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THE BBC NEWSPAPER

Could Today's 'God slot' be up for grabs? Page 10



# HARRY IN THE FRAME

THIS HEART WARMING picture of World War I soldier Harry Patch with his friend, the historian Richard van Emden,

won the Our World section of the BBC staff photography competition. The picture is by 1364 entries. Ariel reveals all the winners Robert Wicks, a senior broadcast journalist

at BBC Bristol. The competition attracted and runners-up.

Culture secretary Ben **Bradshaw on covering** the fall of the Wall Page 3

In the best possible taste? Producers speak out on comedy Page 4

Enid, Margot and Gracie are the ones to watch on BBC Four Page 5

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### **Guest contributors this week**

**CHRIS BERTHOUD,** interactive editor, explains how, amid all the talk of Twitter, interaction with programmes is nothing new. Page 6

**JOANNA JOLLY, Nepal** correspondent, gets to grips with ancient rituals and practices. Page 15

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**Mixed Sources** 

### **Global tour ends at TVC**



### The BBC's branded shipping container had an eventful year, writes Jeremy Hillman

♦ WE LAUNCHED THE BOX just over a year ago. The plan was to follow a shipping container, fitted with a global positioning system, around the world for 12 months, to paint a picture of world trade and the global economy.

What we didn't foresee was that its voyage would coincide with one of the most dramatic shocks to the economy in the last 60 years. Our Box bore witness to a global recession and at one stage a

near total collapse of global trade. After a sprightly start carrying 10,000 bot-

tles of Scotch whisky to Shanghai, and stops in the US and Brazil, the BBC container was soon bogged down in Yokohama, Japan where empty containers were piling up in their thousands. It became one illustration of the container shipping industry going from profitability to a projected loss of £20bn this year.

Our Box had to take account of piracy threats off Somalia, while the environmental aspects of transport and shipping also played a part in the coverage. There were lighter moments too. The captain of the Copenhagen Express only found out he was carrying the BBC Box en route to Singapore when he got an email from relatives on board who had seen the project on our website. He assigned a guard to the Box for the rest of the

> Gratifyingly, the project has connected us with younger audiences. Soon after launch we received emails from teachers and students keen to use the Box in

their classes. Last Tuesday school pupils joined us at TVC to see it close-up.

The project will have a lasting impact. The shipping company with which we have been working has agreed to donate the Box to a charity that converts containers for use as classrooms and soup kitchens in Africa.

> Jeremy Hillman is editor of the business and economics unit

### Lessons learnt, says black belt bj

### by Sue Llewellyn

North West Tonight broadcast journalist Paresh Patel has spoken exclusively to Ariel about the incident in which he floored a drunken thug who had been attacking him.

The incident was caught on CCTV camera, and the BBC man was praised by a judge for fighting back.

With cameraman Steve Capstick, Patel had been setting up a live for reporter Laura Yates at the statue of wartime code to abandon the live and walk breaker Alan Turing in Sackville Gardens, Manchester.

A group of six men and a woman approached and asked what they were doing. One man started kicking the statue and became abusive. The woman poured a pint of beer over Patel's head. He called the office to explain the situation and the men thought he was ringing the police and began swearing at him.

'I thought a bit of bravado might deter them so I told them that I was a black belt.'



Praised by judge: Paresh Patel

Patel and Capstick decided back to the office but two of the youths followed and continued to hurl abuse. The team was chased through the city centre. 'At one point one of the thugs grabbed a metal billboard from a restaurant and tried to slam me over the head with it but I pushed him away,' said Patel.

Eventually, when one lunged at him again, Patel, who is a black belt fourth dan in karate, punched him in the face and kicked him in the groin, knocking him to

the ground. He was fighting off another thug when police arrived and arrested the men.

Sentencing the pair to community service, the judge said: 'He defended himself. I say good for Mr Patel. He had no reason to be subjected to that level of abuse and threat.'

Patel says there are lessons to be learned. 'Cameras attract people and this could happen anywhere at any time... these guidelines work and should be followed at all times: stick together, plan your exit strategy and don't be afraid to drop your camera. Kit can be replaced, people can't.'

Patel believes that 'serious errors of judgement' were made during the incident in Manchester. 'The first was, when we got into trouble, we should have left in the car we arrived in. Once the trouble started, we tried to walk back to the BBC carrying cumbersome equipment. We also became physically separated. These mistakes exposed us to attack from all sides.'

### **NEWS** BITES

**IN THE** Loop, the film spin-off from The Thick of It, won three prizes at the Bafta Scotland Awards: best actor (Peter Capaldi), best director (Armando Ianucci) and best writer for the writing team. Other BBC winners included New Town, made by BBC Scotland for BBC Four, named best tv drama, and the Panorama special Britain's Homecare Scandal, made by BBC Scotland, which took the news and current affairs prize.

AHEAD OF a general election being called, the BBC Trust wants to speed up complaints about the allocation of party election broadcasts, including from minority parties such as the BNP. Its consultation on the proposed new complaints process closes on December 4.

**IN A** bid to improve grammar, spelling and general accuracy and presentation on the BBC News website, a centralised subs' desk will operate for a four-week trial, from 7am to 9pm Monday to Friday, focusing on stories and features appearing on the UK and international front pages. The desk will provide feedback to individual writers when required.

THE GRUFFALO has been voted favourite bedtime story by listeners to Radio 2's Jeremy Vine Show. Nearly 20,000 listeners voted from a shortlist of eight books and the Gruffalo received around one-fifth of the vote. Winnie The Pooh was second, The Very Hungry Caterpillar third.

**ZEINAB BADAWI** was named international tv personality of the year at the Association for International Broadcasting Awards. The BBC programme Korea: Out of the North was named best investigative documentary and the BBC India Election Train was highly commended for the most creative marketing strategy.

**BBC WALES** is seeking an artist to create a permanent tribute to the late broadcaster Ray Gravell. The commission, launched with Safle, the Wales-based independent public art consultancy, is to create a sculpture in memory of the rugby player turned commentator and radio presenter.

