

# ariel

THE BBC NEWSPAPER

Seetha Kumar hosts  
online's first open day  
**Page 6**

## Rain rain go away...

◆ **THE ODD DOWNPOUR**  
didn't dampen the spirits of presenter Lauren Laverne and the rest of *The Culture Show* team, in Edinburgh for three specials from the festival. Programme highlights include comic Arthur Smith touring the city on a leopard print motorised sofa. Feature, Page 5





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**ROBIN MORLEY**, social media lead for English regions, explains how to twitter effectively at work. P8-9

**AMBER DAWSON**, broadcast journalist, writes of her experiences at the 'coalface', working in the UGC (user generated content) Hub. P14

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**NEED TO KNOW** THE WEEK'S ESSENTIALS**Fresh incentive to saddle up**

◆ **IT'S PEDAL POWER AT THE BBC** with around 200 staff signing up each quarter for the cycle to work scheme – a figure that could well rise with the selection of a new provider.

As we report on page 4, the independent company Cyclescheme is to take over from Halfords next month.

Cycle to work is a national initiative designed to promote healthier journeys to work and reduce environmental pollution as part of the Government's Green Transport Plan.

The scheme evolved from the 1999 Finance Act, which enabled employers to loan cycles and cyclists' safety equipment to employees as a tax-free benefit, so reducing the cost of the bike.

The BBC introduced cycle to work in the spring of 2007 but initially, for administrative reasons, restricted the sign-up period to just one month each year: miss that and you had to wait 12 months for another chance.

Now though the window is open four times a year – in December, March, June and September – through myChoices.

A requirement of the scheme is that the bike should be used mainly for commuting to work, or part journeys such as to the station, or for journeys between one workplace and another. The bike can be used for leisure purposes, but its principal purpose must be work-related.

◆ **THE TELETUBBIES ARE BACK** for a dance tour of the nation's shopping centres, but have they ever really been away? With Worldwide's long-running magazine and an array of toys still in production, the colourful foursome are now so firmly embedded in the national consciousness that it's easy to forget the controversy that surrounded the programme on its debut in 1997.

The Teletubbies' limited vocabulary lead to accusations of inanity and teaching children to speak incorrectly, while growing speculation over the sexuality of the handbag-wielding purple Teletubby prompted the BBC to issue the statement 'Tinky Winky is simply a sweet, technological baby with a magic bag.' This did nothing to dent the show's burgeoning popularity, particularly among students who contended it was so psychedelic it must have been made 'under the influence'.

Shrugging off these early issues, *Teletubbies* went on to be seen by millions of children in 120 countries, translated into 45 languages, and



was the first Western pre-school children's programme to appear on national tv in China. Production ceased in 2001, after 365 episodes – 'one for each day of the year' – had been made.

◆ **LAST WEEK'S WATER COOLER TALK** was all about, well, water coolers after the press reported the cost of keeping BBC employees topped up with the clear stuff.

But a few key facts and figures went largely unreported. Did you know, for example, that the provision of drinking water to staff is a statutory requirement under the Workplace Health, Safety and Welfare Regulations 1992?

The BBC occupies more than 200 buildings in the UK employing around 22,000 staff, and the preference is to offer a plumbed in drinking water supply if possible.

'Only in buildings where such facilities do not exist and cannot readily be installed do we make available water dispensers,' says the environment project team.

'Our reliance on water dispensers will continue to decrease as we refurbish our offices or move to more modern buildings.'

**NEWS BITES****ASHLEY BLAKE**

presenter of *Midlands Today* and *Inside Out*, has been sacked by the BBC after Birmingham Crown Court found him guilty of wounding and attempting to pervert the course of justice. The judge told him it was 'almost inevitable' he would be jailed for attacking a youth and later altering his statement about the incident to police. Blake was remanded on bail and will be sentenced on September 2.



**THE LAST** Night Of The Proms on September 12 will be broadcast live to cinemas around the world, thanks to a deal agreed between BBC Worldwide and distributors By Experience and Supervision Media.

**LULU, AMERICAN** star Chaka Khan and Jodie Prenger, winner of BBC One's *I'd Do Anything*, are among the artists who will perform at the Abba tribute concert in Hyde Park on September 13, presented on Radio 2 by Chris Evans.

**EFO KODJO** Mawugbe from Ghana and Erin Browne from the US won the two top prizes in a playwriting competition run by World Service and the British Council. Writers from India, Romania, Georgia and Australia received special prizes.

**PETER ANDRE** and Neville Hendricks, exec producer of *Katie & Peter: The Next Chapter Stateside*, will offer their insight into the making of ITV's fly-on-the-wall series at the Media Guardian Edinburgh International Television Festival between August 28-30.

**BBC TWO'S** coverage of the World Athletics Championships in Berlin attracted a peak audience of 5.2 million on Sunday. Highlights were Usain Bolt's world record breaking 100m and Jessica Ennis winning the heptathlon. **Ariel View, Page 10**

**RADIO MERSEYSIDE ENTERTAINS THE CROWDS ON BUS TOUR**

by Andy Ball

**FIVE O'CLOCK ON AN AUGUST MORNING** and there's a drizzly haze over the River Mersey as the All-England BBC Bus pulls up for the first day of the Radio Merseyside summer tour. Not an auspicious start to a 12-day operation to take the station into the community.

Co-presenter Claire Minter arrives for the breakfast show and miraculously the clouds roll away. Even more surprisingly visitors come for presenter cards and autographs before 7am!

Commuters using the Mersey ferries also come on board to ask us about digital switch-over, which happens in November.

At 9am we leave the bus to go live onboard a ferry with the skipper, as the sun starts to stream down. Perhaps typically, while the sat dish has beamed our stuff 35,000 kilometres into space and back in perfect quality, our usually trusty analogue link doesn't behave well, even though at all times we could see the receiver point on top of Liverpool Cathedral. Un-



**On the road: Andy Ball meets 'Miss Balloonatic'**

signer outlet village where we're given a compound to highlight the BBC's work. We verge on hysteria though as the first guests on the Sean Styles show – the singers and dancers of the Mighty Zulu Nation, playing at nearby Chester Zoo – launch into their act. So enthusiastic are they that they do their entire 30 minute routine. Great for shoppers, but a battle for Sean who has

daunted we crack on and welcome our first youngsters to the bus. We're using software to allow them to record a radio bulletin or jingle and then burn it onto cd for them.

You'd be surprised how grateful parents and grandparents are that we've occupied their little darlings for even a short while.

The tour continues at the Cheshire Oaks de-

to cut away to continue the rest of the show.

The tour includes waterfront locations, supermarket car parks and the Southport Flower Show. We love using the BBC Bus. It's a great tool and shows that our listeners really can be part of local radio.

*Andy Ball is an sbj with Radio Merseyside*  
**Local radio hits the 'hot spots', Page 10**





**BBC Newsline's Julian Fowler looks back on his experience on board the Europa during the Tall Ships Atlantic Challenge from Canada to Belfast**

# On a high after thrilling assignment

**I'VE BEEN A REPORTER IN NORTHERN IRELAND** for more than 10 years and would never have expected the sight of an island to have me fighting back the tears. But after 18 days aboard Europa travelling almost 3000 nautical miles and battling an Atlantic storm and gale force winds, seeing the familiar Irish coastline was an emotional moment. We had sailed across the Atlantic.

As well as documenting the journey, I was a part of the crew, learning the ropes and carrying out watch duties at the helm and on lookout. I

broadcast live for *BBC Newsline* and Radio Ulster from the mid-Atlantic, the culmination of much hard work by many people behind the scenes (special thanks to Stephen Beattie and Angus Millar in Belfast and Keith Wood at TVC).

The quality of the pictures sent by quick link live exceeded all expectations. The link sometimes went down, but that just seemed to add to the drama. I also sent back edited tv reports using store and forward. The view from the crow's nest 100 feet above deck, footage

of the storms with wind lashing the rigging and waves crashing across the deck were all very dramatic.

People could follow the adventure on radio, online and Twitter. I have had comments posted on my *BBC Newsline* blog from all over the world - one of the crew told me that for the first time his family now appreciates what he does.

Sailing a square rigger across the Atlantic was a once in a lifetime experience and it really seems to have captured the audience's

imagination. Since returning to shore I have been stopped dozens of times by people asking: 'Are you the boy off the tall ships?' Everyone, it seems, is talking about it, and our coverage has allowed them to share the experience.

People have been lining the quayside to visit the ships - some queued for an hour and a half to come aboard Europa. It is strange being back, and being the centre of so much attention. I'm glad to have been a part of it, but I'll be sticking to shore duties for a while.

# Travel title makes strong debut in tough market

by Steve Hawkes

The recession is having an impact at BBC Magazines, which saw sales fell by seven percent in the first half of this year.

Radio Times, Gardeners' World and Good Food all lost sales compared with the same period last year, while modest rises were recorded for Olive and History magazines.

Despite a relatively high £3.50 cover price, the BBC's new travel title Lonely Planet, which launched in December, recorded debut figures of 40,702 a month - 16,067 of which were subscriptions. Overall BBC Magazines subscriptions rose - up 15.82 percent, to 762,750.

Earlier this year the commons culture committee was highly critical of Worldwide's acquisition of the Lonely Planet brand, claiming it would hurt similar rival titles.

But its impressive debut in the ABC (Audit Bureau of Circulations) figures suggest that Lonely Planet has brought new readers to the travel sec-

tor of the overall magazine market, which is up 36 percent compared to the same time last year.

Other good news includes the continuing success of Top Gear which, in a shrinking sector for men's lifestyle titles, stayed stable with sales of 200,761 a month, increasing its market share to more than 37 percent.

The latest period surveyed, from January to June 2009, was one of upheaval for BBC Magazines - the UK's fourth largest consumer magazine publisher.

