

## ariel

VERY BRITISH,  
PRETTY FAMOUS:  
HOW MATT  
FREI IS WOOLING  
AUDIENCES  
STATESIDE  
**Page 6**



# STRICTLY BETWEEN OURSELVES...

◆ **BRUCE FORSYTH** joined in-house programme makers, indies, BBC bosses and other BBC talent at the Vision forum, to chew the fat over tv's new realities, the brave new world in the North and the BBC under siege. Jana Bennett said it was time for us all to stick up for the organisation. Brucie was sticking up for Alesha. **Pages 4-5, 10**





Room 2316, White City  
201 Wood Lane, London W12 7TS  
020 8008 4228

#### Managing Editor

Stephen James-Yeoman 02-84222

#### Deputy editors

Sally Hillier 02-26877

Cathy Loughran 02-27360

#### Features editor

Clare Bolt 02-27445

Senior Broadcast Journalist 02-27630

Stephen Hawkes

#### Reporters

Laura Scarrott 02-84224

Peggy Walker 01-43940

#### Production editor

Claire Barrett 02-27368

#### Art editor

Ken Sinyard 02-84229

#### Ariel online

Alex Goodey 02-27410

#### Business co-ordinator

Silvana Romana 02-84228

#### Ariel mail

claire.barrett@bbc.co.uk

Ariel online explore.gateway.bbc.uk/ariel

#### Guest contributors this week

**PAUL SMITH** A&M's head of editorial standards on how to stay on top of compliance. Page 8

**TORIN DOUGLAS** examines how the *Strictly* factor made Saturday nights more than just another media debate. Page 10

**BBC Jobs** 0370 333 1330

**Jobs textphone** 028 9032 8478

**BBC Jobs** John Clarke 02-27143

Room 2120, White City, London W12 7TS

#### Advertise in Ariel

Ten Alps Publishing 020 7878 2314

www.bbcarielads.com

#### Printing

Garnett Dickinson Group

Rotherham 01709 768000

#### Subscribe to Ariel

Six months: £26, £36, £40

Twelve months: £50, £60, £68

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

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

#### INFORMATION IN AN EMERGENCY

Telephone 0800 0688 159

Ceefax Page 159 www.bbc.co.uk/159

Ariel is produced by Internal

Communications for people at the BBC



PLEASE RECYCLE YOUR COPY OF ARIEL



## NEED TO KNOW THE WEEK'S ESSENTIALS

# Top-slicing is 'the wrong answer'

◆ **FRESH FROM ITS BATTERING** by culture secretary Ben Bradshaw, the BBC Trust last week published its submission to the government's Digital Britain consultation on funding options for national, regional and local news.

Once again it set out its opposition to the proposal to top-slice the licence fee to finance independent news consortia in the regions, and says it is 'not too late' to consider other solutions.

These include using the 'spectrum tax' (the money that will be generated from freeing up the broadcast spectrum after 2014) for the benefit of commercial operators, and the BBC sharing its know-how and facilities, to help sustain regional news.

'Top-slicing the licence fee is the wrong answer,' says chairman Michael Lyons in the submission. 'It would undermine the BBC's independence and its direct accountability to licence fee payers, it would risk turning the licence fee into general taxation and we do not believe any ring-fenced amount could be contained.'

Reiterating the trust's position on what should happen to any licence fee money that is not needed for digital switchover, Lyons says it intends to 'hand this back to the government and believes they should pass it back to the public...in the form of a reduction in the future licence fee'.

◆ **THE TRUST'S SUBMISSION** on Digital Britain was published three days after MPs accused it of arrogance over BBC Worldwide's activities. The commercial arm's purchase of the Lonely Planet travel guide business was 'the most egregious example of the nature of BBC Worldwide's expansion into areas where the BBC has no, or very limited existing interest,' according to a culture, media and sport committee report.

'Had the BBC Trust been a more responsible oversight body, it would have given more serious consideration to the likely impact on the



commercial sector.'

The committee of MPs, chaired by Tory John Whittingdale, believes the BBC was 'certainly not as transparent as it claims' over disclosing financial details of the Lonely Planet acquisition.

The criticisms did not take into account new tighter controls over the governance of Worldwide announced last week. The trust has said its own ongoing review of BBC Worldwide – including into the company's remit – cannot conclude until uncertainty around the outcomes of the government's Digital Britain report and negotiations about a possible joint venture between Worldwide and Channel 4 are resolved.

'We are committed to ensuring licence fee payers get a good return on their investment,' it says, 'while being mindful of the BBC's impact on the wider market...'

## SWAMPED BY THE VOLUNTEERING SPIRIT



by Sally Hillier

**A GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS** swapped the Television Centre newsroom for, well, a swamp last week when they spent a day clearing a stretch of the River Wandle at National Trust property Morden House, in Surrey. The river runs through Croydon and into the Thames and is in danger of flooding due to a build-up of plant life.

'We were pulling out pennywort, an invasive species that clogs up the water, and nettles,' explains broadcast journalist James Ingham who organised the clear-up.

'We were lucky to have fantastic weather – warm and sunny all day. Had it been cold and pouring with rain I don't think we would have done it with quite such good humour.'

'It was hard, physical graft – not quite what we are used to – but at least we didn't get wet, thanks to some very effective waders.'

The clear-up was organised through Connect and Create, a BBC scheme enabling staff to gain new skills by volunteering. Connect and Create is part of the BBC Academy, and projects run across the UK throughout the year. Visit [explore.gateway.bbc.co.uk/connectandcreate//](http://explore.gateway.bbc.co.uk/connectandcreate//)

## NEWS BITES

**MORE THAN** 100 viewers complained about Andrew Marr's questioning of Gordon Brown on his BBC One show on Sunday. Marr asked the prime minister about his eyesight and whether he was using prescription medication. Defending Marr, the BBC said: 'He was asking a legitimate question about the health of the leader of the country.'

**THE CONTROVERSIAL** appearance on *Question Time* of the BNP's Nick Griffin has been confirmed for October 22 in a programme to be recorded in London. Jack Straw will appear for Labour amid a continued split in the party over appearing alongside the BNP. The other panellists are yet to be named.

**ROBBIE WILLIAMS** will open the BBC's Electric Proms at the Roundhouse in Camden, London on October 20. It will be his first full length concert in the UK. Shirley Bassey, Dizzee Rascal and Smokey Robinson are also in the line-up.

**RADIO SHEFFIELD** and The Children's Hospital, Sheffield have joined forces to raise £500,000 over the next six months to buy a new CT scanner to replace the hospital's current machine which is more than seven years old. The appeal was launched on *Bigger At Breakfast* with Toby Foster.

**FOREIGN SECRETARY** David Miliband, Rabbi Julia Neuberger, child development expert Tanya Byron and former London mayor Ken Livingstone will be among the contributors at Radio 3's Free Thinking festival, which starts in Gateshead on October 23.

**BBC WORLDWIDE** has won the contribution to employee volunteering award for its work with the Jack Tizard school for children with special needs. In the same awards, given by Hammersmith and Fulham Council, BBC Outreach won gold for 'outstanding contribution to education', for its schemes for schools and colleges, from tours of TVC to media workshops.

**IN A** bid to reduce the number of cups thrown away, staff can get a 10p discount on all hot drinks bought from BBC catering outlets in London, Glasgow and the English regions when they take a travel mug to use instead of cardboard cup.

**BBC GUERNSEY** opened its doors on Saturday when islanders took 30-minute guided tours showing how the radio, tv and online operations work.

**THE BBC** Pension Scheme has won the professional pensions best pensioner communication award. In particular it was praised for its dedicated helpline; its website; its volunteer visiting scheme; Prospero (newspaper) and MyDeals for pensioners.

**DUE TO** the closure of 35 Marylebone High Street, from October 5 shuttle buses will no longer stop there. An additional stop will be made at 180 Great Portland Street.

**DO YOU** work in news and speak, read or write Arabic? The World Service is keen to find out how many BBC journalists know Arabic outside of Bush House. Email Elise Wicker.



# Godwin and Nassé to lead teams to new Salford base

by Sally Hillier

The Salford story continues with two more high profile appointments in divisions that are scheduled to move.

As the new director of BBC children's, Joe Godwin will be responsible for all aspects of CBeebies and CBBC and in 2011 will lead them to their new northern base.

Currently head of news, factual and entertainment for children's, he is expected to take up his new role in November, succeeding Richard Deverell who has been made chief operating officer, BBC North. He is looking forward, he says, to returning to Manchester, where he attended university.

CBBC controller Damian Kavanagh and Michael Carrington, controller of CBeebies, will look after the content on their channels and websites and will report to Godwin.

Saul Nassé's new job, meanwhile, will mean a change not just of city – but of continents. He is to be the new controller of Salford-bound BBC learning, replacing Liz Cleaver, who is soon to step down.



Joe Godwin



Saul Nassé

Currently working in Mumbai, where he has been general manager and creative head of BBC Worldwide productions India since 2007, Nassé will take up his new job in January.

He will be responsible for the BBC's formal learning content, including Bitesize, as well as for commissioning knowledge tv programmes, online learning content, and campaigns like Headroom and Breathing Places.

Former jobs included editing the acclaimed India and Pakistan season in 2007,

working as head of development for specialist factual in 2006, and building the BBC's relationship with the Discovery Channel.

In 2005, he was acting head of the Manchester-based religion and ethics department, and is delighted at the prospect of returning to the north west. '[Salford] offers a great chance to reinvent the way we work and build new partnerships,' he says.

Godwin has spent the past 20 years working in children's media – both inside and outside the BBC, including five years at Nickelodeon – and at the moment is responsible for programmes such as *Newsround*, *Blue Peter*, *Serious*, *TMI* and *The Slammer*.

As director he will lead one of the corporation's most important output areas – one that is to receive an extra £25m over the next three years (see Page 4).

'Children's services are the cornerstone of the BBC and Joe Godwin's 20 years of experience make him the ideal candidate to build on [that] reputation and lead the team to its new home,' says Jana Bennett, director of vision.