**THE BIKE** Doctor and Safer Neighbourhood Police will provide free bike servicing and security on Nov 11 from 10am-2pm on the green at White City Cycle locks will be available with £5 from each sale going to Children in Need. For bikes that need a specific repair, visit cycle-systems. co.uk to order parts in advance.

A PLAYSTATION3, a hotel break and Premier League football tickets are among the prizes in a Children in Need raffle being run by the BBC Club. Tickets are available from all Clubs, which are also selling Pudsey merchandise. For more details on how to help CiN through the BBC Club, email Hannah Booth.

ariel 10·11·09

# Generations change – war continues







Remembrance Day service, Camp Bastion, Helmand province

This is the week the nation remembers the fallen. As part of Sunday's Remembrance Day events Jon Sopel presented live from Camp Bastion in Afghanistan. On November 11 the Queen will lead a special service to mark the passing of the First World War generation. Robert Hall, who will cover the service for the News Channel, has fond memories of some of those indomitable men

There was total silence in the school library as a man who had just celebrated his one hundred and eleventh birthday described the terror he felt, as he lay, trapped, in a shell-hole on the Western Front.

One abiding memory of the time we spent with Henry Allingham, still summoning the energy, despite his years, to bring his message to new generations: 'I don't do these things for myself,' he would always say, 'but for the men who never came home; the men in the trenches who were the real heroes.'

A determination which he showed to the end.... most of us will recall the strength with which he held

onto the wreath at the Cenotaph, when he attended the Remembrance ceremony with fellow veterans Harry Patch and Bill Stone. The Ministry of Defence had decided that wreaths should be laid for them, but Henry was having none of it.

Within months, those three men would be gone; Harry Patch, the only man with first hand knowledge of trench warfare, who had spent decades burying the memories he found so painful; Bill Stone, who'd joined up late in the First World War, but who had gone on to serve with distinction in the second - a man of laughter and song to the end.

The colleagues who worked with ing of his generation.

me on two documentaries, and a series of special reports sensed that we were witnessing something extraordinary.

Rarely can one watch as such a significant page of history turns... or hear voices describing experiences that were still so real...the death of a pilot in his burning, downed aircraft... the loss of a friend during one futile attack... the shells screaming overhead during the battle of Jutland.

Henry always hoped that his stories would be told and retold as a warning for the future; a thought to ponder as the nation marks the pass-

## **Tragedy in Helmand**

by Jon Sopel

The bone dry desert of south Afghanistan feels about as far as you can get from a November Sunday morning at the Cenotaph in Whitehall, but in terms of solemnity it was just the same. British troops have been in Afghanistan since 2001, but this year has been the bloodiest by far. And what was always going to be a sombre day grew progressively more sombre as news came through of two more deaths during the course of the day.

We had just arrived at the hospital the day before and were about to start filming when it became apparent that an emergency was unfolding. There was no drama - the medical staff moved swiftly but calmly. But the man I saw being stretchered into the emergency room didn't make it. We saw one of his comrades carry out his blood stained uniform; and we looked on as a nurse put his helmet, which alas could not stop the bullet, into a blue plastic bag. He was one of those confirmed dead on Remembrance Sunday

Why mention this? Because I think

unless it is someone you know, someone who might have been from your regiment, or of course a relative, it is easy to think of these fatalities as mere grim statistics. But suddenly being up close to this sort of tragedy as my producer, Alex Sinker, and cameraman, Jon Hughes and I were, makes it all seem very much more immediate.

And so at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning in the brilliant sunshine, but with the wind whipping the sand across the parade ground, some two thousand British troops stood in silence to remember their fallen comrades. There was quiet dignity, and yes, pride too. From the front line soldier, to the engineer servicing the vehicles, to the nurse caring for the wounded, to the cook preparing the meals, to the guys who refuel the helicopters and a whole pile of others too there is a real sense of commitment - they know that what they are doing is a vital cog in this complex wheel. As to whether they think they're winning - well that's not language they use.

### On the spot when Wall fell

Culture secretary Ben Bradshaw recalls his time as our man in Berlin

When I arrived in Berlin in spring why I, a German speaker, 1989 the post was considered a bit of a backwater. Nothing much had happened there since the Wall had gone up in 1961.

The job belonged to the German language service at Bush House. Ability to broadcast in German was a requirement, which must have been

got the job straight from local radio ahead of far better qualified, more experienced colleagues.

But that local radio training - turning round endless voice pieces, packstead when things hotted up, as they soon did.

The job was unusual in another way. Because of Berlin's occupied status I was officially still a 'war correspondent' with courtesy military rank, a lieutenant colonel's house and, crucially, a pass that allowed me to travel freely back and forth through the Wall. That became very handy as events unfolded and the East German

regime clamped down. I was still free to slip in and out of East Berlin to

ages and two ways - stood me in good report and pick up interviews when the Wall came down, a steady stream most other journalists were not. On the odd occasion, when I did get into a scrape with the Stasi, I just flashed

> It was an incredibly lucky break for me - to have the biggest story in the world on my hands. My only regret is that I didn't have longer to enjoy Berlin at a more leisurely pace before things really took off.

> We knew the German service and World Service in English were well listened to from people we met in East Germany. But it only really hit us when, in the days immediately after

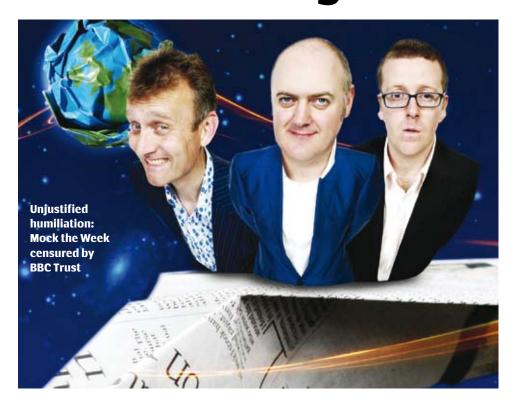
of East Germans made their way to our office to say 'thank you'. When I asked them why they listened to the BBC rather than German or American broadcasters they said: 'You don't preach to us or look down on us as second class Germans, your programmes are fair, you allow diverse voices and you acknowledge that not everything in your own country is perfect, so we believe what you say about other places.' The same values that still make the BBC the most trusted news organisation in the world today.