Three of its children's titles - Tweenies, Balamory and Amy - closed in March. April saw the sale of loss-making title Good Homes, whose circulation had dropped by 20 percent in the period July to December 2008.

And in May, Peter Phippen, managing director of BBC Magazines, a division of BBC Worldwide, announced

a restructuring, which will result in at least 30 post closures by the end of the summer.

Ben Preston, executive editor at the Independent, is shortly to take up the editorship of Radio Times, whose circulation has dropped 4.4 percent, to below one million a month.

The listings sector of the magazines market is down 5.82 percent overall, though. And Radio Times has increased its share to 21.36 percent, or 56.39 percent of the 'premium' listings market, which excludes titles with a significantly lower cover price.

Gardeners' World dropped 12.33 percent and Good Food 4.97 percent - but circulation falls across the industry mean Good Food, which sold 323,171 copies a month, is now the eighth most popular paid-for monthly in the country, while

Gardeners' World, at 266,179, is the 14th. BBC History magazine recorded a 9.15 percentage rise to an average sales figure of 63,888 a month, while quality food title Olive was up 1.08 percent to 86,117.

The children's sector remains troubled. Sales of weekly magazine Dr Who Adventures dropped from 93,741 to 56,986; In the Night Garden went down from 103,664 to 80,334; CBeebies Weekly from 61,587 to 48,509; Bob the Builder from 54,557 to 48,224; Top of the Pops from 130,174 to 119,739.

'All publishers faced a very tough trading environment in the first half of this year, and BBC Magazines is no exception,' said Peter Phippen.

'However I am very pleased with the performance of several of our titles which have bucked the trend with strong results - including a solid debut from Lonely Planet magazine - demonstrating that readers recognise the quality, distinctiveness and value of our brands.'

## What Ringo told Paul

Rare footage of The Beatles in the studio forms part of a season celebrating the band on BBC Two and BBC Four.

Beatles Week starts on September 5 with an evening of programming on BBC Two. *The Beatles on Record*, which includes never before heard outtakes of conversations from Abbey Road, will be followed by *The Beatles: The First US Visit*.

BBC Four's offering includes *Storyville: How the Beatles Rocked the Kremlin*, which tells the story of how the band's music may have contributed to the collapse of the USSR, and *Sings Beatles*, a compilation of archive footage featuring artists that have covered The Beatles songs.

George Entwistle, controller knowledge commissioning, says the season is 'a chance for viewers to enjoy some fascinating insights into the career of the greatest pop group of all time'.





## New provider gets cycle contract

The BBC has awarded its cycle-to-work contract to Cyclescheme, who will take over from Halfords, the current provider, in September.

Cyclescheme, selected following a formal tender process, focuses its business entirely on cycle-to-work initiatives and operates through a network of more than 1,400 independent bike shops for more than 9,000 organisations.

'The new scheme will provide BBC employees with the widest choice of cycle outlets that should appeal to everyone from the novice to the enthusiast, allowing them to shop around if they wish,' says Anneke Heaton, reward manager, BBC people.

Under the scheme, UK-based BBC employees on permanent contracts and those on fixed-term contracts with at least 12 months to run can choose a bike with a minimum value of £150 to a maximum of £1,000.

By 'swapping' part of their salary for the cycle-to-work benefit, in effect receiving a reduced salary, savings are made on tax and national insurance, so significantly cutting the cost of the bike.

Enrolment for the scheme is open between September 1-30 through myChoices.

Details of potential savings and bike stores can be found at [www.cyclescheme.co.uk/bbc](http://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/bbc).

# Bankers back in business – for tv documentary

by Claire Barrett

A documentary to be shown on BBC One next week will tackle the recession from a slightly unconventional angle – putting former bankers into small struggling businesses.

Former hedge fund analyst Griselda learns the ropes in a Blackpool hotel that has been losing guests to the credit crunch, while Amit, who resigned after feeling unchallenged when the recession stopped his bank doing high risk deals, spends the week with an organic dairy producer. Here, sales have slowed as

shoppers are choosing cheaper food options.

The pair try everything from making beds to milking cows, working alongside those whose livelihoods are at risk because of the City's recklessness. As well as trying to win over some potentially hostile colleagues, Griselda and Amit use their business skills in attempts to revive the flagging enterprises.

'We wanted to explore the issues that had come out of the credit crunch in a more personal way,' reasons executive producer Catherine Welton.

'And we were keen to bring

people who, on the face of it, seemed to be on 'opposite sides' to debate the issues and learn from each other's experiences.'

She adds: 'The people at the businesses wanted the bankers to see with their own eyes how the recession had affected people outside the Square Mile. But there was also the hope that the bankers, with their experience of doing business at a multi-million pound level, might be able to bring some of that know-how to bear on a small business.'

*Can You Bank on Me?*  
BBC One, August 24

## Arlene steps up

She might have lost her place as a judge on *Strictly Come Dancing* - but the government has found a new role for Arlene Phillips.

The choreographer has been hired to lead the nation in a bid to increase levels of physical activity.

The UK is currently languishing in the bottom third of the European fitness league, studies suggest.

And ministers hope Phillips, who is already being dubbed the 'dancing tsar', can encourage more people to exercise.

She told the BBC she wanted to make dance classes more accessible.

'I always try to get people to dance through a love of music - whatever music they love there's a dance to it, even if it's just jumping up and down and head-banging.'

Meanwhile, the BBC has announced that it is to drop its Sunday night *Strictly Come Dancing* results programme and run an extended show on Saturdays.

The show has abandoned the format of the past two years, in which a pre-recorded results show, complete with dance-off, was screened on Sundays.

The new series of *Strictly* starts next month with two special Friday night launch shows, but will switch to Saturdays from then on.

The BBC says it wants to make it an 'unmissable television event' this autumn.



## Blast bursaries

Blast, the BBC's creative learning resource for young people, has teamed up with Bafta to offer eight 16 to 19-year-olds bursaries worth £3,000.

Designed for those interested in television production, the eight recipients will work with the BBC or an external production company to produce a piece of work that will be shown on BBC Two. Four of these will then be nominated for a Screen Skills award, with the winner announced at the Bafta Craft Awards in May 2010.

There are four entry categories - editor, scriptwriter, composer and director of photography - and applicants are asked to upload an original video on the Blast website by September 30. For more information visit [www.bbc.co.uk/blast](http://www.bbc.co.uk/blast).

## Top of the morning

Karen Patterson and Mark Carruthers will join Conor Bradford on Radio Ulster's revamped breakfast news programme, *Good Morning Ulster*, from August 31.

In other changes at the station, Wendy Austin will host the interactive, Sony award winning *Talkback* programme every weekday and Seamus McKee will present the drive-time news pro-

gramme *Evening Extra*.

David Dunseith will front the weekend news programme *Seven Days*.

Peter Johnston, director of Northern Ireland, said that the changes were to ensure continued 'high quality news and current affairs programmes'.

He explained: 'We hope that giving new voices to these programmes will enhance our listeners' experience of them.'

**Team work:**  
Conor Bradford,  
Karen Patterson  
and Mark  
Carruthers



# VOICES: Legacy of language project lives on

by Philippa Law

'I'm quite shocked at the horrible things people find to say about each other,' admitted Ann Thompson, PhD student at the University of Leeds. 'The phrase 'A face like a...' is especially productive,' she added with relish, before reeling off a list of unsavoury similes.

Thompson was speaking at a linguistics conference, presenting her analysis of the many words for 'unattractive' submitted by the public to the BBC Voices website.

The online survey of dialect and slang words attracted more than 30,000 submissions from the public. Thompson is now mapping the geographical distribution of some of those terms, such as 'twag', 'dog' and 'nick off' for 'play truant' and 'kaylied', 'blootered' and 'stocious' for 'drunk'.



Her research is just part of the legacy of the Voices project, which was run by BBC Wales New Media. Voices presented a snapshot of the many ways we speak and culminated in a successful week of output about the languages, accents and dialects of the UK in August 2005.

**Paul O'Gorman of Radio Lancashire interviews a bilingual family in Blackburn as part of the Voices initiative**

From Radio Newcastle's *Fraudie to Geordie*, to BBC Four's *Pronunciation Night*, colleagues from all over the BBC helped put Voices on air.

Having worked on Voices, I was delighted to be invited to take part in the International Conference on the Linguistics of Contemporary English in London in July, and over the moon to discover how well-regarded the project still is.

Our primary aim had been to create fantastic content for audiences, but the conference highlighted the enduring value of the Voices project, well beyond our original ambitions.

Academics and teachers were itching to point out that they still use the BBC Voices website reg-

ularly. Almost everyone in the room had a story to tell about how they were using Voices material to enthuse a new generation about language in the UK.

The project also has a personal legacy for me, as I've been inspired to leave the BBC to start a linguistics PhD of my own.

I'm going to research audience engagement with media in languages other than English. I'm looking for BBC departments to collaborate on the project. It's an opportunity to ask in-depth questions about minority language broadcasting and gather concrete evidence about what works for our audiences.

If you produce content in another language - from Gaelic to British Sign Language - and would like to find out more about engaging your audience, email me: [philippa.law@bbc.co.uk](mailto:philippa.law@bbc.co.uk).



# SHOW SPOTTING

PHOTOGRAPHS: STEPHEN GIBSON



That's the shot I'm after: camera operator Shu Lorimer at work in Edinburgh's Pleasance courtyard where a set has been purpose built

## The Culture Show has decamped to Edinburgh for three specials from the Festival. Peggy Walker pays a visit

**THE SUN IS SHINING** as the taxi ascends Edinburgh's steep and curving roads, steering a path through streets packed with festival fans, past a group of girls who have donned red bikinis and painted themselves head to toe in white, perhaps in a patriotic gesture to St George.

