

THE BBC NEWSPAPER

ariel

MORE HELP FOR HAITI: THE BBC
AND INDIVIDUAL STAFF RESPOND IN
PRACTICAL WAYS **PAGE 3**

WEST END GIRL

◆ **HANNAH KHALIL'S** thought provoking
play about what happens to ordinary
people when they become refugees begins
a run on the London stage **Page 5**

◆ **BBC technology
shapes up for
the future** **Page 2**

◆ **No giggling
while newsreading –
announcers' tips** **Page 7**

◆ **Industry keeps
up pressure over
scale of BBC** **Page 10**



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

Editor	
Candida Watson	02-84222
Deputy editor	
Cathy Loughran	02-27360
Chief writer	
Sally Hillier	02-26877
Features editor	
Clare Bolt	02-27445
Broadcast Journalist	
Claire Barrett	02-27368
AV Manager	
Peter Roach	02-24622
Art editor	
Ken Sinyard	02-84229
Digital Design Executive	
David Murray	02-27380
Business co-ordinator	
Silvana Romana	02-84228

Guest contributors this week

ANDY TIGHE, home affairs correspondent, explains how to break a court verdict live. **Page 9**

JEREMY NYE, head of audience research, Global News, on the issues that most concern people around the world. **Page 10**

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SUPPLIERS GET CHANCE TO HAVE THEIR SAY

New plan unveiled to take technology into the future

by Sally Hillier

A new technology plan has been unveiled, aimed at making the BBC more 'technically agile' and responsive to digital developments, market influences and changes in audience behaviour.

The paper is being published externally, allowing suppliers and other interested parties to see where the corporation is heading and giving them a chance to comment. The document, outlining focus areas for investment and intended as a statement of intent to be realised in two to five years' time, is based around a set of core principles. They are:

- **Ensuring sustainable networking**, telephony, storage and other basic services

- **Being connected** and collaborative – breaking down barriers to allow partners to work easily with the BBC, and providing support for flexible and remote working

- **Fostering innovation** – embracing the growing capabilities of consumer devices for professional use and ensuring the development of innovative technology at the BBC

- **Delivering value** – using more standardised and off-the-shelf goods rather than customising products.

The paper also addresses the problems experienced with some outsourced services, and proposes that in future the decision on whether or not to stay in-house 'should be based on individual circumstances for each project'.

Chief technology officer John Linwood, who is at the forefront of dealing with the phone problems that have plagued some areas, including the newsroom, admits: 'We have learned the hard way that outsourcing everything isn't the right solution. We are looking at 'right' sourcing – essentially asking when is the right time to outsource, with

what sort of company and on what kind of scale.'

He adds that from now on more effort will be made to call outside suppliers to account. 'When we have a contract with a vendor, we absolutely will make sure that they deliver.'

As for the core building blocks of the new direction, Linwood says that 'frictionless' devices are at the heart of the plans. 'We need to devise technologies that are easy and intuitive to use. For example, if you press your computer on switch, it should just come on without spending minutes thinking about it.'

Within the main technology document are 48 'roadmaps' covering areas such as cameras, storage, post production systems, studios, high definition, and mobile platforms.

'Increasingly, technology is becoming part of everything we do,' says Linwood. 'Not only is it ubiquitous but more and more complex.'

The rise in inter-connected systems – a decade ago, for instance, the scheduling system was stand-alone; now it's plugged into a number of other systems such as playout – and convergence of

broadcast and IT technologies are two key trends of recent years, Linwood explains.

Then there is the increase in flexible working, the growing concern for the environment – a tricky one for the BBC as more technology means more power consumption at the same time as it is trying to reduce its carbon footprint – and the seemingly insatiable audience appetite for on-demand services and content delivered via social media.

'All these factors have come together to drive the new approach,' says Linwood.

He adds that the document, drawn up with input from divisions across the BBC, has had 'a favourable response' internally and will be updated and refreshed as technology develops further and business demands and audiences needs change.



THEY LOOK FAMILIAR

Presenters past and present gathered to mark 30 years of Newsnight, a special birthday edition of which was broadcast on BBC Two on Saturday night. Standing: Kirsty Wark, Emily Maitlis, Olivia O'Leary, Jeremy Paxman, Gavin Esler, Francine Stock, John Tusa and Sue Cameron. Seated: Martha Kearney and Peter Snow.

NEWS BITES

BBC NEWS is taking part in an independent study of the effect on journalists and other media professionals of covering traumatic events. Researchers from the University of London will contact news people at random; participation is voluntary and nobody outside the project (including the BBC) will have access to the responses.

SINGER KIRI Te Kanawa, conductor Antonio Pappano and director Graham Vick are among the contributors to an opera season this spring. The BBC – A Passion for Opera will feature films, documentary and performance on BBC Two and BBC Four. Radio 3 is also involved and Radio 2 will search for a new opera star. Further programmes are planned for the autumn.

BBC PROCUREMENT was named travel team of the year at the Business Travel Awards. The award recognised the team's partnership with thetrainline.com, with specific mention made of the work done to cut ticket prices and CO2 emissions by encouraging travellers to take the train rather than fly.

JOHN SIMM, Corin Redgrave, Anna Massey and Robert Glenister are among the actors who will appear in the new run of BBC One Daytime's *Moving On* series, written by Jimmy McGovern. Dominic West of *The Wire* fame will direct one of the episodes. The new series starts later this year.

THERE IS to be a review of BBC marketing services, led by Sharon Baylay, director of Marketing, Communications & Audiences. It will look at the likely future marketing requirements of the organisation, so that 'it continues to deliver successful and award-winning campaigns'.

THE BBC'S Extend scheme, which offers paid work opportunities to qualified disabled people, seeks up to 30, six-month placements in a range of departments, starting in September. More than half of previous participants have stayed on at the BBC. Deadline for offers is February 9. <http://learn.gateway.bbc.co.uk/leadership/main.asp?page=870>

WORLD SERVICE programme *Business Daily* was named best broadcast programme at the Work Foundation's WorldWork awards. Online journalist of the year was the business unit's Clare Matheson. Antony Reuben received a special commendation. Emma Simpson was specially commended in the Broadcast Reporter category.

ON YOUR BIKE BBC Workplace is trying to find the owners of a number of bikes left in the car parks at Henry Wood House and Egton Wing at BH. If the owners aren't traced by the end of January, the bikes will be removed and stored off site. Email BBC-Feedback.cguk@jci.com with information.

My personal mission to help people of Haiti

by Sally Hillier

A BBC technical manager is trying to raise funds for a Haiti construction project that has taken on fresh urgency since the earthquake.

Alison Kempster, who works in News Operations at TV Centre, is on a mission to finish a house she hopes will be used by refugees and provide a base for a couple of small businesses.

She has been involved with the country since the 1980s when she started sponsoring a young boy, Baselais, now her godson, whose education and health care she has financed for many years. In 2008 she paid for a property to be built for the boy's family in Hinche, 50 miles from

the capital Port-au-Prince – but her money ran out before completion. 'Even before the earthquake, finishing the house was a priority,' she says. 'Now it's needed more than ever, especially as the rainy season is due to start in March.'

'I'm mad keen to raise the funds to finish it as Baselais and his mother want to squeeze in up to six refugees – Hinche is awash with people who have fled Port-au-Prince – and themselves.'

Kempster has also come up with the idea of starting a rickshaw taxi service and bicycle ambulance service (a sprung stretcher behind a bike) from the house, using the porch for storage. She hopes to persuade bike manufacturers, cycling clubs and medical students to raise funds for the businesses, which would help the town and generate income for Baselais's family.

Not only that, she has also taken out a \$10,000 loan to buy a primary school in Couime, the village where Baselais grew up (he is now a mature student in Port-au-Prince and had a lucky escape in the earthquake when he fled the building he was in just before it collapsed).

'The school was for sale, and I couldn't let a developer buy it as it would have meant the end to any hope of even a basic education for a generation of children,' Kempster explains.

Her plan is to buy the school temporarily until the villagers form a co-operative. But the owner has just sold it to his brother, and Kempster hopes to persuade him to sell it on to her.

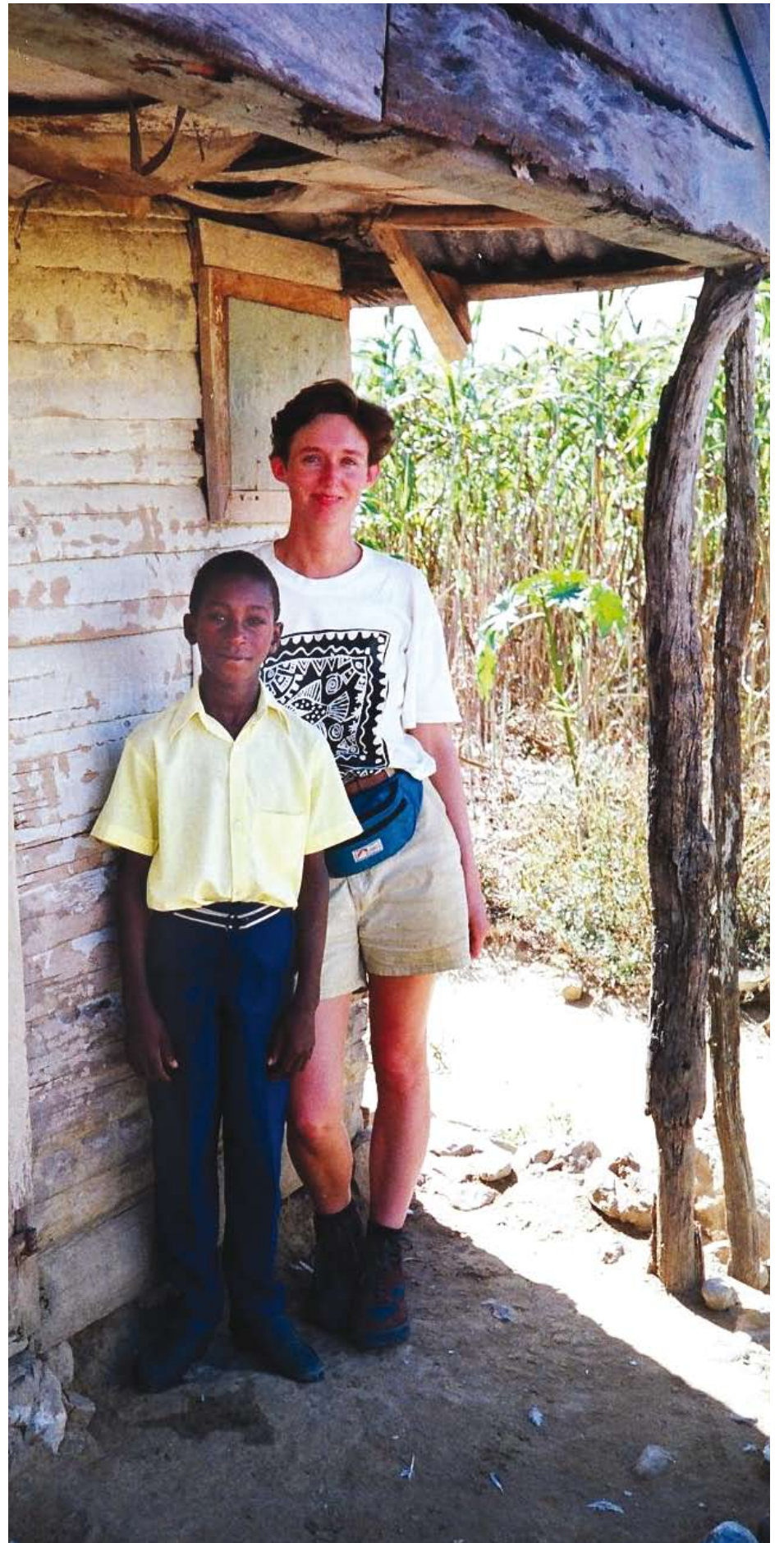


Aid effort: the school in Couime. Right: Alison Kempster in Haiti some years ago with Baselais

■ World Service has launched a new 20-minute daily programme in Creole, as an additional lifeline. It has the latest information on aid and rescue operations, and carries messages from people searching for family members, along with practical information for survivors. World Service is already broadcasting special programmes in English, French and Spanish, but this is the first time the BBC has ever broadcast in the Haitian national language.