Matt Frei on his new Berlin series P6

4 News ariel 10·11·09

**Cathy Loughran** asks producers and execs how hard it is now to judge when humour goes too far

# Where do you draw the line? That's no joke



**'Comic tastes** 

tabloid press'

There have been as many acres of newsprint devoted to outrage about BBC humour crossing the line in recent months as criticism that, post Brand/Ross, BBC censors are killing off comedy.

Back in August, Jimmy Mulville, whose company Hat Trick makes Have I Got News For You, was among a number of critics at the Edinburgh tv festival who warned that BBC comic tastes were being 'set at a dial by the tabloid press'. Since then there seems to have been a stream of comedy 'gaffes' or proof of 'political correctness' pounced on by the press.

In the last few weeks alone we've had 'Hobnobgate' - when Andrew Neil's quip on This Week about Diane Abbott and Michael are being set Portillo being the 'choco-Portillo being the 'chocolate Hobnob and custard at a dial by the cream of late night telly' was removed from iPlayer after 18 complaints - and the arter 18 complaints – and the BBC Trust's censuring of *Mock*Jimmy Mulville the Week, over 'humiliating' remarks by Frankie Boyle

about Olympic swimmer Rebecca Adlington. in a particular slot. Compliance processes He said she looked like 'someone looking at themselves in the back of a spoon' and made a sexual innuendo about the 19 year-old in an August 2008 edition of the BBC Two show.

Just last week, we had the Daily Mail railing about another edition in which Prince Philip and the Oueen were referred to as 'that Greek twit and his Kraut wife', and Julian Bellamy of Channel 4 telling the RTS that, since Sachsgate, the BBC has avoided controversial content 'like the plague'.

Defending the Queen gag, on the grounds of audience expectation in a provocative show, the BBC pointed out that the programme had been shown four times since January 2007 and that 'before recent press coverage we'd only received a very small number of complaints'. It eventually drew 50.

The BBC Trust overturned the decision of the BBC's editorial complaints unit, judging that the Boyle comments about Adlington were humiliating and unjustified. Unusually, 75 people complained.

Explaining the trust's decision on Radio 4's The Media Show on Wednesday, chairman of its editorial standards committee Richard Tait said that the fact that the swim-

> mer had not sought celebrity status had been a factor in the judgement: 'She is a 19 year-old athlete, not a pop star who trades on her sexuality,' he said.

> Existing BBC guidelines covering harm and offence emphasise context, the signposting of 'challenging material' and the need to be sensitive to audience expectation of a particular show

have very publicly been tightened and proposed revisions to the guidelines, published last month, put greater emphasis on avoiding comedy that is 'unduly humiliating...or derogatory' – a clear legacy of Ross/Brand.

Day to day, the people inside the BBC making those judgement calls about humour say it's always been tough to know where the line is drawn, when taste is bound to be subjective. All of the programme makers who spoke to Ariel say they now spend more time making those decisions. But some say they no longer know where the line is.

YOURCALL

# The boundary pushers



### **JON PLOWMAN, FORMER HEAD** OF TV COMEDY, NOW **EXECUTIVE PRODUCER**

The answer [to how you judge what's acceptable] is taste, and what is the defence? That should work both ways, ie the defence for doing a certain line and the defence for not

doing that line. On Psychoville, which had its share of tough stuff, there were only two complaints – one about the placing of Bristol and one about innuendo which rather implies that we could have

I am not sure that there has been a change in public sensitivity but I think writers and producers and performers may well self censor because the impression is that the BBC and some of the tabloids are now a touch paranoid. They could do well to remember the words of Sir Toby in Twelfth Night: 'Doest thou think, because thou art virtuous, there shall be no more cakes and ale?'

### **ADAM BROMLEY, SERIES PRODUCER, THE CHRISTIAN O'CONNELL SOLUTION, 5 LIVE**

One area where we could do ourselves a favour, and pick fewer fights with the Daily Mail, is by not booking panels for comedy shows made up entirely of left wing comedians. When I produced Chat Room for Radio 2, we threw people like Kelvin McKenzie, Quentin Letts and Amanda Platell into the mix. It makes for a more interesting show.

Are we over-cautious these days? Sometimes I'm surprised by what's flagged up - like a comedy séance in an episode of Hut 33 on Radio 4. Anything about the occult is dodgy. Some days it feels like, wherever you thought the line was, someone is drawing it in a different place.

Compliance is about 10 percent of my working week now. That said, The Christian O'Connell Solution is a brave oasis of live comedy at 11am on Sundays. I get butterflies when the panel edge too close to an edgy subject, but there's none of the paranoia that's around pre-recorded shows.



### KATIE TAYLOR, EXECUTIVE EDI-**TOR, COMEDY ENTERTAINMENT**

They are all judgement calls from a joke in Buzzcocks to a panellist's quip in *Qi*. I have a pretty good instinct and get it right 99 percent of the time.

Laughter or gasps from the audience during a recording are a pretty good thermometer aid.

Are sensitivities changing? Audiences are getting more sophisticated and will always spot a cruel or badly crafted joke. My role is to question if a joke will stand up to their scrutiny and is justi-

### ADAM TANDY, PRODUCER, THE THICK OF IT, BBC TWO

I don't think there should be boundaries and certainly not any banned words. It's ALL about context. The Thick of It has some of the strongest language in television comedy anywhere, not language I'd use in polite

conversation.

But it's completely different to the context in which stand-ups or panel shows work. Ours is clearly comic fiction – not real people saying things as themselves where it's much easier to aive offence.

I do feel the BBC is on the back foot right now,

but I don't think there's reason to be pessimistic about the future. On compliance, my experience is that it's a pretty productive and workmanlike approach to getting around problems.

In a recent episode we were advised to 'soften' Malcolm's aggressive line to Nicola from 'shut your gash' to 'shut your cave'. Actress Rebecca Front thought it was worse than the original...