*The Culture Show* has decamped to a small, rented office in nearby George Street to plan its three specials from the Edinburgh Festival. It is also looking to expose itself – though less to the weather and more to the wealth of theatre, comedy and music on offer. At the world's biggest arts festival, there's no shortage of acts to highlight as the 'ones to watch'.

'The hard part is choosing what we cover,' explains series producer Graham Mitchell. 'It's partly down to word of mouth – sending crew members out to shows and gauging what the press is talking about. But we need to be really quick off the mark spotting what the big shows are.'

The first edition from the festival featured a collection of 130 works of art by Spanish masters and British artists, inspired by Spain.

This week, the programme goes behind the scenes of *Faust* – a spectacle involving more than 100 performers and musicians – and looks at *The Last Witch*, a theatrical account of the last woman to be executed for

witchcraft in Scotland.

Executive producer Edward Morgan isn't interested in concepts of high or low art. 'The question is, is it any good?' he asks firmly. 'The show can be a challenging watch, but I think people can cope with going from Rembrandt to Robbie Williams.'

A set has been built in the city's Pleasance courtyard, the biggest venue at the Fringe. A lilac sofa and orange padded footstool, on loan from a furniture shop, perch on top of a purple wooden stage. Presenter Lauren Laverne casts a sceptical eye around. 'It's a bit like being in a DFS showroom,' she quips, before her links are interrupted by rain. 'Filming outside in Scotland, you run that risk, even in summer,' says Mitchell gloomily, as tarpaulins are quickly thrown over the set.

Rain, reviews, rolling news...none goes unmarked, as the team keep up



**There is no shortage of acts to highlight**

their real-time tweets for fans. 'Out filming Arthur Smith on a motorised leopard skin sofa, interviewing special guests...if you're in Edinburgh keep look out,' tweets producer Pauline Law. 'We're all old hands now but there might be viewers who don't get what the festival is all about.'

The 'old hands' work non-stop on the specials for about a month. *The Culture Show* is made in both London and Glasgow, but – for geographical ease – the Glasgow team is responsible for the Edinburgh coverage. The team share flats for the duration of the festival, an experience that series producer Mitchell describes politely as 'intense'.

'Thankfully everyone works well together, but when we're finished we do all go off to detox from one another.'

**The Edinburgh Festival Show, BBC Two, August 19**  
[bbc.co.uk/cultureshow](http://bbc.co.uk/cultureshow)

## Fringe audiences flock to Scott Mills the Musical

'**THERE'S AN INCIDENT** involving wine at an awards show, after which I get fired and try to get my job back,' says Scott Mills, recalling a scene from his past, reimagined for *Scott Mills the Musical* – the sell-out 'kitsch masterpiece' currently playing at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Mills's producer Emlyn Dodd wrote the songs, with the help of listeners, and Mills stars – although not in the title role, which is taken by 19 year old listener Joe Taylor (Mills himself plays David Hasselhoff.)

Set in 2001, when Scott was the



As never seen before: 'Scott Mills' performs

early morning presenter on Radio 1, the musical is 'not entirely' based on fact. 'We wanted to take the humour from the radio show and transfer it into musical theatre,' says AP Becky Huxtable, Mills's on-air sidekick, who plays Kylie, Jo Whaley, and Myleene Klass.

Mills's Radio 1 show came live from the fringe last week, fitted in around the performances themselves. All tickets were free and each show (for audiences of more than 300) was a sell out. Watch for yourself:

[bbc.co.uk/radio1](http://bbc.co.uk/radio1)

■ **Presenter Richard Bacon will be attempting live stand up comedy for the first time at this year's festival. On his 5 live programme on Wednesday he will be mentored by a number of top comedians. Listeners will be able to take part by suggesting jokes.**

**The following night Bacon will take to the stage at the Udderbelly as his ten minute stand-up routine is broadcast live. 'I love the festival and it's about time I found out once and for all if I am indeed funny,' he says. Watch video footage of his performance: [bbc.co.uk/5live](http://bbc.co.uk/5live)**



# Everyone wants to be part of it

**IF YOU LOOK AFTER A WEBSITE**, make a note to yourself to update it. It's Seetha Kumar's bête noir...

'It's the simple things. Always link, always check what already exists before you replicate it – they're core principles,' she says firmly. 'Sometimes we publish and forget to update, and it makes our content less relevant.'

As online's first controller, one of the first things she did was to reissue the online publishing principles. She's also on a mission to demystify [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk), focusing hard on two 'o' words – 'openness' (more) and 'opaque' (less) – while persuading FM&T and the content divisions to work together in a more 'coherent' (friendly) way.

A year into the job, she's in a position to reflect on what is and isn't working online. 'When you see big events like the Olympics being captured in real time and in a very dynamic way, it's very powerful. And when we pull together, as we did for the Obama inauguration, with the homepage and mobile updates and the iPlayer, it can feel really coherent.'

Where we could it be clearer? 'Well, sometimes there's a perception that because something has been broadcast, you have a website and people will just come to it. Or because a programme is big, we should have something of that stature on the web...and it doesn't always work.'

For someone who took on the job with little online experience, there's a lot to take on board. 'As with any new role you need to live and breathe and shape it,' she says calmly. 'The complexity is challenging and people have huge passions in this space; everyone wants to be part of the evolution.'

## Answering the critics

Last week she hosted online's first open day – the kind of seasonal launch that tv channels throw every quarter – with the aim of helping [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk)'s suppliers, partners

**A year ago Seetha Kumar became the first controller of online. She tells Clare Bolt how the job is shaping up and why we need a Strictly site**

and regulators 'get an idea of our thinking' around news, sport, radio and music, entertainment and children's.

'The fact that we are doing it is a good, useful start,' she says cautiously. 'We're taking proactive steps to be more open and transparent about what we do in the online space. I know that the BBC can appear opaque and I wanted to alter that perception.'

It was also a chance for her to take feedback and answer critics – from the classic ('you jump through hoops to get on the preferred suppliers' list and then you can't find out the commissioning priorities') to the question of online's market impact. If [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) is delivered free at the point of use, where's the scope for the commercial marketplace?

It's a question she's prepared for. 'The BBC exists to serve its public purposes and everything we do has to be judged

through that lens,' she says. So what wouldn't the BBC do? 'Anything that didn't conform to Reithian values – we don't do gambling for instance. What we do is in keeping with our public purposes and it is about being distinctive.'

Is the new *Strictly Come Dancing* site distinctive? 'We have to apply the language of inform, educate and entertain to the world of today. What the net can do superbly is to leverage the passion people feel towards dancing, and help them to unlock it. Isn't that the purpose of the BBC?'

## Taking them on a journey

She's keen to take online to the next level. 'A lot of what we've been doing you could call critical hygiene,' she admits. What she wants is better technology, more dynamic pages and the ability to bring content 'to the surface' by aggregating it in a more sophisticated way (watch out for the 'search plus' function, coming soon).

Syndicating content will become increasingly important, although she admits that 'every time we do something like syndicating news it pleases some people and doesn't please others...' She's also keen to expand the number of outbound clicks from 10m a month, so that the BBC reflects the web, rather than 'boxing it' in within [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk). 'Once we spark people's interest we can take them on a journey through our content and to what's outside in the wider web.'

Then there's the task of creating a consistent look and feel across the entire site. 'You should be able to see the ethos by the way it's laid out, even without the BBC blocks. It won't happen overnight and there's no one size fits all, but the design philosophy needs a logic.'

Any 'significant' site is now assessed once a year for market impact and to make sure it fits with the overall online strategy. And every two years key sites will get 'MOTs', ensuring they are fit for purpose.

'Just as in the linear world, you look back at every programme you make to see what you could have done better,' she explains. 'I want online to have that same pride and passion.'

**'Once we spark people's interest we can take them on a journey'**

# cutting edge



BILL THOMPSON

## Mobile tv yet to take off

**WHEN 3G PHONES** hit the shops the marketing departments at the companies that had paid billions for licences to operate the new fast data networks were certain that the two killer applications would be picture messaging and video conferencing.

They were wrong. Phone-to-phone video is still so rare that I have only ever seen it happen in the street once since 2003, while picture messaging took massive improvements in phone cameras and a radical reappraisal of data charges to take off, and is still unusual enough that Apple reached version 3 of the iPhone OS before implementing it.

The same sort of unwarranted hype seems to surround mobile tv, touted by the networks as the must-have service for sports fans, news junkies and reality tv addicts. Takeup in Japan and South Korea has been massive, and easy access to Sky Sports, BBC news and *Coronation Street* would, we were assured, turn a nation of commuters into a whole new market segment which would satisfy enthusiastic

**The apparent failure so far should not lead us to dismiss the possibilities**

advertisers and ratings-obsessed executives.

Although the World Cup in 2006 was supposed to 'usher in the mobile tv area' (according to the BBC news website, June 7 2006) it clearly did not happen in Europe. Reasons seem to involve a complex intersection of cultural mores, established patterns of

media consumption and the diffusion rate of new technologies through existing markets.

I don't know anyone who has watched a single live broadcast of anything, ever, and I suspect you don't either. And iPlayer on a Nokia N96 or iPhone doesn't count, as it is just a way of doing catchup on the move. Yet this apparent failure should not lead us to dismiss the possibilities for mobile viewing. At this time of rapid technological innovation, the past is a very poor predictor of the future – and old failures may turn out to be tomorrow's big successes.

Tv, radio, print and online are like organisms, each with its own niche in the media ecosystem. As the world changes, the population that can be supported by a particular niche also changes, and old forms like newspapers can find their place in the food chain occupied by new media species.

Old species may become extinct, but they can also change as a result of evolutionary pressure, just as the different sources of food available to finches in the Galapagos Islands led to the evolution of many variants that could no longer interbreed.

Mobile television is a new species of finch, similar to but fundamentally incompatible with the old lumbering tv beast that has dominated the ecosystem for the last 50 years. Perhaps it will succeed when broadcasters treat it as such, rather than trying to persuade it to breed with old-style programming.