■ An alliance called CDAC (Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities) has been formed between the World Service Trust and other agencies. The Trust is helping co-ordinate the delivery of information in Haiti through its partner on the ground, Internews.

■ A homemade cake sale held by the GNS and News Programmes Planning teams raised £200 which will be split between the DEC Haiti fund and the Helen Rollason Cancer Trust.



Three Counties Radio comes live from Kenya



House and home: Debbie Scott with residents of the orphanage she has helped to fund

A FIVE MINUTE interview two years ago has resulted in Three Counties Radio *Afternoon Show* presenter Lorna Milton broadcasting a week of live broadcasts from Kenya, starting on January 26.

In Milton's first week on the show she spoke to Debbie Scott, a 52 year old mum of two from Bedford, who had slipped off the tourist trail on a Kenyan holiday and found a cause after visiting Utange village, where pastor John Kahindi was caring for ten children orphaned by Aids.

Scott, a committed Christian, decided to do something to give the children, and others like them, a better future, and began raising funds to build an orphanage.

In the past two years she has

On air from Utange: Lorna Milton



been a regular contributor to the Three Counties *Afternoon Show*, updating listeners on the progress of her project. Phase One of Casuarina House, which educates and provides a home for ten youngsters, was opened live on the show in January 2009 with Debbie Scott relaying the event on her mobile phone for 20 minutes.

A year later Phase Two is com-

plete and will be officially opened by Scott and Lorna Milton live from Kenya.

Milton and her colleague Ian Pearce flew to Kenya on January 25. They are contributing to the Three Counties breakfast show and *Morning MK*, building up to presenting the full two and a half hours of *Lorna Milton in the Afternoon* from Utange on January 29.

But that won't be an end to Debbie Scott's work: Casuarina House costs £18,000 a year to run, and she has given up her job to devote all her time to raising money for it.

You can donate at Just Giving: The Sure Foundation
Find out more online at **Utange Orphanage Project**

Family life keeps me in London

by Sally Hillier

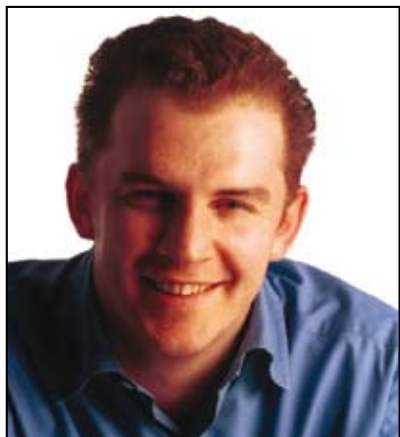
Patrick Spence is in talks with drama management about a potential new role in the BBC following last week's announcement that he is to step down as head of drama for Northern Ireland.

He is giving up the job, which he has held for six years, because he does not want to leave London.

'For some time now I've been asked to relocate to Belfast but I'm unable to do so for family reasons,' Spence has told Ariel.

'I have no quibble at all with the request, as I completely agree that the job should be based in Northern Ireland.'

Personal circumstances – he has a partner whose job is in London and



a young family – have resulted in him working out of Television Centre from where he travels regularly to Belfast.

'Patrick has done a brilliant job,'

says Peter Johnston, director of Northern Ireland, 'but one of the points of the network supply review – the strategy to move productions out of London – is to have a drama leader rooted in Northern Ireland, not just to be close to the team here but to develop relationships with writers and independent companies.'

Speaking of Spence's 'legacy', Johnston says: 'He has been incredibly successful in recent years in attracting high quality drama projects to Northern Ireland including the critically acclaimed *Five Minutes of Heaven* and *Occupation*.'

Spence's job is being advertised and the Belfast department is being restructured to focus on homegrown drama.

60s story versus 3D sci-fi film

BBC Films co-production *An Education* (pictured) will go head to head with *Avatar* for best film at this year's Baftas.

Both films received eight nominations, pitting James Cameron's high concept flick about a paraplegic marine dispatched to the moon Pandora against Nick Hornby's adaptation of journalist Lynn Barber's memoir – a coming of age story about a teenage girl in 1960s suburban London whose life changes when she is seduced by a playboy nearly twice her age.

The film has been nominated



for both best film and best British film, where it will compete against another BBC Films co-pro, Armando Iannucci's political satire *In The Loop* and Sam Taylor-Wood's *Nowhere Boy*.

The awards ceremony takes place at London's Royal Opera House next month.

Setting the eco standard

by Clare Bolt

The BBC has been awarded the Carbon Trust standard, given to organisations which have taken practical steps to manage and reduce their CO2 emissions.

Between April 2008 and March 2009, the BBC reduced its carbon footprint by two percent (against the average of the previous two years) – cutting 3000 tonnes of CO2.

Chief operating officer Caroline Thomson, who chairs the BBC's environment committee, said she was 'de-



lighted that our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint has been recognised.

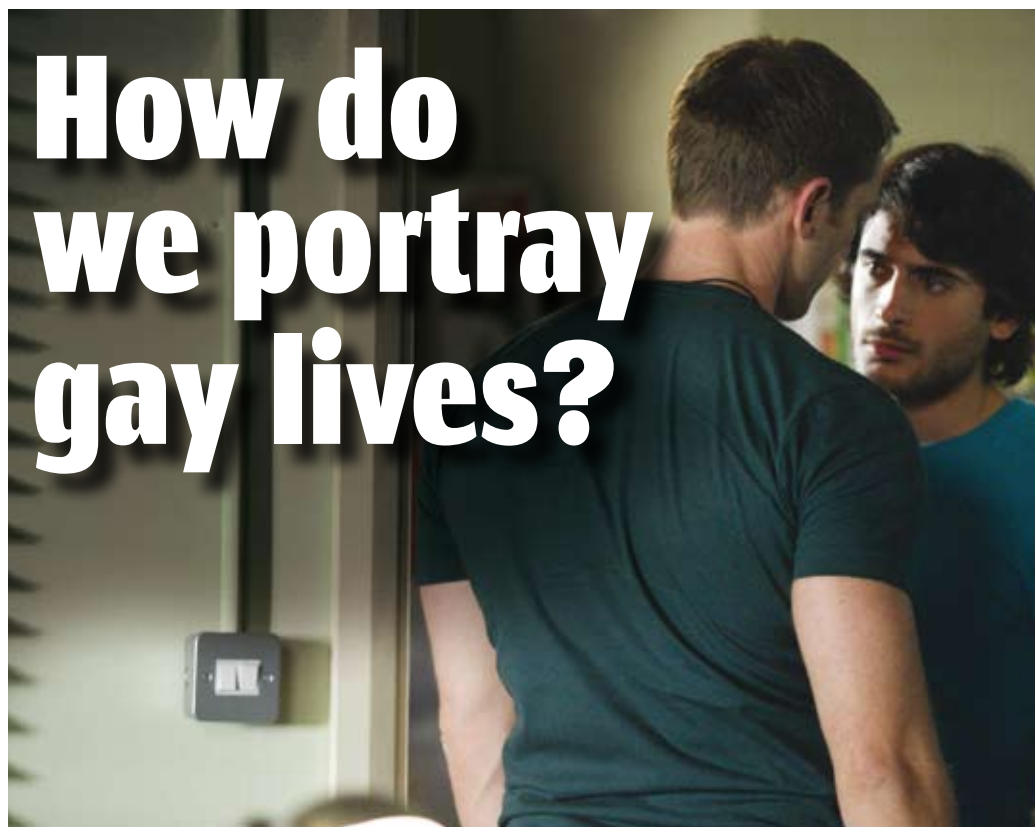
'We know there's a lot further to go before we reach all our goals, but being awarded the standard shows the hard work of staff, and investment in our buildings and technology is starting to have a positive impact.'

The BBC is now in year two of a five year plan to cut carbon emissions. Its four environment targets are to cut waste, water, energy and transport emissions by 20-25 percent by 2013.

Alongside improvements to its buildings and IT equipment, the corporation will aim to cut CO2 emissions and waste made through the production of tv and radio programmes.

The controller of English Regions, David Holdsworth, has signed a BBC Environmental Charter.

How do we portray gay lives?



Christian Clarke (played by John Partridge) and Syed Masood (Marc Elliott) in *EastEnders* love triangle

by Adam Bambury

A 'creative opportunity', rather than just another set of quotas, is how Tim Davie would like a new research project into the BBC's portrayal of lesbian, gay and bisexual people to be received.

The Audio & Music director is chairing the research working group and says the aim is to add insight to already 'robust' editorial guidelines: 'This is about programme makers and editors really getting a better understanding of their audience.'

The next few months will see qualitative research consisting of 28 different sessions with a wide range of both LGB and heterosexual audience groups. The second stage will consist of quantitative research, to ensure the findings are statistically representative of the UK population.

Findings will also come from an online poll, and contact with LGB community organisations across the UK. The result is due to be published this summer and will be made widely available.

The project follows similar work carried out with other audience groups, such as last year's research into disability portrayal. Adrian Ruth, chair of BBC Pride, said the internal LGB forum had been involved from the group's inception

and was pleased that the research was under way: 'I'll be really interested to hear what people have to say,' he said.

'The disability project has led to some lasting changes and did seem to have a tangible impact... so I'm quite optimistic that even though it's a very complex area there will be some insights that will make a real change.'

The project has prompted questions about the lack of investigation into transgender portrayal. Head of diversity Amanda Rice said the research was focused on sexual orientation rather than issues of gender: 'We came to the decision, partly informed by the Human Rights Commission's own guidance on the matter, that it would be more appropriate to have separate research into these two populations.'

The research follows an analysis by gay rights organisation Stonewall in 2006, which found that 'during 168 hours of peak time tv on BBC One and Two', gay lives 'were realistically and positively portrayed for just six minutes'.