Visit: Breakfast's Richard Westcott with nurse Kelly Parslow, liaison officer Mark Sutcliffe and Midlands Today cameraman Craig Giddins

## BBC team 'humbled' by day in hospital

News broadcast for 13 hours last Wednesday from the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine at Birmingham's Selly Oak Hospital, providing live reports for the News Channel, *BBC Breakfast*, *BBC World*, 5 live, 1Xtra, BBC WM and *Midlands Today*.

It was the first time live cameras had been allowed on the wards, currently treating more than 30 injured military personnel who have been flown back to the UK from the field hospital in Afghanistan.

The BBC had exclusive access to the critical care ward and the military managed trauma ward. 'It was a fascinating but humbling experience spending the day with the NHS and MOD doctors and nurses,' says producer Liz Cave.

The special was pegged to the BBC One documentary *Wounded*, broadcast that evening, which followed the treatment and rehabilitation of two young soldiers who returned from Afghanistan with horrific injuries.

The harrowing programme, shown in two parts either side of the *Ten O'Clock News*, was widely praised. It generated an audience of 3.7 million and an extremely high AI (appreciation index) of 93.

## Wildlife resource is 'jewel in crown'

The natural history unit has launched Wildlife Finder, a new resource that allows users to search archive material from three decades.

Speaking at the Vision forum (see pages 4-5) George Entwistle, controller of knowledge commissioning, described the site as 'the jewel in the crown' of the NHU's multiplatform offering. Currently, users can stream 500 clips of animals, plants and habitats but it is estimated that after six months nearly 2000 clips will be accessible.

Wildlife Finders accompanies the recently launched Earth News site which on average attracts 200-250,000 unique users every week.

Another site, Earth Explorers, formerly known as Out of the Wild, gives an insight into the progress of the 17 production teams out filming NHU programmes at any one time.

Speaking of the NHU's commitment to multiplatform, its new head Andrew Jackson, said: 'It makes everything we do relevant. The many stories that we can't fit into a programme can go online.'

Rattled: Rocco (Martin Collins) and Brooks (Spencer Jones)



## Baby, just look what's under the bonnet

**Big Babies**, a comedy featuring babies with the heads of grown men, is one of the highlights of CBBC's winter/spring schedule.

The line-up also includes *Spirit Warriors*, a mix of live-action and martial arts fantasy, as well as two one-off *Newsround* specials – one on bullying and the

other on the dangers of the internet.

CBBC controller Damian Kavanagh also revealed that next summer Gareth Malone, star of BBC Two's *The Choir*, will teach children how to perform in a new series while Johnny Vegas will hunt evil puppets in *The Dead Puppets Society* set for 2011.

## New awards to honour radio's unsung heroes

The Radio Academy and the Radio Independents Group (RIG) have launched the Radio Production Awards, to be presented in February.

Whereas the Sony Radio Academy Awards recognise programmes, stations and broadcasters, the RPAs will honour the achievement of individual

producers and production companies. Categories include: best factual producer, entertainment producer, music entertainment producer, online producer, drama producer, newcomer, and lifetime achievement.

The awards will be open to all UK-based radio and audio producers including independents,

freelances and programme-makers working in BBC, commercial, community, student and hospital radio. Entries will be welcomed as well from audio producers working primarily in the digital sector on output for commercial or not-for-profit audio streams and podcasts.

Gillian Reynolds, the radio

critic and first person to be made a fellow of the Radio Academy, will chair the panel of judges.

'The RPAs will celebrate the work of some of the unsung heroes of British radio. The judges will be looking for flair, innovation and creativity,' says Trevor Dann, chief executive of the Radio Academy.



# Time to fight the BBC corner

◆ **SHE OPENED WITH** news of more money for children's and BBC Two drama, and closed by asking everyone inside the BBC to raise their game in fighting the BBC's corner.

In between, Jana Bennett assured people at the second BBC Vision forum that there was 'no hit list' for the new strategic review she is helping to lead. And she chatted to Bruce Forsyth about *Strictly Come Dancing*. He thought Alesha was getting a raw deal in the press. *Strictly* should have always been in primetime and – great show that it was, 'the hype has been too much'.

After a decade of concentrating drama funding on BBC One, BBC Two's drama budget is to be boosted by more than half, creating what Bennett hoped would be 'the next generation of television classics' – less box-set blockbusters than worthy successors to *Boys From The Blackstuff*, *This Life*, *Our Friends in the North*,

*House of Saddam*. First out will be Marion and Geoff writer Hugo Blick's six-part murder drama *The Shadow Line*. BBC Films would also get a higher profile on the channel.

An extra £25m for children's, again over three years, was in response to BBC Trust recommendations that Vision strengthen its role as the cornerstone of UK children's output. But financial pressures on commercial broadcasters made that investment – subject to approval by the trust – more vital than ever, Bennett said.

Another priority would be to take multiplatform integration to the next level: 'Vision needs to feel more like an integrated multimedia outfit. And to put it bluntly, at the moment it doesn't – quite,' she told Vision colleagues, the indie producers and other external guests at TV Centre. Bennett announced a new multiplatform founda-

**'Step up our advocacy but don't slip into arrogance or blind conviction'**

tion course to train people in production to enhance their own programme websites.

On the innovation front, there would be four new Vision bursaries a year, enabling producers and APs to step out of day jobs to work on experimental pilots.

Interviewed on another forum platform by Evan Davis, Mark Thompson was quizzed on the recent barrage of criticism about the BBC's scale and ambition. Thompson argued that it would be naive to make concessions to critics that

amounted to 'a pre-emptive cringe'.

Bold concessions would only whet the appetite of those who believed the BBC shouldn't exist at all, he said. Far better to engage energetically in the debate and defend the organisation.

Bennett agreed. If the BBC felt under siege from without, the Vision forum was a chance to 'regroup'. Her message was that everyone working at the BBC needed to be better advocates for it: 'We need to step up our advocacy but not slip into arrogance or blind conviction.'

Hadn't the *Strictly* v *X-Factor* scheduling clash been a slip up, Bennett was asked. 'We can't stretch peak time,' Bennett argued. 'Unlike seven or eight years ago, we now have great [Saturday night] entertainment on two channels...and the debate is happening as if we only had two channels to watch.'

**Strictly fallout: page 10**



The forum was a 'chance to regroup', Jana Bennett tells Andrew Marr

◆ **'I WAS VERY un-keen about my character having another baby,'** Nina Wadia, *EastEnders*' matriarch Zainab Masood tells BBC Three controller Danny Cohen. The actress had just had her own second child and 'wanted to come to work to have fun'. The lighter side of life will always have a place in Albert Square, alongside gritty realism and occasional 'gothic' storylines, said exec producer Diederick Santer. A priority is to keep the lid on the 'big reveal' that will be the climax of the live 25th anniversary episode on February 19. 'Six people know, and that's how it will stay for a very long time,' an optimistic Santer told the forum.



## A big, brilliant new hit to put Salford on the map

◆ **WHAT TELEVISION CENTRE** was to the tv age, MediaCity-UK will be for the interactive age, declared a newly bearded Peter Salmon, paddling gamely, on video, down the Manchester ship canal.

That meant BBC North would be a 'sexy, big, new, exciting place to work', its director told the mixed London/Manchester forum audience, and a 'badge of honour' for anyone already excited by new technology.

It would also be where the BBC would 'rewrite the rules of how we work with indies' in a much more joined up way, confirmed Richard Deverell, children's controller and BBC North CEO.

Cue forum panelist Alex Connock, Ten Alps chief exec and massive fan of Manchester, the BBC move to Salford

and the internet. The BBC's relationship with the independent sector had already improved and the Wocc (window of creative competition) was working well, 'but there's no comparable commissioning system for online – you can't bring an online brand to the BBC'. Could MediaCityUK give birth to an online Wocc?

Better access to commissioners was needed, Deverell agreed. But BBC North and

**'It won't be like Television Centre, behind barbed wire'**

**RICHARD DEVERELL**

the whole Salford environment would be more open, he said: 'We'll be using 30 percent of the office space and 40 percent of the studios. [Developers] Peel have to attract other tenants. It won't be like TV Centre, behind barbed wire.'

Both he and fellow panelist Helen Bullough, head of Vision production North, also promised more flexible career paths. 'People will learn more, and more quickly at BBC North. We'll bring down the silos,' Deverell said.

And the proof of the pudding? 'A brilliant, break-out new hit,' suggested Connock. 'Not an iteration of a brand, but a new paradigm...something that defines the BBC in Manchester the way Google defines Silicon Valley.'

No pressure there then.

## CHARGE FOR IPLAYER

◆ **THE BBC WAS QUICK** to react to Lorraine Heggessy's big TV forum idea that licence-free payers should be charged 'micro-payments' to use the iPlayer. The Talkback Thames chief exec and former BBC One controller understood why programme-makers' budgets had been cut to fund the iPlayer's development. But she questioned the decision that it should cost users in the UK nothing. Research carried out by her company suggested people would be willing to pay up to £2 for certain shows. The BBC said there were no such plans: 'The cost of the iPlayer is covered by the licence fee, so UK users have already paid for this service.'

Writer and broadcaster Steve Hewlett later joined the debate, advocating a payment model for iPlayer similar to the one used by iTunes and Amazon. 'The technology now exists that can make payment straightforward,' he told BBC News. 'At iTunes prices, I would pay,' said the presenter of Radio 4's *The Media Show*. 'The BBC never thought it was appropriate to give away DVDs, so why should catch-up TV be free?'



## It's cool to tweet, but only if you handle with care

◆ **ADDING SOCIAL** networking to a project doesn't automatically make it cool – number one on the list of Roo Reynolds's Five Things You Need to Know about Social Media.

Vision's 'portfolio' exec, social media, was at pains to point out that though Twitter, Facebook and the like may be the hot new thing, programme makers should still approach with caution.

Similarly, starting up a blog or sending out the odd tweet will not suddenly gain you an audience – it takes time and effort to build an online presence.

'If you build it then look after it,' he said. 'Don't throw yourself all over the place and not be in a position to resource it properly.'

