

ariel

THE BBC NEWSPAPER

RICHARD BACON SAYS COMEDY IS NO LAUGHING MATTER

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On the ball

◆ **FOOTBALL FREESTYLER** Ollie Hayes is given a leg up at the BBC's Your Game festival watched by Theone Coleman, one of the Your Game All Stars **Page 2**



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BRIAN TAYLOR, political editor, BBC Scotland, on the day the Libyan bomber was released.

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**NEED TO KNOW** THE WEEK'S ESSENTIALS**New fakery case under scrutiny**

◆ **A BBC TWO PROGRAMME** has this week been removed from the iPlayer and business suspended with its independent producer after a cameraman posed as a member of the public.

Sun, Sea and Bargain Spotting, hosted by Angela Rippon, has been taken down pending an investigation with Reef Television, the indie that makes the show. During an episode in series four, which was - until this week - airing on BBC Two daytime, cameraman Craig Harman is said to have posed as a member of the public aiming to purchase goods being sold by the programme's contestants.

A BBC spokeswoman said the corporation was 'extremely disappointed' Reef Television had 'misled the audience and us': 'We take this matter seriously and have suspended all business with them, with their agreement, while we investigate.' A spokeswoman for BBC Daytime said in the 'very rare instance' in which all business with an independent was suspended, all relevant content would be removed from the iPlayer as a matter of course.

No separate set of guidelines exists specifically for the iPlayer - but according to the BBC's editorial guidelines, it is the programme editors' responsibility to ensure, where appropriate, programmes with 'unexpected issues' are not repeated or made available on demand.

Mark Friend, multiplatform and interactive controller at audio and music, said removing content from the iPlayer would usually be the responsibility of the programme's production team - but it was something that 'hardly ever happens'.

It was far more usual for guidance to be added to iPlayer content, for example asking audience members to confirm they were above the age of 16, or for programmes to be edited and republished, he added.

One recent example of Audio and Music content being removed from the iPlayer followed the incorrect reporting of a court case on a Radio 4 news bulletin. Another example, from Vision, was an episode of *Seaside Rescue* in which one of the people featured subsequently died. His family gave consent for the programme to be shown on BBC One and repeated in the Sign Zone but asked for it to be removed from the iPlayer after concerns it could be accessed by the victim's son.

◆ **BBC MONITORING** is about to celebrate its 70th anniversary, but what is it that actually goes on over in its Caversham HQ near Reading and overseas offices?

The clue is in the title. Monitoring actively scan the world's media 24/7, compiling news, comment and reaction. Reports from around 3000 tv, radio, press, internet and agency sources are first transcribed, then translated into English from over 100 languages, from Afrikaans to Latvian to Yoruba. They are then distributed as open source information, available on subscription and used by governments, NGOs, multi-nationals and individuals across the world. Part of the global news division, monitoring was originally established in 1939 to aid with the war effort, allowing the British government to keep an eye on foreign media and propaganda. Now its 500 staff work together to provide coverage of the biggest stories, which often involves a lot of cross-continental collaboration.

Last year's Mumbai attacks were a case in point, the new monitoring team in India worked with the BBC Asia Pacific team and other specialists in Caversham to find out both what the world's media were saying and how they were saying it.

◆ **THE THREE DAY EDINBURGH** International Television Festival kicks off this Friday and a Saturday lunchtime clash between a session with Robert Peston or a date with Peter Andre is just one of the tensions in store.

Highlights include talks from David Simon, creator of *The Wire*; the first Edinburgh appearance of Ant and Dec, hosting a special TV's Got Talent session; and for the petrolheads there's a *Top Gear* masterclass with Jeremy Clarkson and exec producer Andy Wilman.

The controllers of BBC One, Two and Four, Jay Hunt, Janice Hadlow and Richard Klein will be in the hotseat for special Q&As.

Looking in to the future, director of BBC Vision, Jana Bennett, and director of news Helen Boaden will both be fielding questions in this year's hot topic discussion sessions - To Pay or Not to Pay and That Was the News That Was, while Roly Keating, director of archive content, looks at the future of the past.

But all eyes will be on the main event, the James MacTaggart memorial lecture, which this year will be delivered by James Murdoch 20 years after his father, Rupert, used this platform to launch into the broadcasting establishment.

**NEWS BITES**

BBC FOUR is launching a special Scottish season to mark a decade of devolution. *This is Scotland* will celebrate and examine aspects of Scottish culture, art, film-making, heritage, landscape and psyche. Alan Cumming, Peter Capaldi and Rory Bremner present.

DOCTOR WHO enters a whole new visual dimension later this year with *Dreamland*, a six-part animated series which will be premiered via the red button on BBC One and the *Doctor Who* website. The 45 minute long animation will be broadcast in full on CBBC and BBC Two this autumn.

RADIO SHEFFIELD has been presented with a special award by the city's Pakistan Muslim Centre for its outstanding contribution to the local community over the past 40 years. The honour came as the station started broadcasting six hours of special programming each day for Ramadan.

BBC WORLD News has launched *Africa Business Report*, its first tv programme dedicated to business on the continent. The programmes will be based in a different part of Africa each month, with presenter Komla Dumor meeting entrepreneurs and people from the business world in each location.

A REMINDER for all staff booked onto courses with the BBC Academy that the training teams have now moved to the third floor of White City. The Academy comprises three colleges, the college of journalism, college of leadership and management and college of production, and has a centre for broadcast engineering technology.

BBC WORLD Service Trust is launching a new tv drama for Bangladesh as part of a broader drive to encourage the learning of English.

THE JOB of Ariel editor, for both the newspaper and online, is advertised this week, following the retirement of Andrew Harvey. The new combined role is part of a wider restructuring of internal communications.

YOUR GAME OR MINE? SOCCER SCHEME AIMS TO OPEN DOORS

by Sue Llewellyn

FOOTBALL FREESTYLER OLLIE HAYES shows off his skills at London's Your Game festival, wow-ing 1Xtra dj Robbo Ranx and Your Game producer Aisling Grant, (both pictured centre). Since 2006, Your Game has worked with thousands of disadvantaged young people, opening up opportunities for training, qualifications and full-time employment.

This year the project travelled to Cardiff, Hull, Glasgow, Belfast and London inviting groups working with 16-25 year-olds from underserved communities to take part. Focused around a 5-a-side football tournament, it aims to offer long-term opportunities. Partners include funders such as the Big Lottery. Internal support has come from Radio 1Xtra, the BBC mental health campaign Headroom and Video Nation.

Your Game opportunities manager Dominic Cotton said the test of effectiveness will come when the young people are accessing long-term opportunities presented to them by the project.



PHOTOGRAPH: ANNA GORDON



Back in the saddle and loving every minute

by Cathy Loughran

Clare Balding has a packed Bank Holiday schedule coming up – presenting BBC Two's coverage of the European show jumping championships from Windsor this Friday and the Rugby League Challenge Cup on Saturday for BBC One – and that's the way she likes it.

Just weeks after being given the all-clear from doctors treating her for thyroid cancer, the sports presenter is busier than ever, with a new tv and radio series coming up and a trip to France next month to cover the European eventing championships. Filming a special assignment last week for

After the emotional relief of being given the all-clear from cancer, Clare Balding will present two new series

The One Show at London's Charing Cross Hospital was the first time she'd been back to the wards since she was told in July that her post-operative treatment with radioactive iodine pills had been successful. 'They have a Maggie's [advice] centre there and it made me think much more about dealing with cancer than when I was ill. The experience was very affecting – plus, I had some good stories to swap,' she says.

'I may have seemed a bit blasé about my illness while it was happening, but that was how I coped at the time.'

She 'timed' her post-op treatment so as not to miss out on too many sporting fixtures. Balding stopped work

after Wimbledon, had treatment from early July which meant she missed the Open Golf but was back for the King George at Ascot just over two weeks later, followed by the world swimming championships in Rome. 'That might sound daft, but I love my work and I'm a freelance with a mortgage to pay.'

The presenter first spotted a lump on her throat while watching herself on tv last Christmas. Two bouts of surgery led to a good prognosis for full recovery, from a rare disease that affects only 2000 people a year in the UK.

'Until you're given the all-clear, you don't know how much stress you've been under and it's quite emotional,'

she told Ariel. 'I wouldn't have chosen to be as public as I have been, but the upside is getting so much support from other sufferers that, in turn, allows me to deal better with people going through the experience now. It's a connection with the rest of the world you didn't know you were missing.'

Balding passed on the news of her successful treatment via her website last month. Colleagues at BBC Sport were the first to know: 'Last month at Ascot I told the team they could stop being nice to me. I was fine.'

If proof were needed that she is well and truly back in the saddle, she is filming a new series for BBC Four called *Britain by Bike* which involves her cycling some, if not all of the routes, the programme explores. That transmits in early 2010. And a new run of her Radio 4 series *Ramblings* – about great hikes around the UK – is also in the pipeline

NEWS DAY, AUGUST 20: ELECTION AND LIBYAN RELEASE STRETCH NEWS TEAMS

One close call in Afghanistan

by Cathy Loughran

This was the moment when Caroline Wyatt and cameraman Phil Goodwin were caught up in a rocket attack en route to a polling station in Helmand province.

Embedded with British forces, they were travelling in an armoured convoy last Thursday, filming the governor of Helmand on his way to vote, on a day that saw more than 100 violent attacks across Afghanistan and dozens killed.

'The first rocket went off with an almighty thud, not far from us. I have rarely thrown myself on the ground faster, before the security team shouted at us to get back into the vehicles,' Wyatt told Ariel. 'They sped us out of the governor's compound to somewhere slightly more protected, and as we waited, we saw or heard another six or seven explosions in and around the town over the next hour, a mix of rockets and makeshift bombs going off.'

'We discovered later that the first rocket had landed close to the compound, and the next explosion hit a convoy containing western journalists. Only their car was damaged.'

Permanent BBC security at the bureau in Kabul was reinforced from the high risk team in London in the run-up to the election period, as attacks on civilian targets escalated. But safety wasn't the only issue for Wyatt, Goodwin and the rest of the BBC team covering the milestone elections – including BBC Persian and BBC Arabic plus a 25-strong deployment from newsgathering.