*Bill Thompson is a technology commentator*





# Children love coming here to learn

## I should probably know this, but what is 21CC?

It's the 21st century classroom. The BBC has two - one in White City and one in Salford. The basic idea is to encourage the use of new media and digital technology in teaching and learning: we've got Macs, interactive whiteboards and a screen room where children can produce films, music, animations, podcasts and radio packages.

## How do children get to use it?

The schools contact us and we design workshops to tie in with their syllabus. At the moment we've got a six month waiting list. The idea is for the teachers to learn alongside the children, but we also run specialist teacher workshops. Since opening we've had 35,000 children through the doors and we also do work with community groups.

## Who teaches in the 21CC classroom?

We bring in animators, film directors and radio producers - all people who work in the industry. The composer and sound installation artist Duncan Chapman has worked with us on large scale music projects and facilitated some workshops.

## Why did you choose Salford for the new classroom?

We wanted to bring learning to the north ahead of the main move in 2011. There's a big focus on digital education in the region, but a lot of teachers aren't trained to teach it.

## What about projects outside the classroom?

We just finished Time and Tides. We asked three local primary schools to design pods on the banks of the Thames, which were built by the Royal Institute of British Architects. We then took children from 16 schools and assigned them an attraction on the river, about which they had to make a film. They edited the material in the 21CC Classroom and that content is now in the pods.

## So - the magic word - partnerships!

Last Easter we ran a project called Music for the Eighteen with the London Sinfonietta and the BFI [British Film Institute]. We were trying to reach young people who were involved in drugs and crime, through modern classical music, film making and graphic design. A lot of these young people had no support from their families, but turned up most days over the two week period and took part in a performance at the BFI. They learned new skills and acquired so much self belief and confidence.

## You also work with special educational needs (SEN) groups...

It's about using technology to give young people with disabilities autonomy over their learning and their lives in general. For example, we use cheap and readily available kit like games consoles to enable people with reduced mobility to take their own photos, make their own films and create their own music.

Heard of 21CC but not sure what it is? Our Q&A with project manager Sally Briggs, pictured in the 21CC classroom in White City, should help



PHOTOGRAPH: ANNA GORDON

# He made good programmes but spied for Russia

by Jean Seatter, BBC historian

## ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER 1951,

as the Cold War was hotting up, some books were handed in to a BBC commissioner with a note asking that they be returned to the library. Written off as lost, they had been taken out by Guy Burgess - ex-foreign office, ex-BBC and the man who had defected to Russia with the diplomat and intelligence official Donald Maclean earlier that year.

A report of their re-appearance swiftly rose through the corporation hierarchy. 'You may wish to pursue this,' wrote a Mr Faquharson in a

memo, 'as I understand that the Foreign Office are anxious to ascertain the whereabouts of Mr. Burgess...'

The Faquharson memo is one of a collection of documents that the BBC archive is putting online for the first time, and they paint a tantalising portrait of Burgess during his time at the BBC.

His reference from Trinity College cautions that Burgess was a 'mercurial' risk taker, but one who would make an imaginative broadcaster. 'After a period of enthusiastic communism during his last years here, he has now, I believe arrived at some form of left wing



Traitor: Guy Burgess

conservatism.' The writer was, of course, oblivious to the fact he had been ordered to do so by his Russian minder.

The reference also observed that 'what he really likes is knocking up and down behind the scenes of politics'. Burgess was certainly a good producer on *The Week in Westminster*, exploiting his position to work his way into the confidence of people who had information that the Soviets wanted.

Louche, hard drinking, dishevelled, he deftly made himself an indispensable insider in order to betray the system he lived within. As Frank Gillard, war reporter and radio executive, put it: 'Give him an inch, and the man would grab a yard - with every bit of official backing he could muster.'

When the Cambridge spies - Burgess, Maclean, Kim Philby, Anthony Blunt - were discovered, it revealed a rotten fault line within the British establishment. The secret services - unlike the BBC - took no references. British intelligence took them on because as Etonian, Oxbridge chaps from 'good' families they could be 'trusted'. The shock of their treachery changed British society for good, breaking a corrupt patronage system.

On the way they damaged the institutions they had infiltrated: the FO, the secret services and the BBC. The Americans did not trust British intelli-

gence for generations and for the next 30 years, when anyone accused BBC staff of being 'pinkos', Burgess was held up as an example.

Among the documents to be published by the BBC archive is a note of a difficult phone conversation between the BBC and the FO in 1956, with the two sides struggling to distribute the blame for employing him.

The hidden world of the BBC memo turns out to be as elusive, intriguing, complex and riveting as any John Le Carré novel. Smiley's people, it turns out, lived in the BBC. [bbc.co.uk/archive](http://bbc.co.uk/archive)



# How to TWITTER

◆ **What are people saying about your output? Go to the Twitter homepage, put your programme or service name in the search box, and find out – in real time.**

◆ Interested in a particular subject? Search for experts and follow them. Hey presto – they become your ‘human filters’ for the web, flagging up links and stories you might have missed.

◆ **Twitter isn't just about twitter.com. Search online and you'll find dozens of different sites (like twitterfall.com) and applications (like Tweetdeck) which let you access Twitter more effectively.**

◆ More and more people are sending out their exact location as they tweet (using devices such as the iPhone or Nokia N97). This means you can use a tool like Twitterlocal (twitterlocal.net) to discover what people are talking about near you – or to track down users

near a major news event.

◆ **Got a question? Throw it out to your followers for unexpected – and often illuminating – answers. People love demonstrating their knowledge of even the most obscure subjects.**

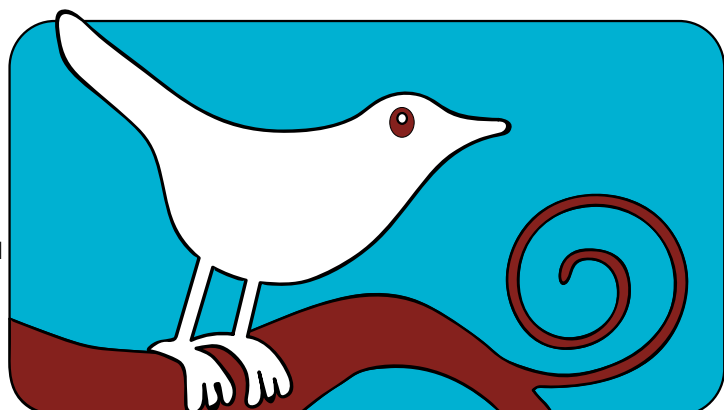
◆ A tweet is for life. Even if you delete a message you've sent, other people will undoubtedly have received and stored it. So be careful what you say.

◆ **Wanting to tweet on behalf of the BBC? Every division has a social media guru, so consult yours first. And don't**

say anything on Twitter which you wouldn't say on air.

◆ Editorial policy has useful guidelines on BBC use of social networking sites. Read and inwardly digest! <http://bit.ly/edpolsm>

Robin Morley  
social media lead for English regions



## CHANGING PLACES

◆ **ANGELA LODGE** (pictured) leaves BBC Essex this week after 21 years, to take up a senior post with a local charity; **TIM WESTWOOD** will host 1Xtra's weekday drive time show but stays at Radio 1 to present the 9-11pm Saturday night slot; **JAMES O'HARA**, news editor at BBC Stoke, is going on attachment to Midlands Today...and **MARK GRINNELL** leaves commercial radio to become the new managing editor of Radio Devon.



## SHAMELESS PLUG

◆ **BREN O'CALLAGHAN** MANAGER, **BIG SCREENS** LIVERPOOL & EDINBURGH

I've been working on a project called *Hungry Hungry Eat Head* (pictured) which we've taken to the BBC Big Screen in Edinburgh. With a title inspired by my fondness for Japanese literal translation, it's an opportunity for people to step inside a mixed-reality live cartoon. The effect is that of a 'magic mirror', replacing the viewer's head with a 3-D animated character. Characters

range from spinning, spotted cuboids to something resembling a spiky Weetabix with fangs! Players can move about and create their own narrative. It's all part of my ongoing exploration of collective participation in an outdoor space. People come by to say they missed their bus stop after watching us from the top deck – praise indeed. Our next interactive project involves a giant, Zeus-like hand that descends to pick people up from the street and squash, tickle, stretch or remove them from the screen entirely. Beat that, Jason and your deodorant deprived Argonauts.



## CALL TO ACTION

◆ People are needed to assist at this year's See Me on CBBC Tour – an opportunity for thousands of children to star in their favourite CBBC shows. MC&A and learning are looking for volunteers to help run the shows, which will involve registering children and generally helping out. You will get experience of working on a large-scale

roadshow, as well as see how such creative sessions are run. Travel and accommodation will be covered. If interested, let Dilzana Hussain know which of the following dates you can make:  
**Aug 29-30, Manchester Trafford Centre;**  
**Sep 12-13, London Thames Festival;**  
**Oct 31- Nov 1, Birmingham**



## LEARNING CURVE

◆ **PRODUCTION SAFETY** The BBC Academy has launched Production Safety Online – a two hour course that replaces the old 13 hour face-to-face safety training. It teaches the basic principles of safety within the production environment and gives an overview of issues involved in tv, news, radio and online and is designed

to be relevant to different areas, with video and audio case studies from Radio 1Xtra, *EastEnders* (online grab from course pictured) and *Coast*. All new staff and freelancers in production or are exposed to risk will have to do the course, as will those who last took a safety course more than three years ago.