Reynolds is keen to follow the Trust's 2008 recommendation to [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) that more can be done to 'meet the public's growing expectation of open dialogue,' hence his advice that it is 'okay to join in the conversation' with online audiences.

But he counselled against using a bland 'voice of the BBC' style when interacting. Communications shouldn't be anonymous but come from an individual.

BBC Three's *Being Human* was cited as a prime example of a programme working well online. Its regularly updated video blog (shot by the production team) was 'one of the most popular blogs to come out of Vision'.

The *Apprentice* received praise for its Live Predictor online game that worked alongside the broadcast show. Reynolds revealed a fleeting image of something similar currently in development for *Strictly Come Dancing*, and advised the audience to keep an eye out for it over the next few weeks.



◆ **IRAQ DRAMA OCCUPATION** wasn't *Generation Kill* – which cost 20 times as much – but a tight budget meant more focus on characters, like the lead played by James Nesbitt (right), in a forum conversation with Alan Yentob.

## Four is most loved channel

◆ **RICHARD KLEIN**, controller of BBC Four, robustly defended his channel against interviewer Steve Hewlett's suggestion that it could be on the list of services to close as the BBC looks at the scale of its activity. 'We're the most loved channel,' he said, 'our AIs are higher than any other.' Klein also admitted he would like 'a bit more breakout' from other channels – more switch-over moments, to attract audiences off the back of programmes on BBC One and Two. He pointed to success on iPlayer, which can make up a quarter of Four's audiences, to prove that there was 'something for everyone' on the channel, if 'maybe not all the time'.

## I want scale and impact

◆ **'IN CONVERSATION** with Janice Hadlow, Aaqil Ahmed gave a taste of what to expect from the BBC's first Muslim head of religion.

In a country with almost 2.5m practising Muslims, there was a debate to be had about the balance of religious festival coverage, he said. But he also promised 'a much improved Christmas' and 'one of the most Christian Easters for a long time'.

The former Channel 4 religion commissioner cites BBC Two's *The Monastery* and BBC Three's *The Manchester Passion* as output with the kind of 'impact, scale and noise' he wants to achieve.

How much would his own faith affect his choices? 'I've never traded on being a Muslim and I'm not going to start now,' he said. As the child of Muslim refugees he had always been 'an outsider', he said, with a more open outlook on life.



Aaqil Ahmed: 'outsider' with an open mind

## WHAT THEY SAID



**'PRODUCERS FEEL** demoralised and frightened [by the new compliance rules].'

**Audio & Music trainer** on the stricter approach to taste and standards

**'WELL THEY** shouldn't feel like that ... unless they're making terrible programmes.'

**Alan Yentob**, creative director who chaired the BBC's review of taste and standards after 'Sachsgate'

**ONE OF** the most important things [in Salford] is to have completely embedded teams, including software designers and content producers. That's not working properly across the BBC. We need to challenge some of our preconceptions. Some of the best ideas ever come from software engineers.'

**Richard Deverell**, chief operating officer, BBC North

**'THIS ISN'T** a press release, it's the transparent and authentic voice of senior staff in Vision and why they make the choices they make.'

**Roo Reynolds**, Vision's portfolio exec, social media, on the upcoming Vision blog, due to be launched by the end of the year

**'I WATCHED** my first episode of *EastEnders* with my mum when I was 15. Ian Beale and I grew up together. We have worrying amounts in common.'

**Diederick Santer**, *EastEnders* executive producer

**'WE SHOULD** celebrate Manchester. We have sushi, broadband, Audis and Premiership matches, and in terms of lifestyle, Manchester knocks London for six. I can climb a mountain at the end of a working day.'

**Alex Connock**, Manchester-based CEO of Ten Alps

**'THE BOAT'S** sailed. We've been in multiplatform for more than a decade... but now we're not ahead of the audience. The idea that we can roll back history is totally negative, and the way we're funded means we have to be where the audience is.'

**Jana Bennett**, answering Andrew Marr's suggestion that the BBC should pull back from everything except traditional broadcasting

**'LOOK, I'M** wearing my success glasses.'

**Michael McIntyre**, (above) expounding his theory that to get on in television, you have to wear rectangular black-framed spectacles



## Gandhi the hero? Not to everyone

**MAHATMA GANDHI: FATHER OF THE NATION;** holy man who stood up to the British Empire through a radical campaign of non-violence; a vegetarian former barrister who inspired civil rights and freedom across the world.

At least that is how many people think of him. But for news presenter Mishal Husain, the picture is more subtle and, as she explains in a new BBC Two series, he was not universally loved. 'My grandparents were quite sceptical of Gandhi,' she says. 'They saw him as a leader for Hindus, not a leader for all India. I grew up with that and it has informed my own view.'

Her grandparents – Muslims who left the country in 1947 at the time of Partition – were followers of Gandhi's great rival Jinnah, generally regarded as the founder of Pakistan. 'They were inspired by Jinnah, and were not believers in Gandhi's political message. That was my starting point.'

Husain made four trips to India and one to South Africa where she set out to challenge the idealised images of Gandhi.

'He is very much someone who has been deified,' she notes. 'It almost prevents us learning from him because he's regarded as unassailable. Even people who are great heroes should be looked at in an objective way.'

She admits that the series shifted her perspective. 'I learnt a lot about his actions at the time of Partition, which I didn't know because my grandparents left before the violence in 1947. I learnt how many Muslim lives he saved in that time, which was very moving for me.'

'We followed the route of the Dandi Salt March, the defining campaign of his life, and met people who had seen him pass by when they were small children. It was a journey in his footsteps – and a journey of discovery.'

Sadly her grandparents will not see her journey. Her grandfather is dead and her grandmother would not be able to follow the programme, but Husain has spoken to other members of her family and gleaned how they feel about Gandhi.

And her own perspective? 'I always admired his personal energy and stamina,' she says cautiously. 'You can't help but respect that.'

**Gandhi starts October 3 on BBC Two**



## Straight to the point

Known in the USA:  
Matt Frei



PHOTOGRAPH: JEFF OVERS

The US-facing newscast, which launched two years ago, is growing in popularity and making a celebrity of its very British presenter, as Steve Hawkes discovers

**NOT MANY BBC NEWS** presenters can stop the traffic in star-studded west Hollywood – but after two years of fronting a one-hour primetime show five nights a week, *World News America*'s Matt Frei is having to come to terms with that sort of celebrity status.

'The first time I saw my face on the side of a five-storey building, I just stopped and stared,' he recalls with amusement.

As he gaped open-mouthed at a giant billboard image of himself, a car came screeching to a stop at the corner of the street. Two American teenagers were hanging out of the back window, pointing in turns at the real Frei and his considerably larger-than-life publicity shot. 'I was looking very serious in the poster, but when I saw the kids, I laughed...at which the youngest shouted gleefully, 'look, Mom – it smiles!'

Frei was in Los Angeles to promote *World News America*, the BBC's first and only US-facing newscast, which celebrates two years on air on October 1. Watched by three million Americans each month, the programme, broadcast from Washington DC, has seen its nightly figures rise 70 percent in a year.

For Frei that means more unscheduled encounters with the great American public. 'You need to do a lot of publicity in America,' he says. 'It's a large media landscape and very competitive.'

### Colonial outpost

He may be the public face of the BBC to the American in the street, but Frei steadfastly refuses to assimilate. When the programme launched, one US tv critic wrote in his column: 'If BBC World News America is intended to be world news for an American audience, why does the very British staff refer to 'America' as if it were a distant colonial outpost?'

Frei – that 'very British staff' – is unapologetic. 'It would be stupid to try to turn my-

self into a typical marzipan-haired, moustachioed American anchorman,' he says. 'I want to retain my distinctive voice. I look different and I sound different. I don't use American terms – I don't stand in line, I queue – and the Americans are just going to have to get used to it.'

The correspondent who began his BBC career at the German language service, writing opera reviews for listeners behind the Iron Curtain, hosts BBC America on BBC World News and the BBC News channel while making regular appearances as a guest on rival US news networks CNN and MSNBC. He's also presenting Radio 4's weekly magazine programme *Americana*, which controller Mark Damazer is hoping will be the natural successor to the late Alistair Cooke's *Letter From America*.

His position in the large, media landscape of the US was confirmed last week



**'It would be stupid to try to turn myself into a typical marzipan-haired, moustachioed American anchorman'**

when he was chosen for the second year running to present at the news and documentary Emmy awards in New York.

*World News America* was nominated in three of what exec producer Rome Hartman calls the 'marquee' [top] categories: best story, most outstanding feature and coverage of breaking news in a regularly scheduled newscast. Up against the likes of CNN and Fox, the show walked away empty handed, a fact that doesn't phase its exec: 'I'd trade five Emmys for one Peabody,' Hartman says, pointing out that *World News America* won a prestigious Peabody broadcasting award in its first year.

### Bush exclusive

Apart from being divided by a common language, Frei and his fellow anchormen/presenters in the US also differ in their interview technique. Journalists in the UK tend to be less deferential, he explains. 'We're not overly polite – we get straight to the point.'

One *World News America* interview required a slightly lighter touch, though – an exclusive, last year, with president George W Bush. 'You can't be quite as rude to the president as you could to the prime minister,' Frei says. 'You can ask tough questions – you can be as cruel as you like – but you can't interrupt him and you definitely can't shout at him. He's like a cross between the prime minister and the Queen.'

And Frei's charm offensive obviously worked, as the president happily provided his interrogator with all the face time required for his interview – and more.

'He didn't want to let me go – he seemed to have so much time on his hands. In the end I had to say to him, 'Mr President, I know you've got two wars to win and need to pack your bags for your forthcoming tour of Africa – but I have a blog to write.'



# Staring death in the face

PHOTOGRAPHS: MARK BASSETT

Spooky or what? Dan Cruickshank examines his life/death mask, cast by sculptor Jamie McCartney

Dan Cruickshank was unnerved to read his own obituary while making a BBC Four programme

by Sue Llewellyn

**ART AND ARCHITECTURAL** historian Dan Cruickshank says you would have to be 'insane' to want to confront your own death, but that's exactly what he did for a new BBC Four programme, *The Art of Dying*.

