

# ariel

## Brighton rocks

◆ **COMPETITIVE** in the extreme: Vassos Alexander reports for 5 live sports extra from the weekend's White Air '09 festival in Brighton. Off air, the usually grounded broadcaster tried out some extreme sports for himself. **Page 4**

BBC UNDER FIRE AS  
BROADCASTERS EYE  
UNCERTAIN FUTURE  
**Pages 2 and 10**







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**Guest contributors this week**

**RIC BAILEY**, chief political advisor, gives his tips on how to stay impartial – timely advice given the start of the party political conference season, Pages 8-9

**RICHARD PATTINSON**, producer, on whistlestop world tour, Page 15

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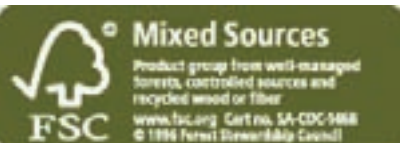
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**RTS** CAMBRIDGE CONVENTION GETS RATHER UNCOMFORTABLE

**No laughing matter:** former culture secretary James Purnell and Mark Thompson share a light-hearted moment during an otherwise serious discussion chaired by media consultant Steve Hewlett

# Happy families? Not exactly

◆ **As a former BBC journalist, Ben Bradshaw knows how to whip up a good story and his pronouncements at the Royal Television Society's Cambridge convention turned the event on its head almost before it had started.**

What had been intended as a timely debate about the future of the industry amid the economic downturn and the rapid development of new technologies instead became pretty much a conference about BBC governance.

In his curtain-raising address, the culture secretary said he thought that the corporation had 'probably reached the limits of reasonable expansion', that it was time its accounts were opened up to the National Audit Office and – most controversially – claimed that the BBC Trust was 'not sustainable' in the long term.

'I know of no other area of public life where... the same body is both regulator and cheerleader,' he declared.

◆ At least the title of the convention, Riding Out the Storm, still held good as first Michael Lyons then Mark Thompson sailed into battle with Bradshaw. Lyons pointed out that the trust, of which he is chairman, was set up by Labour's own Tessa Jowell with a brief to be the 'eyes, ears, and voice' of licence fee payers. While he was more than happy for it to be judged on its track record, he was dismayed to learn that it might be dispensed with altogether.

Thompson found parts of Bradshaw's speech 'frankly puzzling', and urged him to direct his criticism at his colleagues in the present cabinet who 'invented the trust, approved it and enshrined it in a charter which still has well over seven years to run'.

Furthermore, the charter devised by the Labour government 'tells the BBC trust to be independent, to consult with the public, to be guardians of the licence fee', explained Thompson, who thought the real problem for Labour was that its brainchild had done exactly as it had been told. 'The trouble with independent governing bodies is that they can be – well, independent.

'To threaten them with imminent or creeping abolition when they take a different view from

you is not in keeping with the tradition of political independence on which the whole of British public service broadcasting is based.'

◆ **With the issue now at the heart of the discussions in Cambridge, shadow culture secretary Jeremy Hunt couldn't resist joining in, although 'it sticks in the guts to defend Ben Bradshaw'.**

There was 'a problem', Hunt believed, with the current governance arrangements – offering as an example the controversy over the scheduling clash between *Strictly Come Dancing* and *The X Factor*.

'Thousands of people are angry and they should be able to complain to a body outside the BBC.'

Former culture secretary James Purnell said he favoured setting up a public service broadcasting trust, to oversee not just the BBC but the activities of other psb providers.

◆ On a more positive note for the BBC, Purnell said he did not believe that the corporation was too big.

## Ben Bradshaw punches home in keynote address



'If you start to have a BBC that is contracting, it has bad consequences in terms of the people you attract,' he believed. And he was 'always worried' by people who urged it to cease its output for young audiences 'because they think that's not public service'.

But then he added: 'Radio 2 is slightly more arguable. Sometimes it steps over into areas that could be considered commercial, and I have sympathy with commercial operators who say 'Radio 2 is killing us'.'

◆ **Purnell's big concern was of the BBC becoming too dominant. 'For it to succeed, and for public service obligations to be met, it needs competition.'** With Channel 4 struggling, he questioned whether the broadcaster could keep going without help. 'Channel 4 needs money,' he stated, explaining that there might be only a short window of opportunity 'to save public service broadcasting plurality' and he was worried about the window being missed.

◆ Outgoing Channel 4 chairman Luke Johnson considered it wrong that so much of the government's interest and attention in the future of public service broadcasting was focused on one broadcaster – the BBC. 'Is that diversity? Is that plurality?' he asked.

Describing the corporation as 'the most effective lobbying organisation in Britain', Johnson claimed it wielded too much power with politicians, some of whom, he claimed, were 'afraid' of it.

As for who should follow Andy Duncan as Channel 4 chief exec, Johnson said it should be someone with 'a profound understanding of the digital universe'.

◆ **There was of course a lot of talk about digital – largely revolving around what should happen to the so-called digital surplus – the money expected to be left over from the digital switchover help scheme.**

The money was agreed on top of the current licence fee and Bradshaw was scathing about the idea of returning the surplus to licence fee payers rather than using it to help ITV regional news. 'Michael Lyons comes up with his £5.50 give away,' he scoffed, to which Lyons quickly retorted: 'It would not be a give away, but a give back.'

As Purnell noted: 'This all feels a bit like a family row.' It kind of summed up the two-day event.

*In a changing world we must change too, Page 10*





# A story that has to be told

**'With kidnapping an ever present threat the UN refuses to sanction any live broadcasting'**

by Claire Barrett

There was no arrivals lounge, no passport control, no customs, no tarmac, even. A dirt strip and a coterie of gunmen, barrels fortuitously pointed away from the landing aircraft, was all that greeted Mike Thomson on arriving in what the UN says is 'the world's most dangerous country'.

The *Today* correspondent is back

from Somalia – a country riven by internal conflict that has claimed 18,000 lives in the last two years – on what was, literally, a flying visit. 'It was a two and a half hour flight into Belet Weyne in central Somalia and, from there, the planes just got smaller and smaller,' he told Ariel. 'We were buffeted around so much – the only time I've ever got air sick – but it

was just too dangerous to drive more than a few kilometres at a time.'

He is one of few international journalists to enter Somalia – where BBC producer Kate Peyton was shot dead in 2005 – and was accompanying the UN's deputy country director Denise Brown. 'Nobody else would take me there,' said Thomson. 'Everyone said it was too dangerous,

but she wanted to get the message out from this country that so much of the world has turned its back on, that funding was short and food aid was running out.'

With kidnapping an ever present threat and anti-western sentiment riding high, the UN refused to sanction any live broadcasting which might alert militia to their wherea-

bouts. 'It was a case of keep moving... it's the speed at which things change that sets Somalia apart,' Thomson explained. Plans to fly in to Wajid had to be changed at the last minute after gunmen raided its UN compound.

There was another narrow escape when their Belet Weyne base was attacked shortly after Thomson had left to visit a refugee camp. They returned during a lull in the fighting to pick up some stranded UN personnel, but were forced to make a rapid getaway when news of further militia threat came through. 'And this was supposed to be a stable place...'

Thomson spoke to many of the country's refugees who had been driven from their homes by bombs and bullets. Like Fatima Esman (pictured), whom he met in the Abudwaq camp near the Ethiopian border. Her home in Mogadishu had been shelled, two of her six children had been killed and she had been robbed on her journey to a camp where drought and food shortages posed new threats. Her story was featured in one of four *Today* specials last week.

'This was life at its most extreme,' continued Thomson, who had protracted consultation with the BBC's high risk team before he travelled. 'I wanted to get across a sense of this chaos, this grief – it wasn't about the detail. I felt a real sense of responsibility to the Somali people.'

## Debating with the BNP – that's impartiality, not shock value

by Cathy Loughran

As 30th anniversary seasons go, *Question Time's* promises to be pretty explosive, and not just because the BNP's Nick Griffin is in the line-up.

There'll be the now traditional grilling by the audience of the party leaders, in the run up to the general election. And who knows where the next MPs expenses scandal will come from, providing electric exchanges, across the *Question Time* floor, between voters and politicians.

The programme returns this Thursday, a day before the anniversary of the very first broadcast in 1979, when Robin Day was in the chair to referee questions to Michael Foot, Conservative Teddy Taylor and the Archbishop of Liverpool Derek Worlock. Conflict in Northern Ireland and corporal punishment in schools was on the agenda.

This week, deputy Labour leader Harriet Harman will be on the panel in Bournemouth, where the Lib Dem conference is under way. Brighton next, followed by Manchester, to hit the Labour and Conservative conferences respectively.

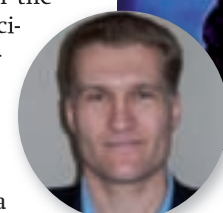
It's London on October 15, but although that's where Nick Griffin is set to appear, there's no confirmation yet of whether that will be the date for the BNP's debut

on the show – nor who his fellow panelists might be. 'We are in discussions with the parties over dates and venues – there's quite a lot to factor in – but in many ways it will be like any other programme, needing to balance panellists and the make-up of the audience,' says Gavin Allen, BBC executive on the programme, produced by Mentorn Oxford.

'I wouldn't want to play down the impact [of having the BNP leader on the panel], but it was an editorial decision, not done for the shock value. The same standards apply to parties like the Greens and UKIP, once they reach a threshold of support. The BNP has now reached that threshold and so there's a responsibility to impartiality.'

So will we see, as has been reported, a Cabinet minister on the panel? 'There is a big debate in the Labour party about sharing a platform with the British National Party, but although Gordon Brown has said there will be no problem debating with Griffin, no names have been confirmed,' Allen says.

In its 30th year, David Dimbleby's *Question Time* averages audiences of 2.5m at 10.35pm, attracting a slightly younger audience than is the norm for politics. That



David Dimbleby, in the chair for QT's 30th year. Inset, Gavin Allen



average shot up during the MPs expenses scandal, peaking at 3.8m for a primetime special on the subject at 9pm. The bar-racking of Margaret Becket and Menzies Campbell, whose expense claims had been reported in the *Daily Telegraph*, has already gone down in the *QT* annals.

'There was a hell of a strength of feeling on that one, and it surprised MPs and news journalists,' Allen says.