# week@work



PHOTOGRAPH: SUE FOL

## IF IT'S THE SIMPLE ALPINE LOOK YOU'RE AFTER...

◆ **AMOROUS COUPLE** Jas (actor Hannah Job) and Ollie (Ceri Phillips) take their relationship to new heights with the aid of some stylish outfits in the new series of *Coming of Age*. All in a day's work for the cast of the unashamedly crude BBC

Three teen sit-com, which is back for a second season after its first successful run last year. The show, which takes a cheeky look at the lives of a group of sixth formers in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, has been scripted by Tim Dawson

(pictured inset – on the right – with producer Simon London). Dawson wrote the original series when he was just 19. At the time this made him the youngest scriptwriter ever to have a series commissioned by the BBC.

## ONE MILE RADIUS



◆ **WENDY FRASER, BBC WEST** A short tree-lined walk down Whiteladies Road from BBC Bristol and you can still catch the world famous Banksy Exhibition at the Bristol Museum. A few steps more and the recently cleaned Wills Tower of the University of Bristol stands proud. Harry Patch worked on the tower in his younger days. At the bottom of

Banksy's take on Jean-François Millet's 'The Gleaners'

Park Street pop into the cathedral for a lunchtime concert during August. On your

way back to the BBC eat a sandwich in the Cabot Tower gardens overlooking the whole of Bristol or drop into the newly converted Victorian solar powered lido for coffee or lunch by the pool. Ancient and modern – Bristol has it all.



## ENVIRONMENT CHAMP

◆ **DAVID H. JONES, RADIO CO-ORDINATOR, BBC WALES, CARDIFF**

**Why did you become an environment champion?** I could see the amount of waste that the BBC generates. Cutting back not only saves licence payers' money, but also the environment. There is only a finite amount of carbon fuel available!

**What's the biggest environmental gripe you have about your building?** That we extract so much heat from technical areas and blast it outside. Simultaneously, we are burning gas to heat our office space. Even if we can't do something about this situation now, let's make sure that if BBC Wales moves its HQ, the building is constructed to the very highest environmental standards.

**If you could ban one thing, what would it be?** Short car journeys. The carbon footprint they produce is very damaging. Half the UK's car journeys are under two miles. Bringing a colleague to work will halve your carbon footprint. Better still, walking or cycling will reduce that footprint to zero.

**Have you changed your own behaviour?** I sign up for online billing and statements to stop paper waste – not printing paper is much better than recycling it! Our environmental group in Cardiff is currently asking the BBC in London if staff could be given the option of paperless payslips. Our payslips are already available via Gateway, so it's not a big leap, yet could save many kilograms of paper every month.

**What frustrates you most about the BBC and the environment?** We need more joined-up thinking. In Cardiff we had new printers, followed by new photocopiers, which are capable of printing from a network connection, yet Siemens supply the printers, and the copiers are sourced locally. Both use similar technology, and are sitting in the office using electricity; the two could be combined in one efficient machine.

**What advice would you give to someone who wants to make a difference, but doesn't know where to start?** Join a group, either at work and/or a campaigning group. Even if you don't have time to take an active part, your money helps them lobby parliaments and assemblies on your behalf.

## blogbites

**Monday**  
**AC DC @ Wembley - backstage teamwork the real star attraction**

A few weeks ago I had an opportunity to attend the AC DC concert at Wembley Stadium. I was interested in how Wembley deals with large scale events and if there are any insights for how we at Workplace do things. I focused on the end of the show - the back of house team at Wembley managed to cope with 60,000+ fans and started stripping the soundstage within 5 minutes of the last encore! Most of the many tons of rubbish had been gathered within half an hour. It was a most remarkable example of teamwork and coordination.

Chris Kane, head of corporate real estate [bbc.co.uk/blogs/spacesandplaces/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/spacesandplaces/)

**Tuesday**

**Tuesday's Quote of the Day**  
They're more suited to Spain than Staffordshire - A spokesman for Alton Towers on why it's banning Speedo-style swimming trunks. The theme park in Staffordshire is banning all types of tight swimming trunks on grounds of taste. "To prevent embarrassment among fellow members of the public and to maintain the family friendly atmosphere at the resort, bosses have taken the extreme measure of banning these tight trunks," a spokesman said. [bbc.co.uk/blogs/magazine/monitor/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/magazine/monitor/)

**Wednesday**

**Being Multiplatform**  
It used to be so simple when people asked what I do. "I'm a radio producer, making programmes for Radio 4." But since last summer, it's not been quite such a straightforward answer. "I'm a senior multiplatform producer." Cue puzzled look. Producer is fairly self-explanatory. It's the multiplatform bit that confuses. We make a number of long-running series and one-off documentaries, for, er, radio - mainly Radio 4, Radio 5live and the World Service, occasionally for Radio 3, the Asian Network and 1Xtra. (When we're not fending off fox attacks of course). Our output is incredibly rich and diverse... Jennifer Clarke, senior multiplatform producer [bbc.co.uk/blogs/radio4/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/radio4/)

**Thursday**

**So here it is. A world exclusive for you bloggers.**  
There's an old boss of mine, Mike Hibbert, and he was one of the best bosses I've ever had. He was the manager of the newsagents I used to work in. Does anyone know of his whereabouts? I would love to get in touch with him. Also, one of my long term girlfriends is a lady called Sara who moved to France. She called me last year but my phone cracked up and I haven't heard from her again. Chris Evans [bbc.co.uk/blogs/chrisevans](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/chrisevans)

**Friday**

**The health of nations: Obama and reform**  
The British National Health Service is playing a central role in the US debate. 'Socialised medicine' is anathema to American conservatives, and they're using the NHS as a warning of what they say Mr Obama is trying to introduce. It's not often that political debate in America is influenced by the UK. (I don't think I'd claim the same was true vice versa.) Robin Lustig, presenter, *World Tonight* [bbc.co.uk/blogs/worldtonight](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/worldtonight)





MADE IN THE UK

**BORN IN RENFREW** and brought up in Dumfriesshire, I'm Scottish through and through. I went to university in Glasgow, I've lived in both Glasgow and Edinburgh, and at the moment my family and I live in Stirling. I didn't begin my career as a historian; I read archaeology at university and came to specialise in military archaeology. Battlefields were my passion; but of course I needed the historical context of the battle, and so history was inevitably the broad brushstroke against which I could investigate the fine details of archaeological work.

It was the battlefields of South Africa that first drew me into working for the BBC. I'd always wanted to explore the sites of the Victorian British Zulu war – the subject of one of my favourite films, *Zulu* – and consequently my good friend Tony Pollard and I made a tv series for BBC Two called *Two Men in a Trench*, which explored different British battlefields. Straight after that I worked on the BBC series *Coast*, based in BBC Birmingham.

#### Scale and attention to detail

*A History of Scotland* is my first direct project with BBC Scotland. I was approached about it in 2006. I knew from the start it was a landmark programme on a huge scale: it was to be a ten-part series covering 2000 years. It was very exciting to have my name associated with telling the story of my own country; and the way in which it was to be made – the vast scale and attention to detail – made for groundbreaking television.

A programme like this probably won't be made for at least another 10 or 20 years. But this particular telling of the history of Scotland is unique, because it is coloured by the time in which it is told: the moment of making is critical because the present is continually shaping the lens through which we see the past. The personality of the teller will also influence the way the story is told, and I hope I have brought my own particular love of Scotland to the programme, as well as my abilities as a historian and archaeologist.

Most of the team on *A History of Scotland* are born and bred Scots. The series producer, Richard Downes, is originally from England, although he has lived in Glasgow for 20 years. Like others who have chosen to settle here, he brings objectivity with him. This objectivity helps to prevent our perspective becoming inward looking; for this reason, I'm a great believer in having a mixture of lifers and incomers on a programme. It reinvigorates the environment.

*A History of Scotland* has come out of the heart of Scotland it-

# There's no point just singing to your Aunty



PETE ELIUS

Programme makers rooted in their communities can give network series as ambitious as *A History of Scotland* global reach with a local feel, says presenter Neil Oliver

self: from the local communities and through the voices of the people, so that the stories told are an accurate reflection of the land and the people.

For the BBC to have a presence in Scotland, and not just a single site, but in different localities around the country, means that you've got global reach with local feel. There are no shortcuts to achieving this: you need to have people who are from there, who have always been there, who want to work there.

There is huge weight behind *A History of Scotland*; it's not just a television series; it also has

radio and online presence. A lot of work has been generated from the programme: the music, for example, was specially composed and performed by the Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

As a result of the series there has been a great deal of outreach work in schools. There is also an involvement with the Open University.

We've travelled all over Scotland to make the series. The history of the 20th century concentrates in places like Lanarkshire, Ayrshire and Glasgow, where the industrial revolution put down its roots. But we've also

been to further-flung areas, such as Shetland, where we recorded the annual Viking festival held in the darkest part of the year. We've visited the beautiful island of Iona and travelled all along the landscapes of the west and north coasts.

There has been a substantial amount of filming in Stirling, as so much Scottish history has been spun there. But the impact of this series is much bigger than the scope of Scotland itself.

You can't tell the history of Scotland without reference to England, Wales, Ireland and Northern Ireland. The nations of the UK are like tenants in a shared house: they can't live truly separate lives because they are all in the same building. There is nowhere you can stand and look at the whole history of the United Kingdom without viewing it through a fractured prism – a cracked lens. There is no perfect 'true' view. But all perspectives are equally valid.

#### Stunning landscape

Seeing our shared history from the viewpoint of Scotland should be interesting to everyone, whether from Donegal, Penzance or the east of England.

In fact, one of my first questions when they approached me to see if I would be interested in the programme was about the distribution; I wanted to ensure that it was going to be shown in the rest of the UK. I didn't want to do a domestic insular history of Scotland view only by the Scots. After all, there's no point just singing to your Aunty; you want a wider audience. I was so convinced about it that I was prepared to insist that I would only do it if it was going to get a network transmission.

When people think of Scotland they tend to think of the landscape itself; a place romanticised by Robert Burns and Walter Scott. Certainly, it is stunning. Scotland is composed of some of the oldest rock on planet earth. But the landscape is a backdrop; what brings glitter to history, what brings it to life, are the actors – the inhabitants that have lived here for 12,000 years.