In this intimate and moving film, co-produced by the Open University, Cruickshank explores whether art might offer any help or comfort for people when dealing with death and he also comes face to face with his own mortality by reading his own obituary. 'I wasn't quite prepared for seeing a piece of paper with the BBC logo on it saying Obituary: Dan Cruickshank,' he says. 'It was shocking and some bits are really quite painful.'

Producer Matt Hill explains how it happened: 'During the programme we were looking at memorials and Dan said he didn't want one and that his work should be his memorial. So we wondered how we could test this and called the obits department for some advice.'

Nick Serpell, who runs what he calls the 'Dead Centre' of the BBC, takes up the story: 'We were chatting about death, as you

do, and I found myself offering to write an obit for Dan and to show it to him. We'd never done anything like that and nobody has ever asked to see them,' he continued. 'Although we've got 300 tv and 500 online and radio obits prepared we didn't have one for Dan so I did some research and laid it out exactly as it would look online. He was quite emotional about it when I showed it to him.'

Cruickshank continues: 'You somehow imagine that what you've done is of some significance, but of course it's a rude awakening when your life has been objectively assessed and you realise that it didn't amount to much. A few books, a daughter, a few buildings that may have been saved and a tv programme. It reminds me how transitory life is.'

Matt Hill is full of admiration. 'Dan deserves a lot of praise for facing up to his own mortality and putting himself through a pretty harrowing experience. He was really quite unnerved by the whole thing and there were definitely a few drinks afterwards to calm the nerves.'

**The Art of Dying, BBC Four, September 30**

## DEATHS THAT PASS ACID TEST

**Asked if the obituary unit ever gets caught out by unexpected deaths such as that of Michael Jackson, Nick Serpell says:**

*'No, we didn't get caught out on Jackson. We'd done his obit because a couple of years ago I thought there was no way he was going to get old.'*

**So how is it decided whose obituaries are prepared?** *'I get calls from people who ask if I know so-and-so isn't very well and I look at the birthday pages to see how old people are. My acid test is 'will people be talking about that death at the pub tonight?' If that's the case we, as the BBC, ought to do them. I think we're the only broadcaster with an obit unit that does stuff in advance. We try to do people our viewers, listeners and online readers would expect us to do.'*

## JUST GROAN AND SPIT OUT THE BLOOD...

by Peggy Walker

**SHARP-EYED VIEWERS** of *Holby City* might have spotted a familiar face in a recent episode. It was Claire Jennings, head of access technology and usability strategy in FM&T, who was cast in the drama as a blind, vomiting drug taker.

'I played a blind woman who tried to regain her sight by taking magic mushrooms,' Claire explains. 'She thought she would hallucinate and be able to see again but took too many and made herself very sick.'

Claire lost her sight gradually as a child, and has been totally blind since she was 14. Her agent, who only has disabled clients on her

books, helped her get the part.

Filming took place at Elstree Studios. 'I was surprised how much hard work it was,' she admits. 'They needed me for four 12 hour days so they could film it from different angles and with different lenses. I loved it, though. It's easy for casting teams to bring in sighted actors, so I think it's quite brave of *Holby City* to go with disabled actors as often as they do.'

Most of Claire's days were filled by pretending to sick up blood – a smoothie drink with red dye mixed in with it. 'I had to hold it in my mouth until I was given my cue, then I groaned and had to spit it out. It tasted fine, though.'

Claire has aspirations to act full time, but remains committed to her role in FM&T, where her job is to make sure that all the internal technology systems work for other disabled members of staff. (Her own emails pop up the same way they do for all staff, but are then read out to her by an electronic voice.)

'I think that the work I do is important for the BBC,' she says.

She began her BBC career as a weekend presenter at BBC Essex but became frustrated by the introduction of a new editing system. 'I just couldn't use it,' she says, 'so my current role was partly created thanks to that experience – to make sure things like that didn't happen again.'



Bedside manner: Claire Jennings with fellow *Holby* actor JD Keleher



## TRADE SECRETS

## GET COMPLIANT

**Paul Smith, head of editorial standards for Audio and Music, on why context matters**



**Risk management: Remember Ross and Brand**

**1** Know who your programme is aimed at and what they expect from it. Remember, your core target audience may not be the only people viewing or listening to your programme – there may be sizeable secondary audiences who have different expectations. Radio breakfast shows often have more children listening than normal because they coincide with the school run.

**2** Don't assume you can't do something. Come up with the best idea you can without self censoring as there might be a way to make it happen. I struggle to think of a programme idea that has not gone ahead because of compliance issues.

**3** Context is everything. The programme's place in the schedule, the genre and channel can all determine what you can and can't do. A show shown late at night for a specialist audience could contain material that wouldn't be acceptable elsewhere in the schedule.

**4** If you're not sure about something refer it, ask experts and discuss with colleagues.

**5** Where there are strict processes (eg competitions) or referrals (eg secret recordings) know what they are, fill in the form, and stick to the process. Also make sure you keep the documentation.

**6** Make sure you can explain why you are doing something. If you can't do this think again about your editorial justification for the content. On the whole, the rules have not changed but the scrutiny levels have increased massively.

**7** Think about the risks involved in the programme. What are you doing to mitigate them? Do you need to give the audience more information or guidance such as a warning before it starts?

**8** Quality makes a difference. Interestingly, the audience will give you more space to explore difficult

areas or include stronger content if the programme is well made and they understand what it is trying to achieve. Sometimes a programme has to earn the right over a period of time to take the biggest risks. The recent taste and standards research showed audiences are remarkably sophisticated, and don't mind strong content if there is a good reason to include it.

**9** Have a working knowledge of the editorial guidelines. You are contractually obliged to work within them.

**10** Read and understand the values of the BBC (they are on the back of most ID cards).



## BBC IN ACTION



PHOTOGRAPH MARK BASSETT

Blast's fashion manager Olaf Parker helps designer Laura Sallsbury put the finishing touches to a model's outfit during London Fashion Week. The BBC's creative network hosted its own catwalk event last

week showcasing the work of ten teens who, with Parker's help, created their own fashion label, 1.WO/MAN. The design team and models all applied for the chance to get involved in the project on the Blast website while a sepa-

rate competition was held to find eight T-shirt designs that will be sold on the site to raise money for Children in Need. 'We had lots of last minute emergencies, including one model about to step onto the catwalk

with her outfit on inside out, but it was all part of the excitement,' explains Parker. 'I'm working on a slightly different format next year which will allow even more people to share in the design experience.' [bbc.co.uk/blast](http://bbc.co.uk/blast)

## CHANGING PLACES

**CHRIS MASON** (pictured), Europe correspondent for nations and regions based in Brussels, becomes 5 live's political reporter... Special assistant editor in news, **SALLY FREESTONE**, becomes W1 migration manager... 1Xtra breakfast show producer **JULIE SHEPHERD** moves to present Westwood's drivetime show at the station... *South East Today* presenter **BEVERLEY THOMPSON** leaves the BBC. **POLLY SMITH** and **ROB EVANS** now present the evening regional news programme... **SAM SMITH**, head of research for tv, becomes

head of audience services and operations in brand and planning.



## COMING UP

◆ A final series of **ASHES TO ASHES** has been commissioned for BBC One by channel controller Jay Hunt and controller of drama commissioning Ben Stephenson. Pencilled in for 2010 the series will follow DI Alex Drake as she continues her quest to find out why she is back in the 1980s. It will be exec produced by Piers Wenger.

◆ CBeebies will explore different religious and cultural festivals in **LET'S CELEBRATE**. The 15x15 minute series was commissioned by controller Michael Carrington and will tx next year. Made in house, it will be exec produced by Alison Stewart.

◆ Controller of BBC Two Janice Hadlow and commissioning editor for independents Mark Bell have commissioned **HISTORY COLD CASE** for the channel. Each of the 4x60 minute episodes will focus on a corpse from a different era of history and work out how they would have lived. Made by Shine TV and exec produced by Cassian Harrison, the series is expected to go out next year.



## SHAMELESS PLUG



Electric friends: Steve Scott (front) with singer Chris Fosh

## ◆ STEVE SCOTT, DUTY OPERATIONS MANAGER, BUSH HOUSE

In my experience as a guitarist, band practice and shift work don't mix, unless a last minute rehearsal for a staff Christmas party is called for. Instead I figured I'd be better suited to a studio project, so with singer/writer Chris Fosh we started Electro Voice Project which fuses deep, rich, spoken vocals with guitar-synth electro. We recorded demo tracks in my flat using a cupboard as a vocal booth and posted the results on MySpace. Somehow we managed to get a guest performance at Ronnie Scott's jazz club and after that I set up EVP Recordings. Thanks to 'mates' rates, favours, and a graphic designer wanting payment in aftershave, The EVP EP is now available on iTunes. Track previews and a professionally directed video can also be found at [myspace.com/electrovoice-project](http://myspace.com/electrovoice-project).

## WHAT TO WEAR

## ◆ IAIN STIRLING, CBBC PRESENTER, TVC

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

Top from Adidas; 'Lyle and Scot' t-shirt from Urban Outfitters; jeans from Levi; trainers from Office.

**Do you need to dress a particular way for work?** Just stuff I'm comfortable in. Although we get a clothing budget and a

stylist. The money I would make in a month as a student, I spent in two hours on Oxford Street.

**Are you experimental in your style?** I think I play it relatively safe but if I ever wanted a dodgy shirt I can always ask my flat mate as he has quite a few.

**Have you had any fashion nightmares?** When I was young my Mum used to knit me jumpers including a 'Postman Pat' one that was a total shocker.

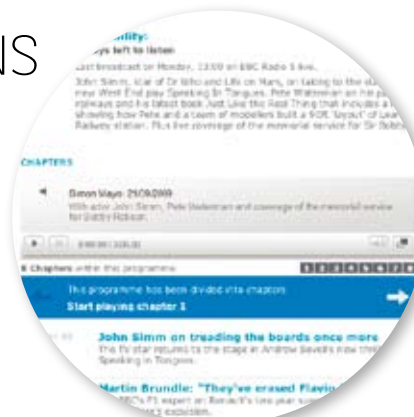
**Whose wardrobe would you most like to rummage through?** I quite like Pharrell Williams's style.



