years, were not new. They were a re-run of woes expressed two years ago at a Broadcast drama conference in London when indies queued up to complain that too many script meetings and too much hand holding in development were draining them financially, let alone creatively. Ben Stephenson, controller of drama commissioning, has recognised some of these problems and is simplifying processes.

The trust's criticism in the annual report however seems harder to stand up when we've just had a run of cracking network dramas like *Occupation*, *Freefall*, *Five Minutes of Heaven* and Jimmy McGovern's third series of *The Street* kicking off strongly. Originality and ambition in spades. Let's see what the 20 hours of original authored dramas Stephenson has just ordered deliver.

*Cathy Loughran is deputy editor of Ariel*





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

## Pay execs a bit more

I don't agree with Gillian Darlington that all employees should 'Claim! Claim! Claim!' (July 14).

BBC executives who receive or even earn six figure salaries should think twice before making a claim because every minute they spend putting details into the expenses system is costing several pounds of tv licence fee. This time could be better spent trying to defend DAB radio and other things digital.

Wouldn't it be simpler if such employees had a small enhancement to their meagre pay but were not able to claim expenses? This would help them to consider more carefully how they travelled/where they stayed/what they consumed/how many they entertained.

**Jamie Searle**  
Radio York

## Clip some wings

I couldn't believe it when I heard this.... 'Yes...charter the plane...they said it's fine....I'll put it on my expenses.' But there you go, it's true.

**Chris Ancil**  
WS radio newsroom

## Our man on the spot

For how much longer will local radio stations use the formula 'BBC Radio XXX's political reporter Chris Brierley is at Westminster....' or 'With the latest from Wimbledon 2009, here's BBC Radio \*\*\*\*'s tennis reporter Mike Naylor...'. To take two recent examples from ENPS, the electronic newsroom production system.

The 'XXX' or '\*\*\*\*' are replaced by the local radio station's name, as appropriate, so every station which uses such items claims the named reporter as its own. Chris Brierley is no more Plymouth's political reporter than he is Manchester's; likewise

## Are the Sonys a contest we can afford to lose?

While the BBC is navel gazing about expenses, I think Mark Thompson should think seriously about the amount of money the BBC spends on entering industry awards. Take the Sony Radio Awards for example. They're a huge advertisement for a commercial company, and of what benefit are they to the licence fee payer? Every year the BBC spends a massive amount of money competing

in the Sonys. Each entry, for each category, can cost around £100. Often staff are taken off-rota to compile the awards, or in the case of the networks, independent production companies may be hired to put them together. Then there's the ceremony in London, the booze, the food and the hotel bills.

Let's stick to internal awards like the Gillards.  
**Chris Baxter**, presenter, Radio Leicester

Mike Naylor is no more Norwich's than Newcastle's: both, presumably, are more likely to be found in London.

Yes, they are BBC political/tennis/whatever reporters, and provide a valuable service to BBC local radio stations, but to purport that each is exclusively a particular station's reporter is bordering on deception.  
**John Halford**  
picture editor, Norwich

## Our hands are tied

It was with some interest that the staff at the BBC office in Carmarthen, west Wales, noted that posters had been put up in the toilets, asking us to 'wash our hands'.

Interesting, as for many years now the toilets at the office have not been supplied with soap or any type of handwash.

Well at least someone made the effort to come down and put the posters up. Maybe they can bring some soap with them next time.

**Jason Phelps**  
BBC Carmarthen

## Easy ride

I am a big fan of *Top Gear* which has provided some of the best laugh out loud moments in the past year. Yet I

couldn't help but notice a political agenda in the July 12 programme which surely would not be tolerated editorially elsewhere.

As the horrendous death toll in Afghanistan was announced, *Top Gear* gave the Army a chance to show how good its new vehicles (largely, alas, not deployed in Afghanistan) really are. Then May and Hammond devoted 20 minutes to showing an extreme example of the 39p stamp to anywhere mail delivery, just as the Royal Mail's anti-privatisation advertising campaign hit the hoardings.

Are the producers of *Top Gear* unable to see through the PR puff that the rest of us counter on a day to day basis?

**Ian Pearce**, religious producer/presenter,  
BBC Three Counties Radio

## Dead ringers

It may come as a surprise to Siemens, or whoever approves their decisions, but the World Service broadcasts to the whole world and its staff do occasionally need to make international phone calls outside office hours.

To keep track of the phone bills, we must request the ability to make international calls in studios. Previously we called 100 for this service,

but we have been told the Siemens Telephony Service Centre on 61000 were taking over responsibility.