History is a story populated with people; it is they who create it, tell it, interpret it and live it. It is the human stories that matter: they shape our world and the way we live, and teach us about our own humanity.

**Neil Oliver's is one of a collection of essays, celebrating out-of-London tv production, at [bbc.co.uk/madeintheuk](http://bbc.co.uk/madeintheuk)**

***A History of Scotland* continues on BBC One Scotland in November, with a network showing on BBC Two later. *Coast*, Tuesdays, BBC Two.**

arielview



LUCY KEELER

## Local radio hits the 'hot spots'

**IT WAS SUPPOSED** to be a barbecue summer. It hasn't quite turned out that way, but that hasn't stopped BBC local radio getting out and about. From agricultural shows to balloon fiestas, and from fun runs to music events, local radio teams have been at the forefront of the action over the holidays.

On Saturday BBC London 94.9 hosted the London Mela, the UK's leading Asian festival, and is now gearing up for the Notting Hill Carnival, from where it will mount a live eight hour outside broadcast.

BBC Kent compiled an A-Z of Kent, broadcasting live from 26 locations in one week. Radio Merseyside has embarked on a bus tour (see Page 2) and Radio York has been on the road as well, averaging three to five OBs a week from various community 'hot spots' across the county.

Audience interaction is a key part of the local radio operation. At the Stockton International Riverside Festival, for example, BBC Tees invited visitors to try football commenting and weather forecasting.

At the Bournemouth Air Festival, Radio Solent allowed people to fly high by stepping into newsreaders' shoes, and creating their own interactive dramas.

These are just a few of the many examples of local radio making an impact over the past few weeks. With so much going on across the UK, there is plenty of opportunity for the stations to engage with the communities to which they broadcast. For many people, these summer activities will be their first encounter with the BBC, which works hard to ensure that it is a positive experience.

You never know, after seeing their local station (which previously they might not even have been aware of) in action, and being encouraged to have a go, they might feel inspired to tune in.

*Lucy Keeler is a reporter*

## Pure gold

**ANY THOUGHTS** that the World Athletics Championships might be a bit dull after last year's Olympic Games in Beijing, were swiftly dispelled on Sunday, courtesy of Usain Bolt and Jessica Ennis.

Bolt's world record breaking performance in Berlin, clocking 9.58 seconds over 100 metres, will go down as one of the great television moments – so great that for a few moments BBC commentator Michael Johnson was lost for words.

Earlier, Ennis took the heptathlon title. She is from Sheffield, which is to host this year's BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award. The Sheffield Arena venue was announced months ago, and there will be other worthy contenders apart from Ennis, but – hey – what a neat co-incidence.

*Sally Hillier 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

## Catch-up phrases

When television programmes promote catch-up, they say 'go to iPlayer'. When radio does it, they say 'go to [bbc.co.uk/radio...](http://bbc.co.uk/radio...)'. As iPlayer is the BBC's branded catch-up service, shouldn't we be giving our audience a consistent message?  
**Matthew Verrill**  
*technical project manager, Manchester*

## Gilda Witte, head of portfolio marketing, audio & music, replies:

There are many ways to access the BBC's radio content online and we feel that we have a duty to let listeners know what each of these are and let them decide which they prefer.

At the moment, we direct radio listeners who want to catch up with television towards the BBC iPlayer home page because this is by far the best way for them to find what they want. However, radio listeners have such a strong bond with the websites for their favourite network that the easiest route online is to direct them to the dedicated site for that service.

This is in keeping with the way listeners found their favourite content online before the advent of the iPlayer and of course it too leads to content on the iPlayer. You will hear radio stations acknowledge this when they say such things as 'and you can catch up with programme X on the BBC iPlayer by going to the Radio X website'.

## A lot of bottle

The BBC has fallen into another corporate trap. It must address the issue of bottled water and water coolers urgently. Never mind the cost [of supplying these], revealed last week via an FOI request; if the Beeb wants to be seen to be green it must look at

the environmental issues.

For bottled water, think big oil. The plastic waste from plastic water bottles generates 1.5m tons of waste per year, and it uses 47m gallons of oil to make them (source: [www.lighterfootstep.com](http://www.lighterfootstep.com)). This is all before we even talk about the water that goes into them, which is no better (arguably worse) than tap water, and of course the oil-based transport industry to haul the water around the world. It's sheer madness.

**Graham Brodie**  
*technology organiser, Plymouth*

## Share it around

I often find myself defending the London-centric feel of the BBC – it is the capital after all.

However, sometimes I despair at the London-centric thinking of some of the schemes that are developed as benefits for us staff.

I've just moved closer to work, so no longer need to own a car except for the occasional trip. It would be great to join a car club for that.

Imagine my joy when I spot that the BBC has created one... only to discover that it is with a US company who only provide the vehicle sharing scheme in London.

I've had to join a more expensive scheme which covers more of the country (including Oxford).

**Phil Mercer**  
*Oxford*

## Call of duty

I note with interest that the serious telephone problems experienced by TVC made it into Ariel's Newsbites column recently.

Such experiences are nothing new to some of us in the regions.

Since our phone system was 'upgraded' in Norwich some time ago we have experienced all range of weird and wonderful issues. Calls are often lost, the phones refuse to take or make calls, sometimes callers can't hear us – the list is long and varied.

Given that we are in the communication business, the fact that we are often crippled by what should be fairly straightforward communication technology is unacceptable.

**Paul Moseley**  
*bj, Radio Norfolk*

## Mice in a stew

Following the results of Ariel's poetry competition, here's my own offering called Reflection on a Mousetrap in the Office:

*I think that mice are rather nice  
Why then this anti mice device?  
Have mice not kept us company  
Since bygone times in history?*

*Is not their rustle a thrilling gift  
In tedium of an evening shift?  
I guess we hate mice for they stray  
From what we think is animals' way*

*We can't pet mice like pets we keep  
Nor treat them like our cows and sheep  
While mice do eat at our expense  
They're not eaten to recompense  
Not their fault, though, 'tis our own taste*

*That lets their fine flesh go to waste  
Some say that mice are really nice  
Poached in wine, mixed herbs and hot spice.*

**Hamid Elyassi**  
*World Service*

## Right Guy for the job

I was surprised to read recently that Seth Macfarlane, creator of *Family Guy* and *American Dad*, was taking part in the Proms this year. It was the first I'd heard of it.

Wasn't this a real opportunity to promote the Proms to a new and diverse audience?

Macfarlane is the highest paid tv star in America, and *Family Guy* easily pulls in 500,000 viewers per weeknight at 11pm on BBC Three. Although I caught his Proms show later on iPlayer, I'd have given my back teeth to see him sing live.

**Claire Hoang**  
*AP, F&L Manchester tv production*

## Up, up and away

I read with interest Bronagh Taylor's letter concerning missing post (Ariel July 21).

I recently sent two pieces of external mail to Dublin and Cumbria and both have disappeared into the ether.

Like Bronagh, I can't get my head round it. Even if they've been 'lost', they must be kicking about in a mail room somewhere, with the correct addresses on – unless I've missed something and the Irish recently reverted to delivering their post by balloon.

**Ben Dirs**  
*sport website*

## CALL TO ACTION

BBC history wants staff with friends or relatives who worked at the BBC during the Second World War to ask if they would like to take part in a seminar looking at the events of September 3 1939, the day the conflict officially began.

'The day that WW2 broke out,' to be held on September 1 in the Council Chamber at Broadcasting House, will involve leading academics in the field and examine broadcast moments from the day. It will also explore the impact of the beginning of the conflict on the BBC itself, as well as its audiences, its relationship with government, and how Britain was viewed by the wider world.

The seminar will draw a parallel with what Germany was broadcasting to its listeners at the time, and comparing both interventions with what might happen today.



Entrance to the event, between 9.30am-2pm, is by invitation only. The discussion will be recorded for the BBC history website. For more information, contact Robert Scatter, head of BBC history.

## OBITUARY

### ALASTAIR OSBORNE

Alastair Osborne has died in hospital in Birmingham, after battling a brain tumour. He was 74.

He worked at the BBC from the early 60s to the late 1980s, in the current affairs bit of radio news – and was an oasis of calm, civility, common sense and wry, gentle humour.

He moved up from deputy editor of *Today* in 1974 – inheriting presenter John Timpson, and looking for a new sidekick. Barry Norman, Des Lynam, Gillian Reynolds, Michael Aspel, James Burke and Melvyn Bragg all had short or longer spells. A future presenter, Libby Purves, joined under Alastair as a trainee.

His time at *Today* ended late in 1975 when he was said to oppose orders – the suits wanted to broadcast from London and Manchester ('pointless two-centre presentation' – copy-

right L. Purves). History proved his stand right.

Alastair moved to the editorship of the oddly-named *Evening Sequence* (essentially *The World Tonight*). He boasted a fourth floor Broadcasting House office with comfy chairs, a drinks cabinet and fridge. Hospitality was on offer after the programme, and in the days of pubs nearby closing at 10.30pm, this room became known as The Osborne among senior colleagues – as in: 'I think I'll finish off with one in The Osborne.'

From The Osborne, Alastair nurtured a motley crew of highly intelligent presenters, output editors and reporters; some urbane, some eccentric, all making thoughtful radio in a laid-back way – with a number going on to positions of influence elsewhere in the media.

Radio news in the eighties invented more strange job titles, and Alastair finished his BBC career as MECAR – managing editor, current affairs, radio – dispensing sage advice to all, and directly produc-

ing the odd weekly programme. This brought occasional Friday panics (if Jenny Abramsky, his boss at that time, hadn't started one already that Friday) – usually solved by Alastair's estimable PA Elaine, also known as head of gin and tonics.