PHOTOGRAPH MARK BASSETT

## SPEECH PATTERNS

**CHAPTERISATION...** It's early days, but Audio and Music is pioneering 'chapters' on on demand programmes. These will let users navigate within programmes, help them link to interesting moments, and ultimately mean that users will be able to find all items the BBC has on a subject. 5 live is testing chapters on its new website. [bbc.co.uk/5live](http://bbc.co.uk/5live)



## blogbites

What we found on the blogs this week

## Red herrings

Right: let's have another stab at this. How many houses in Wales would the new million pound tax affect, given the plan is to work from land registry values – in other words what you paid for your house all those years ago, not what it might be worth now? Not many noughts, I ventured. Around 100? One nought, said my colleague. The answer is 40. So bringing in the tax in Wales would raise very little but we'd get a lot out. We have a disproportionate number of people earning a low income and given the money raised from the levy would go towards raising all of those people out of the tax bracket, Wales would be getting rather a lot out of the pot. Good news for Wales, then. End of story.

**Betsan Powys, BBC Wales' political editor**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/betsanpowys/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/betsanpowys/)

## Now the Guardian demands better weather

Most of the time Britain's weather is dull and the clear-voiced experts who read it out do their best to make it interesting. Last week Peter Gibbs, one of the Met Office's regular broadcasters, decided to read out the evening's weather in the slow, routine manner of the shipping forecast – 'East Anglia, southern England, rain at first, heavy at times, dying out overnight, lowest temperature 11 to 13 degrees, tomorrow dry with sunny intervals'. It was a triumph – clear, informative and memorable – and, even if intended as a cheeky, one-off parody, it should herald a quiet reformation of the BBC's forecasts. Listeners, judging by their responses, liked the new factual style. So make it permanent.

**Eddie Maier, presenter**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/ipm/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/ipm/)

## Round Up: Thursday September 24 2009

Autumn is traditionally the time when tv schedulers roll out good news so let's start there. The announcement on the blog that iPlayer favourite *Top Gear* was getting the HD treatment has reverberated around the internet like a souped up Ford Fiesta Titanium. There hasn't been so much buzz since iPlayer got onto the PS3. Part one of the Telegraph's The 50 most influential Britons in technology featured blog contributor and regular commenter Andy Quested at number 42 and the BBC's legendary Brandon Butterworth at 27. What unites these two? Probably two of the coolest job titles imaginable: 'principal technologist, HD' and 'chief scientist, BBC' respectively.

**Paul Murphy, internet blog editor**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbcinternat/](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/bbcinternat/)

## Next week's themes...

It has been an exhausting week, and I'm looking forward to the weekend off. Running the Berlin marathon last Sunday has probably got something to do with my tiredness. I started well and stayed on my target till 35k when the heat took its toll on me. I still managed to finish in under three hours but that was down to great support and a rather stirring bit of Whitney that was blasting out as I ran the stretch.

**Bryan Burnett, Radio Scotland presenter**  
[bbc.co.uk/blogs/bryanburnett/2009/09/next\\_weeks\\_themes\\_92.shtml](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/bryanburnett/2009/09/next_weeks_themes_92.shtml)

**Are you a BBC blogger? Do you have a blog you're proud of? Email Laura Scarrott**



# For a BBC under fire, Strictly is part of the ammunition



Saturday night entertainment shows have gone head to head since The Two Ronnies took on Game for a Laugh, but for some, the Strictly v X Factor clash is more than a media debate – it goes to the heart of what the BBC is for, says Torin Douglas

**'STRICTLY UNDER SIEGE,'** ran one headline last week, above a particularly doom-laden view of the storm that is swirling around the BBC's Saturday night dance show.

'It's a debacle,' wrote Alison Boshoff in the Daily Mail. 'The BBC has taken a successful entertainment show and, by re-scheduling it against ITV's *The X Factor* and tweaking it by sacking a star judge, turned it into a disaster...

'Not only has the [scheduling strategy failed, it has also caused many to question the BBC's status as a public service broadcaster.'

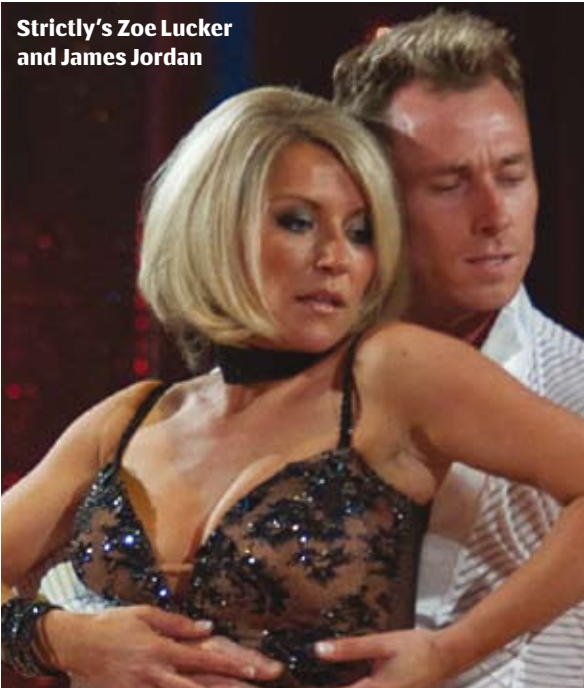
Jana Bennett, the BBC's director of vision, gave the BBC's side of the story in a blog, in which she sought to reassure staff: 'From the perspective of the BBC we shouldn't get too thrown by this media debate... There's been a long tradition of competing entertainment shows on BBC One and ITV on a Saturday night – from Noel vs Cilla; to *The Two Ronnies* up against *Game for a Laugh*.'

## Decision backfired

Indeed there has – but this is now more than a media debate. For some, the question of whether the BBC should compete for audiences on Saturday night goes to the heart of what the BBC is for, and it has taken on particular significance in the current political and economic climate.

With the BBC already under fire from its commercial competitors, the BBC Trust has now sustained a triple salvo from the culture secretary, the shadow culture secretary and the culture select committee. *Strictly* has been part of the ammunition. Jeremy Hunt, the Conservatives' spokesman, told the Royal Television Society Cambridge Convention the decision to schedule the dance show at the same time as *The X Factor* had been extraordinary and would disappoint thousands of licence-payers. He claimed the incident highlighted a problem with the governance of the BBC – and that if people felt angry and disappointed, they ought to be able to complain to an out-

Strictly's Zoe Lucker and James Jordan



Stacey Solomon performs on The X Factor



## 'Some want to make a larger point at the expense of a great show'

JANA BENNETT

side organisation, not a governing body with 'BBC' in its title.

The trust's chairman Michael Lyons rejected that point, but acknowledged the concern about *Strictly*'s scheduling.

He told The Times that in principle the BBC should focus 'on the quality and impact of its programmes, not just audience share' and hinted that he thought the BBC's decision had backfired. Viewers had been 'asked to make a choice between the programmes and that choice didn't go in favour of the BBC'.

## You can watch both shows

Privately, the trust is thought to have been satisfied by executives claiming that it was not easy to avoid a clash at this stage, within the constraints of a Satur-

day schedule moving from family drama to entertainment to sport. And Jana Bennett has defended the decision robustly: 'These two great shows, with loyal fans, have happily co-existed on a Saturday night since they began,' she blogged. 'Indeed, every season the press have excitedly written about the two shows going head to head and whether Bruce or Simon would be crowned king of the living room.'

'The shows have overlapped more than 40 times in the past – and on many occasions for well over an hour. So this is nothing new to either the schedulers, or more importantly, the public. Indeed, this year there is even more choice for viewers with *Strictly* launching on a Friday and Saturday night and *The X Factor* scheduled on a Saturday and Sunday night.'

'The great fact about *Strictly* and *The X-Factor* is both shows are highly popular with the public – nearly 20m viewers tuned in last Saturday. With about 90 percent of homes now with digital television and many of those with digital recorders or broadband, the chances are if you want to watch both shows you can. ITV repeats *The X-Factor* seven times over the week, and *Strictly* is available on iPlayer for seven days from broadcast.'

'So let's not get knocked off

course by people who want to make a larger point about the BBC at the expense of a great show.'

Yet it's not just the scheduling issue that has raised questions about the BBC's public responsibilities. The dropping of 66-year-old Arlene Phillips – to be replaced by the 30-year-old Alesha Dixon – has re-kindled the perennial debate about the lack of older women on tv.

## Age issue won't go away

Many viewers who've bombarded the BBC's messageboards, are more aggravated about the 'Arlene versus Alesha battle' than the scheduling clash. And despite the BBC's denial that the decision was taken on grounds of age – and Arlene's re-emergence on a new BBC dance show – the age issue won't go away.

Last week, it was reported that Mark Thompson had asked the director of news Helen Boaden to find an older woman newsreader, as part of a wider move to ensure the BBC reflects a broad range of backgrounds in its on-screen talent.

Inevitably, the headlines harked back to the 'fury over Arlene'.

• *The X-Factor* outperformed *Strictly* on Saturday by 8.9m to 7.6m viewers.

**Torin Douglas is BBC media correspondent**

arielview



SALLY HILLIER

## Convergence of an odd alliance

**JOAN BAKEWELL AND JEREMY HUNT** – not a great deal in common, you would have thought, yet there they were last week, each on a mission to change things in BBC news.

Bakewell, veteran presenter and now a government adviser on ageism, wants more older women presenting the bulletins while Hunt, shadow culture secretary, thinks the BBC should 'actively look for some Conservatives to be part of its newsgathering team'.