Imagine my surprise when, in a live studio on Saturday, I called 61000 to hear: 'The office is now closed. We are open 9am until 5pm Monday to Friday.'

Not being in a position to postpone the news for two days, we explored workarounds and did manage to get our live interview in the end. There has still (at the time of writing) been no communication about how we are supposed to make international calls in studios outside office hours.

**Chris Marshall**  
studio manager, Asia and the Pacific

## Zoom into action

Leaving TVC recently, I saw a fight going on across the road; two men were attacking or fending off a third.

As other passers by went to help, a fast red car - like something out of *Ashes to Ashes* - sped into the TVC entrance, two men jumped out and ran over to help. The driver restrained the pair and got on his phone, while his passenger ran after the other man, who'd run into Wood Lane station, and brought him back to the others. This all took about five minutes.

At which point the TVC security guards came out their hut wondering why someone had parked outside the gate. The situation was explained to them, but they simply shouted and whistled at the driver to move his car, rather than go over to help.

It's good to know there are still people out there willing to get involved in cases like this, even if they did cause delay to people rushing to their business.

**Phil Haworth**  
White City

## Losing my patience

I am writing about an ongoing problem of internal post disappearing.

Something was put into the internal post for me two weeks ago from Television Centre to Blackstaff House in Belfast and it never turned up.

After contacting the various post rooms I have now been informed that there is nothing that can be done and that 'these things happen'.

I don't buy it. How can envelopes correctly addressed just go missing - they must have gone somewhere.

**Bronagh Taylor**  
pa to head of drama, NI

**Kate Smith, customer service director, BBC Workplace replies:** We apologise for the problem experienced and will make contact with Bronagh to help track down the missing item.

BBC Workplace handles around 85,000 items per week, the vast majority of which arrive safely. If items do not reach their intended recipient, we would advise staff to contact their local mail help desk who can put a chase on the item.

In order to minimise delays when sending mail, please use full name and address details. In addition, it is a real help if staff update their contact details on the global address book on a regular basis.

## OBITUARY

### JAMES KLASS

The presenter of Radio Merseyside's black programme *Upfront*, James Klass, has died of cancer aged 44.

'Larger than life' is a phrase that could have been tailor-made to suit James who came to the UK as a teenager in the eighties and to a Liverpool still bearing the scars of the Toxteth riots.

Soon after his arrival in the city the station's management team felt that the black population of the city needed a fresh, vibrant voice and the *Upfront* programme was created in 1983 with James and his co-presenter Barbara Phillips at the helm.

Both were trained for radio by the Ariel Trust, a training agency set up with the support of the BBC and designed to give radio training to local young people who did not have

the benefits of a sixth form or university education; 'ordinary kids'.

While at Radio Merseyside James interviewed many celebrities including Freddie Jackson, Eek-a-mouse, Frankie Paul, Maze, Nathan 50Cent, Maxi Priest, Hugh Masekela, The Last Poets, The Temptations...

Recently he recalled his first ever live interview with much laughter. '...Maaan, it was a Monday night and I was nervous as hell. Special guests in the studio were the mighty Aswad. I had prepped them, set up the mics, knew exactly what I was going to say, did a big build-up and then called them....UB40. You could



hear a pin drop in the studio. I realised that I had f\*\*\*d up but didn't know what I'd said until Brinsley Forde (Aswad) said quite calmly, 'it's cool, James, we like UB40 but they are a white reggae band from Birmingham and we are clearly not them'. Floor, open up, came to mind.'

James's modesty, humour, enthusiasm and commitment continued throughout the years - no room or studio was dull when James was around.

His sense of humour and infectious laugh made him a huge number of friends - many of whom visited him at his hospital bedside over the past few weeks, which he left every Saturday night, despite the pain, to come into the studio to co-present *Upfront* with Mandy Smith.

He was devoted to his six children and to Liverpool 8 where he spent his teenage and adult years.  
**Mick Ord**

## FROM THE VAULT

### July, 1991

**In reference to the proposed rolling news service for radio, am I alone, and will I be castigated by my colleagues, if I venture to suggest that there is already far too much news? I concede that the Gulf news reports had some public support, where there was at least something to say, but even then it seemed to me that most of the time was taken up with much-repeated items and interminable speculation. I think most of the radio and television news media risk having a shrinking audience. People will switch off, because the impression they will get is of a service desperate to fill the airtime, and where the important items are being increasingly diluted by speculation and repetition. I fear a BBC 24-hour news service will hasten this decline. I also fear that the required resources will only eat into the already stretched BBC funds when they might be better spent providing the public with something more entertaining.**  
**I. F. Humphrey, PID Television**