Like other international news organisations, the BBC resisted orders by the Afghan government not to report on any violence during the polls. On election day, local BBC producer Kabir Haqmal was briefly de-

tained and questioned by counter terrorism officers and security forces confiscated some audio material of a police station attack near Kabul, recorded by fellow journalists from the BBC Afghan stream,' said editor Lutfullah Latif. Reporting from an area south of the capital for the *Ten O'Clock News*, world affairs editor John Simpson told how special forces had 'insisted we got rid of satellite pictures of them'.

'It was clear that across all of our services, we could not comply with the order and we communicated that informally to the authorities,' said world editor Jon Williams.

The government stance was a bigger concern for BBC Persian than for the domestic services. The BBC is the most trusted broadcaster in Afghanistan, with almost 60 percent of the adult population tuning to the Afghan stream broadcasts on radio and online every week.

'On the day, the Afghan authorities told us they were checking our output to find out what was really happening round the country,' said Afghan stream editor Lutfullah La-



tif, whose expanded team in Kabul broadcast live for 14 hours.

The new Kabul bureau, built last year to house Persian TV, was the hub for coverage across all services with John Simpson and correspondents Lyse Doucet, Hugh Sykes and Kabul correspondent Ian Pannell reporting largely from in and around the capital. Radio 5 live's Peter Allen

was at the British Army base in Kandahar and Afghanistan-based Martin Patience, in Mazar-e-Sharif.

But a glance down the live Afghan election page on the BBC news website shows the range of correspondents feeding into BBC coverage on the day. The live page followed breaking news in real time through emails, Tweets and insights from BBC journalists on the ground – people like Ilyas Khan of the Islamabad bureau, posting from Herat and BBC Persian TV's Daud Qarizadah from a live election debate.

News nevertheless had to limit numbers of people deployed on safety grounds and correspondents and crews have been in constant demand by news outlets.

On election day, Hugh Sykes says he had to turn down some network requests. A shortage of live camera points was an issue, he told Ariel: 'At one point, Delhi bureau chief Milton Nkosi, who was co-ordinating coverage in Kabul, had to man a V-point camera to manage a two-way for *Breakfast*.'

PRE-POLL EXCLUSIVES

■ Final election results won't be known until September 17, but even before the polls opened BBC journalists were delivering exclusives on Afghan democracy.

Ian Pannell's investigation into election fraud, exposed voting cards for sale and aired across global and domestic channels.

Meena Baktash of the Persian and Pashto service, describes the tension behind pulling off the biggest pre-election coup of all.

'We had been hoping against hope that President Hamed Karzai would grant us an interview and appear on our planned exclusive interactive Talking Point programme in two languages. We'd tentatively trailed the programme and were sorting emails and phone messages from listeners,' says Baktash, who secured a 50-minute, world exclusive interview with Karzai and persuaded him to do a listeners' Q&A.

We broke Megrabi story first

Brian Taylor, political editor, Scotland

As I write this, the Scottish justice secretary Kenny MacAskill is preparing to make an emergency statement in Holyrood. He has already had an ear-bashing from Hillary Clinton. And he's wanted by the FBI – in the shape of the director Robert Mueller who said his decision to return the Lockerbie bomber to Libya had given 'comfort to terrorists'. Welcome to government.

We broke the story that Abdelbaset al-Megrabi was likely to be released on compassionate grounds and returned to Libya. A week later, that informed insight turned into fact with a news conference in St Andrews House.

I listened as MacAskill set out the background. I digested the information that he had rejected the option of transferring the prisoner to Libya. Then he reached the culmination – release on compassionate grounds. Even as he began that closing statement, I rushed from the news conference chamber to a tv live location next door. Straight on to the end of the *One* – after the inevitable fiddle with audio which attends such events. Then straight on to the *Reporting Scotland* bulletin which followed, then on to the News Channel.

Elsewhere, colleagues were providing hits for the wide range of outlets. I think, I hope, we served all demands. On these occasions, programme producers are insistent. Yes, we know you're terribly busy, but you simply must do.....This approach is absolutely right. Producers would not be serving their programme's interests if they failed to pursue their case.

Ray banned

The BBC Asian Network has sent the Sikh Media Monitoring Group a second unedited copy of the Adil Ray show that was removed from the iPlayer following complaints.

The group requested the copy after listeners complained the presenter had been mocking Sikhism in the programme.

They accused him of denigrating the Kirpan dagger - one of five ceremonial symbols baptised Sikhs are expected to wear at all times.

Ray had been discussing the cancellation of a Punjabi concert in Canada because of fears about Sikhs attending the event wearing Kirpans.

He went on to talk about another news story - Sikh soldiers joining the Queen's guard in the UK.

An Asian Network spokeswoman said: 'At no time did he make any judgment about people's faith or the rights and wrongs of wearing the Kirpan. He did not mock the Kirpan or Sikhism.'

What I wouldn't give...



It's made the impossible and now for one young DUTCHESTER singer-

songwriter it's set to make the impossible possible.

Virtually unknown in the UK until now, Hamel is the man behind the music on the BBC iPlayer trail. His track 'See You Once Again' became a surprise hit with the British public and now Decca Records are to release it as a single on October 5.

Helen Weeks, marketing manager for BBC iPlayer, said: 'Since the campaign launched on July 18 we've had a great response to it. We were keen to find a track that conveyed the iPlayer proposition of never having to miss out.'

Hamel's work is a mix of styles including jazzy or Latin rhythms and catchy harmonies.

He didn't create the song for the trail. 'I wrote it a year ago somewhere in the woods thinking of a big fat Ukrainian wedding, where after one vodka too many someone starts singing about a lost love.'

Radio 2 denies claims of a 'policy of youth'

by Nicki Defago

Radio 2 has refuted RadioCentre claims that it follows a deliberate policy of pursuing younger listeners by replacing older presenters with personalities like Jonathan Ross and Chris Evans.

RadioCentre, the industry body for commercial radio, has unusually gone public with its submission to the BBC Trust's review of Radio 2 and 6Music, which is due to report early

next year. In its submission - Reach not Reith: how Radio 2 is prioritising popularity not public purposes - the organisation's chief executive officer Andrew Harrison accuses the network of shifting its programme policies to the detriment of commercial radio, older listeners, and the 'fragile radio ecology'.

He says if this happened in the commercial sector, Ofcom would almost certainly intervene. Harrison argues that Radio 2's reach amongst

15-34 year olds has grown by 62 percent in the last 10 years.

A Radio 2 spokeswoman said that over the last five years, reach among 15-34s has fallen by six percent (150,000 listeners) and that over 65 percent listen on average for around 14 hours a week - the highest amount of listening per week out of all the age groups.

'The average listener age has remained steady over the past five years, at 50 years old,' she said.



Hank Paulson (James Cromwell) and Tim Geithner (Alex Jennings) in the BBC Two drama

Drama and factual bed in for money

by Stephen Hawkes

Some high speed team work, using fact to make fiction, has produced a three part documentary and an hour long drama - a modern day 'Greek tragedy' - on the collapse of the Lehman Brothers bank.

In an unusual collaboration for next month's Crash season on BBC Two, the factual team behind the Money Programme produced a three-part series, *The Love of Money*, and their interview transcripts and research were used as the basis of the drama *The Last Days of Lehman Brothers*.

Producer Lisa Osborne said: 'It all started with the BBC's factual department, who wanted to do a series of documentaries for the anniversary of the bank collapse in September.'

'When it was pitched to BBC Two controller Janice Hadlow, she felt

that the human story of Lehman's fall might be better told in a drama.'

The Love of Money will reveal exclusive footage shot inside Lehman's in the weeks leading up to its collapse. In *The Last Days of Lehman Brothers*, Fuld is played by Corey Johnson, while James Cromwell stars as the then US Treasury Secretary, Hank Paulson.

Osborne said: 'Some will see Hank Paulson as a hero, others as a villain - but, particularly for Fuld, who had spent 42 years as head of his bank, it's a Greek tragedy, a classic tale of pride and failure.'

'It's a universal human story as much as a reconstruction. In drama we don't often tell a story in a news context this quickly.'

The speed of the commission meant James Cromwell had to make some quick decisions of his own: 'I

only heard about it a week before I got the script. It's a subject that won't get covered in the US, because we don't want our people to know the truth.'

The Love of Money exec producer Dominic Crossley-Holland said an 'exciting creative collaboration' had produced a 'gripping double bill'.

Executive producer Ruth Caleb said the drama could not have been made at speed without cooperation from the factual team: 'Collaborating at the research stage enabled writer Craig Warner, to get access to an in-depth and detailed account of events.'

Other programmes in BBC Two's Crash season include *Warren Buffett: How To Be Rich*, in which Evan Davis meets one of the world's richest men, and *Bonfire Of The Bankers*, which also examines the collapse of Lehman Brothers.

Ulster rapped for swearing

Ofcom ruled that Radio Ulster was in breach of its broadcasting rules after Hollywood actor Tony Curtis swore three times during a live lunchtime show.

Curtis referred to journalists as bastards, claimed his Oscar nomination was bullshit and said f*** off while recounting an anecdote on the phone-in *Talkback*, in May. The BBC apologised for any offence caused and said Tony Curtis had been informed the programme was live ahead of the interview.

The regulator upheld a second complaint involving a member of the public who appeared on BBC One's *Car Wars* without giving permission for the footage to be used. Ofcom decided that there had been an unwarranted infringement of privacy.

Estate fights back

Radio Manchester has given residents of the Northern Moor estate the chance to show a different side of their community, following ITV1's doc *The Duchess on the Estate*.

Local people challenged the station to 'give us some cameras and we'll show you what it's really like'.

Reporter Euan Doak spent the week getting their stories and Radio Manchester helped local people make short films about their lives, which premiered in Northern Moor on Tuesday.

Women for all season

BBC Four's 2009-2010 highlights are unusually starry, with Helena Bonham Carter at her haughtiest as Enid Blyton, Anne Marie Duff seducing Nureyev as Margot Fonteyn and Jane Horrocks giving Gracie Fields the common touch.

Controller Richard Klein's season launch also unveiled a biopic of Winnie Mandela shot on location in Soweto; Michael Portillo examining Spain's historical memory in *Digging Up the Dead* and former British Ambassador to the US Christopher Meyer lifting the lid on 500 years of British diplomacy.

On set: Becci Gemmell (Joyce) and producer Erika Hossington

To mark the 70th outbreak of war, Daytime's drama, *Land Girls*, looks at the women who 'fought in the fields'. Laura Scarrott reports

PERIOD DRAMA GETS DOWN TO EARTH

PRODUCER ERIKA HOSSINGTON is spending the summer location-hopping around Warwickshire, where the rolling green fields and postcard-pretty villages provide the backdrop for Daytime's first period costume, *Land Girls*.