Ruth feels that the BBC research will be useful in responding to similar criticism in future. 'This will give us real credibility with both groups like Stonewall and the gay press, where we're often criticised,' he said. 'It'll be good for us to say we've looked at all these issues, come up with some good ideas, and as an organisation we're a lot better informed.'

Lords report on tv future

by Candida Watson

A House of Lords select committee has called for the part privatisation of BBC Worldwide, to create a public-private company which could drive the sale of UK generated tv content, and provide much-needed revenue for British production.

The Lords Communications Committee said: 'We believe that such a company, with a continuing link to the BBC, would be capable of becoming a major global brand for distributing UK content, producing additional profits, employment and opportunities for British production companies.'

The Lords report said the BBC Trust was 'lukewarm' to the idea. In response a spokesman said the BBC Trust was focused on the interests of licence fee payers. 'We believe their interests are best served by maximising the value that BBC Worldwide can secure while ensuring its activities are aligned with the BBC's public purposes.'

The committee also focused on the steep drop in UK produced children's programming, expressing particular concern at the lack of output available for older school children. They suggest a tax break similar to the one offered to the UK film industry might reverse the slide, and they recommend the government uses some of the proceeds from the sale of analogue spectrum, and the licence fee money currently earmarked for digital switchover, to support UK originated programming.

Commenting on the report, director of BBC Vision Jana Bennett said: 'We recognised the weakening of the co-production market last autumn in children's and also the decline in investment in real terms elsewhere and this is why we announced that we would be committing extra money to children's programming. The BBC is committed to remaining the guarantor of quality UK children's production and commissioning.'

Claire Barrett meets the MC&A playwright who drew on her Palestinian roots for her latest work

THE CHARACTERS give nothing away. They have no names, being described simply as 'Mother' or 'Old Man'. The location gets no name check, while the period remains obscure. 'I wanted people to feel this was something that could happen to anyone, any time, any place,' explains writer Hannah Khalil.

Bosnia, Georgia and Congo were among the settings speculated upon by the group of actors at the first read through of the MC&A woman's play, which starts a three week run on the West End fringe on Tuesday. But its title – Plan D – is more revealing. It's the name of the Israeli military operation in 1948 which saw the forced expulsion of an estimated six million Palestinians from their homes.

'I always wanted to write a play about Palestine,' says half-Palestinian, half-Irish Hannah, 'but it was difficult to find the right story to tell.'

It was after attending an oral history day marking the 60th anniversary of al-Nakba – the Palestinian name for the events of 1948 – that a backdrop to her script began to develop. 'There's no official Palestinian state archive,' points out Hannah, 'mainly because of the fluidity of the territory. The experiences of those who lived through that period have not been logged.'

But a film made by an Israeli documentary maker, collecting interviews with Palestinians and Israelis, is just one attempt to redress that. Screened at the close of the day, the first hand accounts – together with the stories told to Hannah by her father who grew up in occupied Palestine during the 1950s – were woven into a narra-

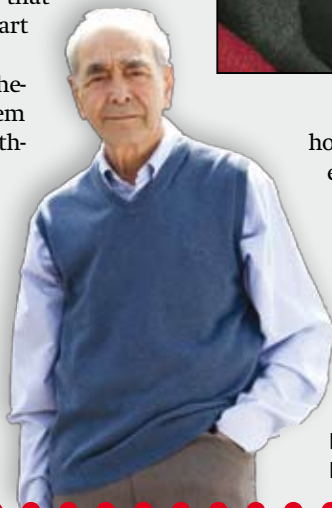
tive about one family forced to begin the long walk from their rural home as refugees.

'I wanted to show what 'normal' people go through in these situations,' Hannah says. 'My family was lucky in that they were not pushed off their land in the West Bank, but they still had to live without electricity and weren't allowed out at night.'

Born in London, Hannah, now a radio press information editor, grew up in Dubai before heading back to an English boarding school as a teenager. Her parents, she says, were not driven by politics and she admits to only a vague impression of tough times for her Palestinian relatives.

'If you grow up in a Middle East country where there is no government – the sheikh rules – you have very little notion of politics,' she explains. 'When I came to England I was befuddled by the way government worked. But as I got older I wanted to find out more; I was hungry to understand the history of Israeli-Palestine relations and it became clear that 1948 was at the heart of it all.'

Her writing for the theatre – 'I can't seem to write for any other medium' – has been strongly influenced by her background. Both parents, she says, are from poor, farm families who faced an element of struggle over their



homeland, and this is reflected in plays which explore displacement and the outsider experience.

Two of them have had brief forays on the London fringe, but Plan D is the first to enjoy a prop-

Former EastEnders Leonard Fenton is the 'Old Man'

er run. Its cast spans the ages, featuring 84-year-old Leonard Fenton – *EastEnders*' Doctor Legg – as the poetic 'Old Man' who provides solace and space to the fleeing family. 'He arrived for the audition with incredible tales about working with Samuel Beckett and Orson Welles – our jaws were on the floor. Then he delivered the piece so beautifully our eyes glazed over.'

Plan D's contemporary reference points – 'the experience of exodus, of

being forced out of your home, is universal' – cannot mask historic sensitivities. 'The play does not try to be shocking, strident or combative, but I am aware it might offend some people,' accepts Hannah. 'Even so, it's important that people remember 1948; atonement needs to be made for those events before there can be peace.'

Plan D, January 26 to February 13, Tristan Bates Theatre, Covent Garden. Tickets: £10/£7. Book on 020 7240 6283 or

REFUGEE STORIES ARE CLOSE TO HOME



Setting the stage: Hannah Khalil prepares for Plan D's opening

PHOTOGRAPH: ANNA GORDON

TIME WILL TELL: BJ'S SITE DISPLAYS WORDS THAT STICK

by Kate Arkless Gray

SOMEONE ONCE TOLD ME that 'it's the simplest ideas that are the most effective' – a statement that certainly rings true for Mario Cacciottolo's Someone Once Told Me project. In his spare time, Cacciottolo, a bj for News Online, has created a website devoted to an ever-growing collection of black and white photographs of people, each one holding up a board displaying what it was they were once told.

It all started with a small compliment over email, which got Cacciottolo thinking about why it is that some things stick in our minds forever. He began collecting examples of statements that meant something to people. 'We're all shaped by the things we're told, whether we like it or not,' he says.

Every day since the site's launch in September 2007, a fresh picture has been added, and alongside the photographs sit some of the stories behind them. From the woman who was told years ago by her doctor that she'd never have children (seen photographed with her two boys) to the girl who freed herself from the hurt caused by her sister repeatedly telling her that she was fat, there's a wide collection of tales, both light-hearted and serious.

'I've always been frustrated at not being cre-



Perfect example: Kasia Madera, presenter on BBC News, explained how her Polish grandmother had said 'faultless' about her son upon seeing him for the first time

ative,' says Cacciottolo. 'The project makes me feel better about myself, like I am doing something to be creative – even if I'm really just the curator of other people's experiences.'

Behind this modesty is an array of photographs which brim with personality and imagination, the majority of which he has taken himself. The accompanying stories give touching glimpses into the lives of the people they capture, from all around the globe.

Despite more than 865 photographs being published to date, there are surprisingly few repetitions. 'To my amazement I've hardly ever had duplicates, but I have had 'don't eat yellow snow' about four times.'

And what of Cacciottolo? Does he have his own picture on the site?

'It never occurred to me that I should do my own someone once told me, but I suppose I should at some point. I don't know when though... I've got a short list involving my old journalism teacher, an Egyptian man, and Osama Bin Laden.' We'll just have to keep watching the site to find out which he chooses.

If you'd like to become part of Someone Once Told Me then delve into your memories and submit a photograph via the website at someone-oncetoldme.com or email Mario Cacciottolo to arrange a time to be photographed.

A new series on the internet gets its lead from web users, **Adam Bambury** reports

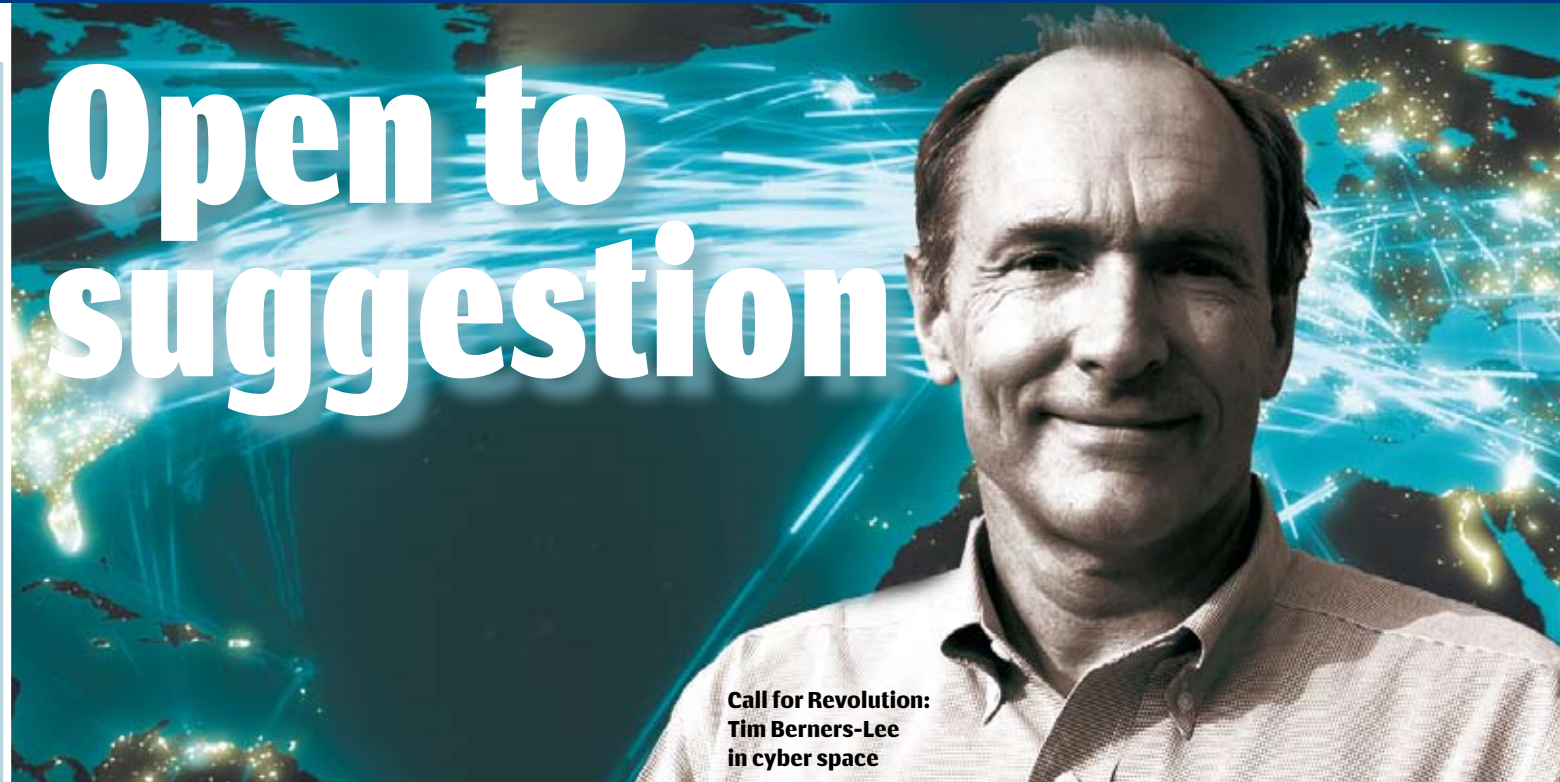
THOUGH 'THE VIRTUAL REVOLUTION' begins on Saturday, a sizeable proportion of internet savvy users are already familiar with its content. Don't be alarmed – it hasn't fallen victim to that media villain du jour, the illegal file sharers. This sharing has been entirely voluntary.