## JOBS

BBC People

## PROGRAMME MAKING

**Assistant Editor, BBC Look East**  
Norwich  
9D /Ref: 15570709  
30-Jul-09 06 months

**Assistant Producer**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
7D/Ref: 15460309  
27-Jul-09

## JOURNALISM

**Asst Editor (Multiplatform) Olympic/Minority Sports**  
London / Salford Quays  
10D/Ref: 15617109  
30-Jul-09

**Reporter (Senior Broadcast Journalist)**  
Tunbridge Wells  
8D/Ref: 10517409  
03-Aug-09

**A V Senior Broadcast Journalist, Radio 1 Newsbeat**  
London  
Yalding House  
8/9D/Ref: 15394409  
26-Jul-09 06 months

**Senior Broadcast Journalist (Output Editor)**  
London  
Millbank  
8/9D/Ref: 15285709  
30-Jul-09 09 months

**Broadcast Journalist, Working Lunch**  
London  
TV Centre  
7D/Ref: 15618909  
03-Aug-09 06 months

**Researcher**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
5D/Ref: 15460409  
27-Jul-09

**Broadcast Journalist, Radio Manchester**  
Manchester  
5/7D/Ref: 15479209  
30-Jul-09 06 months

## BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

**Head of Planning & Scheduling, BBC Daytime**  
London  
TV Centre  
SM2/Ref: 13998209  
27-Jul-09

**Resourcing Contract Manager**  
London  
White City  
11D/Ref: 15635709  
29-Jul-09 2.5 years

**Senior Finance Partner, Audio & Music**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
11D/Ref: 14689709  
26-Jul-09

**Head of Brand Strategy**  
London  
White City  
11D/Ref: 13241709  
03-Aug-09

**Transition Project Manager**  
Afghanistan  
9D/Ref: 15590709  
09-Aug-09 12 months

**Audience Planner, BBC Journalism**  
London  
White City  
9D/Ref: 15419309  
26-Jul-09

**Finance & Strategy Adviser, BBC Trust**  
London  
Marylebone High Street  
9D/Ref: 15376909  
30-Jul-09

**Project Manager**  
London  
Bush House  
8D/Ref: 15506009  
09-Aug-09 09 months

**Category Managers**  
London  
White City  
8D/Ref: 14714609  
02-Aug-09

**Senior Research Executive, Audiences**  
London  
White City  
7D/Ref: 15594309  
30-Jul-09

**Artist Liaison, BBC Children in Need**  
London  
White City  
7D/Ref: 15491609  
02-Aug-09 06 months

**Senior Management Assistant, Newsgathering**  
London  
6D/Ref: 15611809  
03-Aug-09

**Communications Officer**  
London  
Bush House  
6D/Ref: 14706509  
29-Jul-09 12 months

**Research Executive, Audiences**  
London  
White City  
5D/Ref: 15594409  
27-Jul-09

**Team Co-ordinator, Drama Department**  
London  
TV Centre  
4P/Ref: 13997909  
27-Jul-09 06 months

**PA to Head and Team Assistant, IPC**  
London  
White City  
4D/Ref: 15357009  
27-Jul-09

**Team Assistant**  
London  
Bush House  
4D/Ref: 14737109  
29-Jul-09 06 months

**Marcomms Assistant, Knowledge**  
London  
TV Centre  
3D/Ref: 15642009  
27-Jul-09 12 months

**Team Assistant, London 2012**  
London  
3D/Ref: 15429709  
30-Jul-09 3 years

**General Manager, BBC Club, P-Time (Not a BBC Job)**  
London  
White City  
N/A/Ref: 15499509  
02-Aug-09

## NEW MEDIA

**Project Manager External Partnerships**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
8D/Ref: 15366409  
26-Jul-09 04 months

**Content Producer, Teachers & Parents**  
London  
White City  
7D/Ref: 15563909  
03-Aug-09 12 months

**Delivery Specialist, Future Media**  
London  
Bush House  
7D/Ref: 15540309  
30-Jul-09 09 months

**Future Media Developer**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
7D/Ref: 15366309  
27-Jul-09 09 months

**Web Assistant, BBC NI, New Media**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
4D/Ref: 15458009  
28-Jul-09 12 months