Produced by BBC Birmingham's drama department, the five-part drama follows four girls working for the Women's Land Army and will go out every day for a week on BBC One. Like any historical fiction, the series tries to balance factual accuracy and respect for the subject matter with 'telling a good story', but like any drama, reality always gets in the way...

Trade secrets

First were the costumes for the actors playing the Home Guard: in wartime they would have worn codes similar to the postcodes denoting their location. 'We decided to put RM on their sleeves - the writer Roland Moore's initials,' she says, from the set in Henley-in-Arden, noting that 'if there's one thing you have to be as a producer it's decisive.'

The crew, who usually work on *Doctors*, all know about making drama on a shoestring. 'We know how to cheat,' she says. 'There's nothing we couldn't do because of the budget.' When the script called for a Messerschmitt, one of the fighter planes used by the Germans in World War Two,

line producer Sam Hill (who has a light plane licence) asked a couple he knew if he could borrow their Messerschmitt. When it turned out to be from a Spanish fleet, the set designers grabbed a paintbrush and changed its markings.

While the land girls of the drama are fictitious, their histories and backgrounds are



Hoxley Estate: keeping it real in Henley-in-Arden

drawn from Moore's research - from the cosseted rich girl conscripted into the WLA against her will to the woman who lost her family in a bombing: 'I read enough firsthand accounts of land girls' experiences to know that the stories are believable and of the time,' he says. 'It was really impor-

tant to me - and everyone else on the production - that we respected the memory of those women.'

When not on set, Erika is in the edit suite at the nearby drama village, where all the *Land Girls* post-production takes place. When we arrive she's pleased with the footage she's shown, despite one fluffed line which could potentially mean a re-shoot. The programme has already struck a chord with viewers and the team has been inundated with people offering their services, including one woman who sent in some music she had composed especially for it.

Music for the period

Instead they chose Debbie Wiseman for the job. The composer, who won an RTS award for the BBC series *Warriors*, was asked because 'her feminine style complemented the programme's female focus'.

'Music is incredibly important,' Erika says. 'It helps to evoke the period, and it underpins both the emotional drama and the comedy.'

With an already positive outlook, is she hopeful of a second series? 'Well, we've left the ending open,' she smiles. 'We've captured the good and the bad and although it all happened 70 years ago, there's a lot for a modern audience to relate to.'

Land Girls starts on September 7, BBC One



WHO WERE THE REAL LAND GIRLS?

- The Board of Agriculture established the Land Army in 1915, during the First World War. It was designed to replace male farm labourers who had joined the military. Some farmers were initially against the idea of women working the land, and government representatives were sent out to persuade them otherwise.
- By 1917 there were more than 250,000 women working the land and 20,000 in the Land Army itself.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries established the Women's Land Army in 1939, just before the outbreak of the Second World War, to increase food supplies. It was led by Lady Denman. At first the WLA asked for volunteers but it was then supplemented by subscription. By 1944 it had 80,000 members.
- The WLA was disbanded in 1950.
- In 2007 the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced that members of the Women's Land Army would be formally recognised with the presentation of a commemorative badge.



WILL RICHARD BACON CUT IT AT THE FRINGE? HE HAS TO GET AROUND THE BBC GUIDELINES FIRST, HE TELLS ADAM BAMBURY

IT'S PERSONAL

MAKING YOUR DEBUT as a stand-up comic in front of 300 comedy connoisseurs at the Edinburgh Fringe could be considered a baptism of fire. But doing it while being broadcast across the nation on 5 live, then going back into the studio and facing a panel of seasoned comedy critics who will rate your performance live on air? More like trial by napalm.

That's why Richard Bacon – who will be doing just this on August 27 when he follows stand-up Reginald D Hunter's set at the festival with a ten minute routine of his own – is understandably feeling a little nervous. 'The circumstances are stacked against me,' he admits.

'Everyone drinks pints at the Fringe, and by the end of the hour you've got people dying for the loo and wanting to head off to another show. The last thing you want is an untried comic coming out and doing new material.'

Despite these misgivings, Bacon is determined to put himself through the

wringer. He will be in Edinburgh from Wednesday, when he welcomes a bunch of comedians on to his evening show to mentor him in the esoteric art of comedy. Thursday night is the main event, broadcast from a studio next to the Udderbelly stage, when listeners can follow him before, during and after the performance.

As well as going out live his routine will be filmed, both adding another layer of difficulty to proceedings as Bacon negotiates BBC guidelines while trying to keep the crowd on his side. 'I can't stray into the usual comic territory,' he acknowledges. 'I can't swear, talk about alcohol, do serious jokes about religion or discuss politics... imagine the kind of restrictions put on you if you were doing a routine for the Taliban – it's a bit like that.'

So what can he talk about? 'Nottingham, Rebecca Adlington, Jesus and Tim Vincent,' says Bacon cryptically. He's decided to go with an anecdotal approach based on the events of his life and not un-controversial career, rather than a series of searing one-liners: 'It's less likely to die if it's personal, but by doing that you're raising the stakes – if you bare your soul and they're still not interested, that really is embarrassing.'

Even if the audience does warm to him, Bacon has no plans to continue as a comedian. This stunt is about radio – a thought he can console himself with when he's sweating under the spotlight: 'I'll tell myself it's not about the people in the room, it's about the people listening on the radio,' he says. 'They may well also be hating it, but one way or the other it's going to be a compelling listen.'

See the performance live at bbc.co.uk/5live

Small team, big ambition. Lucy Keeler spent a day with the BBC Hereford and Worcester team 'We're the warm friend in the kitchen'

BBC HEREFORD AND WORCESTER may be the only station to broadcast from a one-time abattoir, but a bloody past isn't its only claim to fame.

Worcester station editor James Coghill describes the station (31 staff and a three-man office in Hereford) as 'the warm friend to speak to in the kitchen' and its credentials as a station with a community feel are impeccable: breakfast presenter Howard Bentham even doubles up as a local schoolteacher three days a week. But then a radio station doesn't pull in half a million listeners and win Sony station of the year in its class, just for being warm or friendly – the secret of its success is more subtle.

Coghill believes that the station's relationship with its listeners is key. When the floods hit in 2007, assistant editor Mark Hellings (enjoying an after-work pint) armed himself with £60 worth of food from the local chippie and headed back to the station – fuel for the staff who kept H&W broadcasting throughout the night, the only local station to do so. Such a demonstration of Blitz spirit got an extraordinary response from listeners, many of whom had tuned in while they were stranded

on the motorway, stuck in their homes and sleeping on community centre floors. It won the station a breaking news award at the Gillards.

Then there's H&W's dedication to 'big impactful journalism

'You don't have to cover the schedule with one grand idea – less is more'

and programming'. The station has been modernising since 2005 when the presenter line-up was reviewed and the station started focusing on more ambitious output. 'Punching above our weight,' as Coghill puts it.

The ambition was to make network radio on a local radio budget – most recently the *Family Life* documentary series produced by sbj Howard Belgard. Over the past four years, Belgard has covered the issues he gets angry about – from the plight of migrant work-

ers to ageism. Each took a year to make, with Belgard flying to Ukraine to interview would-be migrant workers.

'It's not a big deal for network, but a really big feat for local radio,' he says proudly, arguing that the freedom he's afforded lends the station a big, ambitious sound. This year *Family Life* won one of two golds for the station at the Sonys, taking the gold for themed programming.

Coghill says they've come a long way from *Hearing Voices*, their 2006 documentary series on the stigma of mental health.

'When we started with *Hearing Voices*, it took up most of our output for a week,' he says. 'Now we've realised that you don't have to cover the schedule with one grand idea – less is more.' They've also learned to be creative with the local radio budget; for *Hearing Voices* the University of Worcester produced a local poll of people's attitudes to mental health, which was incorporated into students' course work and informed the series.

As assistant editor Mark Hellings puts it: 'I think the output shows ambition beyond what local radio is supposed to be like.'

Slaughterhouse four: senior producer Howard Belgard; assistant editor Mark Hellings; ba Mandi Harris and editor James Coghill



PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD SHAKESPEARE

blogbites

Monday

Leah Gooding from Newsround tells me about her day's filming
I rushed to the Albert Hall, where I saw the familiar Newsround logo... In 1 step, and see a small group of invited children meeting members of the orchestra! I managed to grab presenter Leah Gooding for a quick chat about their day filming – in the background, the budding reporters tuck into their well deserved sandwiches before taking up their seats in a private box!

Peter Gregson
bbc.co.uk/blogs/radio3

Tuesday

Deal or no Deal?

The Scottish Government is adamant it made no deal with Megrahi in respect of his application to be returned to Libya on compassionate grounds, given the state of his health. I do not believe Kenny MacAskill, the justice secretary, went to Greenock prison to strike a bargain. I do not see him saying: 'OK, here's the thing, drop the appeal and you're on your way home.'

Brian Taylor, political editor, BBC Scotland



blogs/thereporters/briantaylor/

Wednesday

New students wanted by BBC Ouch!

The BBC's disability website 'Ouch!' is planning a feature called Disabled Student Diaries. We want to follow 3 disabled students in their first few weeks at university, focusing on everything from access to lectures and campus, through to how you're getting on living independently away from home and your new social life. We expect our chosen students to write a diary for us for the first weeks at uni, including a little filming before you go, and a lovely care package.

Damon Rose, senior content producer, Learning Formal
bbc.co.uk/blogs/ouch/damon_rose/

Thursday

Living Live Online

It's an exciting time at BBC Radio 5 live as we gear up for our first new website launch since 1974. Well it seems that long since we last had a new website, although it's probably about 6 years in reality. GT came up with the tagline very early on in development of Living Live Online, reflecting exactly what we wanted to achieve. Our mission has been to bring the online offering much closer to the radio station, reflecting the live nature of the network.

Brett Spencer, interactive editor, 5 live
bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbcinternet/

Friday

Your Letters

UCAS claim 970,570 students have used their website to check whether they have a place at university. This is despite only 592,312 people actually applying through UCAS before it closed. Looks like somebody needs to retake their Computer Science A-level.