### **JANE BERTHOUD, HEAD OF RADIO COMEDY**

It can be tough to make the right call, but gags often end up being sharper as a result of thinking about them a bit more. In News Quiz, for instance, we never buck the issues, just make doubly sure that we know what we are saying and why. People are probably a little more sensitive about language at the moment, but other than that, Mark Damazer and Caroline Raphael in Radio 4 are both supportive about taking risks. There is probably too much self censoring going on, at the writer stage. That's a different issue.

### **PHIL DOLLING, COMIC RELIEF PARTNERSHIP MANAGER**

The more you push the boundaries the more intelligent the comedy needs to be. Shock value on its own is not interesting unless it is insightful. The BBC Two Stewart Lee series was a brilliant example of intelligent comedy that wasn't afraid to push boundaries, and the result was genuinely thought provoking, as well as being very funny.

### **COLIN ANDERSON, RADIO COMEDY PRODUCER**

For me, the risk is that all this compliance actually distracts from the job of ensuring shows are okay to broadcast. The final listen-back before the show is delivered is spent listing words like 'bloody' or brand names mentioned incidentally in a computerised compliance system instead of being able to take a more objective look at your

I produced an episode of Radio 4's The Now Show which included some silly anti-French jokes. They were childish but good humoured.

I didn't have the time and perspective to look again at the week's news for elements which could combine to make silly French jokes more offensive. I should have been clocking the emerging news story that the bodies of two tortured French students had been found in a flat in London. I do watch the BBC News website as I'm editing, but this needed a bit more lateral thought to link the two and see the potential for offence.

I only got one letter of complaint, but really felt like I'd cocked-up.

### **JACKIE HAMILTON, COMEDY EXEC PRODUCER,**

I would argue that you can't use a studio audience as a barometer of taste. I run a comedy club in Belfast and I recognise the world of difference between a live, raucous audience and the sober environment of the cutting room.

There is clearly more box ticking going on these days but more than ever you need common sense to make the right call – that, and knowing your audience, your talent and what goes with the slot. Even so, some of my compliance forms for our panel show The Blame Game are funnier than the programme.



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**'WHO'S THE MOST LIKEABLE?'** chokes commissioning editor Jamie Laurenson, feigning outrage at the question. 'I can't answer that. You have to fall in love with the characters you make films about, whatever they were like. Even in a film like *Downfall*, about the Third Reich, you look for human qualities.'

It's those qualities which Laurenson wanted to explore when he green lit a season of 'bio-pics' about three half-forgotten English icons. Together Enid Blyton, Margot Fonteyn and Gracie Fields form a colourful trio, stars in their lifetimes whose reputations soared and tumbled, not least when music hall star Gracie was accused of desertion during World War II.

But it was the complexities of the characters which attracted Helena Bonham Carter, Anne-Marie Duff and Jane Horrocks to the roles – rather than a tempting contract.

'BBC Four rates aren't the highest,' Laurenson concedes. 'But we do pride ourselves on finding performance pieces that punch above their weight. To follow a character's story for 90 minutes in a single authored film is a brilliant opportunity for an actor, and it means there's a good chance of getting an A-list cast.'

Bonham Carter, who appears in almost every scene of *Enid*, was top of 'everyone's wish list'. '*Enid* was a great script and part,' she says, with a briskness redolent of her alter ego. 'You're lucky to get such good writing and a character so rich in dimensions and contradictions.'

The rub, of course, is that it requires a certain kind of resourcefulness and imagination to create a feature-length film on a shoestring budget. *Margot* was shot in 19 days, a time scale Duff describes as 'kind of bonkers...but they're the times in which we live and it does give you an incredible momentum'.

Enid's exec producer, Sally Woodward Gentle, argues that a limited budget can set the tone: in place of wide shots of 40s London, the film retreats into Enid's private domain. 'You get to see in the bedroom, the pyjamas,' she says. 'It creates an intimacy, which BBC Four is very good at.' While the actors honed their performances, the crew were also calling in favours. Costume designer Amy Roberts, 'beg, borrowed and stole', says Duff, to dress her Fonteyn in vintage Dior and Chanel.

# Women of great SUBSTANCE



Common touch and style icon: Jane Horrocks as Gracie Fields and Anne-Marie Duff as Margot Fonteyn

The three pieces were not conceived as a trio: Horrocks – a devotee of Fields since she played her at Rada – convinced her partner Nick Vivian to write a script for the BBC. Eleanor Moran, exec producer, 'always loved' Enid Blyton's books and suggested a biopic to indie Carnival, while Mammoth Screen made *Margot*.

'The idea to curate them into a season emerged as we started seeing the same themes sur-

face in all three,' Laurenson recalls. 'They are all women juggling private lives with titanic professional achievements and they reflect each other in interesting ways.'

The characters may have 'modern resonance' – de rigueur for any period drama – but will the audience relate to them? The question of likeability resurfaces when Laurenson talks about their 'unique personalities' – which sounds like a

euphemism for difficult, as 'eccentric' often stands in for 'mad'.

'Certainly Enid, in the way she dealt with her family, we would see today as difficult,' he says. 'But you also see her behaviour – and particularly her attitude to her children – in the context of her class and the historical period.'

Blyton – who roundly ignores her own children in the film – is probably the least endearing of the three. 'If anyone challenged her work or seemed to be too critical, she marginalised them,' *Enid* director James Hawes testifies. Bonham Carter is blunt: 'She's dreadful, but she's trying her hardest and I hope people come away feeling conflicted. There's a lot of her in me – she was a 'forever child' who invented a world that was comforting and enchanting.'

Duff is more sympathetic towards Fonteyn: 'Ballerinas were international superstars, but I don't think Margot was much of a diva; there aren't many stories of her being horrible to the company members. She had an energy that separated her, but she wasn't grand.'

For Fields, Horrocks honed in on the positive. 'When you ask people of an older generation about her they either get her mixed up with Vera Lynn or they say, oh isn't she the one that deserted during the war and ran off with her Italian husband? It's sort of redressing the balance, hopefully, for Gracie.'