Revealing that she had had talks with both Mark Thompson and Helen Boaden, director of news, Bakewell suggested that she had influenced their thinking on expanding the newsreading pool. But did she? According to the Sunday Telegraph, the dg's inspiration was Selina Scott, who won an age discrimination case against Five, and is well known for her strong views on the lack of older female presenters. 'The pair have been chums,' says the paper, 'since they worked together 25 years ago when Scott anchored *Breakfast-Time* and Thompson was her tea boy.'

Teaboy, eh? Whoever prompted Thompson, it is certainly true that he has spoken to Boaden and other senior execs 'about the need to have a broad range of presenters on air – including older women'.

What he has not done, as has been widely reported, is to give 'a 12 month deadline to recruit a female presenter over 50'. No such cut-off point, nor age stipulation, has been set.

Critics always make much of the fact that female newsreaders are often significantly younger than, as Bakewell puts it, their 'jowly, white' male counterparts, but actually the BBC doesn't do too badly when it comes to mature female representation in news and current affairs, with the likes of Kirsty Wark, Maxine Mahwhinny, Caroline Wyatt and Bridget Kendall.

Where it doesn't do so well, according to Jeremy Hunt, is in having enough Tories in its ranks. After the MP made his point at a Broadcasting Press Guild event, the BBC quickly, and rightly, pointed out that it would not recruit people on the basis of their political views, and that impartiality had to remain the bedrock of its news operation.

Even so, Hunt touched a nerve that has been exposed before. Some of the BBC's own people have spoken out on this issue, notably Andrew Marr, who at a seminar on impartiality three years ago pointed to a 'cultural liberal bias' within the corporation, and former *Today* reporter Robin Aitken who claimed that in 25 years at the BBC he had met only a smattering of staff with right wing views.

More recently BBC Four controller Richard Klein has said that most of the BBC's employees 'think the same'.

Does it matter? Well, it does if the BBC wants a truly diverse workforce, to reflect the audience it serves.

They might have been making different points, but the respective messages from Bakewell and Hunt amounted to pretty much the same thing.

*Sally Hillier is deputy editor of Ariel*



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

## Creche out

Outsourcing can work brilliantly. Chiltern College has run the BBC Monitoring nursery in Reading since it opened 14 years ago. It has taken care of our children, and children whose parents work for BBC Radio Berkshire and BBC Oxford.

The nursery is sited in our grounds at Caversham Park, in a purpose-built building. Bluebells grow under the garden trees, and you can sometimes see muntjak deer feeding on the other side of the fence.

The nursery's ethos has always been the same. The children are taught to care for one another, to be gentle, and unsparing with affection. I think this testifies more to the quality of care provided than any Ofsted report can.

Some of my daughter's friends are close as cousins. And I have become better friends with colleagues whose children she plays with. Not infrequently we support each other: picking up a child whose parent may be stuck on a train, for example.

Because of colleagues' rave reviews of the nursery, I felt reassured enough to return to work full time when my daughter was seven months old. I breastfed her until she was a year by visiting at lunch time.

How to describe the peace of mind of knowing your child is only in the next building as you work? Or the pleasure of catching a glimpse of them out the window, on a walk around our extensive grounds?

Well, the nursery closes its doors on October 2 as part of a BBC-wide decision to shut all in-house nurseries. I rage and spit and swear over the mealy-mouthed excuse that it's because the BBC's in-house nursery provision was not equitable, and could not meet the needs of all parents.

But I am profoundly grateful for the four years of happiness the nursery provided me. Thank you Chiltern College. And thank you, BBC. You don't have measures adequate to assess the goodwill you earned.

**Tse Yin Lee**

senior monitoring journalist

## Fittest fails to survive

I read Alan Griffiths's letter (September 15) with interest and was sorry to see that no reply was provided. I too

## We shouldn't recruit on basis of favouritism

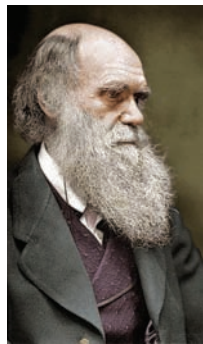
The announcement that BBC News is 'actively seeking to recruit a female newsreader over the age of 50' appears to be trumpeting our intention to break the age-discrimination laws.

Anyone under 50, or any man who unsuccessfully applies for a newsreading job in the coming months, would appear to have an iron-clad

case that they were discriminated against on the grounds of their age or gender. Attempting to solve the problem of age discrimination with more age discrimination does not sound like a formula for success to me.

**Mark Hanrahan**

acp, FM&T



have been trying to find out why the series *The Voyage of Charles Darwin* has not been shown as part of the Darwin season.

I've been unable to get a satisfactory answer from any

of the many people I have asked. I was even more mystified because of all the recent hype surrounding the release of the film *Creation* which purports to tell the Darwin story in a new way when, in fact, the 1978 series covered the same ground plus a lot more.

I can now only assume that, as the BBC is involved in this feature film, it doesn't want to mire its own publicity by showing the excellent and in depth seven-part archive drama series.

**Helena Stones**

college of production, BBC Academy

**Chantal Badjie, pan-BBC season project manager, replies:** We did, of course, view the wonderful seven-part *The Voyage of Charles Darwin* before the shape of the season for 2009 was finalised.

I enjoyed it and the painstaking replica of HMS Beagle was magnificent, even if some of the storytelling and voiceover is a bit old fashioned to modern ears and eyes.

I do wish we could have shown it again, even though it is showing its on-screen age, but to ask any of our channels to give up seven hours of prime broadcast time to a 30 year-old drama series would have meant sacrificing the fresh, contemporary

work we commissioned from Andrew Marr, Jimmy Doherty and David Attenborough among others.

The BBC is proud of its association with the film *Creation* but this had no bearing on the decision. The world moves on and audiences' tastes change – we must accept that.

I would have liked to make the older series available to view as part of the digital archive. Hopefully, as the archive develops and online digital rights become less complex, this will become possible.

## System's got a leak

Julia Harris is letting Siemens get off lightly with an anti-spam system that only 'anticipates catching about 90-95 percent of all spam' (September 22).

I'm with Tiscali at home and they catch 100 percent of spam and have been doing so for several years.

I occasionally check it on web-mail and it's always 100 percent accurate. I suggest we change our ISP.

**Bob Clary, contract project manager, transmission and distribution, WS**

## Go without saying

May I make a suggestion about where we could save some money? Close the 'Have Your Say' page on [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk).

It obviously costs money to moderate what is effectively a shop window for rants, ignorance and a lack of anything positive. There is even a website dedicated to 'the dribble-spattered lunacy of BBC 'Have Your Say' discussions'.

I can understand that, as the BBC, we want to endorse comment and give a voice to the public but

this site, along with many 'readers comments' on BBC blogs, seem to be filled with the same people who have hijacked the discussion to air their often questionable views.

Is moderating this kind of material a good use of licence fee money?

**Carl Davies**

media manager, I&A

## Fear for freelancers

The regulations state that freelancers aren't eligible for a taxi to or from work. So, are we happy to ask them to work unsociable hours but not be bothered about how they get in and out of the building?

What would be our official line if something happened to one of these freelancers on their journey in for a late/night shift? It seems that yet again freelancers are second class citizens.

**Carolyn Rice**

bj, business and economics unit, news

## Club together

There are currently eight separate BBC Clubs with premises of their own – Belfast, Bristol, Cardiff, Caversham, London, Manchester, Plymouth and Southampton. They are now working together to create a single unified organisation which anyone working for the BBC, including our partners and associates such as Siemens, Capita and Red Bee, can join.

You might be surprised to learn that the clubs are entirely independent, although their aims and purposes remain the same.

They have no legal link either to the BBC or to each other. To resolve

this the clubs intend to enter into a joint venture to form a single club and hope to extend the membership to everyone, no matter where they work, to give access to all the existing clubs, organise BBC wide inter site activities, discount schemes and other member privileges and create a sustainable future for the BBC.

Meetings have been held in some clubs and where this has happened the members have voted strongly in favour of a single global club. We hope that all the members of every club will sign up to this exciting initiative.

We hope to become a Company Limited by Guarantee to be known as The BBC Club Limited.

**BBC Club chairpersons**

## Another chance



Why is Stephen Fry's BBC Two programme called *Last Chance to See* when it's available on BBC iPlayer (to see whenever you get a chance, presumably)?

**Gary Loneragan**  
freelance art editor

## DG is white van man

So, driving along the M20 in Kent, on my way to work on Tuesday morning last week, I was somewhat astounded by the sight of a white van overtaking me.

Proudly written on the back was: 'Mark Thompson Electrical Services' (no, it is real: [www.markthompson-electricalservices.co.uk](http://www.markthompson-electricalservices.co.uk))

And I wondered, whether in this time of post-credit-crunch austerity, has the dg had to resort to moonlighting?

**Dave Austin**  
FM&T

## Call of nature

Has anyone else noticed that the new soap in the BBC toilets at Television Centre smells like natural yoghurt?

**Ben Dirs**  
BBC Sport website

## OBITUARY

### GRAHAM KNIGHT

Mention the radio presenter Graham Knight to those who knew him and the words you keep hearing are genuine, generous, warm and caring. As a person he was one of the good guys, as a broadcaster he was the consummate professional.

He was at home in the radio studio – simply because he was exactly the same on and off air: nosey, genu-



almost always bloody marvellous.

Jan Rogers, a colleague at BBC

ine and generous. He made his programme team's life easier, and frequently funnier. As an interviewer he was Paxman-persistent, but if sometimes bloody-minded,

Derby, recalls that his days seemed like the Tardis. There was more room inside them than us non time-stretching Lords could quite understand. Into it went work, wildly assorted interests, family and friends, and any random conversation you might want to have with him. How else did he turn up with a headful of ideas/books read/news scanned/contact book every morning? And however busy he was, he always made time to chat and offer encouragement or support

where needed.

He arrived at BBC Radio Derby in 1983 to present the mid-morning show and stayed for 14 years. And yet he loved being freelance; it allowed him to juggle many things. He broadcast Monday to Friday for BBC Radio Derby and Saturday and Sundays for Radio 2.