Ray Lashley, Colchester, UK
bbc.co.uk/blogs/magazinemonitor/

week@work



FAST RIDE: *Bang Goes The Theory* presenters and staff take a well-earned break from the roadshow by braving the 'Big One' at Blackpool Pleasure Beach. The roadshow has been touring the UK all summer and in Blackpool over 8000 seaside goers got hands-on with science, put their questions to the programme's four presenters and came along to free, live science shows. For more information on the roadshow dates and locations go to bbc.co.uk/bang.
Front row: presenters Jem Stansfield and Yan Wong
Second row: Melanie Windridge (roadshow volunteer) and presenter Dallas Campbell
Third row: James Soper (roadshow presenter) and David Sasse (Bang project manager)

CHANGING PLACES

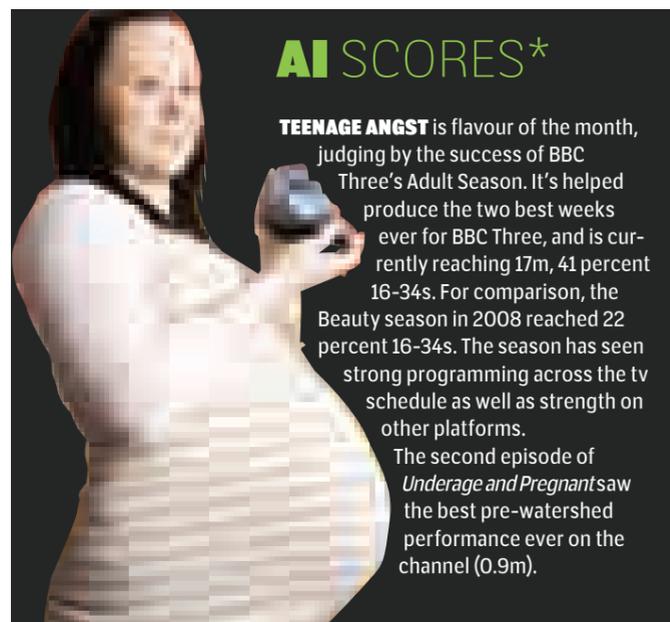


ADAM HEYHURST (pictured), currently multimedia researcher for Children in Need, becomes multiplatform creative... Radio Bristol's news editor, **CHARLOTTE CALLEN**, begins a 12 month attachment on the *Politics Show* in the West... **ANGELA FRAIN** joins the station as news editor in Callen's absence. She was previously acting news editor in Lincolnshire... Radio Lancashire bj **LIZ DE COURCEY** begins a stepping stones attachment on the *Andrew Marr*

Show for three months before moving to the *Politics Show* in the North West for another three months... **ANDY BURROWS** joins BBC Somerset as their new breakfast presenter. He moves from BBC Cambridge-shire where he presented Peterborough's breakfast show.

SPEAKEASY

◆ **THE AFGHAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS** are being held in late August. The three main candidates are current president Hamid Karzai, pronounced HAA-mid kar-ZIGH (-aa as in father, -igh as in high, stressed syllables in upper case), Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, pronounced ab-duul-AA ab-duul-AA (-uu as in book, stressed syllables in upper case) and Ashraf Ghani, pronounced ash-RAAF gan-EE (-aa as in father, stressed syllables in upper case).



AI SCORES*

TEENAGE ANGST is flavour of the month, judging by the success of BBC Three's Adult Season. It's helped produce the two best weeks ever for BBC Three, and is currently reaching 17m, 41 percent 16-34s. For comparison, the Beauty season in 2008 reached 22 percent 16-34s. The season has seen strong programming across the tv schedule as well as strength on other platforms. The second episode of *Underage and Pregnant* saw the best pre-watershed performance ever on the channel (0.9m).

SHAMELESS PLUG

◆ **ANNA MILES, NATIONAL ASSISTANT BBC CHILDREN IN NEED, SCOTLAND**

When I'm not looking after Pudsey in Pacific Quay, I play and sing in an indie pop band called 'Maple Leaves'. We write melodic, literate pop and have been playing gigs together as a three piece since February. Giving our audiences a 'massive aural hug' as the Sunday Herald put it, has been our aim. The nice people at T-Break liked it, and offered us a spot at T in the Park in July, a wee snippet of which ended up on BBC Two. It was, as clichéd as it sounds, a dream come true. Dauntingly it was also only our sixth gig, but it's been a great baptism of fire! Next up we play King Tuts Wah Wah Hut on Friday August 28. It's our first time playing the legendary Glasgow venue so we're more than a little excited. Come along and join the fun. Aural hugs all round, promise...



Tickets: kingtuts.co.uk/tickets.html.
Myspace: myspace.com/mapleleavesmusic – follow us on
Twitter: @mapleleavesband

Strictly top Secret

WHEN THE GLITTERING LINE UP of celebrity participants for the new series of *Strictly Come Dancing* is revealed, the excitement will be accompanied by a twinge of relief for production manager Jane Ashford. 'At last, we can drop the code-language,' she laughs. 'I've spent months huddled in an office with the door shut, having serious conversations about Corfu's contract and the rehearsal schedule of double-bass!'

The new series sees the end of the Sunday results show and all the action packed into 90 minutes on a Saturday. With 17 shows scheduled over 14 weeks, culminating in a Christmas final, it's not only the contestants whose feet will barely touch the floor.

Along with Ashford, other members of the production team are sampling a taste of what's to come.

'Everyone will want a red dress for the tango, it always happens and it's just not possible!' Costume designer Su Judd is already tearing her hair out.

Not everyone can wear red

With 16 celebrities, 16 professional dancers and 13 dances from the Paso Doble to the Argentine Tango – Judd says she can't please everyone all of the time. 'A thick skin is the biggest prerequisite for my job,' she admits. 'The girls have strong ideas about

From the costumes to the cutting room, Nicki Defago meets the entertainment team behind *Strictly Come Dancing*

what they wear – but so do their dancing partners and so do their boyfriends! That's 48 people – all with opinions.' Judd says there are few tantrums in the dressing room ('they're all too scared') but each female celebrity is convinced that her outfit is the only one that matters. 'I have to look at the whole picture, however,' she says. 'Differing styles and contrasting colours bring the show alive. I can't have everyone in red, so someone's always disappointed on tango night...'

Lycra makes them laugh

Judd says the male contestants are easier to dress because their costumes are uniforms and 'lycra just makes them laugh'.

The one-show format will bring some changes for senior VT producer Ed Booth and his team who have the huge task of cutting down hundreds of hours of rehearsal footage into a one and a half hour film each week. These vignettes of the contestants' travails are key to the pro-

gramme's success. 'It's that personal insight that engages the audience,' he says. 'If you know when your favourite celebrity steps out that she's worried about a particular jump, you'll be holding your breath to see if she pulls it off. Without that, it's just a dancing competition.'

Booth says if the films can provoke a reaction – be it anger, tears or laughter – he's done his job right.

Everyone working on *Strictly* concedes it's an all-consuming affair. Ashford's partner enjoyed the occasional tongue-in-cheek attempt to test how she'd do in MI5 by asking over dinner, how is Madonna today? and people constantly plug her for celebrity insights. 'Most often they ask, 'Is Mark Ramprakash as nice as he seems?' she says, 'and the answer is 'yes'. But one couple I met told me being in the studio audience was the best day of their lives – even better than their wedding...'

As the show's music researcher, Ben Skilbeck finds he can't listen to

any piece of music since he began working on *Strictly* without thinking 'is it a quickstep or is it a foxtrot?' It pleases his mum – and has ignited the sense of humour of his friends back home in Gateshead.

The choice of music is a collaborative affair, with each couple willing to share ideas and compromise if there's a particular track that several contestants want to dance to. His highest praise is reserved for the musicians, who rehearse at Saturday morning band call and are sometimes playing the arrangements we hear on a Saturday night for only the third or fourth time ever. 'I may take some ribbing from my mates,' he says, 'but at the end of the day they all want tickets – or, at least, their girlfriends do.'

Today we'll find out if Ashford's partner is a canny interrogator or if she's an even better double bluff. Madonna's a long shot but whatever the line-up it's going to be a hot watch.

Su Judd, with her cast of dress-makers busy with the new celebrity frocks, sums up the spirit of the show by explaining her 'wardrobe rule'.

'When she steps onto the dance floor, she mustn't be worrying 'how do I look'. The dress must be perfect – she is out there to dance.'



Jane Ashford

PRODUCTION MANAGER

'WORKING ON A SATURDAY NIGHT, peaktime show may be a far cry from my days on *Horizon* in the 80s, when the core programme team was me and a producer, but it doesn't mean I can take my eye off the cost. When a producer says, 'I've found this fantastic, visual effect and I must have it for my film' – as happened recently – I told him to look for a cheaper version. The one he wanted was a pyrotechnic, glitter effect version costing £2000. The one he ended up with created the same 'whoosh' effect, but was really just an oversized salad spinner that spat out glitter as it twirled! It cost £80.'

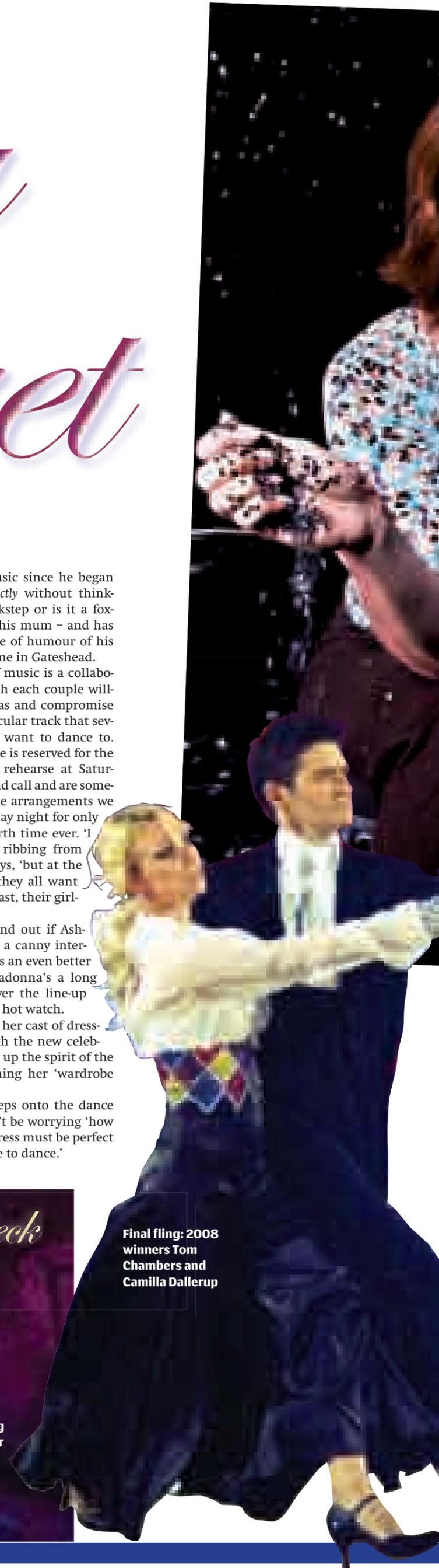


Ben Skilbeck

MUSIC RESEARCHER

'FOR ME, the perfect *Strictly* song is *Crazy in Love* by Beyonce, which Alesha and Matthew danced the *Cha-Cha* to last year. It's modern, but it has all the horn instruments that allow the band to go to town and make a great musical arrangement. *Crazy in Love* was big last year so the audience knew it and loved it. I remember Alesha getting really excited about that song. Matthew choreographed a great routine and she danced the hell out of it. When it all comes together – live dancing, live music, live tv, it's pretty special.'