Enid, BBC Four, November 16. Gracie and Margot to follow later this month

# Witte

Stripped back to basics, is Twitter just another way of watching tv? Chris Berthoud, interactive editor, reports

### I WAS AT HOME ON THE COMPU-

**6 Features** 

**TER** last Thursday night when my visiting Canadian fatherin-law stopped to look. I was watching Question Time live on iPlayer. I had a page up showing what the 'official' BBC Question Time Twitter feed was saying. And I had a third window open with Twitterfall showing what was going on with the #bbcqt topic. 'What on earth is bbcqt?,' he asked.

I started talking about hash tags, Twitter, the fact that bbcqt is often the top trending topic on the micro-blogging site, and that someone in my team was re-tweeting the best comments from the discussion. I tried to explain that a hashtag aggregates messages on a particular topic (in this case QT, or Question Time). He looked at the stream of messages pouring down the screen on Twitterfall at the rate of several a second. At that point he decided there were more interesting things to worry about, and went to bed.

I suppose if you strip it all down to basics, it's really just a new way of watching telly. Interaction with a programme is nothing new. In my old life working on radio programmes, we integrated phone calls, texts, email, even letters and postcards. And people have enjoyed

commenting on programmes online for years - both on and off the BBC.

But our experience in recent weeks with Question Time suggests that now quite large numbers of people are sitting down (often with a glass of wine, according to their own testimony), switching on the tv to watch the programme, firing up their laptop, getting on to Twitter, and

watching the comments flood in from fellow devotees. Because the comments are so short (max 140 characters) it's easy to ping off your thoughts in the twinkling of one of Dimbleby's eyes and watch the reaction. The two-screen programme experience is definitely with us.

This activity is now happening in such large numbers (during the QT featuring Griffin the #bbcqt topic went red hot with 77,000 tweets in the hour) that the hashtag is regularly hitting the number one 'trending' spot in Twitter - hence the direct quote from one Kevin Taylor, probably not UK-based, who spotted the trend and asked: 'WTF is #bbcqt?'

Of course the bigger question, is WTF does the BBC do with all this? It's a growing, vibrant community - but we also have great text messages and emails coming through to the programme. We put the best of the texts up on Red Button and Ceefax. And they are different communities of people: the texters, for example, were more pro-BNP than the Tweeters.

Clearly the BBC shouldn't invade Twitter and stamp all over it with our size tens. And clearly there's no point in trying to recreate Twitter on a BBC

site. But arguably some kind of live 'experience' where we could show trends, the best comments, live reaction to the panel and issues; geographical variation, strength of feeling, maybe even some kind of live demographic breakdown ('18-24 year-olds are generally of this or that view') could be attractive. And - hold on a minute - what if we could put all that on the tv alongside the tv programme itself? Now there's a challenge for the clever folks developing IPTV.

And who knows - with that kind of offering, maybe my father-in-law might stay up a bit

# Return to Berlin gets personal

'I'VE ALWAYS HAD A BIT OF A CRUSH on Berlin,' admits Matt Frei (below). 'As a young German this is where you went to avoid military service. This is where you went to smoke and inhale.'

It makes the German-born journalist the perfect guide on a whirlwind tour through 200 years of tumultuous history - from the enlightenment era of Frederick the Great of Prussia to the fall of the Berlin Wall – in a new three-part BBC Two series simply titled Berlin.

The Wall was breached 20 years ago this month, making it an apposite time for Frei, anchor on BBC World News America and writer and presenter of the series, to look back on the city's history. 'A good part of my own family lived in East Germany,' he recalls. 'The first time I met them was when the wall came down.'

Berlin sees Frei wandering the city with a sense of determined wonder on his face, zipping through time as he connects disparate ideas and people to form a cohesive narrative of a vibrant place that has played host to many of the most radical ideas and movements of our time.

Many historic spots have changed beyond

### **`The first time** I met some of my family was when the wall came down'

recognition. A notorious cabaret club, where the likes of actress, writer and prostitute Anita Berber danced away the decadent days of the Weimar Republic, is now an organic food shop, while Hit-

ler's bunker now lurks underneath a kindergarten and a Chinese restaurant.

Berlin is a co-production with the Open University. It's part of the organisation's move from late night courses to peaktime programming for the masses, the idea being that if people enjoy experiencing Berlin with Frei, they may be tempted by the more formal learning environment provided by the university.

Frei concedes that he has reservations about the series, chiefly concerning his choice of presenting attire: 'A formal suit and tie was deemed too stuffy, but a crumpled linen suit - the traditional arts uniform of BBC Two - was vetoed by the wife.' He finally settled on a brown velvet jacket, 'of the kind not seen since Englebert Humperdink'. Viewer beware: 'I hope you're not too offended by it,' warns Frei, 'because you are going to be seeing a lot of it.'



# Back to the blogosphere in Iran

by Sue Llewellyn

LAST WEEK'S DEMOS in Iran marking the 30th anniversary of the storming of the US Embassy set the blogosphere buzzing - but it could have been louder had the government not reportedly placed restrictions on the internet.

With a well-educated young pulation and a tightly con trolled state media, the Persian blogosphere has become an integral part of Iran's media landscape. In 1998 fewer than 65,000 Iranians were online. Today there are 23 million. Effectively one in three of the population has access to the internet and since the first Persian How To Blog guide appeared in 2001, 100,000 Iranians have started their own.

'The more the media is restricted and controlled, the more blogging, social media and



citizen journalism pushes back,' says Mahmood Enayat, director of the World Service Trust's Iran project. 'Blogging is a big deal in Iran. It's not all about politics - there are tons of blogs talking

about everyday, cultural issues like technology and cookery.'