Alastair assembled great teams of presenters and producers who made great radio programmes – a life worth celebrating. At his memorial, friends and family sang along to a version of Don't Fence Me In by Clint Eastwood.

*Bill Rogers*

### IAN DOCHERTY

Ian Docherty, who has died in Edinburgh at the age of 50, was a hugely creative force in the features department of the BBC in Edinburgh for most of the 1990s. Whether in the BBC's offices in Queen Street or in the Queen Street Oyster Bar (the alternative office for a generation of BBC journalists) Ian generated a stream of original ideas, marshalling

his interest in politics, philosophy, film, food and popular culture into a series of compelling features and strands.

In the early 1990s Radio Scotland was being revolutionised under the leadership of James Boyle. Ian's restless mind and intellectual force soon found a home in the transformed station.

As a former bookseller, who came to the BBC via Waterstones, Ian was the natural presenter for *Coverstories*, a new programme about books and publishing; as a lover of film, he created a long running film programme, *Movies and Shakers*.

As the 1990s went on, his interests became more international. His ambitious series *Kane over America* won a Sony award, and his programme about B92, the anti-Milosevic radio station in Serbia, was pre-



sented at the Prix Europa.

In 2001 Ian left the BBC to take up a job at the public radio station WBUR in Boston where, in the paranoid atmosphere after 9/11, he argued that American radio needed to pay closer attention to the rest of the world. He distinguished himself as the creator of the talk programme *On Point*, which is syndicated across the US to this day.

Ian's wide-ranging interests found their way into his programme making. He was a conversationalist and conspirator of the most entertaining kind and possessed a fertile imagination. A natural mentor, he thrived while holding court, and communicated his passion for radio to a generation of producers in Scotland and the United States.

In recent years he had been in poor health, but his death at the tragically early age of 50 is a shocking end to a colourful and creative life. He is survived by his wife Fiona and daughter India.

*David Stenhouse*



## JOBS

BBC People

## PROGRAMME MAKING

**News Director, BBC Arabic**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
8D/Ref: 17139209  
E 24-Aug-09

**Producer, Learning English**  
London  
Bush House  
7D/Ref: 17410909  
E 31-Aug-09 A 06 months

**Producer (Promotions), Radio 3**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
7D/Ref: 17352109  
E 01-Sep-09 A 12 months

**Assistant Producer/Cynhyrhydd Cynorthwyol**  
Cardiff  
7D/Ref: 17193209  
E 25-Aug-09 A Various

**Broadcast Journalist/Newyddiadurwr Darlledu, WIWO**  
Cardiff  
5/7D/Ref: 17136409  
E 25-Aug-09 A 06 months

**Researcher – TV Football Unit**  
London  
5D/Ref: 17265009  
E 31-Aug-09 A 06 months

**Runners Pool**  
Glasgow  
2D/Ref: 14756209  
E 23-Aug-09 Casual

## JOURNALISM

**Senior Broadcast Journalist, Newsnight**  
London  
TV Centre  
8/9D/Ref: 16122209  
E 04-Sep-09

**Senior Broadcast Journalist/Uwch Newyddiadurwr Darlledu**  
Cardiff  
8D/Ref: 17382209  
E 27-Aug-09

**Senior Broadcast Journalist (News)**  
Cambridge  
8D/Ref: 17150309  
E 01-Sep-09 A 06 months

**Broadcast Journalist, BBC Tees**  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
5/7D/Ref: 17420209  
E 01-Sep-09 A 12 months

**Broadcast Journalist - BBC North West Tonight**  
Manchester  
5/7D/Ref: 17138109  
E 02-Sep-09 A 03 months

**Broadcast Journalist - Online Reading**  
5/7D/Ref: 16675309  
E 02-Sep-09 A 12 months

**Programme Leader, Journalism Foundation**  
London  
White City  
Under Review/Ref: 15944209  
E 06-Sep-09 A 12 months

## BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

**Head of Spanish American Service**  
London  
Bush House  
SM2/Ref: 16269409  
E 27-Aug-09 A 12 months

**Head of Marketing, Digital Switchover Help Scheme**  
London  
White City  
11D/Ref: 17043909  
E 31-Aug-09

**Senior Strategy Adviser, BBC Trust**  
London  
10D/Ref: 17390309  
E 31-Aug-09 A 10 months

**Country Director, Nepal**  
Kathmandu  
10D/Ref: 17277509  
E 27-Aug-09 A 06 months

**Programme Finance Manager**  
London  
Bush House  
9D/Ref: 17367209  
E 28-Aug-09 A 12 months

**Contracts Executive**  
London  
TV Centre  
7D/Ref: 17284009  
E 27-Aug-09 A 09 months

**PA to Head of BBC Switch**  
London  
Grafton House  
5D/Ref: 17439409  
E 24-Aug-09 A 06 months

**Team Assistant, Secretariat & Governance**  
London  
Marylebone High Street  
4D/Ref: 17215309  
E 24-Aug-09 A 10 months

**Assistant, Future Media & Technology**  
Manchester  
4D/Ref: 17200009  
E 01-Sep-09 A 06 months

## NEW MEDIA

**Editor (User Building), Navigation & Services**  
London  
Media Centre  
9D/Ref: 17280709  
E 27-Aug-09 A 06 months

**Project Manager External Partnerships**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
8D/Ref: 17400409  
E 30-Aug-09 A 04 months

**Future Media Developer**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
7D/Ref: 17405309  
E 24-Aug-09 A 09 months

**Producer, h2G2**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
7D/Ref: 17352309  
E 01-Sep-09 A 09 months

**Assistant Content Producer, Content Development**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
6H/Ref: 17151609  
E 23-Aug-09 A 12 months

**Assistant Content Producer, The One Show**  
London  
6D/Ref: 17281109  
E 27-Aug-09 A 12 months

**Assistant Content Producer (Film), The One Show**  
London  
White City  
6D/Ref: 17281009  
E 27-Aug-09 A 10 months

**Content Researcher, The One Show**  
London  
5D/Ref: 17281409  
E 27-Aug-09 A 12 months

## SPECIALIST TECHNICAL AND DESIGN SERVICES

**Data Migration Lead, DMI**  
London  
White City  
9D/Ref: 17411709  
E 27-Sep-09 Freelance A 03 months

**Location Engineers, Newsgathering**  
London  
7H/Ref: 17392609  
E 01-Sep-09 A 06 months

**Broadcast Technologist**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
6/7H/Ref: 17358409  
E 01-Sep-09

## TECHNOLOGY

**Software Engineer, Client Side Developer**  
London  
Bush House  
7D/Ref: 16846609  
E 25-Aug-09 A 12 months

## BBC WORLDWIDE

**Technical Project Manager**  
London  
Media Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 17437109  
E 24-Aug-09

**Deputy Company Secretary**  
London  
Media Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 17424009  
E 25-Aug-09

**Digital Asset Clerk (Part-time)**  
London  
Woodlands  
4W/Ref: 17435609  
E 01-Sep-09 A 06 months

## See Attachment

## No place like it

## Amber Dawson has swapped BBC World tv for the UGC Hub

**IT WAS THE PRO-DEMOCRACY PROTESTS** in Burma that first brought the UGC Hub onto my radar. I was outputting the Asia-Pacific edition of the old BBC World News strand *Asia Today*. Suddenly user generated content, which had previously sounded like it belonged in a dictionary for geeks, became a vital component of my programme.

The pictures, videos and comments sent by ordinary people in Burma let us tell their story in a way our own limited coverage couldn't.

Realising the scope of possibilities, I became a UGC fan. I'm used to moving from one type of programming to another and from radio to tv, but coming to the Hub felt like landing on the moon. CPS, HTML, Jivesoft – it was like learning a different language. It all felt a bit scary, but they are a friendly bunch at the Hub and 18 months later I'm still here.

It's an unusual place. It doesn't make pro-



## Coming here felt like landing on the moon

grammes itself, but quietly influences the way important stories are told. It was the UGC Hub that first contacted Mark Abell, the businessman holed up in his Mumbai hotel during the terrorist siege, enabling correspondents and *Today* to get the sort of interviews that grip the audience.

The Hub was essentially the main newsgathering source at the start of the uprising in Tibet when the Chinese banned journalists from the area. Tibetans affected by the violence told the UGC what was happening and sent illicitly taken pictures and videos, (which the Hub verifies for authenticity before transmission by programmes).

At times like these it's journalism at the coal-face, dealing with the individuals directly affected by a story, building trust and relationships with the people we speak to, who are also our audience – and disseminating that first hand experience through the whole of news. Domestic and World Service radio, domestic and World television, online, nations and regions, *Newsnight*, *Panorama*: the UGC has unsung fingers in every pie. We're also where people send their snowmen stories. There can be few places in news where hard and soft stories sit so close by cheek by jowl.

You need to be able to write for online, edit speech interviews for radio and video for tv, plus be at the top of the curve when it comes to harnessing social networking for news. Twitter may be a current buzzword, but the Hub was using it 18 months before anyone else had heard of it.

I'd recommend anyone to come here. It's a rare species in the BBC – a new and developing area, still putting down roots and willing to experiment with the way it works and with the tools it uses. All ideas are welcome. Mine has been UGC documentaries for Radio 4. What's yours going to be?

**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



# LIZA BOOTH

PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER, CONNECT AND CREATE, BBC NORTH PROJECT TEAM



PHOTOGRAPH: ION SUPER

## CV

**Degree:** English at Reading University; postgraduate in broadcast journalism

**First Job:** Working in Laura Ashley counting rolls of wallpaper

**Career Landmark:** Reporting from Thailand and Iraq for Radio 1's Newsbeat, but also taking on current role and reshaping the project.

**Family:** Married to Nick Ravenscroft, north of England correspondent for BBC news, with a young son named Oscar.

**What does your job involve?**

The departments that are moving to Salford in 2011 will need lots of new people to work for them, so my job is to link up students from different universities and colleges in the north to those departments. It's a talent spotting exercise. We run challenges so we can choose the best students and offer them placements with the BBC.