Final fling: 2008 winners Tom Chambers and Camilla Dallerup





Star team: production manager Jane Ashford; music researcher Ben Skilbeck; costume designer Su Judd and VT producer Ed Booth

Ed Booth



SENIOR VT PRODUCER

'I WORKED ON FAME ACADEMY and all the Lloyd Webber shows, but **Strictly** is the most challenging if you want to capture up-to-the-minute reactions. We used to film contestants and judges between the main programme and the results show, which meant laying down the final shots of the results show while the programme was on air. What you saw could have been filmed just minutes before, which is cutting it fine even by our standards.'

Su Judd



COSTUME DESIGNER

'CLOTHES MEAN SO MUCH to the female contestants – they have an emotional relationship with their dresses. Emma Bunton comes to mind. She's very photogenic but her image had always been carefully controlled. She said she'd only been photographed from the front in the past three years and felt self-conscious about dancing 'in the round.' The challenge there was to create something that she felt was flattering from all angles as the cameras followed her around the floor. We did and she was happy.'

New for 2009...

WHY WE CHOSE ALESHA:

As a star performer and a past champion, Alesha knows exactly what the dancers are going through. Her eye for great performance, plus her charisma and charm make her a great addition to the judges line-up.

TIE-BREAK

During last year's semi-final the judges' scores produced a tie between the top two couples, which meant that the audience could not save the bottom couple from the dance-off. In the circumstances the fairest solution was to carry forward the points from the audience vote from the semi final, so that all three couples could dance in the final. We've now got a new scoring system in place, which means that once the judges have given their scores, the viewers will always have the power to decide the final outcome. The audience vote can now save a couple, or condemn them to the dance-off.

ONE NIGHT ONLY

This year we're packing all the action into one show. There will be two special Friday launch shows to kick off the competition, but after that it is all down to that one, nail-biting show on Saturday nights.



MADE IN THE UK

There's something in not being under the commissioner's eye

TELEVISION FED MY IMAGINATION

as a child in Swansea. I was a voracious viewer, glued to anything from cartoons and soaps to Dennis Potter's marvellous *Pennies From Heaven*. I must have been 12 or 13 when that hit the screen, and I loved it.

Doctor Who was a favourite of mine from the age of three. The episodes I saw are well and truly embedded in my head. So when I came back to Wales after university, it's not surprising that after a brief flirtation with the theatre, I decided to make a career in television, and joined the BBC in Cardiff. There was a snag. I'm a Welshman who doesn't speak Welsh – not something I am particularly proud of, and it was certainly a handicap in the children's department at BBC Wales 20 years ago.

The vast majority of children's programmes produced there were in Welsh, for local consumption. So a linguistically handicapped but ambitious young man had to look elsewhere in search of a career. Unlike most people in the BBC, I didn't head for London. Manchester had become an exciting place to be if you wanted to make programmes for children, and so I moved there, and stayed.

Rich speech patterns

My writing career took off, I crossed over to Granada, and from children's to adult drama. But all the time I remained an adopted son of Manchester. Inevitably the place where you keep your collection of *Doctor Who* videos ends up shaping the way you describe the world. Most of what I wrote then had a Manchester accent. But every time I went home to visit my family in Swansea, I'd be struck afresh by the speech patterns in Wales; the way Welsh people talk is funny, rich and evocative.

In 2001, when I spent even more time there while my mother was dying of cancer, I began to be aware of wanting to write in a Welsh accent. The result was ITV's *Mine All Mine*, with Griff Rhys Jones – made in Manchester but set in Swansea.

It was not, alas, a success. But afterwards people sat around making ridiculous pronouncements like: 'Well, that just proves the Welsh accent doesn't work on television.' That only made me determined to prove them wrong.

The stars were not in the right conjunction for *Mine All Mine*, but they were edging towards a new and favourable alignment as a result of the professional relationship I was forging with Julie Gardner on the production of *Casanova*. I absolutely loved

When it comes to television drama, 'made in Wales' is now a brand that will outlive the Doctor, says Russell T Davies



working with her. So it was inevitable that when Julie became head of drama in Wales, we would be thinking about joint projects.

I had already told the BBC that I was interested in reviving *Doctor Who*. My life might have been easier if the series had been made in Manchester, since I had my adult home base there. But nonetheless I was delighted to have the chance to make it in Wales.

I realised this was going to be a 24-hour, full time commitment. I would have to come and live in Cardiff, and so I bought a flat here on the Bay. In my opinion, viewers see far too much of London on screen. There is something valuable to be gained from being away from the centre, not under the commissioner's eye and thumb. In 'outposts' like Manchester and Cardiff, it is much easier to develop a dedicated team, whose commitment to the production is often far greater than you will find among London crews.

Doctor Who and *Torchwood* have a

special atmosphere because they are made in Wales. The crews love working on them, and are delighted to be thought worthy of a role on a network production.

Similarly, the people of Cardiff and the city council have embraced the shows, particularly because the appeal of them crosses the generations. Cardiff people are thrilled that their city is being seen not only throughout the UK but also in Italy, Canada, Australia, Korea – all over the globe. It is as if a member of your family had done something particularly good, that everyone can be proud of, and there is a real sense of ownership which in subtle ways communicates itself on screen.

Not every episode of *Doctor Who* can be set in Cardiff, but my belief is that if you are making a show in a city, then you should show that city off. I would sit at my window overlooking the waters of Cardiff Bay, walk past the Wales Millennium Centre, knowing instinctively that I wanted to use these places

on screen. *Torchwood* was partly devised as a means of setting a whole series in Cardiff, with a Welsh cast and Welsh accents and made by Welsh crews – so Captain Jack's team have their base under the Millennium Centre, and their emergency escape lift brings them to the surface next to the fountain in Roald Dahl Plass. On Cardiff's official website for visitors, the *Torchwood* and *Doctor Who* locations are flagged on the map. One enterprising hotel even offers *Doctor Who* breaks for families, complete with Dalek.

The other motivation for creating *Torchwood*, and other spin-offs like *The Sarah-Jane Adventures*, was to give the drama department here longevity. There is no point in having just one successful series. *Doctor Who* may be around for another 10 or 20 years, but if it is the only series the department makes, its loss could effectively spell the end of Welsh tv drama. That would have been wrong.

Strong foundations

Both Julie and I were impressed by the professionalism and expertise of the crews and post production facilities here, in-house and freelance. This was a place that deserved a thriving drama industry. So we made it our ambition that BBC Wales should come to be seen as a centre of excellence for drama, on a base so firm that it would survive the end of any one series. Both Julie and I left at a point when the future of tv drama in Cardiff was assured. With the other spin-off series that we have devised, not to mention existing local drama made in Wales in both Welsh and English like *Pobol y Cwm* and *Belonging*, and now *Casualty* arriving here too, there is employment for literally thousands of people.

This has been built on the strongest possible foundation, not just by us but also by the sheer hard work over the last few years from hundreds of other people that has gone into reviving the industry in Cardiff. As for my flat on Cardiff Bay, where I have sat so many times looking out at the water, thinking of the Doctor and Captain Jack, dreaming up ideas – well, I may think of Manchester as my adopted home because I have lived there for so long, but this is home too. 'Made in Wales' is something that I am personally proud of.

Read this essay in full and others by well known champions of out-of-London production at the BBC website bbc.co.uk/madeintheuk

arielview



STEPHEN JAMES-YEOMAN

Saturday nights are for staying in

ORDER THE TAKEAWAY, pour a glass of something cold and prepare to stay in every Saturday night from now until Christmas. As the nights draw in that can only mean one thing: the annual ratings battle between *The X Factor* and *Strictly Come Dancing* is once again upon us. Although this year in particular it feels like neither programme has really been away. Of course there's been the customary speculation about who exactly will be donning the sequins in *Strictly*, and whether watching deluded tone deaf 'singers' audition in front of Cheryl Cole et al does constitute freak tv. But there have been other reasons to keep the headline writers busy this summer, not least *Strictly*'s much publicised changes in the judges' line up and *The X Factor*'s change in format.

I'm sure these behemoths of the television world are robust enough to cope with all that and more. This year's singing competition opener has already attracted almost 10m viewers, slightly down on last year but impressive nevertheless. We'll have to wait until next month to see if the loss of Arlene and the addition of Alesha will have an impact on *Strictly*'s loyal fanbase.

But amidst the machinations, what we mustn't forget is that both formats are, in my opinion, great telly. I'm happy to out myself as a *Strictly* devotee and although at the time of writing the line-up of the dancers is not confirmed, if the papers are right and one of the names that's been suggested really will be seen in tight-fitting lycra, stomping their way around the dancefloor then I certainly will once again be hooked.

The fact that soon both programmes will be back dominating the weekend is good for the viewer; after all a bit of singing and dancing is what Saturday nights are all about.

Stephen James-Yeoman is the managing editor of Ariel

Push to the top

IF FIONA BRUCE doesn't exactly test her own observation that women who 'look like the back end of a bus' don't get jobs as newsreaders, there's no denying that the 45-year old mother of two has some rare qualities aside from being pleasing on the eye.

In an interview in the Guardian this week she recalls the long labour preceding the birth of her daughter. In a lull between noisy, painful contractions, a medical student present seized the opportunity to tell Bruce she was 'my favourite presenter'.