'We can land on a topic that is fascinating to the Westminster village but which falls flat with the audience. Not this one. It's hard to predict the issue that will take

off on the night.'

Both he and presenter for the last 16 years David Dimbleby are surer of why the programme works and endures. Its secret is that it's simple, not gimmicky, Dimbleby says: 'Because it is driven by events that matter, it never goes stale'.

Allen adds: 'It's an incredibly simple, Victorian-style town hall debate – albeit with a very adept chair. It says, here are the people you elected, you ask the questions. I love it that there are no whizzy graphics and no VT – a lesson to us all.'

There have been innovations over recent years. The debate now also happens via text, Twitter and email; there's the annual *Schools Question Time*, produced by teenagers; and a broader range of panelists, from Will Young and Jarvis Cocker to the chief executive of McDonalds. Carol Vorderman is booked for the new series.

'That's less about trying to attract a younger audience than recognising that everyone is interested in politics,' Allen says. Upcoming venues include Hull, Wootton Bassett and Llandudno. Bids are in for the party leaders but Mentorn Oxford's remarkably small, eight-strong core team under editor Ed Harvard will continue negotiating for guests and juggling audience mix, as close to the wire as ever.



# Tighter controls on BBCW

by Cathy Loughran

Jana Bennett is to step down from the board of BBC Worldwide as the BBC Trust tightens controls over the way the commercial arm is run.

From October 1, no member of BBC Vision will be eligible to sit on the Worldwide board, to prevent 'conflicts of interest' between public and commercial activity. Similarly, Worldwide's chief executive officer John Smith will cease to be a member of the BBC executive.

Contrary to some press reports, the director of BBC Vision has not been 'forced' to step down, the trust says, nor are the changes in

response to any conflicts of interest that have actually arisen.

The Worldwide board will also shrink, from 16 members to between 8-12; all transactions above £30m will need trust approval (it was previously £50m); and the next Worldwide chairman, succeeding Etienne de Villiers who leaves at the end of the month, will be a BBC non-executive director – strengthening the role of the public service arm as company shareholder.

Michael Lyons said the changes were in response to 'concerns raised by commercial competitors and others' and in line with initial findings of the trust's ongoing review of com-

mercial operations, which pointed to a more narrowly focused Worldwide that would concentrate on core BBC business.

The chairman agreed with Mark Thompson that it was right to question whether the BBC now needed to own 100 percent of Worldwide, but he stressed that the trust 'won't contemplate any loss of direct control over BBC rights created as a result of investment from the licence fee payer'.

In an email, John Smith said: 'These changes ...strengthen our governance structure and give greater confidence in the separation between the BBC's public service and Worldwide.'

## Changes on sponsorship

Deals like the controversial sponsorship by Robinsons of the Sports Personality of the Year event and support for Proms in the Park by National Savings & Investment are a thing of the past.

New guidance, just published, confirms that there will be no further commercial sponsorship of BBC on-air events and tighter rules on non-commercial sponsorship.

The BBC called a halt to commercial sponsorship last July after the BBC Trust backed complaints by ITV and RadioCentre that the 2007 *Sports Personality of the Year* programme had breached editorial guidelines. This year's SPOTY will be broadcast from Sheffield Arena in December, without the aid of a sponsor.

While programmes themselves can never be sponsored, non-commercial sponsorship of BBC on-air events like *Cardiff Singer of the World* – supported by Cardiff council – will still be allowed. On-air concerts, award ceremonies, events connected with new talent schemes can all continue to attract non-commercial sponsors, although news and current affairs events are off limits. All proposed sponsorship arrangements have to demonstrate clear public value and must be approved by editorial policy.

The BBC's sponsorship website has now closed. Richard Tait, who chairs the trust's editorial standards committee, said that sponsorship still had a place at the BBC, making possible important events for licence payers, but producers had to be clear about the rules.

## COVER STORY 5 live goes to extremes

Radio 5 live sports extra broadcast live from Europe's biggest extreme sports and music festival at the weekend. The White Air '09 festival in Brighton featured highdiving, kitesurfing and scubadiving with presenter Vassos Alexander (pictured) turning his hand to some lesser known sports such as surfing on brushes, and thundercat racing. Reporter Charlie Webster also gave bocking (spring loaded stilts) a go. 'We don't usually cover extreme sports,' explains producer Graham McMillan. 'A lot of the sports were very visual so instead of commentating on them we provided a beginners' guide.'



## TV channels under review

The BBC Trust this week launches its biggest ever service review, looking at the performances of BBC One, BBC Two, BBC Four and the red button.

It is the first time the trust has reviewed the main two channels. The assessment will cover all content, including news, sport and programmes from the nations and regions, but not children's output, which was reviewed separately. Licence fee payers' views will be fed in during a 12-week consultation period and the final report published next spring/summer.

Staff can learn more at a briefing in room B551, TVC on September 25, from 2-3pm.

Questions can be emailed to the review team at engagement.bbctrust@bbc.co.uk

## Dog fighting investigation results in conviction

A woman at the centre of one of Europe's largest dog-fighting gangs has been convicted thanks to a BBC Northern Ireland *Spotlight* and *Panorama* investigation.

Claire Parker, from Kexby in Lincolnshire, had a pit dug in her garage where illegal dogs fought for up to an hour, as bets were placed on which would emerge alive.

Five more people will be sentenced this week, and face up to six months in prison, and fines of up to £20,000 each.

The convictions were part of

an RSPCA investigation after an undercover operation by Steve Ibinson, a former SAS soldier, whose work was featured in a *Panorama* programme.

The investigation was one of the biggest undertaken by *Spotlight* and led to the first 60 minute *Panorama* special commission for BBC Northern Ireland.

*Spotlight*'s The Pitbull Sting won the 2008 RTS award for best regional current affairs programme and *Panorama*'s Dogfighting Undercover earned BBC NI current affairs its first Bafta nomination.

## 'Passion and potential'

The journalism trainee scheme has launched its search for 15 talented new recruits

Last year more than 2500 people applied to join the scheme which places people in newsrooms across the UK. Trainees spend three months online, three months in local radio then six months in tv and elsewhere.

Scheme director Claire Prosser said: 'We're looking for people full of story ideas and thoughts on how we serve harder to reach audiences. It's more about passion and potential than experience.'

## Sunrise to sunset...my one day fast

Asian Network presenter Tommy Sandhu has recorded an audio diary of his day of fasting during the holy month of Ramadan. Although not Muslim, he decided to take part in the one-day fast, from sunrise to sunset, to try to gain an understanding of the significance of Ramadan and Eid

'I found out that the reason for fasting is to find time to self reflect. It's about dedicating your being to God, being focused, and trying to be a better person,' he says.

Although he did not participate in morning prayers, Sandhu still woke around 4am, took time to contemplate the day ahead, and

forced down a banana and a glass of juice.

Listening to music isn't recommended during Ramadan – not an ideal situation for a radio presenter. 'I drove up from London to Birmingham without the radio on because I wanted to stay focused,' he explains.

Inderpreet Sahota, who produced the diary, also took part in the fast for moral support.

Sandhu's diary is part of a three hour special on the Asian Network on September 22, which also includes a session recorded at Maïda Vale with Islam's biggest rock star, Sami Yousaf.

## NEWS BITES

**LITTLE DORRIT** won more Emmy awards than any other programme or series. The BBC One adaptation collected prizes for direction, art direction, screenwriting, casting, costumes and cinematography, also picking up the award for best mini-series.

**SIMON MAYO** was finally confirmed as Chris Evans's replacement on Radio 2 drivetime from January. The Radio 5 live afternoon host will continue to present his cult film reviews with Mark Kermode.

**OFCOM HAS** announced that from December online video demand services such as the iPlayer and Channel 4's 4OD will be regulated but will not be subject to the broadcasting code. It follows a new EU directive. Regulatory duties will be handed to the Association for Television on Demand and the Advertising Standards Agency.

**PAT CONNOR** is to be BBC North's first head of development and events, in a role that will deliver collaborative ideas across the division. The former leader of



BBC Vision's central development team, *The Culture Show* series producer and Radio 1's first creative executive will work directly to Peter Salmon, director of BBC North.

**EASTENDERS WILL** celebrate its 25th anniversary in February with a live episode. Diederick Santer, exec producer, says: 'It's a big test for every member of the production and hopefully a big treat for the audience.' It will air on Friday February 19.

**THE BBC** Scottish Symphony Orchestra will perform a 1926 soundtrack by Edmund Meisel on September 27 to accompany a screening of Sergei Eisenstein's classic piece of silent cinema *The Battleship Potemkin*. It will be the climax of Glasgow's Merchant City Festival.

**Z-CARS CREATOR** Troy Kennedy Martin has died of liver cancer, aged 77. He started working for the BBC in 1958.

**CEEFAQX, THE** text information service, celebrates its 35th anniversary on September 23. Developed by BBC R&D engineers, the service is being phased out as part of Digital Switchover and will disappear completely by 2012.

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Walford's finest: back row shows trainees Liz Gill, Alex Kalymnios, Lance Knee Shaw and Rebecca Gatward with director Clive Arnold, centre



PHOTOGRAPH: ANNA GORDON

Directing EastEnders is so complex that special training is needed, reports Laura Scarrott

# NEW SHOOTING STARS

There are some newcomers to Albert Square – but you won't see them on screen. Behind the cameras they're making sure that when Bradley hands Stacey her decree nisi in the launderette, it will be as sensitively shot as the finalé of *Silent Witness*.

From adultery to arson, the *EastEnders* team produces 120 minutes of drama each week and can have as many as 12 episodes shooting concurrently. For that reason, each scene is filmed with four different cameras, so that shots are obtained in a single take without having to start and stop the action – reducing the time it takes to edit the footage.

The result, says director Clive Arnold, is that *EastEnders* is produced four times faster than most other drama. 'Shooting multi-camera is a very specific skill, but because it's so much quicker our directors have to be able to cope in

a fast-paced environment,' he says. Series producer Lorraine Newman nods. 'A lot of people want to work on the show, but we can't take them on without experience.'

With few freelance drama directors equipped to shoot multi-camera, Newman approached Vision Production and asked them to set up a training course specifically focused on *EastEnders*. More than 50 directors applied: Arnold and Newman whittled them down to four, who were taught to script and plan scenes using four cameras before heading off to Elstree's famous square.