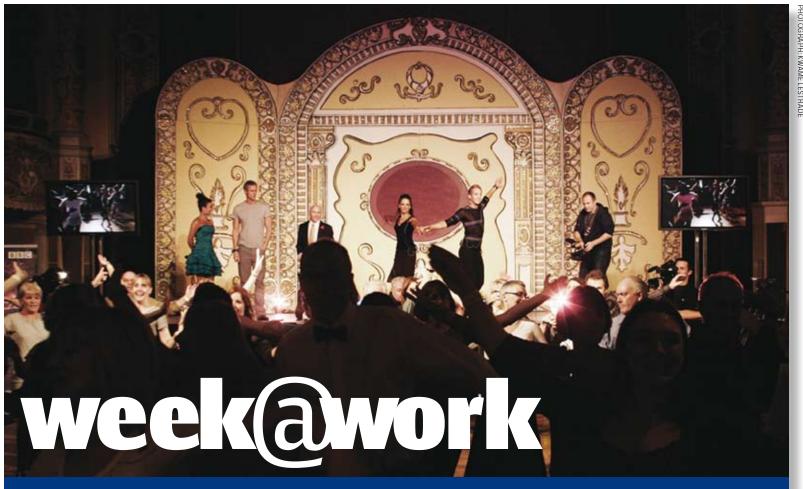
The Persian blogosphere may be one of the biggest in the world, but until now tracking these diverse conversations had proven very difficult. With this in mind,

the Iran Project has launched BlogWatch, an online aggregation platform that showcases Persian blogs and brings the full range of conversations into one

Until now, Enayat says, Iranians have tended to follow the blogs of people with a similar world view. 'Instead, we thought we'd put it all on one platform and say this is what everyone's talking about,' he says.

The first phase of the project was selecting the blogs. Initially 100,000 blogs were identified and then the top 30,000 linked blogs were selected and put on a platform to be categorised by the Balatarin users (Balatarin is the most popular Persian social media website akin to Digg.com). Four thousand and six users contributed to the process - making BlogWatch one of the most successful online crowd-sourcing projects ever.

ariel 10·11·09 Features 7



### WE WANTED PEOPLE WITH TWO LEFT FEET

as well as those with twinkle toes,' laughs BBC Learning project manager Ruth Millway. 'We knew that *Strictly* had inspired people to get dancing, and we wanted to hold an event for everyone.'

Hundreds of the show's fans headed to Blackpool's Winter Gardens this weekend to

take part in Learning's 'dance masterclass': professional dancer Karen Hardy led them through the cha-cha-cha while former *Strictly* contestants Jo Wood, Mark Foster and Rav Wilding provided the celebrity sparkle.

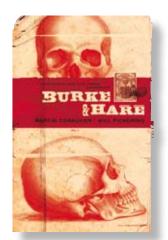
'With the cha-cha-cha you can stick to the basic moves or learn more complicated steps,' Millway explains. 'It turned out even better than we expected – we had dancers of all ages and more men turning up than we anticipated.'

More than 2000 people attended a special live screening of the Saturday night show on a big screen at the gardens, which featured performances from the professionals and commentary from Hardy.

### **COMING UP**

- ◆ The MPs' expenses scandal will be revisited in a new comedy-drama for BBC Four. The hour-long film will follow a journalist who is scooped by the Daily Telegraph.

  THE HEATHER BROOKE STORY is expected to tx in 2010 and will be exec produced by Patrick Spence. It was commissioned by channel controller Richard Klein and controller of drama commissioning, Ben Stephenson.
- ◆ Businessman Gerry Robinson will present a new six-part series called **LEGACY** for BBC Two that will help people writing a will. Green lit by controller of entertainment commissioning Mark Linsey and channel controller Janice Hadlow, it will be made by Talkbackthames and exec produced by Jo Wallace.
- ◆ BBC Two has also announced that a new comedy series will go into production next year. Created by James Wood and Tom Hollander, **HANDLE WITH PRAYER** follows the frustrations of a vicar who moves from a sleepy village to the city. Made by Big Talk Productions and exec produced by Simon Wilson, it was commissioned by controller of comedy commissioning Cheryl Taylor.



### **SHAMELESS** PLUG

### ◆ Martin Conaghan, content producer, Pacific Quay

I work for Sport but in my spare time freelance as a comic book writer. My graphic novel about the Edinburgh serial-killers Burke and Hare will be released on October 6. It's a research-based graphic novel which details the crimes of Burke and Hare, with the odd minor invention along the way. Illustrated by artist Will Pick-

ering, a cover by top British designer Rian Hughes and an introduction by Judge Dredd writer Alan Grant, there's also a bonus gallery featuring the work of some top Scottish comic book artists such as Frank Quitely (Batman, Superman) and Gary Erskine (Star Wars, Dan Dare). You can order a copy of the book from me for £10.

Burke and Hare, Insomnia Publications (Edinburgh), £12.99

### MY WEEK AT WORK

### ◆ Sunny Dimitriadou, Outreach project assistant, White City

In the last month I've visited 13 towns in the north. I was part of a team from Outreach, the Video Nation Network and the nations and regions BBC bus – together we've uncovered some extraordinary tales for BBC Learning's My Story competition.

On our travels we met more than 1000 people and, using the bus's equipment, recorded more than 200 stories – some of them very personal. We met war veterans, drug addicts and people affected by the closure of the mines as well as those wanting to tell us about their community work or book project: the more stories we

collected from an area, the easier it was to identify common themes and issues. As well as recording stories we also ran twicedaily storytelling workshops in the areas we visited. People from local **BBC** stations also came down to help and even arranged for some of the stories to be broadcast live

Sunny and the BBC bus in Darlington from the bus. Talking to people about their lives was both inspiring and enlightening, a way of getting to know an audience that don't always connect with the BBC. It showed that we care about what they have to say.

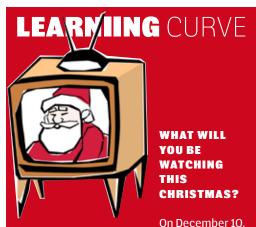
The video stories we recorded can be seen at bbc.co.uk/videonation along with selections of audio, stills and comment gathered by local stations and at the workshops. The closing date for the My Story competition is December 16. Fifteen of the best will feature in a BBC One series next year. bbc.co.uk/mystory/

Ariel is currently judging staff entries for our own 'My Story' competition. The winner will be published in our December 15 issue

### **CHANGING PLACES**

◆ JESSICA COOPER (pictured) joins BBC Shropshire as the new breakfast newsreader... News sbj MARTIN ASSER begins a five month attachment as Journalism's first search engine optimisation specialist... CHRIS MORRIS joins the Journalism audiences team as a research executive... Radio Nottingham's assistant editor HANNAH KENNEDY begins a four month attachment as the managing editor at Radio Sheffield.