'Literally, Mia's head was about to crown,' laughs Bruce. 'It was fantastic. I said, 'That's very nice to hear, thank you very much.'

Surely anybody who can keep their composure in such extreme circumstances, while maintaining the highest grammatical standards and avoiding the use of expletives has earned their place before the camera.

Claire Barrett is Ariel production editor

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

It's the PITs

I am only a journalist trying to get PIT to work for my department's news programmes, but I have to say that the last five months have been the worst, in terms of technical problems stopping us doing our work, that I can remember in my two decades at the BBC.

World Service started using PIT (the Programme Information Tool) for its programme listings in March. But since then, PIT – and all the other gizmos we use to get our programme data and audio onto our audience-facing web pages – have failed to deliver on so many occasions that I have lost count.

PIT's continuing underperformance, despite the best efforts of the many people involved, is undermining the World Service. We are destroying hard-won BBC brand names – as all our programmes will have lost audiences because of this.

We would not allow BBC One or BBC Two to stop working once a week for months on end, so why is it acceptable for World Service's online audience?

Do we redesign PIT so that it works without falling over every week or so, or accept the inevitable and chuck it in the rubbish bin?

Tim Bowler

World Service business programmes

Mark Kortekaas, controller, A&M

mobile, replies: A number of people had problems with PIT over the last week, arising from a system upgrade, for which we apologise.

We treat broadcast critical systems as a priority in FM&T, and it's not acceptable for them to go down,

however temporarily, and we're looking to improve PIT as a priority.

Since being launched in 2008, PIT has grown from a tool used by a handful of users in A&M to one used by over 1000 people across the BBC. Having never been intended for this many users, the system is prone to problems, particularly when we do system upgrades that expose unexpected problems in the system.

We want to make it more widely available and are planning significant investment in the coming months to make PIT far more robust and reliable.

Most of our systems have working groups set up to address specific faults, and PIT is no different. If you're a user of the system who has had similar problems please do bring them to our attention via the working group.

Breaking point

I'm all for being prudent with expenses, but I wonder how we're supposed to operate as a live broadcaster with the latest guidance?

We've been told we MUST book local taxis using the cumbersome online system – and if we don't there's an additional charge of £7 per booking.

That wouldn't be so bad, but for the booking to work, we have to do it 45 minutes in advance. How does that work if we have a breaking news story and no fleet cars available – or the need to get urgent items to or from our premises? Or a guest for that matter?

Kevin Stanley

bj, Radio Nottingham

Oven proof earmuffs

The oven in the Broadcast Centre café makes a constant loud humming noise – it can't be healthy for the staff to have to put up with it all day long every day, and it makes the café an uncomfortable place to sit.

Can anything be done to reduce the noise it makes or could it perhaps be replaced with a quieter model?

Andy Webb

software engineer, Search

Short shrift

A question to Johnson Controls Int. Why are support workers not allowed to wear shorts in the summer? I appreciate that, as postal workers, you want us to look smart, but surely during hot weather, the dress code could be relaxed? I am sure the sight of a postman in tailored shorts would not offend.

Peter Coleman

main despatch, TVC

Draw the line

Your green room item on HDTV (August 18) caught my eye – but the statement that 'the BBC boffins were pawing over the revolutionary Marconi 405 line system' is incorrect.

Just to set the record straight, the 405 line system was researched and developed by EMI (Electric and Musical Industries – the Beatles' record company) and not by Marconi. As EMI did not wish to build transmitters but major on the studio and outside broadcast systems, they formed a company named Marconi-EMI Ltd with Marconi supplying the transmitters and aerials which were

installed at Alexandra Palace in 1936. All the major work on developing the cameras and their pick-up tubes, sound and vision processing equipment, like mixers, etc. and the modulators for the vision transmitter (arguably the most difficult part of the whole system) was undertaken by EMI.

Norman Green

Pressing on

Adana printing machines were advertised in the British national press, including Radio Times, for over 70 years. In the days before computers these little red and silver letterpress machines allowed the production of high quality printing by relatively unskilled operators. According to Adana, the BBC were major users of their presses.

I'm keen to contact staff who worked with these machines for a company history I'm writing. Ariel readers with memories of Adana presses should contact me at InkSprite@btinternet.com or at 48 Fort Road, Northolt, Middlesex UB5 5HH

Bob Richardson

sport graphics

Give Siemens a hand

'The BBC has announced today that it has completed the procurement for a 10-year Technology Framework Contract (TFC) with Siemens Business Services worth almost £2bn' read a BBC press release back in October 2004.

Hands up if you think this deal has been an unmitigated triumph.

Duncan Hess

director

FROM THE VAULT

August, 1967

By taking refuge in 'the law of the land', pensions officer has retreated into a quicksand. It is not long since the 'law of the land' decreed that a wife's earnings automatically became the property of her husband. As we are not Medes or Persians we had the 'law of the land' changed. Would pensions officer have it otherwise?

When the 'law of the land' as regards divorce, homosexuality, abortion, drug-taking and other marginal activities is in the process of being improved – is it likely that the law as it affects the pensions of career women will remain as it is for much longer. It hardly seems so!

The BBC is an institution dedicated to informing – and therefore reforming – public opinion on matters of public interest. Can it afford to turn a blind eye to the anomalies and inequalities in its own practice? The fact that the BBC has recently improved its pension facilities for married men shows that it is anxious to act as a progressive and enlightened employer. The failure to give married women employees parity with their husbands can not be defended by reference to the 'law of the land' which is apt to grow obsolete faster than fashions, pop music or armaments.

Joyce Rowe, radio publicity officer

OBITUARY

PAULA LEONARD

Paula Leonard, who died on July 4, was a great BBC stalwart. She joined the corporation in 1971 working first in the press office and then light entertainment.

In 1973 she moved to music and arts, where she was to stay until the mid-nineties. First as a PA and then as a unit manager, she became a brilliant and highly-valued enabler and supporter of production talent.

She worked in Hollywood with Gavin Millar on his Busby Berkeley film where the showmanship of the dancers, then in their eighties, echoed her own vision for life. Colin Nears, who she worked with on his Schubert film, remembers her as 'the most lovely, laughing and lively girl to be with'.

For three years, Paula was instrumental in glueing together the many creative talents behind *The Shock of the New*, the seminal series in which Robert Hughes unravelled the 20th century through its art.

Paula will be best remembered

for the big contribution she made as unit manager of *Omnibus*, which won two Baftas during her tenure.

She was a clever organiser and a great team builder. Generations of new recruits to BBC arts can, and do, thank Paula for the unique way she made them welcome and let them into the secrets of how the BBC really works. And if they couldn't find a way, Paula nearly always could.

She insisted work should be fun, as well as creatively successful, and she singularly made the annual M&A Christmas Party a hot ticket.

She joined recruitment in 1997 where her flair for display and organising public events was invaluable, and in 2004 moved to Career Link, the unit which supports staff whose jobs are being made redundant. 'There was a time when coming into the Media Centre wasn't a ball of fun for me, but Paula was



always there with a smile and a kind word' is a typical comment.

Paula's genuine care for people made her known to many, right across the BBC. Everyone warmed to her openness and her mischievous sense of humour. They knew they could trust and rely on her, not just as a colleague but as a friend. The BBC is only as good as the people who work for it and Paula brought to it, for over 30 years, dedicated hard work, laughter and fun and, behind all of it, a simple, but profound, humanity.

Andrew Snell

DAVID BATT

Dave Batt, a man of great integrity, a skilled professional and a highly regarded operations manager for BBC News, has died at the age of 67 following a long illness.

Dave joined the BBC in 1960 on his 19th birthday at a time when there were only two tv channels. His early career at TV Centre involved him in the 'Golden Age' of BBC comedy and studio drama, working on programmes such as the Morecambe

and Wise Christmas Shows, *Dad's Army* and *Only Fools and Horses* as well as costume drama and children's tv, like *Cracker-jack* which he loved.

I first got to know Dave in the late 1970s. I was a fresh faced sound trainee and he was a highly skilled sound professional, yet he would always encourage and train others.

In 1983 we were both among the pioneers of the PSC (portable single camera) operation at the Lime Grove topical production centre. Here Dave worked on the road as a sound recordist and later in studios as a sound supervisor on programmes such as *London Plus*, *Newsnight* and *Breakfast Time*.

In 1989, as current affairs and news joined, we both moved up the road to work as senior sound supervisors in the newly formed bi-media sound section for news. Highlights of the period included rolling news for the coverage of the first Gulf War,



the births of BBC World and News 24 as well as many *Newsnights*, *One*, *Six* and *Nine O'Clock News* programmes, working alongside young output editors such as Mark Thompson, Adrian Van Klaveren, Richard Sambrook and Peter Horrocks.

Dave's organisational skills, and perhaps his prior experience as an excellent union rep, equipped him well for 'spells in the office', which quickly merged into a permanent management role during the nineties, first as manager sound and then as an operations manager for tv news. We shared an office and, once again, Dave was there to teach and guide, including a great management tip – a reliance on bananas for energy when the going gets tough!

Dave retired from BBC News in 1997 after 38 years. He was a much loved husband to Margaret; father to Richard and Caroline and grandfather to Isabel and Thomas. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family at this sad time, including Caroline who works on many of the same programmes as her father as a floor manager for BBC News.