From Dot's engagement and the moment Peggy regained ownership of The Vic, the trainees re-shot 'testing' old scenes using extras – an experience which unsettled director Lance Kneeshaw: 'We were so familiar with the actors who actually play the characters it was a bit

strange,' he recalls. 'But it was exciting filming in the Queen Vic and being reminded of all the famous scenes that have played out there.'

The pace also proved challenging: 'You have to plan each scene in advance, almost visualising in your head exactly what shot you'll cut to when,' he says. 'It means the shoot is a lot faster – you write the shots down on the script, then it's down to the vision mixer to edit it.'

**'It's like theatre – you don't have to interrupt the flow of the action'**

Trainee and former theatre director Rebecca Gatward said that the experience taught her about the technical aspects of directing for tv. 'It appealed to me because it makes it like theatre – you don't have to interrupt the flow of the action. I learnt how to get what I want technically, but also how to interact with a crew.' She hopes to build on these skills when she returns to film a block with the other trainees, this time for real.

'I'd like to do single camera drama, but it definitely helps to have multi-camera experience,' she says. 'If shooting schedules get tighter it's likely that more productions will adopt it.'

Directors who took part in the last multi-camera training scheme in 2006 have gone on to work on soaps like *Doctors* and *Emmerdale*. If you're interested in honing your multi-camera skills, contact the BBC Academy.



## AT FIVE FOOT ONE, MARIA FITS THE BILL

Station swap: Maria Horner

**IN A FIRST FOR BBC LINCOLNSHIRE** a member of the team has stepped down to join the police force. After 14 years with the BBC, programme sbj Maria Horner has left to fulfil a childhood dream. On October 5 she will begin training with the Lincolnshire Constabulary.

At 5 ft 1ins she won't be

the tallest copper on the beat and it was only when police height restrictions were eased that she could apply.

'My ambition as a child was to join the police, but I thought I just wouldn't be tall enough and I focused on my art studies instead,' she says.

'Then about four years

ago the idea started nagging away at me again, but it wasn't until the end of 2007 that I logged on to the Lincolnshire Constabulary website, saw they were recruiting and decided to apply.

'I've loved going out and about with my BBC job, talking to people and seeing different places – and joining

the police has a similar appeal. I'm also looking forward to the physical challenge.'

But won't her height be a disadvantage in certain situations? 'Possibly, yes, but the training will help with that and in any case police work is about using your brain more than anything.'



Musical maverick:  
producer Philip Tagney  
at the Maida Vale party



# Harmony at the musical crossroads

Late Junction has always steered away from the mainstream, so it wasn't surprising to hear an obscure instrument or two at its 10th birthday party, Adam Bambury writes

**MAX DE WARDENER** crouches in front of a collection of large glass jars hanging from blue twine, gently hitting them with sticks. His is the latest performance in an evening that has also seen a pianist who climbs into the piano to play it from the inside, a man with a 22-string guitar and two 'Norwegian hillbillies'. Welcome to the tenth anniversary of Radio 3's *Late Junction*.

The one-off studio concert at Maida Vale, hosted by Verity Sharp and Fiona Talkington – who have been presenting *Late Junction* since its inception on September 13 1999 – will be broadcast later that evening. Its eclectic bill is typical of a show known for sonic juxtapositions which ignore all consideration of geography, era or genre in the quest for musical enlightenment. Tuning in can yield anything from ancient Sufi devotional song and field-recordings of birds to a retrospective of Chicago post-rock act Tortoise.

It sounds like a recipe for a less than cohesive programme, yet somehow it works, creating a unique feel that's unmistakably *Late Junction* – a fact attested to by emails from fans around the globe and an atypical listenership for Radio 3, drawn in from other musical orbits. But how do you choose tunes for something which knows no normal boundaries?

'The ultimate thing is 'god, that's a good piece of music'', explains producer Philip

Tagney. 'But saying it's both that and something for the programme is much more serendipitous, and I don't think I could tell you that. It's partly to do with context and juxtaposition as well as feeling and mood. Maybe if we could completely pin it down on a piece of paper then we'd kill the spirit of *Late Junction*, because it has to have some mysteriousness to it.'

The track listing is a 50-50 collaboration between producer and presenter, each starting with a pile of records. 'We mix and match,' says Tagney. 'An interesting fermentation goes on when you put the two lots of ideas together.' With five rotating producers, plus Sharp, Talkington and new presenter Max Reinhardt, it becomes clear how the programme manages to have reach without sacrificing quality.

Such wilful eclecticism is always going to have its detractors on a station perhaps best known for more conservative programming: 'We do get the occasional indignant 'I was trying to get to sleep, I can't listen to that!'' chuckles Tagney. But Radio 3 does have a long history of observing beyond the mainstream and conservative restrictions of genre, from the prog-rock odysseys of *Sounds Interesting* in the 70s, to much-loved experimental show *Mixing It* which ended in 2007.

Looking to the future, the recent *Collaborations* sessions – where two ostensibly differ-

ent artists are brought together to make new music together – have proved fruitful and will continue, while plans are being mooted to expand the programme's presence at festivals with late night dj sets from the presenters

Back in the studio de Wardener has finished with his glass jars (aka 'cloud-chamber bowls'), and the Norwegian duo ended the night with a raunchy tango played on accordion.

Somehow, it all makes perfect sense.

Ariel view, Page 10



**I RECENTLY FOUND MYSELF** on a panel at the International Broadcasting Convention in Amsterdam to discuss user generated content and how – with a bit more open-mindedness – it could bring broadcasters to the forefront of the digital revolution.

French journalist Gary Smith invited me after seeing *Shoot The Summer*, a film I made last year with point of view footage from mobile phones I'd handed out to audiences at music festivals. My fellow panelists were online UGC champions Martin Rogard from Daily Motion and Gilles Babinet from the Eyeka website. Rogard's site avoids the phrase 'user generated content' altogether because it had become what he calls a dirty phrase – synonymous with videos of cats on skateboards. His view was that there is an abundance of quality content on Daily Motion worthy of broadcast on traditional broadcast channels.

In order to feature the most creative content, they launched the MotionMaker program – an initiative intended to give recognition to creative users by allowing them to upload longer videos, HD videos and have a better chance of getting them on the homepage.

Eyeka is an online platform that crowd-sources user generated content for brands to use within marketing campaigns. By leveraging a community of 50,000 film makers and photographers, Eyeka enables brands such as Coca-Cola, HP, Canon, L'Oréal, Orange and Sony Ericsson to generate marketing campaigns designed to engage users. You only have to watch this brilliant Coke Zero advert – [tinyurl.com/garyUGC](http://tinyurl.com/garyUGC) – from 21 year old student Khidai to realise that hidden in among all those cats on skateboards is true talent waiting to be discovered.

I admitted in Amsterdam how surprised I was to be still talking about my film a year after it had been made. Naively I assumed that soon after making it there would be so many user generated films out there that *Shoot the Summer* would become unremarkable quite quickly. That's clearly not the case.

For me the great missed opportunity is less in not harnessing the content being made by 'the people formerly known as the audience', but the missed chance to discover new talent. I'd bet my last penny that a future Jonathan Ross or the next Chris Moyles will be using UGC spaces such as YouTube and Daily Motion to express their creativity at this very moment. By doing more projects like *Shoot The Summer* and the brilliant new Chart Jackers (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00mwyfl>) we could find ourselves in a great position to discover that talent at a very early stage.

*Hugh Garry is senior content producer, audio and music*



# CAPTURE THE CASTLE

With Merlin back for a second series, Lucy Keeler catches up with the designers who put the magic into medieval

**Texting times: actors**  
Angel Coulby (Gwen);  
Bradley James (Arthur);  
Luke Neal (Sir Geraint);  
Anthony Head (Uther) and  
Kate McGrath (Morgana)



PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN BOYES/PRESS EYE

**THEY'RE MORE KING'S ROAD** than Camelot, but Colin Morgan's Vivienne Westwood boots certainly don't look out of place on the set of *Merlin*. But it wasn't just the costumes that caught our eye when we visited the *Merlin* set.

The crew spent the summer shooting in a vast warehouse just outside Cardiff, which is doubling as the interior of a medieval castle. Production designer Dominic Roberts, whose team constructed it, says it was decided early on that *Merlin*

wasn't going to be a period drama. 'We didn't want to slavishly adhere to any particular era - we wanted to be more relaxed about it,' he says.

All the exterior shots were filmed at Château de Pierrefonds in France, which set the architectural style for the rest of the set. The interiors, however, allowed Roberts a little more artistic licence. Inspired by the Pre-Raphaelites' idealised portrayal of medieval life, he added Indian and Turkish 'twists' of his own, creating interiors which are richer in texture

and more detailed than if he had recreated an historically accurate medieval castle. There are lavish curtains, huge carved mahogany chairs and tables, reams of parchment, and four poster beds you could curl up in for weeks.

In between sourcing props from battle re-enactment groups, and panicking over custom-built furniture, Roberts also had to oversee the construction of the tiltyard. At over three metres high and 40 metres long, this was the most ambitious



**Outside shot: Château de Pierrefonds**

set yet: it had to be high enough to fill the long shots.

'It was exhausting and incredibly challenging, but we got there in

the end,' he says. 'The second series was all about being more ambitious than we were first time round. And we certainly achieved that.'

But what will happen to the set now that shooting has wrapped? 'It'll stay up in the warehouse for the moment, possibly going into storage... it all depends on whether they decide to go for a third series.'

Producer, and creator of *Merlin*, Julian Murphy can't guarantee it. 'That's not my decision,' he smiles.

*Merlin, Saturdays on BBC One*

## SECRET HISTORIES: RADIO 4 DELVES UNDER THE COVERS

by Sue Llewellyn

**IF YOU'VE EVER WONDERED** what your ancestors got up to behind closed doors, then a new Radio 4 series could provide a few clues to some very intimate secrets. There are men behaving badly, adultery in the parlour, servants running amok, burglars, bashful bachelors, witches and wedding nights...their stories will all be told for the first time in *A History of Private Life*.

It was a fascination with the way people lived their day-to-day lives and their secret struggles that prompted historian Amanda Vickery to delve into accounts of domestic life in Britain.