From its launch in July, when World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee came to White City and announced that 'the concept of a [tv] channel will soon be history... the future of video on the web will allow random access to everything that has ever been broadcast', it was clear this project was going to be different from the norm.

On one hand it remains a traditional high budget four-part documentary, exploring how 20 years of the internet has affected our lives and discussing the web's role in everything from self-expression to governmental repression. Talking heads include heavy hitters like Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales, celebrity Tweet-machine Stephen Fry, and the usually camera-shy Berners-Lee.

On the other, it's an innovative online experiment revolving around the exhaustive Digital Revolution (the project's working title) website, which gave anyone with an internet connection the opportunity to have an input in the direction the finished documentary would take.

Months of pre-production saw the team – including series presenter and academic Ale-



Call for Revolution:
Tim Berners-Lee
in cyber space

ks Krotoski – blogging their thoughts on the format of each programme, and responding to the ideas, questions and frequent criticisms (this is the internet after all) of users. This 'open source' ethos culminated in the uploading of the interview rushes online for non-commercial users to do with as they wanted.

This wasn't an easy task – it took six months to obtain the unique permissive licence which allows users to watch, download and edit material before (and after) the series airs. Input had to come from Editorial Policy, Legal and Business Affairs, Rights, Commercial Agency, FM&T, Vision Social Media, among others, before the scheme was approved.

So was it worth all the effort? 'I hope users gained a lot, and it showed the BBC is absolutely up for sharing its public service content,' says exec Dominic Crossley-Holland. 'Clearly you can't completely subvert the tv process – I don't want to suggest that everything was up for grabs. But lots of good ideas came from the web – interviewees, names, thoughts for filming, case histories, experiments. All of those things we fed into the series.'

Was it hard to sort the wheat from the chaff? 'The chaff tends to be very chaffy,' quips multiplatform content producer Dan Gluckman. 'The problem is more when the director has a particular vision of what they want to

do. To get these extra ideas coming in makes it quite difficult for them.'

Both men see a future for this method of production. Dominic argues that it could be the start of a different way of making programmes. 'We have scores of interviews that in a tv show will only run 10-30 seconds which we've posted up in their entirety. It seems to me our audience is the owner of the content, not us,' he says. 'In order to be healthy programme makers in the future, I think this is something we've got to embrace.'

The Virtual Revolution, BBC Two, January 30
See clips made from Virtual Revolution content at Ariel Online

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Hawk-Woods new range of MacBook battery adaptors allow production personnel to run their Mac's from a range of different broadcast camera batteries. These batteries are often already being used out in the field.

They are ideal for using in remote locations, or if you find yourself away from a mains power supply for a prolonged period of time - often the case in this industry. The large capacity of most broadcast camera batteries, provide a huge amount of portable power. With this new series of adaptors from Hawk-Woods, this power is now accessible to a MacBook.

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THE ART OF THE ANNOUNCER

by Sue Llewellyn

CHARLOTTE GREEN is a terrible giggler. She's even in stitches when we talk about her infamous giggling fit on *Today*, which was triggered by the first recording of a human voice.

It was only the second time in her long career that the newsreader – whose own mellifluous tones are to many the embodiment of Radio 4 – had corpsed on air, but she says that the listeners were very kind about it. 'They seem to like it when you show that you're human and not an automaton,' she muses.

For anyone with a burning desire to become an announcer, her advice is simple: 'On radio, the voice is everything,' she says. 'You need to sound warm and accessible.'

And for a newsreader, it's a question of finding the balance between sounding authoritative and engaged as well as lively and upbeat: 'If you sound bored that's terrible,' she says. 'I immerse myself in the news because if I understand the story I can read it intelligently.'

BBC voice coach Elspeth Morrison agrees: 'You've got to have an understanding and an interest in what you're saying,' she insists. 'Make it sound like it's the most interesting thing on the planet and people will believe it.' Other qualities she looks for are clarity, authority and 'a voice fit for the job you're in. Charlotte Green on 1Xtra just wouldn't work'.

Different stations and networks have distinctive house styles, says World Service announcer Iain Purdon: 'They use voices to create their sound and to project the image of the service.' His colleague, announcer Michael Powles, agrees: 'My voice wasn't right for Radio 2, Radio 3 or Radio 4, but it just seemed to fit the World Service.'



KATE CHARLESWORTH

Twenty years ago, when Powles first started newsreading at the World Service, he acknowledges that his delivery sounded 'a bit posh'. 'A clear reading voice is essential but it's not Received Pronunciation any more,' he says. 'Language changes, and the world audience need to be kept up with the way we speak in Britain.'

Forget a public school education and a

Where once RP was the required standard for the BBC, today it's what you say not how you say it – and spending your formative years in local radio helps, says Radio 4 announcer Jim Lee: 'You've only got your voice to engage with the listener, but if you've been doing it long enough, it becomes second nature,' he says.

Senior announcer Chris Aldridge, who manages the Radio 4 team of continuity announcers and newsreaders, advises people to think of themselves as 'the listener's friend'.

It's a trick that works for newsreader Alice Arnold, who tries to convey a personal, 'intimate' style on air. 'I'm very aware that radio is often listened to alone, and I'm conscious that I am talking mostly to one single person.'

Engaging your listeners is key but 'a nice voice is very much in the ear of the beholder,' says Elspeth Morrison. 'In news, you're listening to what they're saying and not how they're saying it – ideally you want a voice where you don't hear the 'voice'.'

What about a distinctive voice like Robert Peston's? 'He hasn't got voice issues,' Morrison insists, 'but he is Marmite (a matter of taste)' and it would be wrong to try and contain him. But she freely admits that he wouldn't find work as a continuity announcer or presenter, 'because we expect certain rhythms and tones from our news people'.

It is possible to change your voice? It is, Morrison says, but she cautions that it is often a long, slow slog. 'Some people want accent reduction or accent softening, but I always explain to them that this will change their personality – how you speak is who you are.'

The successful announcer must also be able to negotiate on-air mishaps – from spoonerisms to sniggering.

For Jim Lee a quick sip of water just before the Shipping Forecast gave him such a bad coughing fit that when he opened the mic 'the voice that emerged was like something from *The Omen*'.

And don't misplace your vowels. At the World Service, Michael Powles says care must be taken with phrases such as 'the meeting passed off peacefully' and 'cutting the country's interest rates'.

His colleague Stewart Macintosh described his struggle to announce the Olympic Games from Atlanta when he found himself saying, 'now on the BBC World Service we go live to Olympia for the Atlantics'. While Jonathan Wheatley cites 'A jobs blow in Bristol' A phrase that doubtless would have set Charlotte Green giggling again like she did in 1997 when she heard the pronunciation of the gloriously named Major General Jack Tuat.

For Voice Tips see <http://college.gateway.bbc.co.uk/journalism/main.asp?page=6315>

From Hadrian to Hirst – the Seven Ages of Britain

by Candida Watson

FOR PRESENTER DAVID Dimbleby it has been 'a glimpse into the British soul'. For the audience it will be a chance to see objects which embody the spirit of their age, and illustrate the changing nature of the nation. In seven one hour programmes on BBC One, Dimbleby will consider Britain's past through its arts, from the Age of Conquest (the Romans to the Normans), to the Age of Ambition (1914 to the present day).

Viewers will get privileged, HD access to treasures like the Coventry Doom, a medieval wall painting of the last judgement, high above the nave of the city's Holy Trinity Church; or the shirt worn by Charles I at his execution.

They will also be introduced to more prosaic objects which typify the spirit of their particular age – a Maxim gun from the Age of Empire, an Austin 7 from the 20s.

Produced in partnership with the Open University the programmes, which were two years in the making, represent one of the BBC's biggest ever art commissions. Dimbleby acknowledges that he is neither an historian nor an art critic, but he brings an audience with him, as the success of his previous series, *A Picture of Britain and How We Built Britain*, demonstrated.

Mark Bell, commissioning editor for arts, says: 'David Dimbleby has fabulous enthusiasm as well as knowledge. One of my favourite moments in this series is David's

virtuoso deconstruction of the Rake's Progress'.

The programme makers achieved extraordinary access to priceless artefacts. Series producer Jonty Claypole says they took expert advice from the OU, specialists and curators in their choice of works. For him the highlight was seeing a Roman frieze at Aphrodisias in Turkey which depicts Britannia being pulled down and trampled by the Emperor Claudius. A piece of art far removed from our depictions of proud, regal Britannia, but typifying the Roman view of a little country thoroughly subjugated. Claypole says: 'It is the oldest image of Britannia in the world, it was only excavated about 20 years ago, and it has never been filmed before, it is wonderful.'

Seven Ages of Britain, BBC One, Jan 31



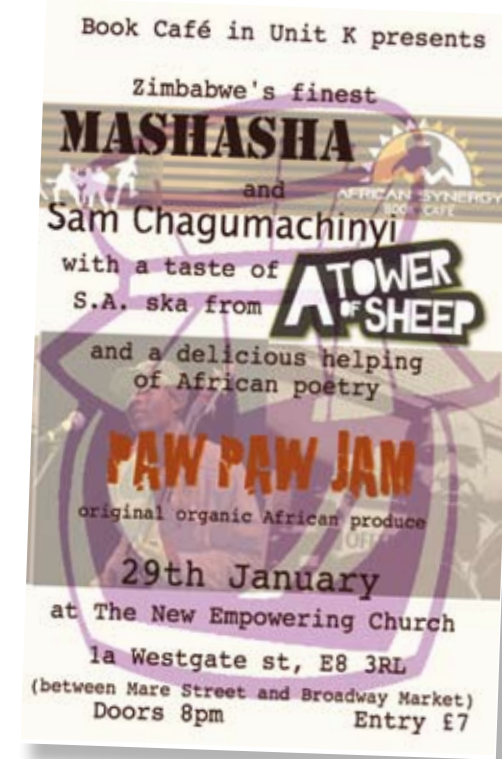
Face to face: presenter David Dimbleby on the banks of the Thames with cast of Hadrian's head

SHAMELESS PLUG

TOMAS BRICKHILL, TECHNICAL ASSISTANT FOR DVSOLUTIONS

At the end on the month I'm helping to organise the launch of Paw Paw Jam, a regular monthly night of African poetry, music and general shenanigans. Paw Paw Jam nights first began at the Book Café in Zimbabwe to promote new talent and celebrate cultural diversity, and the new London nights will be no exception.