Peter Coles

JOBS

PROGRAMME MAKING

Head of Speech Radio Interactive

London
Henry Wood House
11S/Ref: 17415209
E 02-Sep-09

Executive Producer, 6Music

London
Western House
9D/Ref: 17699609
E 07-Sep-09

Executive Producer, Radio 2

London
Western House
9D/Ref: 17699509
E 07-Sep-09

Picture Editor

London
Broadcasting House
7D/Ref: 17649509
E 26-Aug-09

Technical Operators, Arabic TV

London
Broadcasting House
7D/Ref: 17242009
E 02-Sep-09 A 12 months

Question Writer/Researcher, Weakest Link

Glasgow
5H/Ref: 17020409
E 31-Aug-09 A 03 months

JOURNALISM

Editor, Ariel

London
White City
10D/Ref: 17589509
E 11-Sep-09

Duty Producer, BBC Weather (Part-time)

London
TV Centre
9D/Ref: 17585109
E 07-Sep-09 A 06 months

US Online Reporter/Producer

Washington
8/9S/Ref: 17484509
E 31-Aug-09 A 06 months

Senior Broadcast Journalist, Panorama multi-platform team

London
8/9D/Ref: 177341019
E 03-Sep-09 A 12 months

Political Reporter, 5 live

London
8/9D/Ref: 17597009
E 01-Sep-09 A 06 months

Producer, Radio Sport

London
TV Centre
8D/Ref: 17786109
E 07-Sep-09

Assistant Producer, Sport Interactive

London
7D/Ref: 17709509
E 06-Sep-09 A 06 months

Broadcast Journalist, Specials Team

London
TV Centre
7D/Ref: 17657209
E 07-Sep-09 A 06 months

Broadcast Journalist, On Demand

London
TV Centre
7D/Ref: 17643509
E 07-Sep-09 A 06 months

Assistant Producer (Data), Weather Centre

London
TV Centre
7D/Ref: 17585509
E 07-Sep-09 A 06 months

Broadcast Journalist (Producer) - BBC Somerset

Taunton
5/7D/Ref: 17794709
E 06-Sep-09
Continuing 06 months

Broadcast Journalist - BBC Somerset

Taunton
5/7D/Ref: 17708009
E 06-Sep-09 A 06 months

Broadcast Assistant, Sport Interactive

London
5D/Ref: 17709409
E 06-Sep-09 A 07 months

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

Head of HR & Development, BBC Vision

London
TV Centre
SM2/Ref: 17792009
E 06-Sep-09

Chief Adviser

London
White City
SM2/Ref: 17589709
E 04-Sep-09

Head of Digital Marketing

London
TV Centre
11D/Ref: 17756909
E 06-Sep-09

Head of Promotions and Branding/Pennaeth Hyrwyddiadau a Brandio

Cardiff
10D/Ref: 17717109
E 04-Sep-09 A 06 months

Business Development Manager

London
9D/Ref: 17636609
E 05-Sep-09 A 12 months

Adviser, Compliance, Fair Trading

London
9D/Ref: 17493909
E 07-Sep-09 A 12 months

Lawyer - Project TOO

London
White City
8/9D/Ref: 16779009
E 14-Sep-09 A 15 months

Trainer (TV Operations), College of Production

London
White City
8D/Ref: 17658209
E 07-Sep-09

Trainer (Network Radio), College of Production

London
White City
8D/Ref: 17658009
E 07-Sep-09

Project Manager, BBC Academy

London
White City
8D/Ref: 17631509
E 07-Sep-09

Business and Project Cycle Planner

London
TV Centre
8D/Ref: 17560109
E 31-Aug-09 A 12 months

Research Executive

London
White City
5D/Ref: 17797909
E 03-Sep-09

Business Co-ordinator

London
White City
5D/Ref: 17756809
E 04-Sep-09

Team Assistant, DMI, FM&T

London
Broadcast Centre Media Village
4D/Ref: 17770909
E 07-Sep-09 A 06 months

Newsroom Assistant, BBC Weather

London
TV Centre
4D/Ref: 17646609
E 07-Sep-09 A 06 months

Team Assistant

Manchester
3H/Ref: 17762309
E 31-Aug-09 A 06 months

Functional Support Assistant

Belfast - Broadcasting House
3D/Ref: 17475609
E 03-Sep-09 A 12 months

NEW MEDIA

Client Side Development Team Leader

London
Broadcast Centre Media Village
9D/Ref: 17273709
E 03-Sep-09 A 09 months

Technical Project Manager

London
Broadcast Centre Media Village
8D/Ref: 17479809
E 30-Aug-09

Delivery Specialist, Future Media

London
Bush House
7D/Ref: 15540309
E 01-Sep-09 A 09 months

Production Co-ordinator, Repeats & Reversioning

London
White City
5D/Ref: 17786009
E 01-Sep-09 A 06 months

Production Co-Ordinator Navigation and Services

London
Media Centre
5D/Ref: 17521909
E 01-Sep-09 A 06 months

SPECIALIST TECHNICAL AND DESIGN SERVICES

Creative Director, UX & Design

London
Media Centre
9D/Ref: 17012409
E 03-Sep-09 A 18 months

TECHNOLOGY

Senior Technologist - Technology Consultant

London
Broadcast Centre Media Village
9D/Ref: 17483709
E 03-Sep-09 A 12 months

Technical Project Manager, BBC World Service

London
Bush House
8D/Ref: 17573109
E 01-Sep-09 A 12 months

Broadcast Technology Systems Engineer

London
TV Centre
7D/Ref: 17583109
E 01-Sep-09 A 06 months

BBC WORLDWIDE

Senior Research Manager, Sales & Distribution

London
Media Centre
SENEX/Ref: 17538509
E 31-Aug-09 A 12 months

See Attachment Making music

Richard Edwards, assistant producer, BBC Blast

BUDGET, DESK, PHONE. And three months to produce a prototype interactive music-making and remixing resource, under the wings of the Learning Development team... all of which was pretty hairy but darned enjoyable stuff.

It had come about through their 2008 competition for new pervasive/mobile media ideas, into which I'd put a proposal called 'Up From the Streets'. I was lucky enough in that it was selected for further development and that BBC Blast, with whom I work, thought that it had potential for their re-launched site and supported my joining Learning Dev to build it.

The idea all tied in with their remit to help creative 'Discoverers', teens who are not confident in



their creativity. A few chats with the Learning Dev team and a few pitches to Learning heads later, I found myself with an informal three month attachment. And the aforementioned budget, desk and phone...

How to start, drive forward, evolve and deliver a new project from scratch was only one of the many things I learnt there. In fact, being an editorial bod, to begin with I was most expecting to increase my tech awareness. However I was soon amazed at how much I was learning about absolutely everything: the differences between development production and working on a live site, production processes, timescales, the importance of getting interest from other departments, what other teams around the BBC are doing, innovative emerging web resources, how to integrate with BBC infrastructure, that nothing need be impossible, and of course the point at which you have to stop talking to people and, you know, actually get something built.

It was daunting at times but the Learning Development team were supportive in all the right ways. I had a lot of free rein, but the help and input when I needed it. Now, coming back to Blast, I feel that I can bring a greater understanding of back-end processes, a keener editorial eye and stronger confidence and focus in getting ideas off the ground. And best of all, Blast get a prototype music-making resource which I firmly believe will help get kids motivated to create and share their compositions. I hope you all get to play with it.

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
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



PHOTOGRAPH: MARK BASSETT

PETER BRIDGES

SOUND SUPERVISOR,
BBC STUDIOS AND POST
PRODUCTION

What do you like about your job?

I've always been passionate about sound. At school I used to operate the PA system and record school productions, and at university I did the sound for stage productions and helped run the student radio station.

I don't think I ever actually made a decision to work in broadcast sound. It was something I just knew I wanted to do. I still find my job as exciting now as when I started 11 years ago. From planning the communication facilities for Children in Need to mixing the London Marathon, I can genuinely say I'm never bored at work.

What do sound supervisors do?

A huge range of duties, from rigging microphones and loudspeakers on a studio floor to operating mic booms on a drama, editing and playing-out music and sound effects for a children's show, and mixing live Saturday night entertainment shows. I meet with the production team before a show and learn what the programme involves.

I then design a suitable sound system which includes providing radio mics, talkback facilities, PA system and grams (music and sound effects). On the day of a show I'm joined by my sound crew colleagues who set up and operate the sound equipment according to my plan. I sit in the

sound control room and mix the programme sound.

It sounds hectic. What's the most challenging part?

Staying cool under pressure is vital. Live tv can change from what was expected within seconds, and dealing with these situations can sometimes cause the heart rate to increase. As a team, however, we've experienced pretty much everything that can happen during a live show, and so we know how to deal with these situations while remaining calm.

What are you most proud of?

I co-planned the sound and communication facilities for the 2008 European Football Championship. Our studio was on the top floor of an office block in the

centre of Vienna, several kilometres away at the International Broadcast Centre.

We were also to be the BBC's first major sporting event to use a single sound console to produce coverage in both stereo and 5.1 surround sound. We had to make sure that there was no compromise in either the stereo or surround sound mixes. It ended up being a huge success, both from a technical and production perspective.

What are you working on at the moment?

I'm one of the team of sound supervisors for *EastEnders*. We plan and then record a 'block' of four episodes at a time, which usually involves nine studio days spread over two weeks. My job is to capture the best possible sound of

dialogue and effects, ready for editing and dubbing by my Post Production colleagues.

And you're also helping to plan sound facilities for the 2010 World Cup?

Yes, in South Africa. It's a major project, as we will be building and running a remote studio and gallery in South Africa, in addition to an editing, mixing and switching facility at the International Broadcast Centre in Johannesburg.

Do you do work for independent companies too?

A significant proportion of our work is for independent customers, and not only in tv. I've worked on product launches, staff conferences and even radio recordings for a variety of clients over the past couple of years. The most common thing people are surprised about is that we don't only make programmes for the BBC.

What do you like doing in your spare time?

I like going out for meals, but to balance-out the guilt of too much beer and food I've started visiting the Lake District with my girlfriend on days off. We're discovering the art of fell walking. The scenery is absolutely fantastic and it's great therapy to put everything else on hold for a couple of days and just relax.

Interview: Peggy Walker

CV

Degree: MEng (Hons) in Electrical & Electronic Engineering from the University of Bristol.

First Job: Picking up litter in my home village of Christleton, Chester. For money, not punishment.

Most Proud: Co-planning sound and communications facilities for BBC Sport's tv coverage of the 2008 European Football Championship.

Family: Girlfriend, Gopa who's a paediatrician, sister Susannah, and parents in North Wales. Dad was an engineer, and Mum was a drama teacher, so I've ended-up somewhere between the two as a tv sound engineer.

foreign report



JEFF WILKINSON

PRODUCER/DIRECTOR GETS TOUGH IN THE ARCTIC

I KNEW I WAS IN TROUBLE when my wife asked me to jot down a quick 'last will and testament' on the back of an envelope. I was about to board a plane for the coldest permanently inhabited place on earth to direct a film for the new BBC Three series *Tough Guy Or Chicken?* No wonder my wife was worried. She had good cause.

Filming in the Olenyok province of northern Siberia in the middle of February was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. At its coldest the temperature dipped to below minus 50 degrees. And we were camping in the Arctic Circle – filming five young men attempting to become Evenki deer herders, a people who have survived in one of the most hostile locations on earth for thousands of years.