'I've spent 20 years in the archives chiselling out little nuggets of information and I realised early on that I'd far rather read love letters than acts of parliament,' she says.

Almost all the stories broadcast in the programme are first hand accounts taken from letters and diaries. 'Some are fantastically juicy, some very funny and others very dark or sad,' says producer Elizabeth Burke. 'They're easy to dramatise, because you have multiple viewpoints - like when you have serv-



**What the historian saw:**  
Amanda Vickery

ants giving evidence in a trial.' But how to bring them to life?

'I thought of it like a quilt,' says Burke, 'with each piece very different, but sewn together. We found hugely talented actors to breathe life into the words and we began to wonder if there were any songs that might illustrate our themes. It was extraordinary what we found.'

Many of the songs she found to accompany the stories had never been recorded before. Composed in the 18th and 19th centuries, their messages turned out to be surprisingly modern. Burke's favourite, *The Housewife's Lament*, describes one early 19th century woman's life poignantly as 'a never-ending struggle with dirt'.

The team added its own, custom made sound effects: 'We had endless trouble trying to get exactly the right sound of a creaking chair and rustling clothes,' Burke says, recalling how she translated one rather risqué account of what the servant saw through the keyhole.

The series takes in everything from death, adultery and burglary to love and longing. There are diaries of anxious young men like London bachelor Dudley Ryder, desperate to marry but worried about bad breath and impotence, and the private angst of a Lincolnshire widower having an affair

with his housekeeper but tortured by guilt.

The very personal details reveal vivid and vibrant personalities some of whom, concerned by their salacious revelations, even pleaded with the recipient to 'please burn this letter that no mortal eyes may read it'. Vickery is delighted with the result and says: 'Voices that have echoed in my head for years will now be heard by thousands of people.'

Vickery and two research assistants have been collecting both private documents and public transcripts of court records, hitherto silent voices that she says are all the more poignant for finding little things like locks of hair in letters.

She says that writing the history of people's private lives was not as easy as one might think. Normal domestic life, as we all know, is pretty mundane and therefore rarely put into words. But, says Vickery: 'You've really got to know what you're looking for and it's actually moments of crisis that deliver the details.'

*A History of Private Life* will take a different theme every week, moving from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century; from a Tudor mansion to a modern bedsit. Starting on September 28 the programme will go out on Radio 4 at 3.45pm every weekday, with repeats in an omnibus edition on Fridays at 9pm.

**Listen to *A Housewife's Lament* at Ariel Online**

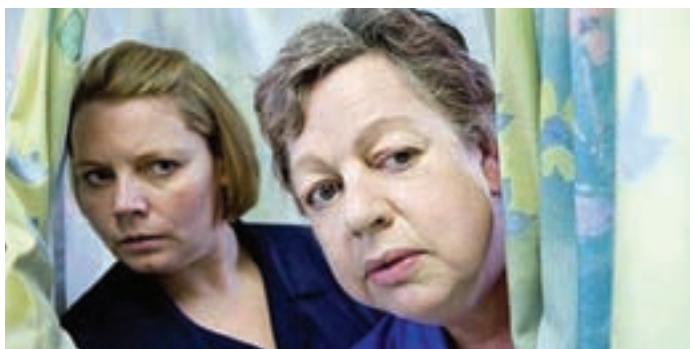


# week@work

## WHAT WE WATCHED THIS SUMMER

**There weren't many bbqs in the end - but the patchy weather meant tv ratings held up, say Audiences**

**RUMOURS THAT AUDIENCES** had abandoned tv this summer were put to rest by BBC Two's performance. The channel increased its peak hours share from 8.9 percent last summer to 9.7 percent. This was spearheaded by its entertainment slate, with *Top Gear* achieving its biggest ever average share (29 percent). *Dragons' Den*, *Mock the Week*, *Shooting Stars* and factual title *Coast* also received good ratings. Five was the only other terrestrial channel to increase its



Joanna Scanlon and Jo Brand in BBC Four's *Getting On*

peak hours share.

But BBC One, like ITV1, didn't fare as well. The channel's all hours share was down two points from last year to 20.5 percent (ITV1 averaged 15.8 percent). Saturday nights were particularly quiet for the big two – that is until *The X Factor* returned towards the end of August. BBC One trumped ITV1 in the ratings in seven

of the ten Saturdays over the summer, but audiences varied: 5.8m stayed in to watch *Casualty* but only 2.9m tuned in to *Totally Saturday*.

The star of BBC One's summer schedule was *Torchwood* which was stripped over one week. It had an average 6.5m viewers and AIs in the 90s. *New Tricks* also performed well against *The Bill* (now in a

new timeslot). It had an average audience of 7.9m while the long-running cop show lost 2m.

Meanwhile BBC Three recorded its best two weeks ever. *The Adult Season* brought 18.5m individual viewers to the channel with *Underage and Pregnant* attracting the biggest audience (0.9m). BBC Four seasons *War Beneath the Skin* and *Grey Expectations* also attracted larger than usual audiences. *Beneath the Skin's Spanish Flu: The Forgotten Fallen* attracted 0.64m while *Expectations' Getting On* broke the record for comedy on the channel, managing 0.86m.

All eyes now turn to the ratings war between BBC One's *Strictly Come Dancing* and ITV1's *The X Factor*. The latter won the battle last weekend attracting an average audience of 9.3m (38 percent share) on Saturday compared to *Strictly's* 7.7m (32.9 percent share). More at audiencesportal.

Ask any eight year-old what to do when they grow up that fighting monsters will be where on the list. Last week was able to do just that when a

## CALL TO ACTION

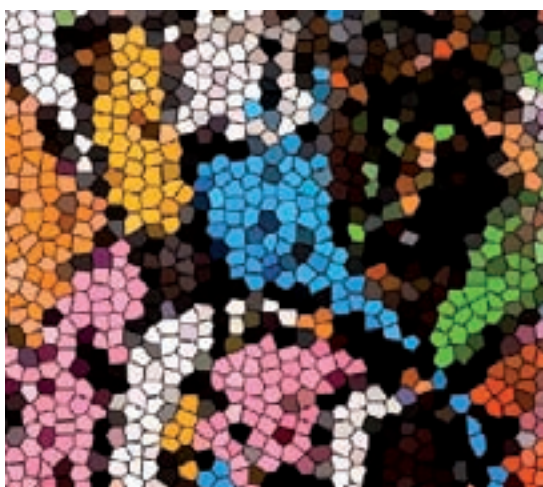


**IF YOU'VE HAD AN OFFICE-RELATED** injury, you may be able to help the team behind a new Safety At Work website.

Training and Development is looking for three people who, before joining the BBC, experienced office related injuries at work – anything from RSI to back pain, slips or trips.

Volunteers should be prepared to have their stories used to help raise awareness of health and safety issues. The team is looking for people who are willing to talk openly about their experience and any impact it had on them.

Email Nick Welch to volunteer



## SHAMELESS PLUG

**Jemma McCann, brand executive English regions, TVC**

After completing a Masters in design, I now work as a graphic artist and designer outside of the BBC. My freelance projects are really varied, from logos and traditional brand identities, to websites and products.

I'm currently developing a range of products for the Tate Modern to support an exhibition they're running on the artist Van Doesburg. It includes jewellery, textiles and clothing and will be available from February.

I'm also about to exhibit some limited edition prints at a gallery called Art and Escape in North London and will be starting work on a project for the Royal Shakespeare Company next month.

[jemmafrances.co.uk](http://jemmafrances.co.uk)

## COMING UP



Controller of BBC Two Janice Hadlow and controller of drama commissioning Ben Stephenson have commissioned a 90-minute drama set against the backdrop of Charles and Diana's wedding. **ROYAL WEDDING** will be made by Tiger Aspect and exec produced by Juliette Howell. Filming in Wales, it is expected to tx next year.

A new three-part series called **A CENTURY OF FATHERHOOD** will interview men from different generations about their roles in their children's lives. Commissioned by controller of BBC Four Richard Klein and in-house commissioning editor Martin Davidson and made by Testimony Films, it is expected to tx next year.

Wallace and Gromit will return to BBC One next year in **WALLACE AND GROMIT'S WORLD OF INVENTION**. The duo will introduce documentary footage of scientific breakthroughs. Made by Aardman Animations it will be exec produced by Alison Kirkham. It was commissioned by controller of BBC One Jay Hunt and commissioning editor for factual Jo Ball.

## CHANGING PLACES

**ANDREA WATSON**, media manager for news and current affairs in Manchester, moves to Entertainment and Comedy North.

**DAVID WORMSTONE**, currently media manager for regional news, replaces her. Radio Bristol producer **SOPHIE WOODCOCK** begins a three month attachment as a trainee network news producer for television. **JOHN BENNETT** begins a six month attachment as a sports bj. He currently produces the *Breakfast* programme.







what they want  
o and it's likely  
I appear some-  
week they were  
a workshop run

by Learning and CBBC marketing pitched  
up at London's Thames Festival and invit-  
ed 6-12 year-olds to act out and produce  
scenes from *The Sarah Jane Adventures*,  
*Blast Lab* and *Tracy Beaker* in front of a live

audience. 'We chose these programmes  
because they reflect the diversity of pro-  
gramming on offer,' explains See Me on  
CBBC project manager Grace Comely. 'The  
number of people wanting to get involved

was incredible,' adds Comely. 'We esti-  
mate we had 30,000 people come to see  
the London tour.'  
See Me on CBBC will be in Birmingham on  
October 31/November 1.

## TRADE SECRETS

# HOW TO BE IMPARTIAL

**With the Lib  
Dem conference  
in full swing  
and a general  
election only  
eight months  
away, chief  
political advisor  
Ric Bailey shares  
his tips for  
broadcasting  
impartial  
coverage**

### 1. ADJUSTING THE RADAR:

Most people know that during the formal election period – the month or so before polling day – special election guidelines operate which are aimed at helping programme-makers achieve appropriate balance and impartiality during the campaign itself. But due impartiality means we always have to take account of the current political context – and that means that in some instances, we should now be beginning to 'adjust the radar'.

### 2. FAIRNESS TO CANDIDATES:

Making sure we're not being unfair to individual candidates is central as an election looms. Some get more attention than others – and proper editorial coverage of high profile characters – celebrity candidates, anti-sleaze candidates – is fine, so long as in doing so, we're not being unfair to other candidates in those constituencies.