I grew up in Zimbabwe and when the Book Café opened there was really nothing like it. The Book Café was the first venue to have public discussions on topical issues, provide a platform for poets, offer an open mic night, hold regular literature events and it also launched Zimbabwe's first stand-up comedian and brought the traditional mbira (thumb piano) music of Zimbabwe back into popular culture. Its policy of promoting free speech, even as the Zimbabwean government was clamping down on it, quickly made it an oasis of creative freedom in



the arts and it has remained at the centre of Harare's emerging youth culture.

Since I moved to London I have searched for a place like the Book Café to no avail and so myself and a group of other former regulars and performers, now based in London, decided to set up a Book Café night in London.

I am lucky enough to be in contact with a number of very talented African poets, comedians, singers and musicians, all of whom will probably appear on stage at a Paw Paw Jam over 2010.

The launch night will include a Book Café style poetry slam with one of the original Book Café poets, Victor Mavedzenge, the terrific South African ska band 'A Tower of Sheep', as well as virtuoso Zimbabwean bassist Mashasha who will be playing with a full band. We will be screening footage from the Book Café in Harare over the evening and a dj from the very popular afro-centric Wormfood group will keep us moving into the small hours.

Do come and join us from 8pm on January 29. See the Book Café UK group page on Facebook or by emailing pawpawjamuk@gmail.com

BBC IN ACTION

WHEN BBC WALES correspondent Wyre Davies put a call in to the RAF 22 Search & Rescue Squadron, he wasn't expecting them to say yes. 'They were being asked to air-lift pregnant women to hospital, rescue stranded motorists and help to find people lost in the snow,' he recalls.

To his surprise, RAF 22 agreed to take him and his cameraman Tim Jones up in their Sea King helicopter.

Cramming themselves in with a small Z1 camera they hit temperatures as low as minus eight degrees – but arrived home with footage that was used across all the

news platforms.

'Filming and even speaking in such conditions was difficult and testing,' Davies tells us.

'Not only are the RAF search and rescue crews very busy in the snowy mountains of the UK, but because of the hostile conditions at the start of the year they were having to help the other emergency services when the snow made it impossible for them to do their work properly.'

Take a tour of a search and rescue Sea King helicopter with Wyre Davies by visiting tinyurl.com/HighWyre



Hard landing: Wyre Davies with cameraman Tim Jones (left)

WANTED

YOUR HOT TIPS

Week@Work wants to hear your tips for surviving BBC boards, for a future 'Tricks of the Trade' feature. Send your suggestions and stories (from both sides of the interviewing table) and we'll share the best ones with all of you itching to get ahead.

COMING UP

◆ **KUDOS**, the production company behind *Spooks*, *Hustle* and *Life on Mars* has been commissioned to make a new eight-part drama series for BBC One called **OUTCASTS**. Set on a recently-discovered planet, it tells of the dilemmas, loves and lives of a group of people setting up a new world. Outcasts is created by Ben Richards (*Spooks*, *The Fixer*, *Party Animals*) and commissioned by Ben Stephenson and Jay Hunt.

◆ Continuing BBC One's reinvention of popular science on the channel, new commissions for 2011 include **HUMAN**, a landmark series taking the audience through the history of the human body. The three-part series will be charting the course of the biological development of one of the world's most complicated species – humanity.

◆ Moving from the individual to the hugely

impersonal, physicist Brian Cox returns to our tv screens in **UNIVERSAL** (BBC Two), an exploration of the entire universe.

◆ New commissions on Radio 4 include Professor Marcus du Sautoy's ten-part series, **A BRIEF HISTORY OF MATHEMATICS**, and an ambitious 40-part series, **SAVING SPECIES**, which looks at the survival chances of some of the world's most rarest animals and plants and their habitats.

week@work

TRICKS OF THE TRADE:

The end of a big trial can make riveting viewing, but getting it right takes a lot of preparation. Home Affairs correspondent Andy Tighe, who has broken numerous verdicts on the BBC News Channel, shares his tips

1 It's all about team work. It can take a surprising number of people to get a verdict out of a closed court-room, often using hand signals or coloured cards, phoning simultaneously to the gallery and the live position and even writing verdicts on a white-board in front of the correspondent. Work out the system that works best for you and remember, no-one should ever feel pressurised to pass on information they're unsure about. Better late than wrong!

2 Get to know all the players – clerks, barristers, police etc – so that you can find out whether the return of the jury really does mean a verdict is imminent and you have to go to action stations.

3 Rehearse the most likely scenarios in your head so that the words and expressions come easily. Remember that the most interesting element is sometimes not the verdict itself but what it means – a major success/defeat for the police, the men behind the biggest ever robbery convicted/cleared, relief/despair for the victim's family...etc.

4 Liaise with the channel producer so that you know what pictures, floats and backgrounders are available and discuss the various headlines and



Andy Tighe outside the Royal Courts of Justice

scrolling Atons that will work best. Try to get a small monitor cabled to the live point.

5 Don't go on air too quickly – it can take an agonisingly long time for everyone to get back into court after they've been summoned. Stay calm, keep it simple and don't get into long, complicated narratives that you might have to truncate suddenly when the verdict arrives. Use this time to build up the drama and remind people of the key events in the trial.

6 If there are multiple verdicts, when you've got through them all, focus on the most important ones and summarise the rest. Don't get bogged down in the minor stuff.

Never say anything you're not completely convinced is true. But if you do

make a mistake, correct it immediately and move on.

7 I use flashcards with background details of the case, the evidence, quotes and key facts. You can even forget the name of the accused or the judge in the heat of the moment! Anyway, it's reassuring to know you've got something to turn to if you've got to 'fill'.

8 Don't be afraid to change the tone when the verdicts are in – drop 'alleged' and other neutral phrases and be more strident. Keep reiterating the main developments for people just tuning in. But also try to move the story on – judge's quotes, reaction from the dock, sentencing etc. Your team should keep this information flowing.

9 Keep your eyes open for relatives, solicitors, police etc coming out of court so that you can draw them towards your camera position for interviews. And if it turns into a scrum make sure you shout the loudest and keep them looking at your camera for as long as you can.

10 Final tip: should it rain, your carefully-redacted notes and urgent quotes will disappear before your eyes in seconds. Always take a transparent plastic wallet or, failing that, use a pencil.

HOW TO BREAK A COURT VERDICT LIVE

CHANGING PLACES

Gavin Smyth is leaving his role as BBC SSO's head of MC&A to become head of marketing for BBC Scotland, from March... **Chris Jones**, editor of the 'About the BBC' blog, has been appointed social media manager in digital communications...

It's musical chairs at the BBC Asian Network with **Sonia Deol** (pictured) moving to a new weekday morning show on the station and **Tommy Sandhu** taking on the drivetime slot. Jas Rao moves from drivetime to work on projects for the network and **Nikki Bedi** is leaving the station...

Mark Flashman, operations manager at World Service English, is on attachment to World Service Future Media to work as a search engine optimisation (seo)

specialist for three months...

Chris Gottlieb is taking on a temporary role as acting director for MC&A Vision, with **Sanjay Nazeralli** taking over from Chris as acting director for Journalism for the same period of time...

Gilda Witte moves from her role as acting director for Audio & Music to take up a six month attachment as acting director of marketing and fundraising for Children in Need... **Nicki Sheard** has stepped up to take on the role of acting director for Audio & Music in place of Gilda. The circle is completed by **Emma Bradley** who is moving from her post as director of marketing and fundraising for Children in Need to replace Nicki as acting head of

marketing for Journalism...

Kathy Martin becomes acting director for MC&A BBC North, moving from her current role as head of MC&A for Northern Ireland...

Mark Tierney joins the BBC to become head of planning in the brand strategy and planning team and **Rosalind McKenzie** joined the team as planning manager, covering for **Becky Weathers** who is on maternity leave...



blogbites

What we've found while trawling the blogs this week

Have Spurs got nerve for top four?

When Sebastian Bassong prepared to make his grand Anfield entrance only to discover he had forgotten to put his shorts on, Harry Redknapp may just have suspected it was not Tottenham's night.

And so it proved. Quite how Bassong overlooked this crucial item of clothing – think standing at the bar for two hours with a pair of polka-dotted underpants on full display – is as inexplicable as Spurs' performance.

Bassong's team-mates were almost as absent-minded as the startled and shortless defender as they forgot a visit to an under-strength and fragile Liverpool represented the perfect platform to make a powerful statement about their top-four aspirations.

Phil McNulty, chief football writer, BBC Sport http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/philmcnulty/2010/01/when_sebastian_bassong_prepare.html

The Classless Society

Minutes after arriving at Sydney airport, Prince William did something that an Australian leader would rarely, if ever, do on home soil: lever himself into the back seat of a car. Australian leaders make a point of sitting next to the driver, a gesture designed to convey that the prime minister is merely the first among equals in this fiercely egalitarian country. The PM's car isn't that flash either – a modified white Holden (the Aussie Vauxhall) that would not look out of place on the drive of any suburban bungalow, save for the Aussie flag fastened to the bonnet.

To many, it is one of the great Australian anomalies that a nation so strongly committed to the egalitarian ideal continues to countenance a monarchical system founded on inherited privilege.

Nick Bryant, Sydney correspondent http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/nickbryant/2010/01/the_classless_society.html

The Undercover Celt – five days deep

Five days in, 39 concerts and 18 workshops down, and six of the seven Celtic Connections shows personally attended by your covert correspondent have ranged from excellent through outstanding to transcendently unforgettable. As was widely predicted, nothing so far has quite approached the magic summoned last night by the unique vocal genius that is Bobby McCerrin. Whether deploying his enraptured audience as rhythm section or backing choir, at times almost literally playing the crowd like a huge collective instrument, such was his skill at cueing our responses, or jamming delightedly with his surprise Scottish guests (Eddi Reader, Angus Lyon and Ruairidh Campbell), and the Grace, Hewat & Polwart trio), he transported both the human voice and the art of performance into an utterly different dimension.

The Undercover Celt, guest blogger, BBC Scotland <http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/scotlandsmusic/2010/01/the-undercover-celt-part-1.shtml#more>

Less is more, if you're the BBC, until it comes to partnerships

As the industry awaits Mark Thompson's strategic review, key players have been using conference platforms to spell out how they would rein in the BBC. **Cathy Loughran** and **Clare Bolt** report from Oxford and Salford Quays.

IT'S A familiar theme – things that the industry and some politicians would like to see the BBC doing less of – and it was a recurring one as media and policy types gathered in Oxford and Salford last week.

Less online (Jeremy Hunt and Sly Bailey); fewer platforms (Peter Bazalgette); a lot less spending on Broadcasting House (Luke Johnson). The outgoing Channel 4 chairman's onslaught on the BBC Trust and the '£1bn' bill for the BH development that proved the organisation had 'more money than it knows what to do with', brought alive a fairly stately Oxford Media Convention.