The first day of filming was so cold that all the cables snapped off the back of Sam the soundman's mixer. Then Anthony the AP developed the first signs of frostbite – on his face. From that point on it was a mad, bad struggle against the elements to

get the film made.

There was a lot of raw reindeer meat

Cameras were constantly breaking down; even the tripods began to fall apart, the metal shattering and shearing off the legs in the extreme cold.

Even eating was a challenge. I arrived in Siberia a strict vegetarian and left something else.

In the bone snapping cold we were advised to double our calorific intake or suffer. There weren't any vegetables anyway. Just reindeer meat and bread. So I had to take a deep breath and think of Auntie. Trouble was, the Evenki eat a lot of their meat raw. Each time a reindeer was killed we had to eat its liver and kidneys uncooked straight from the carcass, with just the odd glass of vodka to make it palatable. But just a modicum. Honest.

It was a tough shoot in Olenyok, but also a huge privilege. We gained an amazing insight into a way of life that is fast disappearing. And the land itself was beautiful and desolate. Only 4000 people live in an area the size of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg combined. The rest is wilderness.

We camped in the snow and travelled each day across the taiga – a vast primeval forest, the original wild wood.

The contributors went on to other adventures, including Namibia, the Amazon and Bangladesh. But for me it was an edit suite at White City. I was glad to be back. I'm not sure that that terribly rushed 'last will and testament' would have been legally binding anyway.

Tough Guy or Chicken, BBC Three, Aug 27

green room

THE ARIELATOR

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



UPSIDE Brilliant brother **Ravinder Sanghera**, a producer at Radio Sheffield, made the trip over to Hull to visit his sister **Inderjeet**, a ba at Look North so they could celebrate the Indian festival of Rakhsa Bandhan together. It marks the relationship between brothers and sisters with the tying of a rakhi (holy thread) on to the wrist. 'Threads come in lots of varieties - you can get outrageous designs or simple ones,' Ravinder explains. 'The nice thing is that you've got that symbol on your wrist for however long it lasts. It's always sad when the thread splits or starts fraying, but I've had one that has lasted a whole year before.'



Perhaps both working at the BBC is the solution to sibling rivalry?

DOWN: He was a double agent who betrayed the secrets of the West

to his Soviet allies during the cold war, and an often unpredictable hard drinker. But you know what **Guy Burgess'** biggest sin was? Maxing out his expense account. 'Guy Burgess abused BBC expenses,' said the Telegraph last week. It seems even in the '40s expenses came under great scrutiny, with Burgess often called upon to justify his extravagant actions. 'I normally travel first class,' he explained on one occasion, 'and see no reason why I should alter my practice when on BBC business, particularly when I'm in my best clothes.' His bosses mused, 'It requires a very strong character to reduce this expenditure but the attempt should certainly be made' - advice as true now as it ever was...

EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...I think I'm getting posher and posher as I get older...

...Pigeons in Italy are so sexy, the ones here are just rough...

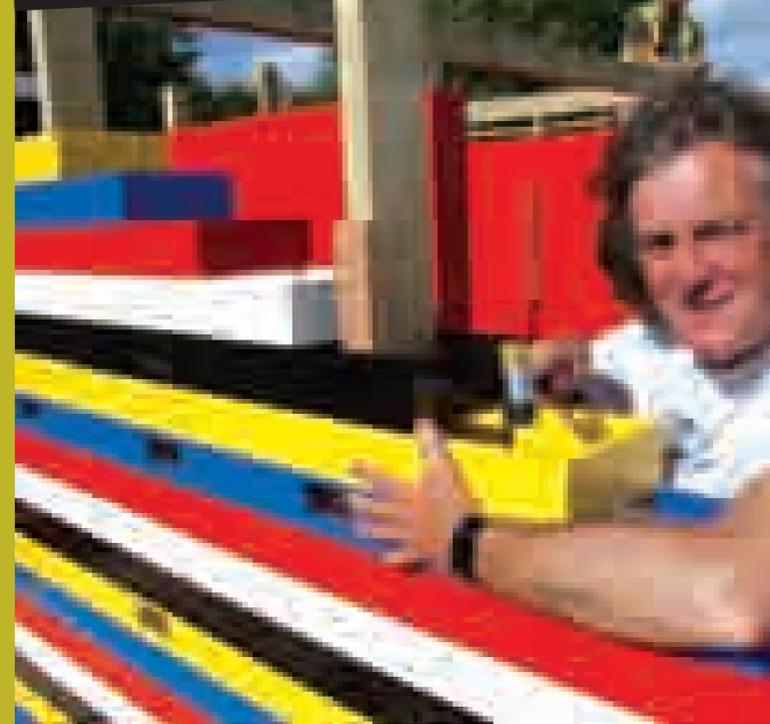
...I'm no Maggie Thatcher!...

...I've been described as a hippo with attitude...

...If the club stops serving alcohol at 2, what are we supposed to do on a training course?...



ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL



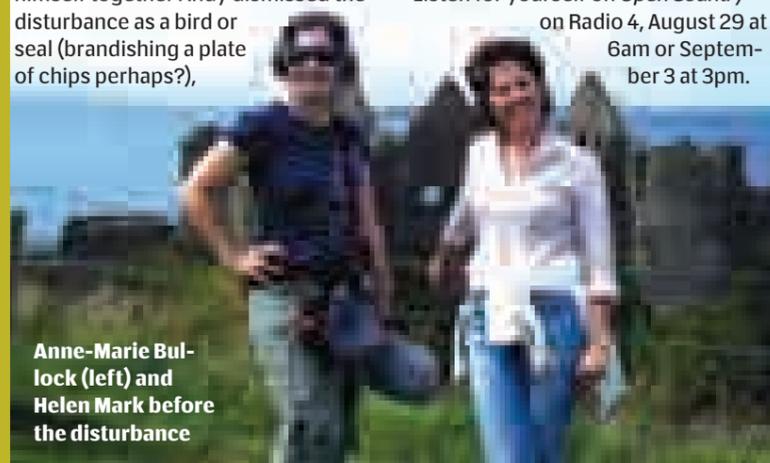
JAMES MAY adds another layer to his Lego house, a garish domicile made entirely from the titular bricks. These aren't extra large blocks either - look closely and you'll see each of the large bricks is made of individual pieces, 272 to be exact.

Deciding to build a house, for his upcoming series James May's Toy Stories, may seem a staid choice for a *Top Gear* presenter, but factor in the working shower and toilet and there's plenty of room for extravagant feats of engineering.

CREEP-OUT CAVE

A BRUSH WITH THE OTHER SIDE, and we're not talking Channel 4, awaited producer Anne-Marie Bullock and Helen Mark when they investigated Portcoon cave in Country Antrim for Radio 4's *Open Country*. Inside the cave the pair were being told about one of its legendary residents - a local hermit who wouldn't accept food from human hands, surviving only on what was brought to him by a friendly seal - when their guide Andy McInroy paused mid-sentence. An eerie howl passed through the darkness, followed by a series of bangs. Pulling himself together Andy dismissed the disturbance as a bird or seal (brandishing a plate of chips perhaps?),

while Anne-Marie thought perhaps someone was shouting at them from the entrance. Emerging into the light they found no-one in the vicinity... Afterwards Andy quietly requested a copy of the recording for another listen as 'it's not often that he's creeped out inside a cave' but it was 'very bizarre'. For her part Anne-Marie says she felt no fear: 'My commitment to capturing the sound overrides everything else' she laughs, exhibiting nerves of steel that would be of use in any further paranormal investigations. Ghostly seal or whistling wind? Listen for yourself on *Open Country* on Radio 4, August 29 at 6am or September 3 at 3pm.

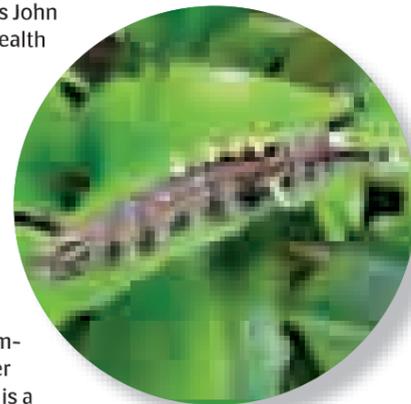


Anne-Marie Bullock (left) and Helen Mark before the disturbance

WE HEAR THAT...

OF COURSE trails are specifically designed to attract human viewers, but it seems their hypnotic effects have been rubbing off on dogs as well. 'I've just had an email asking if a BBC One trail is on iPlayer because her dog enjoys it (Does the dog have a licence?),' Yammered John Collings, information agent, last week. It turns out the trail used several names the dog recognised from its family, making him get particularly excited whenever he heard them emitting from the funny flashing box in the living room. Sadly the viewer had to be informed that iPlayer doesn't show trails, though in this multiplatform age 360 Dog TV surely cannot be too far off.

NATURAL HISTORY is not just about hanging off waterfalls and traversing caves in search of rare forms of salamander. The creatures in your own back yard can be just as impressive, as John Blades, senior health and safety risk manager with Workplace, found when looking out of his window in White City - a place not normally associated with exotic wildlife. This flamboyant character (pictured, right) is a Vapourer moth caterpillar.



'I had a look the other day and it had disappeared, it may have pupated by now' says John. The comparatively dull adult moth apparently resembles an oak tree, and no doubt looks back upon its youthful existence of bingeing on endless leaves and wearing long hair and outrageous clothes as the best days of its life.

SCENES MORE appropriate to a rock concert at the ukulele prom last Wednesday, when enthusiasts across the country converged on the Royal Albert Hall to witness the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain in action. In true proms fashion the event even managed to attract a demographic not known for its love of classical music. 'There were a load of teenage boys there and they were all really good,' relates Green Room's cultural correspondent, who, though attending ukulele in hand, failed to practise the song before the performance and was left red-faced and fumbling in the surprisingly tuneful mass play along.

Win The Street series three on dvd



THE THIRD and final series of Jimmy McGovern's emotionally powerful drama, *The Street*, was again a huge hit with audiences, attracting an average audience of five million. Starring a host of famous names, including Bob Hoskins, Anna Friel, and Timothy Spall, its six episodes explored the darker side of human nature with McGovern's trademark combination of wit, intelligence and compassion. To enter to win one of five Series 3 dvds, just answer this question: Which drama serial starring Robbie Coltrane did McGovern create in 1993?

Email ariel competitions by September 1.