### 3. DESERT ISLAND POLITICIANS:

Prominent slots for politicians on programmes not ostensibly about politics and not even discussing much politics? That's fine normally – a revealing way of relating them – but especially



Liberal Democrat Party leader Nick Clegg during a question and answer session at the party's annual conference in Bournemouth

in the run-up to the election you need to be aware of not favouring one side or the other. If you rarely feature politics or politicians and want to – call me (the guidelines say it's a must).

### 4. POTENTIAL GOVERNMENTS:

Parties of government and parties of opposition are normally playing different roles. The former tend to set the agenda and aim to do things; the latter can usually only aspire and say things. Now, though, we should begin to think of both as future potential governments. Subtly and appropriately, in terms of tone, prominence and scrutiny, the perspective shifts.

**5. NATIONS:** It's always important for UK-wide output to remember that politics is

different in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. But in the run-up to the election, taking account of the different structures and inter-party relationships becomes even more important for impartiality.

**6. NEW YEAR:** For now, we should be upping our awareness of these impartiality issues. After Christmas, though, it'll all notch up. The election period will be weeks away. If you're planning now for then, be aware – virtually all politics will by then be defined by the general election.

**7. GET IN TOUCH:** Most things will be fine – don't be frightened into not mentioning politics...just ask yourself more questions about how to make sure what you're doing is fair.

## blogbites

### The political detail

Has George Osborne been reading *Stephanomics*? I suspect the answer is no. But if you read yesterday's post there will have been little to surprise you in the shadow chancellor's speech this morning on the Conservative Strategy for Recovery. As predicted, Osborne made a full-frontal assault on the idea that tightening the budget as early as next year would tank the economy. In fact, he said, cleaning up the public finances could actually support growth – for all the reasons I went through yesterday. He even quoted Goldman Sachs in his support.

**Stephanie Flanders, economics editor**  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/stephanieflanders/>

### Monday's quote of the day

'We are dependent on the museum to tell us whether any carcass that may emerge from the loch is a haddock, or a previously unknown creature from the deep' – bookmaker William Hill on its Nessie deal with Natural History Museum. Presumably, it shouldn't be too hard to tell the difference. For more than 20 years, William Hill has been paying the museum a retainer to showcase Nessie's remains in return for verifying her existence. Documents recording the 1987 deal – worth £1000 a year – have been released.

**Magazine Monitor**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/magazinemonitor/2009/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/magazinemonitor/2009/)

### Celebrity guests...

Things we learned on last night's show: Lawrence Dallaglio the rugby player sang on Tina Turner's *We Don't Need Another Hero*, Bruce Hornsby played on *I Can't Make You Love Me*, Elton John played piano on *Get It On*, Luther Vandross was David Bowie's backing singer, Paul McCartney played carrot and celery sticks for the Superfurry Animals, Kate Bush sang with Big Country, Glen Campbell was Frank Sinatra's session man, Shawn Colvin did the backing vocals on Luka, and Bob Holness definitely did not do the sax solo on *Baker Street*. Talk about public service broadcasting. Phew...

**Bryan Burnett, Radio Scotland presenter**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/bryanburnett/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/bryanburnett/)

### Lloyds: Mind the GAPS

Lloyds has put out a statement today that it is still exploring alternatives to making any use at all of the 'Government Asset Protection Scheme' (which apparently is now known as 'GAPS' – presumably because it is supposed to fill the 'gaps' or gaping holes in its balance sheet).

**Robert Peston, business editor**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/robertpeston/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/robertpeston/)

### Good Reception

I've decided to spend less time breaking bread with my colleagues in Glasgow and more time supping soup with the audience. This has become a lot easier thanks to the improvements that have been made to the reception foyer at Pacific Quay. I tell you, it's a far cry from Queen Margaret Drive where uniformed security guards used to patrol the pavement outside and confront curious onlookers. 'Move along,' they would say, 'there's nothing to see here'. Not exactly the best slogan the BBC ever gave out.

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



# The world has changed and we have to change with it

**AT THE HEART** of Jame Murdoch's speech is a simple proposition: that only an unregulated free market can guarantee editorial independence, choice and quality and that there is no space between this market and the state.

Media properties are either commercial and therefore truly free, or they are state-sponsored, state-controlled and therefore not just paternalistic, but authoritarian. You have to choose – and in James's view...Britain has made the wrong choice.

In this country we have a different tradition – not just the BBC and the other psbs, but our universities, our museums and galleries, many of our orchestras, the RSC, the National Theatre, our great national parks. In fact, so much of our collective cultural and social life exists not in James's bi-polar universe of market and state, but in a third space. Public space.

## No pay zone around news

Wherever it can be – and certainly in the case of the BBC – public space is free at the point of use. And the more people who use it the better.

In the case of the BBC, there's another important characteristic. There's no demand curve and no exclusion. You can't buy a better service from the BBC no matter how wealthy you are.

Public space is shared space. That's why we will never erect a pay zone around our news. That's why we will fight tooth and nail to preserve our broad public remit – from *Strictly* to the Poetry Season.

And public space is independent space. The public believe in the editorial independence of the BBC and they trust us. James called his speech The Absence of Trust, arguing that we have a system that doesn't trust the public to make free choices and which therefore is a system which the public themselves cannot have any trust in.

Again we need a reality check. As the ICM poll suggested the other week, public pride and trust in the BBC has grown, not diminished, over the past five years. The BBC is more trusted in Sky homes than Sky is.

So much of the current discourse is based on the assumption that support for the BBC, the licence fee and for other forms of public service broadcasting, is in decline. It isn't. Public support is strong and getting stronger.

The BBC works precisely because it has never stood still. It's only three years since we

Defining what public space the BBC continues to occupy, post 2012, will drive its strategic review, Mark Thompson told the RTS



A sombre-faced Thompson hears Bradshaw's views in Cambridge

**'We will fight tooth and nail to preserve our broad public remit'**

launched Creative Future. But, in those years, the world has changed almost beyond recognition. Digital take-up and the public's use of digital services has exceeded almost everyone's expectations. But the effect of that – and of the downturn – on many incumbent media businesses has been devastating.

Inevitably, that has meant a steady increase in the number of those who worry about the BBC's scope and market impact.

Convergence has become an everyday reality and the businesses which once regarded themselves as being in a quite different market from the BBC – newspapers, for instance – now believe themselves to be direct competitors.

You've heard me argue that James Murdoch's diagnosis of the ills of British media misses the point. That does not mean that every question about how the BBC fits alongside the rest of British media is illegitimate or a partisan attack on psb.

The world has changed and so the BBC must consider how it changes, too. Five years ago, we said that 'the BBC should be as small as its mission allows' and in absolute terms it is smaller. Thousands of jobs have gone and whole former divisions – technology, play out, OBs – have been sold. The high-water mark of new linear service launches and content investment was passed some years ago. New initiatives like iPlayer offer conven-

ient new ways of giving the public access to existing content, rather than representing expansions into fresh content areas.

But we have to accept that to many in commercial media we seem relatively bigger and stronger than ever. Therefore, it is inevitable that questions about the BBC and our services come to the fore. That's one of the reasons why, back in June, the BBC Trust and I decided that this autumn was the right time to look ahead to the post-switch-over world of 2012 and beyond and to develop a clear strategy for what kind of BBC could best serve the public, and best support the media sector.

## Need for broader debate

The review will be both radical and open-minded. Ben Bradshaw wondered whether the BBC might have reached the limits of expansion. Don't assume that we'll dismiss that notion out of hand or erect defensive barriers against it. Defining the public space the BBC should occupy and being explicit about where space must be left for others will be the thread through the whole review.

The review will throw up difficult choices. Over the past 20 years, we've been able to use productivity gains – enhanced during some of the period by a licence fee which grew in real terms – to opt for what you could call a 'both-and' strategy: maintaining, indeed sometimes being able to increase investment in existing linear services, and launching new digital ones.

But in a period where not just the licence fee, but the wider public finances and the revenues available to commercial media, are constrained, and after years of squeezing efficiencies out of the system, 'both-and' must and will give way to 'either-or'. And that means choices.

It was encouraging to hear Ben say that the government still has an open mind on top-slicing. I hear that work is being conducted on spectrum tax, which I believe is a credible and deliverable alternative. But I would also suggest that the government thinks more imaginatively about what kind of local and regional alternative it wants to support. Is a replication of the current ITV provision – close to a mirror-image of the BBC service – really what this country needs, post-switchover?

Like Ben, I believe we need a better, broader, more positive debate. Both within and beyond our strategy review it's a debate we will enter with enthusiasm.

arielview



SALLY HILLIER

## If in doubt, ask the audience

**HIS COMMENTS ABOUT THE BBC TRUST** aside, there was something else Ben Bradshaw said last week that should have set alarm bells ringing. Looking ahead to when work starts on the next BBC charter, he listed some questions he thought should be asked: 'Do we as a nation still value public service broadcasting? Do we want the BBC to survive and, if so, what do we want it to do and how do we want to pay for it?'

The usual stuff, in other words. Tellingly, the culture secretary added: 'The public needs to be heard in this discussion... a proper national conversation.' This sounds suspiciously like a call for yet another big consultation exercise. Enough already! The industry is awash with reviews, reports and consultations. Ofcom alone has launched more than 100 in recent months, according to Jeremy Hunt, while the BBC has just embarked on a strategic review of its own – albeit from a fairly radical starting point. Then there are the endless seminars, festivals and conferences, where the same subjects keep popping up: funding, psb, plurality, the challenges of digital technology. Outgoing Channel 4 boss Andy Duncan nailed the groundhog day feel of it all when he pointed out at the RTS Cambridge convention: 'We're having the same debate we had two years ago.'

Another point made at Cambridge was that there are only about 60 legislative days left until the general election. If the Tories win, we know they have ideas of their own. Cue consultation.

Sally Hillier is deputy editor of Ariel

## Critical junction

**WHEN LATE JUNCTION FIRST HIT** the airwaves in 1999, experimental music on BBC radio was in a healthy state. John Peel plied his esoteric trade in a populist time slot over on Radio 1, while at Radio 3 *Mixing It's* intrepid presenters panned for gold in the murky waters of the avant-garde.