## TECHNOLOGY

**Technical Architect, FM&T**  
London  
Media Centre  
9D/Ref: 15517509  
28-Jul-09

**Senior Project Manager, FM&T Vision**  
London  
Media Centre  
9D/Ref: 15351009  
27-Jul-09

**Technical Project Manager, FM&T, Vision**  
London  
TV Centre  
8D/Ref: 15350909  
27-Jul-09 12 months

**Client Side Developer, FM&T - Vision**  
London  
TV Centre  
7D/Ref: 15352209  
27-Jul-09 06 months

**Software Engineer, FM&T - Vision**  
London  
Media Centre  
7D/Ref: 15351809  
28-Jul-09 12 months

## BBC WORLDWIDE

**PA - Finance Director, SVP EMEA, VP Marketing**  
London  
Media Centre  
4W/Ref: 15647209  
02-Aug-09 10 months

# See Attachment Austen's world

## Nic Rigby, a bj with BBC Norwich, indulges his passion for drama

**WHEN I SAW THE ADVERT I WAS INTRIGUED:** a Hot Shoes placement which called for someone with experience of research and a passion for drama and storytelling. I had to go for it. The BBC was making a new four-part adaptation of Jane Austen's masterpiece, *Emma*, written by screenwriter Sandy Welch. Researchers were needed to help generate ideas.

Although I'm a bj for news online in Norwich, I've researched stories for *Inside Out* and *Dispatches* for Channel 4. I've also got a passion for drama and I've just finished a screenplay about 17th century witches.

I arrived at BBC drama HQ in London with fellow hot shoe-er Andrea Brew. We were working for the producer George Ormond and director Jim O'Hanlon. They needed background material, so my briefing notes had



### The big kiss scene looked superb

titles such as *Mud on the Slacks - Keeping Shoes Clean in Jane Austen's World*, *Trade in the 18th century*, *Shoewearing*, and *Street Scenes at the time of Jane Austen*.

In the two months, I delved into many worlds. I researched the lives of servants as well as etiquette and late 18th century dances, which involved listening to a lot of wind instruments.

On another tangent, I wrote a piece about women and cricket in the 18th century: so the way that cricket is portrayed in the drama is all down to me. Jane Austen was certainly one of the earliest woman authors to refer both to cricket and baseball - though not in *Emma* (I do quite like the image of Knightley bowling *Emma* out at the crease, though I think it unlikely.)

I was invited back for a day while they were filming at Squerryes Court, a wonderful 17th century house near Westerham in Kent. It was the last day of the shoot, and I was there for the big kiss scene. It looked superb, with great performances from Romola Garai as *Emma*, Jonny Lee Miller as Knightley and Michael Gambon as Mr Woodhouse.

I think Hot Shoes placements are a fine way of sharing the experience of BBC staff.