Vision's head of scheduling George Dixon and head of audience research David Bunker are giving a sneak preview of this year's tv line-up. They'll also reveal what audiences want to watch over the festive period and provide an insight into the commissioning and scheduling of shows.

The Never Stop Learning event will be held in Meeting Rooms 4 and 5, 6th Floor, TVC, 12-1pm.

You can book your place from November 13 – see tinyurl.com/NSLChristmas



**8 BBC STAFF PHOTO COMPETITION 2009** 

A RECORD breaking 1364 entries, from almost 500 people, were submitted to the staff photo competition, now in its fifth year. The contest is sponsored by global news whose director, Richard Sambrook, was a judge. The panel also included Mark Thompson, world editor Jon Williams, technology correspondent **Rory Cellan-Jones** and professional photographer Jeff Overs, who works for BBC news. Staff were asked to send their images via Flickr. Browse them at www. flickr.com/groups/

# ALL IN THE



DVERALL KABUL KABAB Y DERRICK EVANS, TECHNICAL OPERATOR, AFRICA & MIDDLE EAST,

**WORLD SERVICE** 

A VERY PLEASING IMAGE said the judges. 'Enough to keep the eye interested, keep it busy, yet without clutter. Snatched in real life, but the composition is still

This picture was also runner up in the Our World section, won by the image of Harry Patch (see cover). The Our World commendation went to Off by Gareth Ford Williams, senior content producer, FM&T, Manchester



### A CLEAN, BOLD **COMPOSITION**

said the judging panel of this image of an isolated figure against the horizon which, it was believed, 'worked perfectly'. The judges added: 'The photographer is not afraid to have a photograph of almost nothing.'

### MOBILE TECHNOLOGY WINNER: HIGH TIDE BY ANDREW JNN PRODUCER/DIRECTOR, TV MUSIC ENTERTAINMENT



### the contrast between the colours. 'The blue

and the vellow from the light make this an appealing image. And we liked the way the photographer is using the road sign to create a sense of irony.

### MOBILE RUNNER UP: Watching Over You

by **Jaltson Akkanath Chummar**, video producer, Mumbai

### COMMENDATION:

**Broadcasting House** worships All Souls by **Richard Leeming**, executive producer, syndication, A&M interactive

### UGUST ACTIVITY WINNER: NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL BY PING SHUM, PRODUCER, BBC CHINESE



### **THE JUDGES DESCRIBED** this

as a 'wonderfully strong image full of action and joyfulness which is well composed and beautifully lit'. They said it was 'a great subject captured at the perfect moment'.

### **RUNNER UP: Worthing August** 2009 by **Alex** Fielding, senior

Asian Network,

Birmingham

wedding by Andy Gallacher, reporter. broadcast journalist, newsgathering,

### **ABSTRACT WINNER: FOAM ON BROADHAVEN BEACH** PAUL EVANS, SENIOR PRODUCER, WALES PRODUCTION



### IT COULD HAVE BEEN MANY THINGS, said the citation.

'You can't quite tell what it is. Where is it shot from? What height? What distance? Is it a satellite image or is it a closeup? The scale is indeterminate. Striking colours. Oyster-like. Even upside-down, it becomes an almost completely different picture, but it still works.'

**RUNNER UP:** Worthing no5 by Nigel Jarvis, senior technician, FM&T

### **COMMENDATION:** Dry

earth and sprouting seed by Jeremy Toogood, broadcast camera journalist, newsgathering, Bristol

### UNEXPECTED BEAUTY: WINNER: WHALE IN THE WILD BY LINDSAY PRETORIUS, PA TO TVL MANAGEMENT TEAM, LICENCE FEE UNIT



### according to the judges. 'It fits the category perfectly. A marriage of luck and timing.'

A BEAUTIFUL IMAGE

caught in the moment,

**RUNNER UP:** The Swimmer by Nigel Jarvis, senior technician, FM&T

### **COMMENDATION:**

Liquid sunlight by David Fawcett, head of policy development, strategy

# Is it time to give atheists their say on Thought for the Day?

The BBC Trust is about to give its verdict on whether Radio 4's time-honoured religious slot should be opened up to non-believers. Sacrilege, progress or just fairer representation? **Ariane Sherine** and **Giles Fraser** argue from opposite sides of the TFTD divide

### A QUARTER OF ADULTS EXCLUDED

ARIANE SHERINE

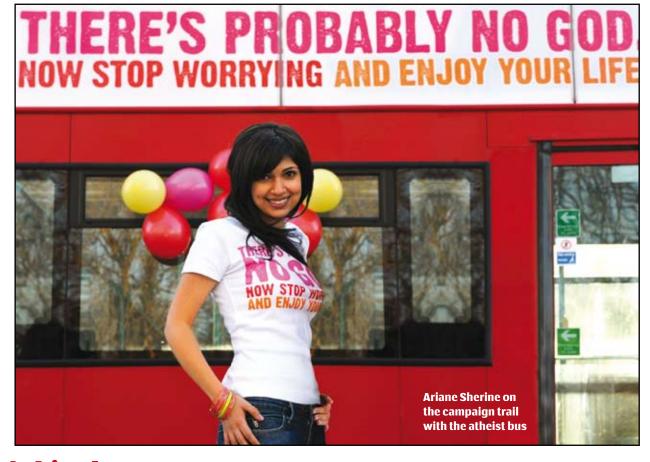
**TODAY IS THE MOST RESPECTED** and influential radio programme in Britain. It's listened to every day by politicians, newspaper editors and television channel commissioners – the people who shape Britain's thinking, guide our public policy and make decisions on behalf of the nation.

These people listen to *Thought for the Day*, perhaps intentionally, often unintentionally or subconsciously, but nevertheless it plays a role in influencing the way they think.

Thought For The Day's two minutes may seem like a small length of time, but over decades this amounts to whole days' worth of influential airtime. Yet this airtime is only available to people with religious world views.

A 2003 Ipsos Mori poll showed that 23 percent of people in the UK are either atheist or agnostic. That means that nearly a quarter of Britain's adult population – over 12m of us – are not represented at all in this slot on Radio 4's flagship political and current affairs programme. For those two minutes every weekday, we are excluded from the airwaves.