Johnson thought the trust as 'regulator and champion, defender and critic' was a 'deeply flawed' idea: 'Abolish it forthwith,' was his solution.

A frank and revealing Patricia Hodgson, BBC trustee and former BBC policy director, admitted: 'The trust is a completely lousy system – apart from all the others. It's like democracy,' she suggested. Hodgson wanted to simplify the 'box-ticking bureaucracy' and argued for the trust to have 'greater powers over appointments and salaries'.

On BH, she was more revealing still: 'Waste in the public sector is endemic and Broadcasting House was a major problem' that trustees had inherited from the board of governors. 'The trust closed down the phase where there were clearly problems, took a grip and brought in the NAO.' The National Audit Office's report is due next month.

Sprawling empire

The BBC confirms that the budget for the £800m project had been 'adjusted after the first phase of the redevelopment in 2006', partly to incorporate changes in scope to accommodate new services like Arabic and Persian TV. It was then a year behind and £20m over budget. The project is currently on schedule to be handed over to the BBC at the end of this year, 'within the approved budget'.

The ongoing debate about the future of local tv news saw shadow culture secretary Jeremy Hunt in Oxford and shadow minister Ed Vaizey at the Nations and Regions Media Conference in Sal-



Clockwise from left: Luke Johnson, Erik Huggers, Caroline Thomson, Jeremy Hunt, Helen Boaden, Patricia Hodgson

'We took a grip and brought in the NAO'

PATRICIA HODGSON

-ford, hammering home Tory opposition to the proposed independently funded news consortia – Hunt talking of legal action to stop the pilot IFNCs.

Trinity Mirror chief exec and consortium bidder Sly Bailey complained in Oxford of market distortion for local papers by a 'bloated BBC with insufficient operational discipline'. Director of News Helen Boaden gave assurances that local news from the BBC, including via the BBC's 45 local websites, would be 'no more local than it is today' and so was 'not competing for audience in the same space' as the 1500 hyper-local news sites currently available in the UK.

Meanwhile, the digital economy bill proposal that the BBC and Channel 4 take the lead in online content

would 'power out' entrepreneurs wanting to launch new sites, Hunt claimed. He wanted to 'constrain' the public broadcasters to programme-related material.

Cue FM&T director Eric Huggers in Salford, challenged by interviewer Steve Hewlett to defend the 'sprawling empire' of the BBC website.

'When you grow an organisation...you get duplication of system and effort. A lot of that has been eliminated, and we've standardised in the engine room. The amount of top level domains had been sprawling,' Huggers admitted. It was now right to ask the question: 'Is there an opportunity to [further] limit that, to get more focus on quality, clear propositions?'

BBC iPlayer was a runaway success and Canvas was forging ahead. But shouldn't the BBC focus its efforts on developing content, rather than platforms, media consultant Peter Bazalgette posited.

The iPlayer is a service, not a platform,' said Huggers: 'We need to think about content creation and distribution, but we also need continued investment in R&D,' like the kind that would allow everyone in

the UK to get Freeview HD.

Canvas was first and foremost a standard, a 'unified user experience', that went far beyond 'linear tv plus on-demand'. Most exciting was the prospect of 'small and large companies and entrepreneurial individuals getting their ideas into the living room', he said.

Talking of benefits, Caroline Thomson previewed a Deloitte report in Oxford, showing that the BBC contributed £7.6bn to the UK economy last year. In the same breath, the BBC's chief operating officer also declared that 'the days of the megamoney [for star salaries] are over'.

Measure success

Andy Duncan's was the lone voice last week wanting the BBC to do more – more sharing of resources, much more partnering. The former Channel 4 chief exec also called for proper measurement of the success of BBC partnerships. Perhaps the BBC connections that his successor David Abraham will bring to the table, as former head of UKTV, will help clinch the partnership that Duncan wanted most of all – a joint venture between Channel 4 and BBC Worldwide.

Listen when the world speaks



JEREMY NYE

HERE'S A HARD QUESTION. What's the biggest problem facing the world? Even for those Pollyannas who mutter 'challenge' or 'opportunity' when they hear the word 'problem', we are a long way from Shangri-la.

Global News has launched an annual poll to find out what the world thinks are the biggest global problems. In year one, we interviewed more than 25,000 people face-to-face or by phone in 23 countries, including 15 of the 20 with the largest populations.

Accurate news and information, analysis of global trends and stimulating debate are all important. But to remain relevant, we're working hard at understanding what information audiences need to lead fulfilling lives.

We've made a point of seeking out those who are not usually given a voice. We hope that The World Speaks will track the real global agenda from citizens, not the politicians, the media, and the 'commentariat'.

Here's what we found. The top concern is extreme poverty (71 per cent thought it very serious). Ranked second was the environment/ pollution (64) and third was rising costs of fuel and food (63). After those was a group covering climate change, human disease, terrorism and the global economy.

We also asked which issues people were talking about. And here we found that prices, poverty, diseases and the economy featured more highly. We learned that while many issues are perceived as serious, it is those which have a personal impact that get people talking: those that affect whether they have money to spend, or whether they or a relative might get ill. Perhaps the reason why climate change or war/conflict did not feature more highly is that they feel more abstract – there's less personal impact, and fewer occasions to bring it up.

We also found out that nationality has a bigger impact on people's concerns than whether they are young or old, male or female or with different educational attainment. So, residents of India and Pakistan, and only them, ranked terrorism as the top problem. Only France and Germany rated war/armed conflict as most serious. We also found that China placed the environment and climate change at number one and two. Clearly China has been less affected by recent economic woes than some economies.

How did the UK compare? Like nine other countries, it placed extreme poverty highest, but voted terrorism and armed conflict more highly than most. While the UK ranked transnational migration bottom of the list, it was ranked far more highly as a topic discussed with friends and family.

www.bbcworldservice.com/worldagenda
Jeremy Nye is head of audience research, global news

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

Spend less time on pay

I attended the Stephen Sackur/Mark Thompson showdown at the News and Sport festival last week (Ariel, January 19), and was sorely disappointed. The inordinate focus on executive pay misses the point.

The entire media industry is being turned upside-down. Companies like Google, Apple and others are changing everything about the way media works. Our competitors, notably News Corp, are reacting in ways that will change that environment even further.

Audience behaviours have changed profoundly – many of the people I know under 20 years old don't see the point of having a tv (or a tv licence). A laptop is enough for them. Dealing with these issues requires strategy, skill, and vision. And yet, when we have a precious hour to ask the dg about the big issues facing our company, we spend most of it dealing with who claims for the dg's parking tickets.

Executive pay is important. Fairness is important. But let's not get distracted from the most important question: how can the BBC best serve the public, now that everything about their relationship to us has changed?

Philip Trippenbach
current affairs

■ Why does Mark Thompson continually justify his salary and that of others in top jobs at the BBC by comparing them to salaries paid in the private sector?

The BBC is a public service broadcaster, paid for with licence and taxpayers' money. Lower grade staff are continually told that we cannot expect higher wages for this reason. We are told that if we want higher wages, we should leave and get work

Don't let U2 rap cut the BBC down to size

Endorsement=Bad, Epic=Good.

In judging that the BBC inappropriately endorsed U2, via the U2=BBC device, a clamour to row back from epic coverage of bands would be a likely but incorrect response. Lest we forget, every song played on the radio is, in effect, an 'advert' for an artist's wares.

To some degree, the media exaggerates the true popularity of artists such as Joe McElderry (remember him?), while neglecting the global phenomenon of bands of U2's stature. To use the =



grandeur is something that it's rather good at.
Jonathan De Souza, global news marketing

symbol once more, such an approach subscribes to the Nuremburg rally syndrome which equates big with bad and as something to be feared.

The BBC must not fear big or epic. In fact, like weddings and funerals,

in the private sector.

Most of us stay here because we like working at the BBC and value our output more than we value the luxuries that high salaries can buy.

What an enormous pity that the person who heads the BBC doesn't share that same view.

Lindsay Alexander
global news

■ If one accepts Mark Thompson's arguments about paying top managers top salaries, otherwise the BBC would not be able to attract people like the developer of the iPlayer, then why does it follow that he, as the dg, needs to be paid more than anybody else? There are plenty of football clubs who pay their managers considerably less than their star players.

But my argument is a different one: we are not a commercial company, or a football club, but a public service corporation. People who want to work here should know that their salaries will not be the same as in the private sector. And if we

need to attract people from the private sector, they should be employed for a specific project, with any payments linked to successful implementation. That way top managers' salaries could come down without harming the BBC's ability to attract outside 'talent'.

Andreas Gebauer
assistant editor, WS radio newsroom

Fault lines

A friend of mine excitedly sent me a link to an essay she'd written for the BBC 'My Story' competition, which had been picked to appear on the BBC website for all to read.

I was surprised to see that, at the end of the story, the first thing the reader's eye falls across is a button marked 'Complain about this story'.

The story is, of course, completely inoffensive – and very well written – but the effect of this prompt, almost inevitably, was to make me scroll back over the story just in case there was something offensive in it which I hadn't spotted.

Fostering a culture in which BBC production staff are encouraged to apologise for their work instead of taking pride in it, is one thing. We're kind of used to that now.

Extending that culture to members of the public, in return for their sincere creative contributions, seems to me quite another, and quite shameful.

Paul Bajoria
Radio 4, Manchester

Hit where it Hertz

Nick Woolley – I see your £15 and raise you £30 (January 12). On a recent OB in Sheffield, several people were caught out using hire cars, the windscreens a blur in the driving rain in an unfamiliar city and following the suggested sat nav route. It was a bus lane infringement so poorly signposted that there is a chat site dedicated to it.

All very annoying but not as infuriating as having the £30 fine kindly paid by Hertz and an administration fee of £30 added by them. This was

then to be deducted directly from the drivers' salaries.

Mike Page
radio outside broadcasts, A&M

Rock of ages

Regarding Ariel (January 19), Spinal Tap and the new BBC Two (pre)history series *Stonehenge Britain*. So, really like, that'd be not so much a documentary – but a rockumentary?

Sorry, I couldn't resist.

Tim Bowler
online sbj, WS business programmes

Get a grip on IT

Recently, Mark Thompson and Helen Boaden have happily acknowledged what everyone here has known for years: that the BBC's IT infrastructure simply isn't up to the job required of it; that the new VoIP phones are disastrous; and that staff concerns over Siemens' stewardship of IT matters are valid.

For example: BBC staff using BBC computers in BBC buildings are unable to play BBC content because of problems with networks and desktops; serious concerns were expressed when the VoIP phones were initially introduced in English regions years ago yet the roll-out continued regardless; Siemens appear unresponsive and unconcerned by customer complaints and the lines between their and FM&T's responsibilities are unclear for the majority of staff.

In the light of yet another week of disastrous and lengthy server failures, could the dg expand upon his pronouncement that he will be 'thinking strategically to make sure we've got the infrastructure we need'?