Among others he also worked for BBC exhibitions, BBC television, BBC Children in Need and also helped many organisations such as the National Trust and Amnesty Interna-

tional. He latterly set up a successful web design company and then ran a specialist tea and coffee shop in his adopted home of Nottingham.

Graham had been ill for some time, but typically he was often more concerned about his wife Cherry, his boys and his friends than himself.

It was a privilege to know and work with Graham; we'll miss his broad grin – you could hear it on-air and enjoy it in his company.

Gary Andrews



PROGRAMME MAKING

**Story Editor, River City**  
Dumbarton  
8D/Ref: 18965109  
E C 04-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Assistant Producer, Development**  
Belfast - Broadcasting House  
7D/Ref: 19238909  
C 06-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Assistant Producer, See Hear**  
Birmingham  
7D/Ref: 19231109  
E C 06-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Researchers, See Hear**  
Birmingham  
5D/Ref: 19231509  
E C 06-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Contestant Researcher, Weakest Link**  
Glasgow  
5D/Ref: 18895509  
E C 11-Oct-09 A 04 months

**Broadcast and Online Assistant**  
London  
Bush House  
4D/Ref: 19240809  
C 06-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Runners, See Hear**  
Birmingham  
2D/Ref: 19231809  
E C 06-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Studio Manager, BBC Afrique**  
Dakar  
N/A/Ref: 19004509  
E C 01-Nov-09

**BBC Comedy Multi-Camera Director Training Scheme**  
Multi Location  
N/A/Ref: 18954009  
E C 04-Oct-09 A Various

JOURNALISM

**Arts Producer, BBC Newsgathering**  
London  
8/9D/Ref: 19468309  
C 11-Oct-09 A 12 months

**Senior Broadcast Camera Journalist**  
Leeds  
8/9D/Ref: 19394209  
C 05-Oct-09 A Continuing

**Camera Producer, Sportsgathering**  
London / Salford Quays  
8D/Ref: 19230609  
C 05-Oct-09

**Broadcast Journalist, Newswire**  
London  
TV Centre  
7D/Ref: 19475909  
C 12-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Broadcast Journalist (TV News) - BBC Look North**  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
5/7D/Ref: 19185909  
C 05-Oct-09

**Broadcast Journalists - BBC Wiltshire**  
Swindon  
5/7D/Ref: 19122109  
E C 09-Oct-09 Various

**Senior Producer, BBC Afrique**  
Dakar  
N/A/Ref: 19004309  
E C 01-Nov-09

**Producer, BBC Afrique**  
Dakar  
N/A/Ref: 19004009  
E C 01-Nov-09

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

**Finance Manager (Part-time)**  
London  
Media Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 19253509  
C 01-Oct-09 A 09 months

**Programme & Project Support Manager**  
London  
White City  
11D/Ref: 18172909  
E C 12-Oct-09

**Production Executive, Childrens**  
Glasgow  
10D/Ref: 17018809  
C 04-Oct-09

**Plan, Schedule and Finance Manager, BBC HD**  
London  
9D/Ref: 19470509  
C 05-Oct-09 A 12 months

**Compliance Manager, TV Operations**  
London  
9D/Ref: 19426609  
C 12-Oct-09 A 12 months

**Advisor, Information Policy & Compliance**  
London  
White City  
7D/Ref: 19085509  
E C 12-Oct-09 A 2 years

**Policy & Public Affairs Manager**  
London  
Media Centre  
6D/Ref: 19444509  
C 05-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Talent Co-ordinator**  
London  
5P/Ref: 19447409  
C 05-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Operations Co-ordinator**  
London  
Broadcasting House  
5D/Ref: 18417009  
C 08-Oct-09

**Rights Assistants**  
London  
4H/Ref: 19402009  
C 05-Oct-09 A 12 months

**PA to the Controller, BBC THREE**  
London  
TV Centre  
4D/Ref: 19431109  
C 05-Oct-09

**Business Assistant (part time)**  
London  
Bush House  
4D/Ref: 18940909  
E C 08-Oct-09

**Previews & Promos Assistant, MC&A Vision**  
London  
TV Centre  
3H/Ref: 19434009  
C 05-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Office Manager, BBC Afrique**  
Dakar  
N/A/Ref: 19004409  
E C 01-Nov-09

**CSV, Project Manager**  
Glasgow  
N/A/Ref: 18965209  
E C 11-Oct-09 A 05 months

NEW MEDIA

**Head of Content Release**  
London  
11D/Ref: 19444409  
C 09-Oct-09

**Senior Software Engineer**  
London  
Henry Wood House  
8D/Ref: 17760909  
E C 05-Oct-09 Various

**Senior Web Developer**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
8D/Ref: 16482409  
E C 30-Sep-09

**Researcher, Search Editorial Team, BBC Online**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
5D/Ref: 19365509  
E C 04-Oct-09 A 12 months

SPECIALIST TECHNICAL AND DESIGN SERVICES

**Multi-skilled Technical Operator, BBC North West Tonight**  
Manchester  
5/7H/Ref: 19043509  
E C 05-Oct-09

TECHNOLOGY

**Technical Architect, FM&T**  
London  
Media Centre  
9D/Ref: 15517509  
E C 30-Sep-09

**Senior Test Engineer**  
London  
White City  
8D/Ref: 19218309  
E C 01-Oct-09

**Software Engineer**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
8D/Ref: 16381109  
E C 14-Oct-09

**Senior Software Engineer**  
London  
White City  
8D/Ref: 16263309  
E C 14-Oct-09

**Software Engineer, FM&T - Vision**  
London  
Media Centre  
7D/Ref: 17140009  
E C 30-Sep-09 A 12 months

**Release Coordinator**  
London  
Broadcast Centre Media Village  
7D/Ref: 16381609  
E C 09-Oct-09

**Network Engineer**  
London  
Media Centre  
7D/Ref: 15852609  
E C 08-Oct-09

**Operator/Senior Operator - BBC Look North**  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
5/7D/Ref: 19186009  
E C 05-Oct-09

**Senior Media Assistant**  
London  
TV Centre  
3H/Ref: 17820109  
E C 01-Oct-09 A 06 months

BBC WORLDWIDE

**Business Analyst, BBC Magazines**  
London  
Media Centre  
SENEX/Ref: 19358109  
E C 01-Oct-09

**Senior Sales Executive - Format Licensing, EMEA**  
London  
Media Centre  
1W/Ref: 19343709  
E C 04-Oct-09 A 06 months

**Promo Producer**  
London  
Media Centre  
2W/Ref: 19292709  
E C 11-Oct-09

**Support Engineer**  
London  
Media Centre  
2W/Ref: 19314409  
E C 30-Sep-09

See Attachment

Comply with me

The political research unit's Mark Williams jumps on a conveyor belt of controversy

**A TOP FLOOR OFFICE OVERLOOKING** Westminster Abbey, easy access to the Houses of Parliament and a front-row seat for the daily political theatre that Westminster offers up. For a self-confessed political geek, working in the political research unit in Millbank was obviously hell.

A couple of months ago I swapped the beating heart of politics for the beating heart of the BBC, at least until the next general election. Thankfully, editorial policy has offered a spectacularly poor haven from political controversies. Tory complaints about Alan Sugar, the prospect of televised leaders' debates in a general election and Nick Griffin's mooted appearance on *Question Time* have all made



They are not a group of finger wagging killjoys

White City feel like a home away from home.

But that's only been the half of it: from Arlene Phillips to George Alagiah, it sometimes feels like there's a conveyor belt taking the top stories of the day from the newspapers straight to our office.

And that, in a nutshell, is what gives working in editorial policy its fascination: the situations we deal with are as varied as the BBC itself. Across all genres and platforms, the day throws up a mixture of fire fighting and honing of early-warning systems to prevent future conflagrations. Above it all, there is a constant striving to define what the BBC is for, what it should do and how it should do it. So quite straightforward, really.

My experience has shown editorial policy to be far different from the clichéd view some have of it as a group of finger-wagging killjoys determined to rain on programme makers' parades. What has struck me has been the passion that the team themselves have for quality tv and radio. The dreaded 'c' word, compliance, is not some arbitrary pedantry designed to get in the way, but a blueprint designed by people with real experience in the field to help make all BBC content as good as it can possibly be.

The BBC can be a baffling place to work and it's all too easy to stay in your silo and comfort zone. Vision, FM&T, MC&A...to me, they were all abstractions referenced in emails from on high. No longer, and with knowledge comes understanding and with understanding comes appreciation.

I'm glad I've burst out blinking into the light to catch a fleeting glimpse of the wider BBC world.

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

FULL DETAILS AND HOW TO APPLY

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

EXTERNAL APPLICATIONS

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





# JOSIE CAHILL

## INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER, BBC NORTH AND CHILDREN'S

She used to  
take tips from  
Jamie Oliver,  
but now gives  
advice to those  
thinking of  
moving to  
Salford

PHOTOGRAPH: ED SWINDEN

### What do you do for BBC North?

I started not long before the BBC Trust gave the project the green light. I helped design the BBC North website, which I now edit. I look for content and video clips to feature, and help organise events and the e-newsletter for staff.

I'm a point of contact for London staff whose jobs are moving and anyone wanting to know about BBC North, and I communicate information about the move to Manchester staff, as well as to staff across the north.

### How do you think people in the regions are feeling?

There is a definite interest in the north west, and in the departments that are moving here. Eight hundred people have signed up to the BBC North Enthusiasts list – those people with jobs that aren't 'in scope' to move, but who want to be kept informed.

### What do you say to people who are due to move to Salford?

For me, it's not a sell. It's about providing information so people can make an informed decision, rather than trying to sell them Manchester over London. They're different cities.

### You set up the buddy scheme?

Yes, there are about 100 buddies on the website now. London staff can get first hand feedback about what it's like to live and work in Manchester from a buddy. Many of the buddies featured on the website have made the move away from London themselves and are able to share their experiences.

### What things do you get asked about most?

People want to know what certain areas of the north west are like, where to live, what the schools are like.

People worry that Media City is a bit out of town, and wonder what other companies will be sharing the site with us. Often people get caught up with the little things, like how many bicycle bays there will be, and miss out on the bigger vision.