Fast forward ten years and the only place for ambient, post-rock, and other exciting but indefinable fusions of genre is *Late Junction*, itself now three days instead of four and starting an hour later at 11.15 so only the truly dedicated (or unemployed) can last the entire session.

A shame, because this defiantly un-commercial programme is exactly the kind of licence fee-justifying show that the BBC can do so well. A welcome shot in the arm of a vibrant global scene, it is a bastion against playlists, demographics, hype and obsession with the 'new' – the polar opposite of typical commercial radio.

Sure this is high minded stuff but, crucially, it's also accessible: if you loathe one track you still might love the next. This, coupled with a playful, intuitive approach to the playlist makes it the ideal introduction to a station whose output can seem impenetrable to the classically uninitiated.

It was good to see *Late Junction* celebrated last week. I hope it lasts another ten years without being shunted to the schedule margins or being forced to compromise musical integrity in the quest for a bigger audience, thus destroying what made it so good in the first place.

Adam Bambury is an Ariel reporter



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

## Yellow brick road block

I see the BBC Trust has ordered an end to sponsorship of on-air events. I presume they came to this decision because it looks like just one long advert for a particular product or company.

Does this mean that the BBC will be cancelling the annual Andrew Lloyd Webber advertising campaign for productions he is associated with, disguised as talent programmes?

**Alan Caswell**

senior media assistant (tv intake), I&A

## Stroke of hope



My mother hadn't been able to say much for two weeks after her stroke. We'd only heard odd words and phrases like 'dry mouth'. But the first real sign of recovery

came last week when she spoke a whole sentence; 'Could I tape *Strictly Come Dancing* for her?'

With pleasure! She'll have the whole series ready when she comes home.

**Rob Bayly**

director, *BBC Bristol features and docs*

## Hear reason

Why is *See Hear*, the deaf magazine show, moving to Birmingham next year? *See Hear* relies on London – as the biggest deaf community in the UK – for many of its stories as well as its referrals to government and other spokespeople.

The deaf staff are the nucleus of *See Hear*, collecting the stories from their contacts. If they don't

move, you have no programme. You wouldn't move a black community programme from Brixton to white middle-class Surrey.

Opportunities for deaf British Sign Language users in the BBC are rare with few departments interested in investing in deaf staff or taking them on board. Those who have had placements elsewhere in the BBC have almost always not been retained and have had to return to *See Hear*. Talent managers have no understanding of what it is like to be deaf in a large hearing corporation – supplying the deaf person with an interpreter is not the answer. The glass ceiling exists and is exacerbated by poor understanding and poor quality interpreters.

This move is for the sake of a move and does not accommodate the deaf staff's specialist needs.

**Linda Richards**

freelance interpreter

**Nick Patten, head of Birmingham and Manchester factual, replies:** *See Hear* is transferring to Birmingham as part of the BBC's commitment to moving flagship titles to regional and national bases. Birmingham's proximity to a

number of high profile organisations for deaf people, and for learning and promoting BSL makes it ideally placed to make *See Hear*.

The move will provide new opportunities for people with hearing difficulties in the Midlands that they otherwise wouldn't have had.

We will continue to make the production with a combination of both deaf and hearing staff, as London factual does currently. There will be no redundancies in London continuing contract staff.

## Night to remember

As a member of one of the BBC orchestras I sometimes wonder for our future when even our colleagues cannot get the basics right.

*BBC Breakfast*. Saturday September 12: 'The London Symphony Orchestra will be performing at the Last Night of the Proms.'

No. The Last Night is always performed by the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Later in the same programme: 'Barry Manilow will be performing at the Prom in the Park tonight.'

It should have been: 'Barry

O'Neill is crucial. It's our journalists' responsibility to provide clear, accurate reportage to perhaps allay people's fears and help inform change.

Are we incapable of doing this? I think not. Is censoring ourselves and the audience from reality the solution, as Ms O'Neill suggests? My goodness, certainly not.

**Jimmy Smallwood, 5 live Interactive**

Manilow will be joining the BBC Concert Orchestra tonight at the BBC Prom in the Park.'

Even if the presenters don't know, what are researchers for?

**David Wythe, sub principal horn, BBC Concert Orchestra**

## Spam shirkers

Has the spam filter gone part-time? Not too long ago it did such a sterling job in shielding me from offers of luxury watches and the slimming benefits of acai berries that I would have argued it deserved UPA2. But these days my colleagues and I can barely move for invitations to join casinos and attempts to make it easier for us to please our ladies.

The filter is obviously still turning up for work sometimes – just today it tells me it prevented Delmar Stinson informing me of an 'ideal solution for men who feel inadequate'. But already this morning it has failed to weed out Mabel Vigil's offer of 86 percent off a blue pill which will give me the 'unstoppable desire which girls like so much' and the charmingly-titled 'Song about testicles' from Gilbert Ketch.

Can anyone shed any light on the spam filter's erratic performance? Does it need a pill to perk it up? If so, I could tell it where to get one – at a bargain price too...

**James Clarke**

sbj, news interactive

**Julia Harris, head of information security, replies:**

The BBC is working with Siemens to launch a new, improved anti-spam solution by the end of the month. With the new system, all email addresses will be automatically opted in. It is anticipated that about 90-95 percent of all spam will be caught by the filters.

Spam is constantly evolving and the techniques used by the spammers to fool spam filters is changing constantly. The spam filter providers have to react to this but it takes time for them to catch up.

## Talk big

I think Dominic Casciani may have misinterpreted the message around the new policy regarding car hire (September 15). It will still be possible to hire cars larger than 1600cc in the future; but a reason will have to be given for why a larger size car is needed.

The intention here is to help reduce the overall CO2 emissions produced as a result of our car hire activities and to help us understand some of the reasons behind why larger cars are required.

We understand there are occasions when, in fact, a larger size of car can be more environmentally friendly than a smaller sized car – given the right driving conditions – however this judgment will still be made by the booker/driver of the car.

**John O'Donnell category manager/road transport, procurement**

## OBITUARY

### BRIAN BARRON

Brian Barron was a real foreign correspondent, the kind we all wanted to be. I was in awe of him when I joined the BBC 25 years ago. I thought he was a very cool guy, a legend. That feeling never wore off.

Brian seemed to have been on all the big stories. There was Africa and the Falklands and the 1991 Gulf War, and Cairo, Hong Kong, Washington, New York and Rome. I remembered him reporting from Vietnam, where he stayed on in Saigon with Eric Thirer, as great a cameraman as he was a correspondent, to watch the North Vietnamese Army's final victory. That took guts, of which Brian had plenty.

He had energy too. After many weeks in China, reporting on the pro democracy demonstrations in 1989, he went back to Hong Kong for a short rest. One morning the foreign editor John Mahoney rang me.



'Barron's on his knees, old boy. I need you to get out there, Honkers, then Pekkers... ok?'

While I was in the air flying to Hong Kong that evening the Chinese

authorities sent troops in to Tiananmen Square. At the BBC office in Hong Kong it became clear very quickly that Barron was far from being on his knees. He was heading straight back to Peking, as the BBC called the Chinese capital in those days.

If he was disappointed about not being there he didn't show it, and he had time to console a young reporter who perhaps naively had thought he was about to replace the great man. Brian told me that I was better off staying in Hong Kong for a few days, because I would have my own story there, and if I had gone straight to

Tiananmen, which of course I wanted to do with every atom in my body, I would get big footed royally, not least by Brian himself. He was right, of course.

Brian Barron was the best sort of reporter, in the best traditions of the BBC. He would get out to the story to see for himself, then find the words to tell it. He made our competition at ITN nervous.

It is a tragedy is that he didn't have many long years ahead with Angie and Fleur to enjoy his life and every now and then turn on the tv and watch with wry amusement the efforts of those who tried to emulate his brilliant career.

Jeremy Bowen

### PENNY VERNHAM

Our friend and colleague Penny Vernham has been tragically killed in a motorcycle accident while on holiday in America.

Penny joined the BBC in 1975 as a clerk in publicity based at Queens House. She went on to work in artists

contracts, scenic facilities and as assistant to the head of programmes, resources and engineering.

Penny was a huge motorcycling fan, soon joining the BBC Club motorcycle section and becoming its secretary. She enjoyed many rideouts and social events with the group. She was also a keen horse-rider and a member of the BBC Riding Club; never shying away from the fast lane – be it horses or motorbikes.

Penny took a break in the early nineties to spend time with her baby daughter Alice, and when she was ready to return to work she did so as a course co-ordinator for tv operations training at Elstree. She regularly set up shoots, worked with actors and crews on location and organised all tv training activity. She rapidly endeared herself to the television training team and was a mainstay of the Elstree 'family', much loved by all those who knew her. Her great subject knowledge, enthusiasm and sense of humour, together with her passion for cakes, are all things by which she will be remembered.



Later in her BBC career Penny became a production manager on the Future Now project, working with a small team in White City to look after multi-platform training and large events. Penny blossomed

in this role and really came into her own organising events involving all departments of the BBC and a host of other companies.

All of those who had the pleasure of working with her were impressed by her dedication to her role, her warmth and her generosity of spirit; no matter how busy she was, she always had time to help other people.

Penny was a stalwart of the BBC; committed to its principles and always prepared to give 100 percent to any project she was involved in. She will be very sadly missed.

Andy Wilson



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**Chiswick.** Lovely 1 bed flat. 2 minutes tube. £820pcm. Telephone 07775 782210. Available now.