David Larnar
audience services

OBITUARY

BILL MCLAREN

The night before the Rugby World Cup final of 1991 at Twickenham, four of us went out for a meal in a restaurant in Richmond. Bill McLaren had insisted on an early-evening start and an early finish because he had a big day ahead, commenting on England-Australia.

As the evening progressed and the restaurant got busier, more and more people in town for the final recognised that Bill was there, and one by one they came over for an autograph. The autographs became chats, the chats became conversations, and almost like a roll-on roll-off ferry, a string of total strangers ended up sitting down for dinner with us.

The original occupants of the table, myself included, just sat back and watched as Bill chatted about rugby, rugby and more rugby. It was a subject he simply never tired of. He was much later to bed than he'd



anticipated. When Bill talked rugby, he spoke with understanding and passion, and he spoke about it the same way with a seasoned All Black and a member of the Old Alleynians 4th XV. He was astonishingly even-handed with everyone, full of such genuine goodwill that in an almost evangelical way, you felt spiritually uplifted having spent time in his company.

The Rugby World Cup in South Africa in 1995 meant spending hours just listening to tales of life as a teacher, as a player, of bygone days in his beloved Borders, of commentaries far and wide, all told with no edge and not a hint of self-glorification.

Words like 'great', 'legend' and 'icon' are bandied about far too regu-

larly these days but Bill fully justified all three. He'd been an integral part of the BBC's most glorious years as a sports broadcaster, and for almost half a century he embodied rugby union to the watching world.

I was walking the dog in Richmond Park when my phone went with the news of Bill's death. Other nearby dog-walkers must have wondered why this grown man started shedding a few tears. But as the news became public, I started receiving text messages from contemporaries at university and beyond. All hugely upset, many saying they'd cried too. Bill was that important to so many of us. The soundtrack of the game, and the soundtrack of part of our youth.

John Inverdale

DAVID GILES

Listing David Giles's tv directing credits, impressive as they are, in no way conveys the warmth, intelligence and charm of the man himself. Actors loved to work for him; many of his BBC colleagues – script



David Reid (*The Strauss Family*) and Richard Bates (*The Darling Buds of May*)

David's first BBC directing was on the black and white soap *Compact*, but he became well known for directing the lion's share of *The Forsyte Saga* (with Eric Porter, Maggie Tzack, Susan Hampshire). He directed all 12 episodes of *The First Churchills* (with John Neville and Susan Hampshire, who won an Emmy).

Other BBC credits include serials such as *Sense and Sensibility*, *Resurrection*, *Vanity Fair* and *Mansfield Park*; plays include *The Winslow Boy*, *The Recruiting Officer*, *When We Are Married* and five history plays for the *Complete*

editors, designers, costume, make-up and production staff – became lifelong friends, as did writers such as Alan Plater and producers including

Shakespeare.

He directed the first serial shot entirely on location with a two camera OB unit, *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. Though known as an actors' director, he was technically astute and used cameras with boldness and subtlety; for instance a seven minute handheld tracking shot with Alan Bates and Anna Massey quarrelling as Henchard and his mistress.

An OB unit was used again for the location scenes in one of David's favourite productions, *The Barchester Chronicles*, starring Donald Pleasence and Nigel Hawthorne and giving Alan Rickman his first major screen role as the awful Mr Slope.

Later tv credits include *Hetty Wainthropp Investigates* and *A Murder Has Been Announced* (Miss Marple, with Joan Hickson). David continued to work in the theatre, where his career began, doing new work such as *Smoking With Lulu* (at the Yorkshire Playhouse, transferred to the Soho Poly) and *The Quiz* (with David Bradley) usually with his regular theatre designer and partner, Kenneth Mellor.

Marcia Wheeler and Betty Willingale

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Broadcast Journalist, Coventry & Warwickshire
West Midlands, Coventry
5/7D/Ref: 247599
C 08-Feb-10 A 09 months

News Systems Trainer, BBC Newsroom
PEOP BBC Academy, London
TV Centre
Under Review/Ref: 253264
C 07-Feb-10 A 06 months

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

Head of Factual, Entertainment & Formats
Rights & Business Affairs (BBC Vision), London
11D/Ref: 252857
C 03-Feb-10

Head of Editorial Standards, Compliance & Risk
MC&A Direction, London
White City
11D/Ref: 251835
C 03-Feb-10

Financial Reporting Manager / Rheolwr Adroddiadau Ariannol
Core Finance, Cardiff
11D/Ref: 249748
E C 01-Feb-10 A 12 months

Head of Marketing & Pictures, BBC Three, Comedy & Entertainment
MC&A TV Group, London
TV Centre
10D/Ref: 250669
C 01-Feb-10 A 09 months

Senior Commercial Manager, BBC Distribution
S&D Commercial, London
White City
10D/Ref: 250182
C 08-Feb-10 A 12 months

Regional Manager, Central Region
BBC Digital UK, Multi
Location - West Midlands
9D/Ref: 253460
C 01-Feb-10 A 18 months

Partnership Manager
MC&A Direction, London
White City
9D/Ref: 253065
C 02-Feb-10

Portfolio Analyst, W1
BBC Workplace, London
Henry Wood House
9D/Ref: 249168
E C 01-Feb-10 A 2 years

Finance Analyst / Dadansoddwr Cyllid
Core Finance, Cardiff
8D/Ref: 251147
C 01-Feb-10 A 12 months

Business Manager
Core Finance, London
White City
7D/Ref: 253459
E C 07-Feb-10

Business Manager (Meetings), Executive Unit
Executive Support & Projects, London
White City
7D/Ref: 253139
C 01-Feb-10 12 months

Research Officer
WST Development, London
Bush House
6D/Ref: 253092
C 31-Jan-10 A 12 months

e-Sourcing Adviser
Procurement, London
White City
6D/Ref: 23104909
E C 28-Jan-10

PR Assistant, BBC Global News
WSB Marketing, London
Bush House
4D/Ref: 253076
C 28-Jan-10 A 04 months

Senior Support Technician
PEOP BBC Academy, London
White City
4D/Ref: 252872
E C 07-Feb-10 A 06 months

Team Assistant, Brand Identity
WSB Marketing, London
Bush House
4D/Ref: 251137
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NEW MEDIA

Technical Project Manager
FMT Divisional Controllers, London
Broadcast Centre Media Village
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E C 02-Feb-10

Editorial Assistant, Programme Support
Multiplatform, London
Media Centre
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C 04-Feb-10 A 06 months

SPECIALIST TECHNICAL AND DESIGN SERVICES

Designer, Multimedia Newsroom
HS News - Multimedia Newsroom, London
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TECHNOLOGY

Systems Analyst
OMG, London
Broadcast Centre Media Village
8D/Ref: 252193
E C 01-Feb-10

BBC WORLDWIDE

UK Licensing Account Manager, Adult Brands
Children's & Licensing, London
Media Centre
SENEX/Ref: 252229
E C 03-Feb-10

See Attachment

Learning the hard way

Online business writer Simon Atkinson goes live at World Service

A QUICK LISTEN BACK on the iPlayer confirmed the fears. I really had, on my live radio debut, described Iraq as ‘a very hairy country’.

At the BBC business website where I usually work, the sub-editor would have made the correction before the story ever went live (presumably pausing only to cut, paste and share among colleagues, just as when someone described British Gas as having an ‘Anus Horribilis’).

But on attachment at the World Service, and left to my own devices in a studio, the gaffe became just another lesson to learn the hard way.

This three-month stint has coincided with a separate scheme that tries to equip online reporters with the skills and confidence to appear on other BBC platforms.

But for all the training in holding engaging two-



way interviews or writing succinct news bulletins, for a print hack turned online it’s sometimes easy to forget the power and reach of radio, especially that from Bush House.

This was confirmed last month when I awoke to a Facebook message from a friend in East Timor. ‘Was that you I heard this morning?’ they asked incredulously. ‘And anyway, how is anyone foreign going to understand your Mackem accent?’

Besides confusing audiences with a lack of verbal dexterity, I’ve chipped in with story ideas, made radio packages on music and manufacturing, published podcasts and, having spent almost a decade as a journo dodging them, done my first overnight shifts.

Perhaps most pleasingly, when trying to line up interviews with banana growers after a crucial trade deal was struck, I got a man from Del Monte to say ‘yes’.

Despite regular and pathetic cries for technical assistance, there has been a warm welcome from colleagues. Many names and voices were already familiar, but there’s plenty to be said for spending a few months sharing an office with workmates from another site – something to be cemented when TVC and Bush teams come together in the W1 move.

As a token of gratitude, I’ve pledged to become an even more regular listener, kicking at least some of my 5 live habit. (*World Have Your Say*, it seems, can be considerably more engaging than 6-0-6).

Meanwhile the chats with former foreign correspondents and our staff and stringers around the globe have reignited a desire to try and nab an overseas BBC posting one of these days.

Though probably nowhere too hairy.

Been anywhere nice?
Send your attachment stories to Clare Bolt

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 Attachment/contract

What did you want to be when you were little?

I always wanted to be a writer but my parents were very keen that I got a proper qualification before I launched into this crazy journalism business, so I did a law degree and after that did a year's pupillage training to be a barrister.

So how did you make the leap from barrister to journalist?

I think the way you think as a journalist and as a lawyer is actually very similar, and all the time I was doing pupillage I was submitting freelance articles to The Voice newspaper. I then did random sales jobs like selling airtime and was spectacularly unsuccessful. I sold absolutely nothing and luckily, in the end, The Voice said come and try out as a writer.

What did you do then?

I started off doing general news reporting and then became news editor. I then did a bit of local radio reporting, worked at GMTV, Sky News and then joined the BBC, starting off in World News and then went to business unit reporting and presenting. It's been a mix of presenting, reporting, output editing and then this opportunity on *Africa Business Report* came up.

How would you describe *Africa Business Report*?

It's a monthly programme which each time comes from a different African country. The whole idea is to give a sense of the colour, the heat, the diversity and the vibrancy of the entrepreneurial culture that just goes right the way across the continent.

So it's a business programme?

Yes but it's not business as usual. If you think you know what Africa is about then you'll see that but you will also see a lot more going on. There's far more energy and creativity than we see reflected in much of the coverage of Africa.

So how do you bring business to life?

Quite often when people think of business they think of quite abstract, dry concepts and ideas and what we do is to say this is what business really means: It's about a form of human communication, it's about feeding the ones you love, it's about building your community and a network that is going to sustain your country and your continent.

What sort of businesses are you talking about?

It ranges from the corporate to the one man band. In South Africa, for example, we featured a company that's doing great things in the space industry and one young woman was saying how, as a girl growing up in Soweto, she had no



PHOTOGRAPH: MARK BASSETT

EGON COSSOU Producer, *Africa Business Report*

idea she'd be on a trajectory to become, quite literally, a rocket scientist. That's the sort of story we're keen to bring out.

What other surprises have you found?