### What is the bigger vision?

It's about being more open to working with external partners. Not everyone is going to be able to move, and I understand that, but if you can it will be an unbelievable opportunity. You can be part of something from the start. For me, it's not really about the buildings, as lovely as they will be, but the people and what we will do differently there.

### How do you get to work each day?

I've just started cycling in from Old Trafford. It takes about 11 minutes whereas it used to take me 10 minutes just to walk to my nearest bus stop. I used to be too scared of the traffic but now I've got a helmet and I just go for it.

### When did you start working for children's?

I started in June. It was a great opportunity to work with a department I'd been communicating with. Already it has been useful to see how comms from BBC North reach people, and what needs changing. I also wanted to go and work in a production area because I've not had experience in that.

### Do you split your time between Manchester and London then?

Yes. I try to do two days in London, but I have to be flexible. I stay with friends in London so it's nice to see them. It's a bit tiring but it's worth it.

### What did you do before joining the BBC?

I worked for the British Council on global scholarship projects. They offered people from other countries the chance to come and study for a Masters degree which they would be able to use back in their home country. A lot of people from Iraq did peace studies at UK universities, and then passed on what they'd learnt back home.

### You used to work in London?

I did a graduate job in the City. It was dreadful. I was dealing

with bankers all day. It wasn't my cup of tea. I left that and worked in the only Michelin Star Chinese restaurant in the world and served lots of famous people like Jamie Oliver and Ben Affleck. The tips were amazing.

### Have you ever lived abroad?

I lived in California when I was 16. I went to high school and the prom and home coming. It was brilliant. My Mum did a work exchange so swapped her job and our house with an American family. I've still got friends there who I visit when I can.

### Where do you like to go out in Manchester?

I love the vintage shops and independent bars of the Northern Quarter. I like the way it's a bit edgy and interesting.

### So I assume you'd like to work at MediaCity then?

Yes, and I plan to flog my house to some big media exec so I can move somewhere posher. I'm joking... It's great as I'm walking distance from the site at the minute.

### How have the familiarisation tours of the north west for staff in line to move gone down?

I went along to some of the evening meals and I've been surprised how little people know about Manchester. Everyone's really impressed though, with the city and the site itself.

Manchester will never have as many shops, bars and theatres as London, but it does have lots and they are really good.

Interview by Peggy Walker

# foreign report



EMMA  
PEIL

SCOTLAND RESEARCHER  
DOES A STINT IN UGANDA

**THE UBC OFFICE** in Kampala is a shiny, modern building – from the outside at least. The new facade hides a run-down concrete block which bears the scars of Uganda's turbulent past; bullet holes can be seen in some of the windows from the days when new governments stormed the radio building during military coups.

That's all in the past, although the government still exerts a strong influence and partly funds UBC, where I had a month's placement over the summer. In that time the minister for information and national guidance, princess Kabakumba Matsiko, visited. The next day we were told that news programmes had to observe 'political protocol' – ie that the first story must be about president Museveni, regardless of what else was happening.

A typical day starts at 8am (or 8.30am, or 9am... Ugandan time is 'elastic') with the reporters' meeting. Tips are shared, stories assigned and a mad scramble begins. There aren't enough

cameras, so reporters often need to wait for someone else to return before they can go out. There aren't any radio mics or boom poles. There often aren't enough batteries or tapes. Just getting to a story can be a challenge as usually there's no car available. Walking in 30+ heat, with kit, isn't much fun, but it beats taking a boda – a motorcycle taxi. The drivers usually have no licence and little regard for safety.

Sometimes reporters are given money by press conference organisers to encourage them to go along. My questions about how that might affect impartiality were brushed off with 'It's just how it works'.

Around lunchtime, UBC reporters start to edit and file their stories. There are only five computers, two of which are always in use by the news editors. Getting a pc to write a script is like musical chairs. The same goes for editing, with the four pcs in the edit suite in constant demand.

Each weekday, UBC news staff produce four morning bulletins, a lunchtime bulletin, an afternoon update and three evening news programmes (in Luganda, Swahili and English). I worked as a camera operator, voiced updates (with some spectacularly bad pronunciation of African names) and had a chance to script, voice and edit my own report. Two days before I left riots erupted in Kampala. The government wouldn't let UBC cover the story (the tv manager was suspended for letting one report go out); we got away with it by doing a 'business' piece about business in the city centre coming to a halt.

## Two days before I left, riots erupted in Kampala

## CV

**Degree:** Sheffield University, literature and language.

**First paid job:** Working in a greasy spoon cafe for £1.80 an hour, near Salford.

**Career landmark:** When BBC North finally got green light from the trust; we'd been in the planning stages for months and it felt great to be able to shout from the roof tops.



# green room

## THE ARIELATOR

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



**UPSIDE** A double up ariela-tor this week as two brave souls separately took their place in art history on Antony Gormley's installation at the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square.

For his hour Glasgow-based presenter and producer **Huw Williams** (above) donned a very smart suit and played a selection of music from the 1920s and 1930s on a portable cd player, 'in tribute to the earliest days of broadcasting'. Journalism trainee **Kay Crewdson** travelled from BBC Belfast for her stint on the plinth, opting for the less refined but worthwhile route of charity promotion. She also found time for a quick live OB to Radio Ulster's drivetime show.

**DOWNSIDE** Last week's 35th birthday of **Ceefax** was a bittersweet occasion, marking the final proper anniversary of the tv text service that's gradually being switched off around the country to be replaced by the ubiquitous digital Red Button. Sadly future generations will be deprived of the thrill of constantly changing pages that always seemed to flick to the next one just when you didn't want them to, necessitating having to sit and watch them all roll round again to see what you missed. Ceefax aficionados should check out the Magazine's excellent 10 things you didn't know about Ceefax at [tinyurl.com/ceefax35](http://tinyurl.com/ceefax35)



## EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...When I got back from that Brucie thing the other day I just couldn't settle...

...I always sleep in the recovery position anyway...

...He literally has the voice of God. Or at least John the Baptist...

...Hello, Dudley Zoo? Can I speak to a Mr C.Lion?...

...Why would I have ordered 2500 sandwiches?...



## LYING DOWN ON THE JOB



**NO, IT'S NOT** a bizarre protest against long working hours, nor is it a rehearsal for the latest Saturday night gameshow extravaganza (although...). So why were there 100 mattresses arranged in a spiral formation around the TVC hub last week, accompanied by 100 people, some of whom were in their pyjamas? Two words: *Blue Peter*. As we previewed a few weeks back, the team mounted an audacious attempt at the mattress dominoes world record (which stood at 80 mattresses). For the uninitiated (where have you been?) this means

people standing holding mattresses and getting knocked over by the one in front of them, to endlessly amusing effect. The Guinness-monitored attempt was successful, but not without incident – one media manager was left bereft after the Blue Peter badge he had been given for his participation got broken in the stunt. 'They're a lot harder than they look,' he said of the plastic covered mattresses (all donated to charity after the event). 'I finally get given a badge and now it's broken. It spiked me right in the nipple'.

## REBEL SONGS

A brush with the authorities for BBC Essex presenter Chris Penhall last week during a busking lesson with noted rabble-rouser Billy Bragg outside the Tower of London to promote Southend's Big Busk event. The singer was halfway through Redemption Song ('a bit of Bob Marley goes a long way', he advised) when he was suddenly cut short by two security guards who ushered the pair on. Bragg retaliated with a burst of I Fought the Law, but Chris was undeterred: 'It was all done in very good humour, so it wasn't embarrassing at all,' she



Billy Bragg and Chris Penhall hit the streets

claims. The presenter wasn't so confident about her on-air busking debut, though. 'As soon as I agreed to do it, I began to panic,' she admits. 'When I arrived at the Tower and realised what I had let myself in for, I really,

really began to panic.' Nonetheless she gave a stirring rendition of Bragg's song New England, worthy of the man himself – which was just as well as he was standing right next to her playing the accompanying guitar.

## WE HEAR THAT...

**BBC JERSEY** have won a 'Crapaud D'or' award. Stop that sniggering at the back – despite what the title may suggest, this is in fact a Good Thing. The awards are handed out annually by the Congres des Parlers Normands et Jerriaise to any island organisation helping to promote the Jersey French language and keep it alive. Crapaud is actually a local name for the common toads that cover the island.

**BBC RADIO SUFFOLK** presenters Mark Murphy and Rob Dunger have gone where no man has gone before. The breakfast show duo are believed to be the first men ever to become president and secretary of the Women's Institute in Earl Soham, Suffolk in its 90 year history. Murphy and Dunger took on the challenge as part of their 'jobs for the boys' feature which has in the past seen them working as chambermaids in a hotel and tightrope walking in a local circus.

### DANGLING

**DOWN** a cliff face to film an eagle's nest for *Coast* didn't faze presenter Neil Oliver and celebrity farmer Jimmy Doherty (right) who took riding through croc-infested waters for *Jimmy's Global Farm* in his stride. So what would be outside their comfort zone, asked *Newsnight's* Kirsty Wark, at a Vision Forum session on specialist factual in Pacific Quay. Being an accountant, said Doherty; being asked to sing and dance, confessed Oliver; no *Strictly* invitation for you then, said Wark.



**UNWITTING** BBC Manchester conference goers thinking they had nothing more shocking to face in their day than a particularly excruciating Powerpoint animation might have had a surprise last week: *Crimewatch* are using the conference room for some auditions – there could be some screaming... be warned,' ran a cheerful memo to staff.

## Win a Have I Got News For You book

**THIS COUNTRY** can be a confusing place at the best of times, but what better guides to the state of the nation than the *Have I Got News For You* team? With their Guide to Modern Britain (out October 1) the people behind the show aim to help us understand why 'the most ingenious, resilient, resourceful, and proudest people on earth became the Twittering, touchy-feely, fame-obsessed, flu fearing wimps that they are today'. To enter to win one of five copies, just answer this question: What magazine does Ian Hislop edit? Email [ariel.competitions](mailto:ariel.competitions) by October 5.