*Emma* will be shown this autumn on BBC One

**Been anywhere nice? Send your attachment stories to Clare Bolt**

## FULL DETAILS AND HOW TO APPLY

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

## EXTERNAL APPLICATIONS

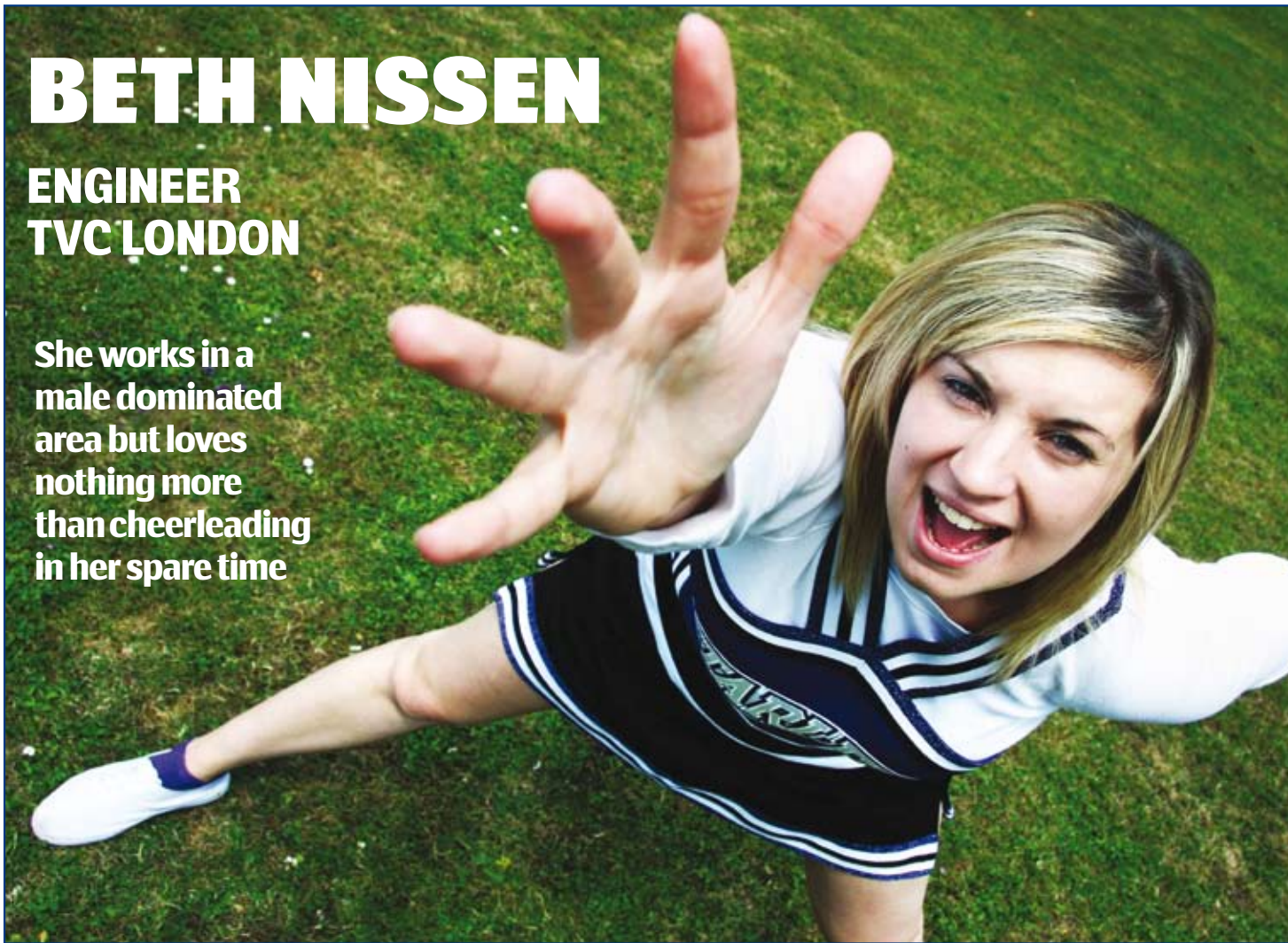
Vacancies published on this page are open to BBC Staff. Where indicated (E), external applicants may also be considered. Please contact (quoting the appropriate ref.no.): Recruitment BBC HR Direct, PO Box 1133, Belfast BT1 9GP Tel: 0370 333 1330. Textphone: 028 9032 8478



# BETH NISSEN

ENGINEER  
TVC LONDON

She works in a male dominated area but loves nothing more than cheerleading in her spare time



**You're an engineer but enjoy a very girly pursuit in your spare time...**

One of the problems with studying an electronics-based course at university was that there weren't many girls. In fact there were more people on my course called Matt than there were girls. So I joined the cheerleading club, the girliest sports club I could find, to make friends with some girls. It turned out I absolutely loved it and I've been doing it ever since.

**You've competed at the World Cheerleading Championships in Florida...**

When I moved to London I joined a cheerleading team called the Surrey Starlets based in Tolworth, south west London, and each year we compete in the British National Championships. Teams that do well get to compete in Florida and in 2007 we won through. We came tenth, which isn't amazing, but it was a great experience competing against the top American teams. It's a different world out there.

**What's it like working in a predominantly male area at the BBC?**

Of the 18 people on the technology trainee scheme there's only one other girl, and within news production women are a minority. This can be an advantage because people remember my name over a boy's. I'm more easily identifiable as a girl among men. I've never felt disadvantaged or discriminated against or that I have to prove myself more. It's a nice environment to work in.

**Why do you think there are so few women in engineering?**

There just seems to be a lack of girls interested in studying the appropriate subjects and wanting to pursue a career in this area.

**When did you decide this was what you wanted to do?**

I've wanted to work in the technical side of tv since my dad took me to see *Blue Peter* being filmed at Television Centre when I was about ten. Then at university I studied film and video technology. I was always good at maths and physics so it seemed a natural route.

**What does the technology trainee scheme involve?**

We started in September 2007 and the scheme is two and a half years long. There are 18 trainees based in different departments across the BBC. I'm based in news along with five others. Our time is split between theoretical training courses at Wood Norton and placements which, for me, are in different areas of news production facilities.

**Where are you working at the moment?**

I'm currently working with the system specialists in audio and music to learn more about VCS, the scheduling and play-out system used by all the BBC's radio networks. I've been here three months helping them to troubleshoot any problems with the system. At the end of July I'll move to SCAR where I'll spend six months.