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**Richmond Hill "Alberts"**

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**Room to let in Maida Vale.**

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**Shepherd's Bush.**

Beautiful three bedroom Edwardian family home, recently modernised throughout. Perfect for TVC. £450pw. Email matthew.price.01@bbc.co.uk

**Short term room to let in garden flat, W3.**

£650pcm incl. Email karenmcgann@talktalk.net or ring 07525 429028

**Stunning two/three bedroom garden flat. London N7.**

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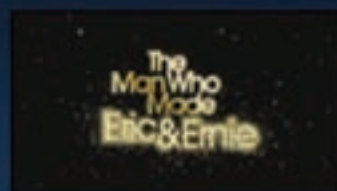
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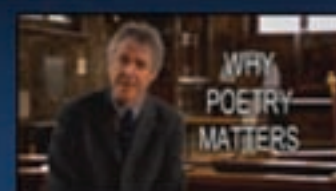
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10D/Ref: 18955109  
📅 06-Oct-09

**Producer**  
Elstree  
9P/Ref: 18929409  
📅 01-Oct-09 📅 2 years

**Leader, BBC Philharmonic Orchestra**  
Manchester  
9D/Ref: 16939109  
📅 27-Sep-09

**Producer, Regional Football League Programme**  
Birmingham  
8D/Ref: 18951309  
📅 28-Sep-09 📅 08 months

**Producer, Front Row, A&M Factual**  
Manchester  
7D/Ref: 19088609  
📅 05-Oct-09 📅 07 months

**Assistant Producer, World Service Sport**  
London / Salford Quays  
7D/Ref: 18035209  
📅 28-Sep-09

**Marketing Coordinator, BBC Proms**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
6D/Ref: 18632209  
📅 29-Sep-09 📅 08 months

**Week-end Presenter (Senior Broadcast Journalist), East Midlands Today**  
Nottingham  
5/7D/Ref: 18993909  
📅 02-Oct-09

**Production Coordinator / Cydlynnydd Cynhyrchu, One Show**  
Cardiff  
5D/Ref: 18895209  
📅 27-Sep-09 📅 05 months

**Broadcast Assistant, Radio Drama**  
London  
Bush House  
3/4D/Ref: 18992509  
📅 30-Sep-09

**Series Producer, Religion**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
Under Review/Ref: 18858209  
📅 29-Sep-09 📅 15 months

JOURNALISM

**Golygydd Newyddion Teledu ac Arlein**  
Cardiff  
10D/Ref: 19005109  
📅 30-Sep-09 📅 08 months

**Assistant Editor, BBC Sussex & BBC Surrey**  
Multi Location - South East  
9D/Ref: 18682609  
📅 27-Sep-09 📅 08 months

**Washington Late Reporter**  
Washington  
8/9S/Ref: 19107309  
📅 02-Oct-09 📅 2 years

**Broadcast Coordinator**  
Glasgow  
8D/Ref: 18882609  
📅 28-Sep-09 📅 06 months

**Broadcast Journalist, BBC News School Report**  
Manchester  
7D/Ref: 19007409  
📅 27-Sep-09 📅 18 months

**Broadcast Journalist, Online Development (BBC Asian Network)**  
London  
7D/Ref: 18997709  
📅 04-Oct-09 📅 06 months

**Broadcast Journalist, East Midlands Today**  
Nottingham  
5/7D/Ref: 18993509  
📅 02-Oct-09

**Broadcast Journalist, Midlands Today**  
Birmingham  
5/7D/Ref: 18894709  
📅 29-Sep-09

**Broadcast Journalist (Sport) - Radio Bristol**  
Bristol  
5/7D/Ref: 18644609  
📅 24-Sep-09 📅 06 months

**Researcher, WSNCA**  
London  
Bush House  
5D/Ref: 19139009  
📅 01-Oct-09

**Broadcast Journalist/Newyddiadurwr Darlledu, Eye on Wales**  
Cardiff  
5D/Ref: 19009909  
📅 24-Sep-09

**Reporter / Producer**  
Macedonia  
N/A/Ref: 18646209  
📅 12-Oct-09 📅 12 months

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

**Head of Brand Strategy & Planning (Jobshare)**  
London  
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SM2/Ref: 19103509  
📅 04-Oct-09 📅 12 months

**Regional Director, Africa**  
London  
Bush House  
SM2/Ref: 18912809  
📅 11-Oct-09

**Head of Planning - Brand & Planning, MC&A**  
London  
White City  
11D/Ref: 19103609  
📅 28-Sep-09

**Internal Communications Specialists**  
London  
11D/Ref: 18867609  
📅 30-Sep-09

**Internal Communications Managers**  
London  
10D/Ref: 18867709  
📅 30-Sep-09

**Project Director, Iran**  
London  
Bush House  
9D/Ref: 19055809  
📅 04-Oct-09 📅 2 years

**Commissioning & Production Modernisation Advisor**  
London  
TV Centre  
9D/Ref: 18906009  
📅 05-Oct-09 📅 06 months

**Adviser, Fair Trading**  
London  
9D/Ref: 17493909  
📅 28-Sep-09 📅 12 months

**Media Planner**  
London  
White City  
8D/Ref: 19103709  
📅 28-Sep-09 📅 07 months

**HR Manager, Finance**  
London  
White City  
7D/Ref: 19102809  
📅 28-Sep-09 📅 06 months

**Partnerships and Rights Executive**  
Reading  
7D/Ref: 18941909  
📅 01-Oct-09 📅 12 months

**Strategy Analyst, Finance Economics & Strategy**  
London  
7D/Ref: 18901209  
📅 05-Oct-09 📅 06 months

**Internal Communications Executives**  
London  
7D/Ref: 18867809  
📅 30-Sep-09

**Category Manager**  
London  
White City  
6D/Ref: 19131109  
📅 27-Sep-09 📅 03 months

**Media Co-ordinator**  
Glasgow  
4H/Ref: 18965009  
📅 04-Oct-09 📅 10 months

**Personal Assistant**  
London  
White City  
4D/Ref: 19099209  
📅 01-Oct-09 📅 06 months

**Assistant to Creative Director, New Writing**  
London  
Grafton House  
4D/Ref: 19069709  
📅 28-Sep-09 📅 06 months

**Personal Assistant**  
London  
Media Centre  
4D/Ref: 18861009  
📅 27-Sep-09 📅 03 months

**Network & Business Assistant, Radio 2**  
London  
Western House  
4D/Ref: 18533809  
📅 29-Sep-09 📅 08 months

**Finance Specialist**  
London  
White City  
Under Review/Ref: 19131209  
📅 30-Sep-09

NEW MEDIA

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London  
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10D/Ref: 19078409  
📅 05-Oct-09

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8D/Ref: 18906109  
📅 29-Sep-09 📅 06 months

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7D/Ref: 19099109  
📅 04-Oct-09 📅 2 years

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9D/Ref: 18920509  
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📅 29-Sep-09

TECHNOLOGY

**Infrastructure Team Lead**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
9D/Ref: 16381209  
📅 24-Sep-09

**Designer**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
7D/Ref: 18891709  
📅 29-Sep-09

BBC WORLDWIDE

**Channel Systems Administrator**  
London  
Media Centre  
1W/Ref: 18861109  
📅 27-Sep-09

**Mail Order Marketing Manager**  
London  
Media Centre  
2D/Ref: 19147109  
📅 30-Sep-09

**Features Co-ordinator, Gardeners World Magazine**  
London  
Media Centre  
3W/Ref: 18865209  
📅 01-Oct-09

**Editorial Assistant, Gardeners World Magazine**  
London  
Media Centre  
4W/Ref: 18865309  
📅 01-Oct-09

See Attachment

It's news to me

Josephine Wildridge has gone from TV Licensing to the hectic multimedia newsroom

**I ALWAYS SAY** you don't know busy until you've worked in news. Exposure to such a high-pressured area, with constantly changing deadlines, has made me understand the division and the people who work here in a new way. And I've come to realise that a PA's priorities are never going to be the same as those of an editor.

I joined news on a year-long attachment as personal assistant to the head of television news. I'd started off at the BBC in the nations and regions HQ in the brand new Media Centre. I was new to London, new to the BBC and everything was exciting.

I wanted to further my experience so I moved to TV Licensing – it was important to know and understand about the licence fee, I reasoned – but I also

You never know where things will lead



wanted to work in an output department and see how that money was spent. I didn't know if I would always be living in London, and you have to do these things before the opportunity passes.

My attachment came in a year of great change for BBC news, as it morphed from separate television, radio and online departments into a multimedia newsroom – the biggest in the world. Professionally, that threw up some big challenges. We grew to more than 1000 people – and I had to get to know them while also helping to organise events that would help them to get to know each other, like the New Year New Newsroom party. I have developed and become a better PA as a result – from improving my vocabulary and grammar to gaining confidence in organising events for large numbers of people.

I was made permanent in the job after eight months. The person for whom I was covering was made permanent in her attachment. Sometimes these things have a way of working out.

I have also discovered a new hobby – writing. This has been encouraged by successive newsroom bosses (Peter Horrocks and Mary Hockaday). I feel very lucky. You never know where things will lead.

I love working for the BBC. I love telling people I work here, and I am so proud, especially now that I work in news. I always ask people if they watch the news and seriously mean it when I say that they're missing out if they don't. It's fascinating and BBC news is the best in the world.

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

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EXTERNAL APPLICATIONS

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# EMMA MASEY

VJ AND PRESENTER  
LOOK NORTH, HULL

The first time  
mum was  
back at work  
six weeks  
after giving  
birth. Editing  
at sea, in force  
nine gales  
was easy  
after that



PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL WITCOMBE

## You've been doing some filming at sea recently then?

Yes, around the Clipper race. It gives amateur sailors the chance to sail around the world. There are ten 68 foot yachts and I went on board the Hull and Humber yacht. All the boats set off on the race from Hull earlier this month and they finish here too, around July next year.

## Why else did the Clipper race interest you?

The Hull and Humber is the only boat to have ambassadors on board – young people from deprived backgrounds representing their city. One of the boys I interviewed couldn't even spell his own name to me, but they were amazing on the boat. They've all got a place on one of the round the world legs of the race.

## How did you end up getting involved?

I was asked to cover it because I have some sailing experience myself. I spent two days on the boat in training around the Solent, and then a time trial up from Ramsgate to Grimsby. I gathered footage for a half hour documentary called *A World Away* and ended up with more than 20 camera tapes full. I got up early one morning and put my camera in a wet weather bag and got some fantastic footage. I was the camera director, which I'm very proud of. Seeing the finished programme made all that worthwhile.

## What was that race like?

Some of it was frightening. It lasted for 36 hours and for most of it we were in severe gale force nine winds in the North Sea. I

had to get as much material as possible for the documentary, but I also had to provide radio reports and lives for Radio Humber and also make and edit a film on board for *Look North* and a live for them from the satellite phone.

## How did you manage to edit at sea?

I kept going below deck to edit, and then, when I felt sick, I'd go back up again to take my mind off it.