**What sort of challenges?**

At the recent Manchester International Festival we worked with two universities and an apprenticeship scheme to give students a chance to work across tv, online and radio, gathering material that was used by the BBC. In another challenge, three universities in the north east had to come up with ways in which our coverage of the Great North Run could be more interactive. We have projects with various parts of the BBC, including radio drama and *A Question of Sport*.

**Previously you worked in radio. What did you do?**

I worked at Radio Berkshire for 18 months then did some freelancing with Radio 4, and at what is now BBC London. Then I joined Radio 1's *Newsbeat* which really was my dream job. During my six years there I went to Iraq, Kuwait, Sri Lanka, South Africa and all over Europe.

I also reported from Thailand on the tsunami, which was a bit overwhelming. In Iraq, I visited a camp of Marines in the desert getting ready to go over the border. I didn't think there was any other job that would give me the same buzz, but BBC North was an exciting opportunity to do something that has lots of elements I enjoyed about *Newsbeat*.

**Are you from the north?**

I'm originally from Surrey. My husband was offered a job with the BBC up here so I decided it was time for a change and a new challenge. Manchester has so much

going on. It has the best bits of London, all the bars, restaurants, theatre and sport but closer together so you don't have to get on the tube and stand with your nose under someone's armpit. I've signed up to the Buddy system [where London based staff can make contact with someone similar to them already working in Manchester] and have two buddies who both work at 5 live in London.

**Have they been to the north west yet?**

Yes, they've both been to see us. I feel like I'm working in the Northern tourist board as I tell them to move here immediately.

**Where do you live now?**

I live in Chorlton in Manchester. It has lots of independent shops, bars and restaurants. It's a friendly place and we know all our neighbours really well. In London I lived in Clapham, which is a similar kind of area. Driving to work here takes 15 minutes and 15 minutes in the other direction is the Peak District.

**Why do you think your job is important?**

I was helped to get my dream job at *Newsbeat* by a contact giving me a placement, so I want to help other people do the same thing. People sometimes think that working for the BBC at MediaCity is out of their reach.

A lot of the work that we're doing focuses on people from different backgrounds. We've been really impressed with the quality of students so far. They can do things that we can't, especially relating to technology, so skills are exchanged both ways.

**Have you seen MediaCityUK**

Yes. I first saw the construction site just before

I started this job and I was very impressed. Now it's going up so fast. It's shiny and huge and very different to a traditional BBC building. I really want to work there.

**You met your husband in unusual circumstances**

I was doing a three part feature for Radio Berkshire about joining the circus, and I was the sword swallower's assistant. I was cut in half and had to wear fishnet tights and a sparkly leotard - at the time the most mortifying experience of my life. I asked one of my colleagues to record the piece. The guy I asked [and went on to marry] was Nick.

**What's it like being married to a fellow BBC person?**

Because we met through work we understand each other's jobs [Nick is a BBC news correspondent]. We can go home at the end of the day and know what each other is talking about.

The downside is we're usually both working silly hours so it can be hard to find time to spend together.

**You have a new addition?**

We have a 19 month old son, called Oscar. Life is good in Manchester.

Interview by Peggy Walker

## DO YOU WANT SILLY...

...you want Chris Blackwell.

You want an assortment of kazoos, nose flutes, finger cymbals plus a sprinkling of weird and wonderful sound effects but more importantly, you want an absurdly talented musician and composer. Chris Blackwell is just that.

At Audio Network, we asked him to create a slew of quirky, off the wall tunes for our Silly Season and, of course, he jumped at the chance.

To hear them, go to [www.audionetwork.com/playlists/silly-season](http://www.audionetwork.com/playlists/silly-season)

If you're looking for silly music, that's the most sensible thing you'll ever do.

For more information contact Scott Pearce on 020 7 242 2311 or [s.pearce@audionetwork.com](mailto:s.pearce@audionetwork.com)





# green room

## THE ARIELATOR

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

**UPSIDE** GNS reporter **James Alexander** got a taste of the journalistic high life when he spent several hours broadcasting from the pungent environs of a pig pen in North Yorkshire last week. His companion was Ginger, a hog with a taste for expensive jewellery who had eaten a local grandmother's diamond



ring when she'd reached over to pet him. 'There's an anxious wait here for nature to take its course,' James informed the nation during a series of 18 two-ways across local radio and the World Service, as Ginger grunted and squealed obligingly in the background. Fortunately for our intrepid reporter, the pig failed to yield its precious cargo during his time at the pen, so rubber gloves were not required. As the GNS team put it: 'things can only go up from here for James'.

**DOWNSIDE** Residents of **Bush House** may appreciate a down Arielator now that their lifts have lost that particular function. Not an uncommon occurrence you may think, but these lifts (in the north-east wing and centre block)



are so archaic that replacement parts no longer exist and need to be manufactured from scratch, taking a month. 'I've been in buildings where the lifts tell you you're on a floor which doesn't exist, but lifts so old that the parts have to be specially commissioned is a new one,' says our mole in Bush House.



## MENACE TO SOCIETY

**IT'S POLITICAL CORRECTNESS GONE MAD!** was the predictable complaint of certain sections of the press on hearing that CBBC's new Dennis the Menace cartoon had stripped the stripy-jumpered one of his trademark catapult and pea shooter. Instead of Dennis as the archetypal rebel without a cause, a grimacing outsider continually kicking against the restrictions of a society he doesn't understand, *Dennis and Gnasher* (note the lack of 'Menace') sees the afro-ed

destroyer become a smiling creative force adept at making odd contraptions that have unpredictable results. Though the BBC reasonably argued that Dennis can't be seen to be doing anything violent that could be mimicked by children, the real question is whether the 'iPod generation' would know what Dennis's weapons actually were, and not mistake his catapult for a video game control pad and the pea shooter for the latest in slim-line mobile phone technology...

## Nice dogs finish last

**RADIO SUFFOLK-AFFILIATED** Blue Cross rescue dog Satsuma joined a host of hounds at Suffolk's annual dog day (a 'prestigious event in the canine calendar', according to its website) but sadly failed to reach the final of either the rescue dog or veteran categories. Disappointed by the judges' decision, Satsuma expressed his distaste as only dogs know how - by cocking a leg at a rather inappropriate moment. Calmed by this outburst, Satsuma put his troubles to one side and went on to upstage his owners, Radio Suffolk husband and wife team Mark Murphy and Lesley Dolphin, by meeting and greeting the masses at the 7000-strong event. 'We talk about him lots on air and people seemed more

pleased to meet him than us,' laughs Mark. Judging by his popularity even when he didn't win anything, if Satsuma manages actually to take a title next year then dog superstardom is surely not far away. Roll over Beethoven, and tell Lassie the news.



## WE HEAR THAT...

**USERS OF** the Programme Information Tool, known as PIT, may have been concerned by a recent problem with the service, but surely they weren't so worried about a ten minute lack of programme metadata that they soiled themselves? It seems they were: 'Sorry for the incontinence caused,' apologised a systems administrator in an email telling staff they could once again access the system. Fortunately for the cleaners the trouble lay with the administrator's spellchecker and not in anybody's pants.

**EVAN DAVIS** showed he was more than a match for the politicians on *Today* last week. When an interview with Peter Mandelson began to turn into a party political broadcast, an audibly exasperated Davis refused to relinquish control of the situation: 'I'm just asking you what your plan is,' he said for the umpteenth time, and led off into a lengthy list of questions. Mandelson left a gaping silence, then asked in his most reserved tones, 'Have you finished?' 'Yes I have,' affirmed an unrepentant Davis. Earlier in the day it was the Conservatives turn to get the Davis treatment: 'You've got your shirt on back to front Ed, do you know? Your label is poking out,' he informed Ed Vaizey after an interview. 'I couldn't believe the red light was on when you said that,' whimpered the MP for Wantage. Now that's what Green Room calls holding power to account.



**THE FUSS** that HDTV is generating implies it's something fresh, but it isn't all new you know. Whizz back 73 years and BBC boffins were pawing over the revolutionary Marconi 405 line system, on which trials began on August 26. The first fully electronic system to be used in regular broadcasting, the Marconi was described as high definition by articles at the time - an appropriate moniker given the graininess of previous technology. Considering the new system in Ariel's third edition (in 1936), then director of Television Gerald Cock was in a mood to 'wager about the trend of future television programmes': 'I suppose there will always be demand for variety (entertainment),' he mused, 'but programmes with a news flavour, outside broadcasts and topical types are, I think, the stuff of television.' Well Gerald, early days yet, eh?

**IN THESE** money saving, environmentally conscious times, leaving your computer left switched on overnight is considered one of the worst office faux pas. Staff at Radio Lancashire now face punishment if they commit such a sin. 'We check the office at night and see who has left their PC or monitor on and I send that person an e-ticket,' explains assistant editor Ben Thomson. His zero tolerance approach appears to be working as repeat offenders are now a thing of the past, 'Which is bad news for Pudsey as I was hoping to collect a few fines.'

## CBBC competition

**TO BE IN WITH A CHANCE** to pre-book your child in to the *Richard Hammond's Blast Lab* experience on August 29 at the Trafford Centre on the Manchester leg of the See Me On CBBC tour, just answer this question: **Who is the character in charge of security in Richard Hammond's Blast Lab?** Email ariel competitions by August 21. Non-winners can still sign up their 6-12 year olds to the free event on the day.

## EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...I'm not looking at your chest, I'm looking at your Eiffel Tower...

...I can't wear sunglasses because my ears are wonky...

...You don't get many serial killers on crutches...

...I've just sent you a new and improved duck...

...I can still smell manure up here...

...Yes he has arrived, but he and the sofa are at one...