**What's SCAR?**

SCAR stands for Spur Central Apparatus Room and is basically the control room for news. It's operational 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They set up and co-ordinate feeds of incoming material from all over the world for both radio and tv. They also ensure that incoming material is available when needed and routed to the right destination.

**What's the most exciting project you've worked on so far?**

I spent five weeks with the newsgathering trucks out and about in London, helping the engineers to set up and de-rig the equipment. That was really varied, because you go wherever the news is. I was with them at the start of the credit crunch so I spent a lot

of time outside the Bank of England. I also got to go to the High School Musical 3 premiere. My younger sister was very jealous when I met Zak Efron but I'm a bit old for that now. When the general election is finally called, I'll be working with the rest of the trainees on the coverage. I'm looking forward to that as it's the biggest news operation. That will mark the end of the trainee scheme.

**What will happen then?**

I'll get a job somewhere within news production facilities that matches the skills and experience I've gained during the scheme.

**How have you found shift work?**

A normal shift pattern in news engineering consists of working seven consecutive 12 hour shifts every six weeks. I've only worked night shifts once, but I was surprised at how easily I adjusted. It helps that, normally, you're then scheduled a whole week off to recover.

**What BBC programme would you most like to work on?**

It would have to be *Blue Peter*. I grew up watching it and that's how my interest in working in tv started. I've even got one of the famous badges. After I visited I sent them a thank you letter and a poem and they sent me a badge.

**Interview: Laura Scarrott**

## CV BETH NISSEN

**Education:** BSc (hons) film and video technology at Southampton Solent University

**First Job:** Part time lifeguard at my local leisure centre

**Career Landmarks:** Staying awake for the duration of my first ever nightshift

**Family:** Lives with boyfriend Paul, a fellow BBC engineer

# foreign report



ALEX SOUTH

VJ, BBC GUERNSEY, ENJOYS THE 'MINI OLYMPICS'

**THE COMMON RESPONSE** from most people when the island games is mentioned is 'The what games?' Unless, that is, you are from one of the 25 countries that participates in the biennial event. It's basically a mini Olympics for people from small islands ranging from Bermuda to Guernsey. This year it was held in the Swedish speaking Finnish island (complicated I know) of Aland, which wasn't the easiest place to get to from the Channel Islands.

After a 16 hour trip, we arrived in the capital Mariehamn, which makes up just one of more than 1000 small islands in the middle of the Baltic.

According to the websites we checked before departure, the temperature would be around 9 degrees, so imagine our shock when it was more like 30 as Scandinavia enjoyed a heatwave. The six jumpers I'd packed remained in the suitcase lonely and unworn and a new pair of shorts had to be bought. This is where I found out that Aland is the most expensive part of Finland and that it would

## Going by bus, we were the laughing stock of other media

cost around 50 euros to get my legs out. The other big shock, apart from my wallet being a lot lighter, was that our car hire booking was suddenly cancelled a couple of days before the games started.

Despite a population of just 27,000, Aland isn't a small place. Along with six colleagues from BBC Channel Islands, I wondered how I was going to cover a week's worth of sporting events for radio, tv and online. A quick call to the one and only car hire company on the island, to ask if we could have three cars for island games week, was met with laughter.

So it was on the buses for us. We were the laughing stock of other media but actually the bus network was good; that, and a few lifts from some of our colleagues at ITV (a sign of things to come perhaps), enabled us to get around to every sport.

Fourteen hour days are par for the course at an island games but they are the most enjoyable of weeks for the team from the BBC Channel Islands as there is nothing that even comes close to it locally.

Aland itself was gorgeous, and its inhabitants can be extremely proud of putting on one of the most organised games in recent times.

Good job they did, otherwise our coverage, without the use of any cars, would have been very, very different.



# green room

## THE ARIELATOR

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



**UPSIDE**  
Radio York presenter **Jonathan Cowap** goes straight to the top of the arielator this week for broadcasting live from the heights of Anthony Gormley's Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square.

The 100 day living sculpture gives members of the public one hour on the plinth to do whatever they want. Despite a professed fear of heights, Jonathan chose to present from the plinth during his allocated slot between 6-7am last Tuesday. All in a day's work for our intrepid bj, who was back in north Yorkshire presenting from the studio by midday.

### DOWNSIDE

Summer time, and the living is... Actually quite difficult, at least for presenter **Steve Carver** who, in his quest for the perfect summer job, found himself shepherding OAPs around Devon for last week's Radio 4 programme *Touring Round Torquay*.