## Were your sea legs up to the challenge?

I learnt to sail about five years ago. I've taken part in various race weeks including Antigua and Cowes week, but before this story I hadn't been on a boat for about three years.

## Why was that?

Partly because I was having my son, Alfie, but also because I'd been working for *Midlands Today* which is rather landlocked. It was good to get back on the water again.

## What are your days at Look North usually like?

There is never a typical day. I'm assigned to being the North Lincolnshire vj but I could be sent anywhere in East Yorkshire or Lincolnshire. I can be doing a

top news story one day, and a colourful feature the next. Some weeks I'm reporting, some weeks I'm presenting. The week before I went out on the boat I was in a cosy studio presenting lunchtimes and lates. I love that I never know what I'll be doing next.

## What stories stand out for you?

For *Look North* in Hull, and in Leeds, I've put the Children in Need films together. That was very satisfying. In most cases I set the films up, filmed them, and produced them myself. They went in the regional opt-outs of the main programme. One of them was a sailing story about disabled children getting out onto the water in dinghies.

## What was your maternity leave like?

I was on a short term contract, but also freelancing so I only took six weeks off after having my son. I couldn't afford to take months off. I started working again by making corporate films for websites. Then I was offered a few months cover at Leeds, and then went for the job at *Look North* in Hull which is a staff contract.

## How do you feel about short term contracts?

I worked myself into the ground

and could never say no to a job. I never knew what was around the corner. I waited for a staff job at the BBC for 17 years.

## Where else have you worked?

I was a consumer reporter for network. I worked on a *Watchdog* spin off called *The Big Dinner*, *Short Change* on CBBC, *Working Lunch*, *Breakfast* news and sport, and *Midlands Today*. My most significant job was as a vj on the BBC local tv pilot.

## How did you feel when the BBC local pilot failed to get approval?

I was disappointed. I did some of my best stories on it and we had a lot of freedom to be creative and do stories that wouldn't normally be covered. The audiences wanted it, but I understand the competition element for local newspapers.

## You've had quite a varied career outside the BBC too?

My first tv job was as a continuity presenter on the children's channel Nickelodeon. I was also at Reuters for two years as an equities correspondent. Then I became an ITV/BBC yo-yo, on short term contracts.

## How did you meet your husband?

On an internet dating website. It all happened quite quickly. We met in early spring, were married by the end of the summer and had Alfie at Christmas time. I like telling the story to people who are my age and think they're too old for that to happen to them. Your life really can change in a minute.

Interview by Peggy Walker

# foreign report



RICHARD  
PATTINSON

PRODUCER'S WHIRLWIND TRIP

'THAT'S THE CRAZIEST SCHEDULE I've ever heard,' said Sanjay, who was helping put together my whistle stop tour of the globe for Aftershock, the BBC World News season about the state of the markets after a year of recession.

Sao Paulo was my first stop – via Madrid. If the city's traffic-choked roads were any guide to how the economy was doing, Brazil was doing ok. I left the madness to visit a sugar factory in upstate Sao Paulo. Sugar cane can be turned into either sugar or ethanol, Brazil's major car fuel, and producers can choose to make more or less of each depending on prices. With sugar prices at record highs, that means a lot more sugar next year.

Next stop, Houston. 'It's a full flight with just the middle seats in rows of fives available.' Not good news. 'I can give you one with more leg room.' Better news, but the check-

## Swathes of Detroit lie virtually derelict

in guy failed to add: 'It's right in front of a giant glowing screen that doesn't switch off.' Never mind sleep, doing any work on board was a challenge. My

laptop battery barely lasted two hours. And there were no plug sockets in economy.

The buzz in Houston was about recovering oil prices and the growing demand for natural gas. The US needs to start using gas instead of coal if it's to cut CO2 emissions.

The contrast between Houston and my third stop was jaw-dropping. Thanks to the energy boom, Houston's now the fourth biggest city in the States – something Detroit could once claim. But Detroit's population is down a quarter since the 80s, and swathes of the city lie virtually derelict.

Next up, Tokyo. If Detroit seemed broken, Tokyo looked brand new. Whether it was the relaxing order of everything, or the delicious food, I began to feel human again. Unemployment is at record levels, and the Japanese have just thrown out pretty much the only post war government they've ever had – but it didn't feel like a country on the edge.

In Detroit and Tokyo it had been unseasonably cool. That couldn't be said of my final stop – Dubai. But its economy's in the deep freeze. Property prices have halved in the past year. Even so there's optimism among some that the worst may be over. Others, though, argue it is more wishful thinking than anything grounded in reality.

The great lesson of my sleep-deprived fortnight is the uncertainty that has infected just about every market around the globe. As the cliché goes, if there's one thing markets hate, it's uncertainty. No uncertainty as far as I'm concerned though – I'm laying off the flying for a while.

CV

**Degree:** BA Communications Media at Goldsmiths  
**First Job:** Saturday assistant at Waitrose  
**Career landmarks:** Working on the BBC local tv project, and as a consumer reporter  
**Family:** Married to James, with a 20 month-old son, Alfie.



# green room

## THE ARIELATOR

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



**UPSIDE** Going up the arielator, but falling rapidly towards the earth, is *North West Tonight* presenter **Ranvir Singh** (left) who has done a 10,000 foot tandem skydive for charity. She was accompanied by, although not strapped to, *Coronation Street* actress Tupele Dorgu for the jump at Lancaster Airfield in an unusual example of cross-channel co-operation. 'It was really surreal,' says Ranvir. 'One minute you're sat there, and the next you're jumping out of a plane! I just wanted to stay up.'

### DOWNSIDE

An ignominious on air chess defeat for Radio Derby managing editor **Simon Cornes** at the hands of 12 year-old guest Emma Bentley. 'Big boss' Cornes was the station's last hope after ba 'Dancing' Glenn Jones and journalist Ross Birkenshaw were both soundly beaten by the child chess prodigy in



under four moves. He might have lasted longest but Simon admits it was only his slowness of play that prolonged the game, although breakfast presenter Shane O'Connor's advice to 'make good use of the horsey' [the knight, in case you're wondering] was deemed less than helpful. 'Emma is clearly going on to great things but I've decided to take up ludo,' said Simon.

## EARWIGGING

### OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...Can I just have a moment to read my press release – I've forgotten what I think about this...

...I took her to Jessops but they chopped her head off...

...We can cut it with dancing gorillas...

...They're all chilling in the doughnut, sequins and all!...

...I couldn't say that I've never licked a chicken...

...I shouldn't go on holiday – it gives me the energy to be even more grumpy...



## MAKING TEA AT THE BBC

**EARS PRICKED** in the Green Room on listening to the new Jamie T album, which references that most lowly, but much sought after, production post. 'If I look down I'm a goner, I'll end up working for the BBC as a runner,' raps the urban troubadour desperately in Castro Dies, as if he's trying to avoid a fate worse than death. The Clash espoused a similar sentiment 32 years earlier in Career Opportunities with the question 'do you wanna make tea at the BBC?' – just one uninspiring job choice available to young people at the time, suggesting internships aren't such a new thing. The three

initials are common in popular song, probably because they're easy to rhyme, but two cases stand out: indie kids Franz Ferdinand get the literary prize for their masterful evocation of Terry Wogan in The Dark of the Matinée ('So I'm on BBC Two now, telling Terry Wogan how I made it and / What I made is unclear now, but his deference is and his laughter is'), while the most bizarre award goes to hip-hop act N.E.R.D who end Jump by screaming 'Astronaut suits by the BBC! / Astronaut suits by the BBC!' for 30 seconds. Is there something the props department isn't telling us?

## NEWS HOUND

**WE LIKE DOGS** at the Green Room, and judging by this photo sent in by proud pooch owner and Radio Nottingham breakfast show presenter Andy Whittaker, they like us too. 'This is my new

rescue puppy Lara, a border collie/German shepherd cross and she's very grateful to Ariel in helping her with house training,' he writes. Obviously using the staff newspaper to line Lara's pen

shows Andy's dedication to his beloved pet by providing it with the finest news and views around, the small matter of waste disposal an unfortunate side issue. It isn't the first recycling wheeze to emerge from eco-minded staff keen to keep their copies of the paper useful once they are out of date – one member of the PA network recently responded to a question about the existence of BBC wrapping paper with the answer 'copies of Ariel'. Last week's Ariel, of course.



## WE HEAR THAT...

**MARK THOMPSON** has been airing his dirty laundry in the Royal Television Society magazine, *Television*. It seems the dg has been having a bit of trouble at home: 'My relationship with the cat has begun to deteriorate,' he wrote. 'He's gone off *Top Gear* and the first thing he did when I got back from holiday was to bite me on the hand.' Why all this feline negativity? Thompson suspects foul play: 'My wife says that it is the trauma of being separated from the family. I think that he's been talking to Ben Bradshaw.'

'**BOYLE IS** edging closer' to Porno,' ran a recent headline on the BBC news website. SuBo (Susan Boyle) fans should remain calm – the story was in fact referring to how director Danny Boyle may make a film version of the sequel to Irvine Welsh's novel *Trainspotting*, which is called Porno. Obviously.

**HAS SAFETY** teamed up with the environment team in an attempt both to eradicate swine flu and develop a free new water source – one that would withstand *The Guardian's* most rigorous FOI requests? A mysterious new poster (pictured, right) appears to say so, though its subsequent disappearance suggests the campaign didn't quite take off...



**THE PERILS** of the press junket – hungry hacks sniffing for a story amid nervous PR people – took an interesting turn at a *Merlin* set visit which added a bunch of child journalists into the mix. But the presence of the youngsters didn't stop a journalist from *Gay Times* persisting in a risqué line of questioning that would have had even seasoned Camelot court physician Gaius blushing...

## Win a Teletubbies dance dvd



**THE TELETUBBIES'** comeback continues with the release of 'Ready Steady Dance' on dvd. A collection of some of the fab four's funkiest moments, it's sure to get any young children busting a move. In one of three dvd extras the Teletubbies are featured in a brand new light, as for the first time ever they appear in animated form. For your

chance to win one of five copies of 'Ready Steady Dance', just answer this question: How does Noo-Noo help the Teletubbies?

- A) **BY** making Tubby-custard
- B) **BY** cleaning
- C) **BY** telling the time

**EMAIL ARIEL** competitions by September 28.