In Ghana the private health service is so well developed that it's developing a health tourism industry and people are coming from across the region and having procedures done that they just can't get at home. And it's done in a spa setting. The continent is alive with inspiring business stories. Quite often it's a case of what can we squeeze in.

How have you found going to a different country every month? Any disasters?

No disasters but we've certainly had adventures. When we went to Kampala we landed in a day of rioting and gunfire which required rethinking our plans quite quickly. What has ama-

zed me is the way people have been eager and quick to help us out. They realise that we're doing something pretty special and they want to be in on it.

Are there any places you would really like to visit?

What's happening in Zimbabwe is particularly important and interesting. What was a pretty closed society is gradually opening up. I think, from both a professional and a personal viewpoint, seeing what the changes there mean for businesses and people's lives and livelihoods is going to be great telly and great for the programme.

Why do you think we have such a bad image of Africa?

I think the Americans have a phrase, 'If it bleeds, it leads'. In other words, if it's suffering, downbeat then it's going to get on. That's what's great about this program-

me; it doesn't feel like it has got to highlight the negative in order to cover a story.

In what way?

Up until now if you wanted to look at the way Botswana is turning itself into an international financial services centre that would be quite a hard sell because it isn't about conflict or hardship, it's about a country that's run its economy particularly well and invested its diamond wealth in high quality education for its children, and medical care.

Have there been any amazing moments or things that surprised you?

All the time in every country. I have yet to go to a country where I think it's just what I expected. For instance in Botswana, in a crude 'headliney' sort of way, I'd say it's pretty much the Switzerland of Africa – things work, it's a very efficient society and I suppose on a very simple level the thing that took me aback is some of the modern architecture. One face into the future while at the same time acknowledging their past.

You sound like someone who is loving his job.

Well, not only can I see some of the countries I've heard about for years but also, through this programme and my part in it, I can show the world the sheer life, energy, colour and diversity of this amazing continent. Being able to do this is such a great gig for me.

Interview by Sue Llewellyn

foreign bureau



MARK LOWEN

CORRESPONDENT, BELGRADE

SOME OLD-HANDS described it to me as the 'cramming period': those few weeks before you take up a foreign posting when you devour as many books about your patch as you can, so as to sound vaguely knowledgeable for that first despatch. I duly followed suit before heading off to Belgrade last June. But everything I read painted a rather depressing portrait, and my head became full of images of bread queues and bombings a decade ago. Those chilling phrases 'ethnic cleansing', 'the Srebrenica massacre' and 'war crime fugitives' began to roll off the tongue.

But Belgrade surprised me. Yes, I arrived in hot sunshine, when even a Socialist concrete tower block can look...not bad. But within days I'd experienced the city's fabulous vibrancy, artistic edge and hospitable population. Serbia's capital is bursting with cafés and bars, the River Sava lined with 'splavovi', or boat nightclubs, and the streets peppered with alternative little music venues. I spent my early weeks

doing stories on the renaissance of Serbia through the Exit music festival and University Olympic Games. I met the new generation of Serbs, determined to put the past behind them. But beyond the cool and

sophisticated Belgrade, I soon discovered the raw interior. The divisions that exploded in the 90s haven't disappeared; they've simply been buried, just beneath the surface. Many Serbs still feel wronged by their representation in the history books. The old faces of Serbia revealed themselves when Belgrade's attempt to hold a gay parade was thwarted because of violent threats from the far right. I sat through interviews with ultranationalists who told me that Srebrenica never happened and that Serbia's only ally was Russia. I rubbed shoulders with the supporters of Radovan Karadzic, who still call him their hero.

Modern Serbia has a schizophrenia that leaves me constantly challenged. It is a country where most oppose the arrest of Ratko Mladic but also support Serbia's entry into the EU; where people yearn for a new dawn for their country and for the greatness of the past; where years of isolation and poverty have left Serbs unsure of which direction to take.

Covering the whole of the Balkans enriches the experience still further.

When the breaking stories die down and the phones fall silent, it can feel solitary. But my delightful Serbian service and Monitoring colleagues have made me feel part of the family, with Slavic warmth and a chuckle at my woeful attempts at learning the language.

One of those same old-hands once told me: 'The audience will only be enthused by the story if you're enthusiastic about your patch.' Belgrade makes that easy.

CV

Degree: Law, Queen Mary, University of London

First Job: Reporter on The Voice newspaper

Career highlights: This programme, *Africa Business Report*, is a highlight

Interests: Writing, cycling and getting to Dorset, which is one of my favourite parts of the world.

green room

THE ARIELATOR

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



UPSIDE

Hot spells are predicted for readers of *Attitude* magazine's exercise supplement this month, which features BBC weather-

man Tomasz Schafernaker and his 'stunning secret'. Are all weather men made of such buff stuff? Is it part of the crack meteorological training at the Met office in Exeter? Is Michael Fish secretly packing abs of steel and the kind of pecs that would make even Arnie in his prime look downcast in shame? It certainly would be something for the Met to put in the contract bid...



DOWNSIDE

Trouble has reportedly been brewing for *One Show* presenter Adrian Chiles after daring to grow that presenting taboo – a beard. But help is at hand

in the unlikely form of *The Sun*. 'Barmy BBC bosses have ordered Adrian Chiles to shave off his beard,' roared the paper last week, quoting a 'BBC insider' who said 'they reckon he doesn't look right, a bit scruffy, like he hasn't bothered to get ready properly'. Thankfully for beard lovers everywhere the paper pointed out that *One Show* ratings recently peaked at 7.2 million viewers – on a day when Chiles's manly whiskers were on full display. For his part, Chiles was unrepentant: 'Women and many gay men have told me it looks good, so it's staying,' he said. Presumably the heterosexual men just looked at the floor and mumbled something about football....



OUT OF HIS COMFORT ZONE

YOUR SNOW TROUBLES may now be an icy memory, but spare a thought for those of us who are still dealing with the effects of Big Freeze 2010, or BF@10 as it will henceforth be known in the Green Room.

Radio Humberside sbj Andy Comfort took the train all the way up to Scotland last week to rescue his car, which had been stuck in drifts on the closed A939 since December 30. The road was finally opened but the snow remained, so he and friend Kevin

Keane, an sbj at Aberdeen, then spent two shivering hours at 1800 feet above sea level liberating the vehicle from its icy confines.

Being built of stern stuff, he also managed to file well-received updates for Radio Humberside and the website via Twitter. 'At one point, I was tweeting live on bbc.co.uk/humberside from 550 metres up in a wind-chill temperature of minus 16 Celsius, with a shovel in my hand,' he says. Now that's what we call multiplatform.

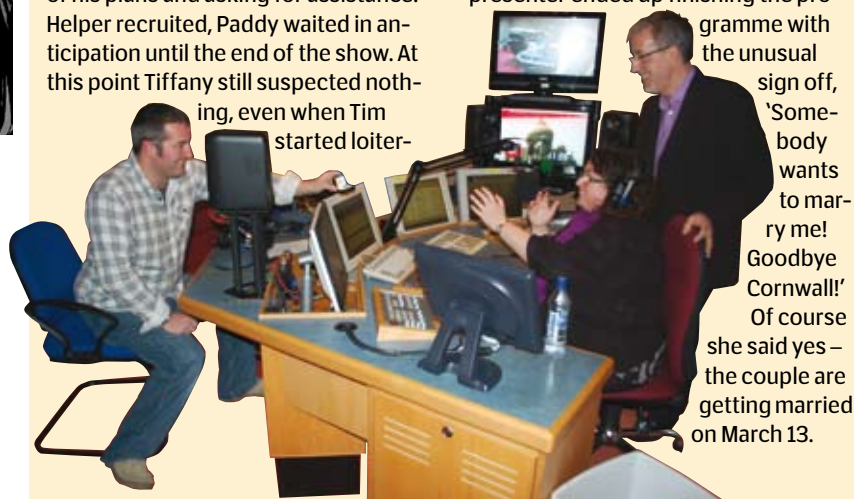
DECENT PROPOSAL

SURELY PRESENTING a live radio show is stressful enough without a man barging in at the end and asking to marry you? Fortunately our curmudgeonly attitude wasn't shared by Radio Cornwall bj Tiffany Truscott, who was surprised on air by boyfriend Paddy.

Paddy had arrived at BBC Cornwall reception while Tiffany was presenting *Newshour*, telling sbj Tim Hubbard of his plans and asking for assistance. Helper recruited, Paddy waited in anticipation until the end of the show. At this point Tiffany still suspected nothing, even when Tim started loiter-

ing in preparation for the surprise. 'He came in early, saying there was an ISDN problem,' she remembers. 'I didn't think anything of it.'

It was only when Tim announced 'we have some breaking news now, Tiffany, involving you' that she realised something was up – particularly when he then brought in a nervous Paddy clutching a small box. The shocked presenter ended up finishing the programme with the unusual sign off, 'Somebody wants to marry me! Goodbye Cornwall!' Of course she said yes – the couple are getting married on March 13.



WE HEAR THAT...

AN ANONYMOUS cake delivery was the unusual but doubtless well deserved reward for BBC Surrey last week. Two chocolate cakes were left at reception, one each for the teams on Nick Wallis's Breakfast Show (pictured) and Mark Carter's Drive Show. They came attached with a card saying 'Thank you to BBC Surrey for keeping going in the snow, when everyone else didn't'. The cakes were delicious – and were eaten almost as soon as they had arrived,' says editor and presenter Mark Carter. Any cakes/doughnuts/croissants for our hard work reporting other people's snow bravery can be delivered to the usual address....



BBC LANCASHIRE presenter Ted Robbins had a new weapon in the fight for morning show dominance last Friday – in the form of rather talkative parrot. Known as Sinbad to his friends, the parrot sat on Ted's shoulder and pronounced on the issues of the day, as well as responding to listeners who rang in with



examples of items from their home that aren't human but squawk. 'We had a hippy hamster and a Barbie alarm clock among other things,' says producer Alison Brown. 'Some weren't broadcastable...' Apparently the parrot found his

radio debut rather draining, but no animals were harmed in the making of the programme: 'Sinbad is worn out and I'm taking him home for a rest,' she assured us.

Win a 12 week exercise regime

LOSER

IF THE Christmas overindulgence is proving difficult to shift and motivation hard to come by, then perhaps the BBC Club London's biggest loser campaign might be for you. The 12 week plan includes full gym and Club membership, a gym assessment and induction, a weekly weigh in with your personal instructor, free weekly Biggest Loser classes, a goody bag, discounted personal training sessions, discounted beauty treatments and an invite to the Big Losers party and prize giving on March 26. The Club is also offering one Ariel reader a free pass to the programme. To enter to win it, tell us what the acronym BMI stands for when referring to the human body. Email ariel competitions by February 1.

EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...I can never find anything in this building, they keep moving the walls around – it's like being in a horror film...

...Are you talking to my bottom?...

...I am not a button monkey...

...Take your hands off my choux bun!...

...'Do you watch EastEnders?'

'No, I gave it up for Lent years ago'...

...Smell this opera brochure...

...Have you any rabbit related audio? Also – hats?...