For someone who regularly leads expeditions around Nepal, you'd have thought the OAPs would have been a doddle. Not so. Within minutes,

Steve had to deal with mislaid luggage, incorrect seat allocations, difficult German coach drivers and losing his own tour group. Despite a diarrhoea outbreak on the coach, the presenter remains upbeat. 'We had a laugh and they were so kind to forgive my fumbblings over the microphone. Next time I see a coach roar past on the M4 full of elderly people, I'll want to get on it.' Five words: Rather you than us, Steve.

## EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...Conjure me up a little tart...

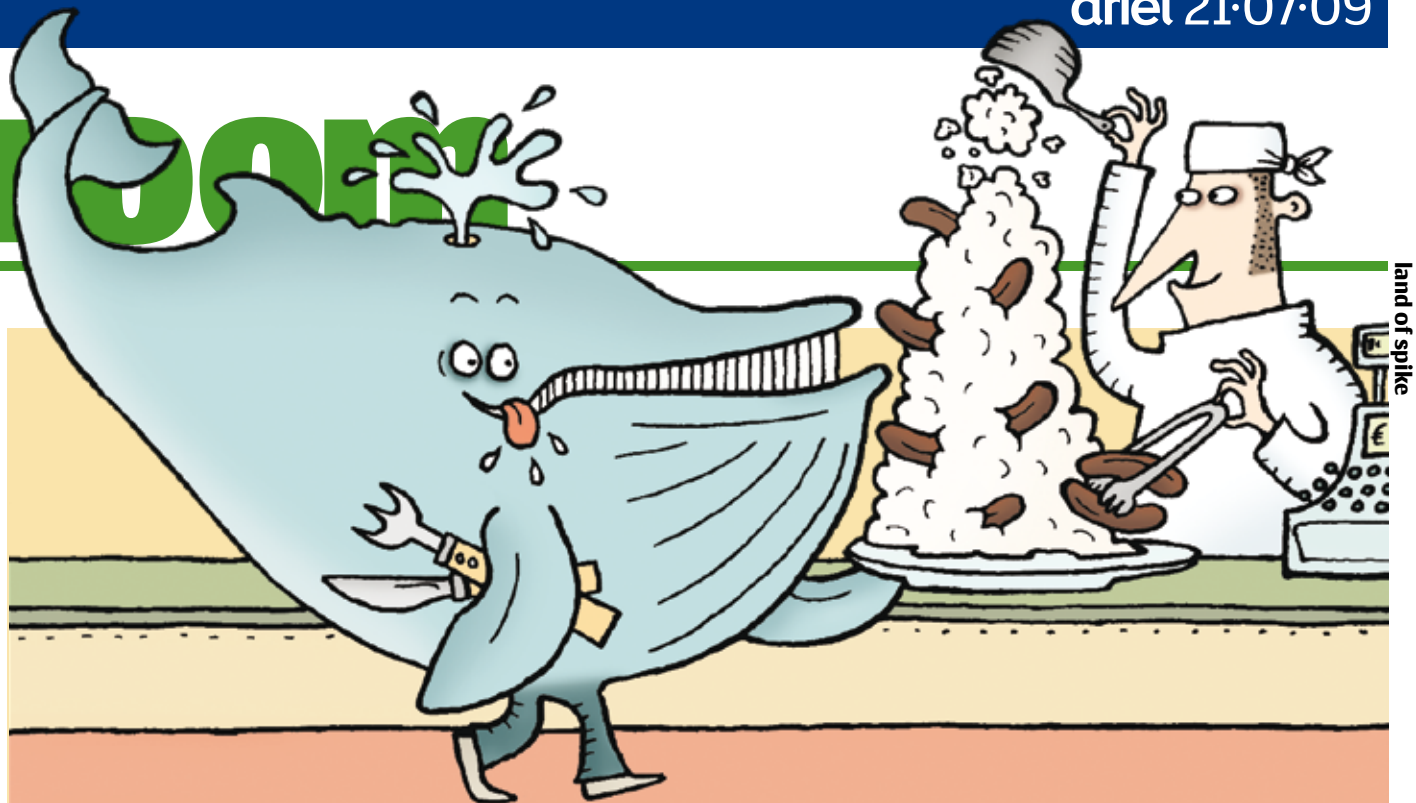
...Not used to seeing you with your trousers on...

...You never stop being a mother, Tim, as one day you'll find out...

...We need a brothel manager next week. Can you do it?...

...I suspect walking on the moon is very overrated...

...I'm NOT going down on my knees and getting dirty today...



land of spike

## PETER AND THE WHALE

**IN A RARE BOUT** of culture at green room we present the winner of the Ariel poetry competition, set a few weeks back. Robert Seatter, head of history and published poet, was the judge. He chose Peter Jones's epic entry, although honourable mentions also go to Richard Wright, Wanda Keenan and Neil Ryan. All four will receive a copy of the Nation's Favourite Poem anthology, and the kind of literary kudos that money simply can't buy.

**The Maida Vale Whale**  
**Peter Jones, ba, Radio 3**

*When I first started at the BBC, in sunny Maida Vale,  
Never did I ever foresee that I would end up as a whale.  
I have always been a little plump, even when a nipper,  
But never did I ever expect to grow a blubbery flipper.*

*There is at Maida Vale, you see, a rather large canteen,*

*Stocked full with food and treats and spoils by the resident chef de cuisine.*

*From lamb with peas to ham with mustard,  
And spuds with cheese to puds with custard,  
I ate it all, every day, with reckless regularity,*

*Until the day I developed my first cetacean peculiarity.*

*It happened whilst chomping on a potato skin morsel:  
There unexpectedly formed on me a prehensile fin (dorsal).*

*Before long I developed pectoral fins, a blowhole and a tail  
And all the other appurtenances befitting your average whale,  
And when complete was the addition of body parts alien,  
I realised I was no longer a man, but a sea-going mammalian.*

*And in a development in our story utterly removed from the prosaic  
Was the irreversible change in my acid*

*deoxyribonucleic.*

*I tried to battle on as best I could, and get to work on time,  
But my route presented quite an obstacle: an absence of brine.*

*You can imagine, no doubt, dear reader, my utter humiliation,  
When finally I was irretrievably beached at Maida Vale tube station.  
Before long quite a crowd had gathered with buckets and hoses and water,  
Including Sarah, Duchess of York, and her eco-friendly daughter.*

*By night and day they valiantly battled to keep me nice and moist,  
Whilst the fire service was despatched to find an efficacious hoist.  
How they kept me going as long as they did to me is a mystery,  
But eventually I passed away into the annals of natural history.*

**To hear Peter read his winning entry and see the runner-up poems, visit Ariel Online**

## WE HEAR THAT...



**Nicky Campbell and Charles Hawtrey: should have gone to Specsavers**

**RUMOURS OF** rivalry between *5 Live Breakfast* and *Today* seemed to be dealt a blow when the Radio 4 team stepped in to lend Nicky Campbell their communal reading glasses after the presenter realised he had left his pair at home, putting the *5 Live* show in jeopardy. But the gift had a sting in its tail: 'I look like Charles Hawtrey in *Carry on Abroad* after a night on the tiles,' lamented Campbell on air as he donned the one-armed plastic specs.

**THE RADIO 4** beehive has been flourishing this summer. *Farming Today* producer Fran Barnes and team took their first crop of BBC honey from their very own hive to The Royal Show in Warwickshire last week. They entered honeycomb, some light honey, and presenter Charlotte Smith's honey cake in different catego-

ries in the honey competition. Sadly all they came away with were sticky fingers and a bitter taste in their mouths. 'Our honey was oil seed rape honey, which didn't have the floral mix the judges were looking for. It's the Blue Nun of the honey world,' Barnes sighs.

**OTHER ATTENDEES** at the agriculturally-focused Royal Show could be forgiven for thinking they were seeing the shocking result of GM crop experimentation gone wrong when radio presenter Mark Powlett turned up with a retinue of smiling clones. In fact his mini-me posse was actually a bunch of school children in masks donated by a local business that had taken part in a feature on Mark's afternoon show for BBC Coventry and Warwickshire. At least, that's what he told the irate farmers...



**Just me, myself and I: Mark Powlett and friends. Mark's the one at the back**

## WIN TICKETS TO SUDDEN LOSS OF DIGNITY.COM



**EVER PESTERED AN EX** with drink-and-dial, or run out of toilet paper at the worst possible moment? Help is at hand: the team of playwrights turned therapists at the Bush Theatre in W12 have created [suddenlossofdignity.com](http://suddenlossofdignity.com), a show inspired by embarrassing true stories submitted via the titular website. Its cathartic entertainments should have you laughing, crying, then holding your head high once more. To enter to win one of five pairs of tickets for the August 1 performance at 7.30pm, answer this question: What is the name of the pub that the Bush Theatre was established above? Email [ariel@bbc.co.uk](mailto:ariel@bbc.co.uk) competitions by July 27. BBC staff are also eligible for discounted £9 tickets: call 020 8743 5050 quoting 'BBC Offer'. T&Cs apply.