It's argued that religious people have the right to an exclusive slot



`This slot on Today influences the way people think

because there is so little religious programming on tv or radio, but in fact the opposite is true.

From Songs of Praise to The Big Questions, Something Understood to Beyond Belief, the 9.15am God slot on Terry Wogan to the Moral Maze, and from Radio 4's Prayer For The Day to the majority of Sunday morning talk radio programmes across the country, reli-

gious people are represented regularly and fully on broadcast media.

Yet where is the comparable regular series on national television or radio based around atheist or humanist issues. It's not possible, because there isn't one.

For centuries, atheists, humanists, freethinkers and secularists have been sidelined, and that's why we're

so passionate about being included. We want the right for our voices to be heard. Because we have ideas to put across which are as inspirational, moving and thoughtful to those of anyone else. Whether or not you follow a religion or believe in a God shouldn't determine your right to share your reflections on life with the country.

Furthermore, the idea that humanists and atheists would use the platform given by *Thought for the Day* in order to speak negatively about religious viewpoints has no basis in truth.

Humanism is a positive philosophy comparable to that of other belief systems. Its key principles are those of kindness and tolerance, forgiveness and equality.

So it seems odd to me, at best, that the BBC and some religious people want to exclude people who think differently from a radio slot which is all about inclusion.

To speak of kindness, yet to shun those with alternative beliefs; to talk of tolerance, yet refuse to tolerate the other side; to implore forgiveness, yet not forgive us for not believing, and to speak of equality, yet refuse to allow us an equal platform seems at odds with the basic message of *Thought for the Day*.

Comedienne Ariane Sherine masterminded London's 'atheist bus campaign' and delivered a secular Thought for the Day on Radio 4's PM programme



PRESERVE A
DISTINCTIVE
VOICE

GILES FRASER

**SHOULD HUMANISTS BE** on *Thought for the Day?* Yes, they should. I am a humanist myself. Christian humanism has a long and distinguished past going back to some of the earliest Christian writ-

Of course, what we are really disagreeing about here is whether *Thought for the Day* should be opened up to atheists. And I say no. But not 'no' because I doubt that you can be moral without God.

gious beliefs of others.

Often, I have want have a pop at another view but have been sla down by BBC producers damentally, I see the population this is a slot for a more

Clearly, religion has no monopoly on virtue. The reason I am against any change is that a slot like *Thought for the Day* needs to maintain its distinctiveness or it's as good as finished.

Match of the Day does football, Thought for the Day does God. I am against atheism on Thought for the Day just as I'm against cricket on Match of the Day.

There are other issues. One of the fundamental rules under which all *TFTD* contributors operate is that they cannot attack the religious beliefs of others.

Often, I have wanted to have a pop at another world view but have been slapped down by BBC producers. Fundamentally, I see the point: this is a slot for a more gentle, non-combative take on the world. In the middle of so argumentative a programme this change of pace is appreciated by many listeners.

Atheists would find it much more tricky to fit neatly into this regime because atheism is, by definition, about being against

# Like putting cricket on Match of the Day'

something. When Richard Dawkins did a trial alternative *TFTD* on the *Today* programme he used it to call religion 'childish and self-indulgent', 'infantile', 'lazy', and a 'crybaby phase'. If this is what people want at ten to eight, then so be it. To be fair, religious people should be allowed to respond in

kind. And this would make for a very different slot from what it is now.

Of course, many atheists are not as combative as Professor Dawkins. So why not have some interesting thinkers who can reflect on the day's news without mention of God at all?

This is perfectly possible. But how would this be all that different from the standard secular comment or opinion piece that is ubiquitous in the contemporary media?

When I do TFTD, it is not simply an opinion piece by Giles Fraser, but a reflection that comes out of a long and defined history, with a specific body of texts and millions of adherents.

I am there not because I

am especially clever or witty or wise, but because I am thought to be able to bring this tradition to bear on the events of the day. An atheist Thought for the Day that was not allowed to be robustly anti-God would all too easily become like every other secular comment piece that appears in the media.

TFTD offers a distinctive voice in an otherwise very secular schedule. Atheists on the radio? Yes, of course. And robust anti-religious debate? Bring it on. But let us not do culture wars at ten to eight. That's not what TFTD is all about. Leave it alone.

Giles Fraser was recently appointed Canon Chancellor of St Paul's Cathedral. He is a regular TFTD contributor 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



### Fat around the middle

The BBC should be congratulated for attempting to cut back on its senior management pay bill. The BBC's 15-page review of the money it pays to senior managers makes clear that they have, for more than a decade, benefited from a deliberate policy of top-pay inflation, stoked up by dgs such as John Birt and Greg Dyke.

But the review contains a fascinating fact. Of the 643 senior managers and top executives whose pay will now be reined in, 242 work in the corporate centre. How come 38 percent of all the BBC's 'public service' senior managers work there, as opposed to working in the departments that devise and broadcast programmes (sorry, 'content')?

Yes, we need people in charge of things like marketing, personnel, finance and legal and public affairs, as well as steering the overall direction of what is a large and complex organisation. But 38 percent?

In last week's Ariel Lucy Adams suggested that senior managers made up just 2.5 percent of the workforce, in other words, one for every 40 staff. The annual report said that the BBC employed 23,000 people. If about 1000 are in the commercial

parts of the BBC, which are not part of this exercise, that means one senior manager for every 34 staff, similar to class sizes in some schools.

Why, when much day-to-day management and supervision of programmes and staff (at least in News) is carried out by editors and assistant editors on bands 11 and 10, so not classified as senior managers?

Ian Pollock

personal finance reporter, business news

### Put a lid on it

There should be a total earnings (salary and bonus) cap at the BBC of £100,000 per year. Anyone wanting to earn more than this can go and work elsewhere.

Let's have senior managers who are committed to public service broadcasting rather than getting rich. **Peter Lewenstein**, *deputy editor*, *WSB African English daily progs* 

### **Quiet Time**

I have always assumed that Ariel wasn't afraid to reflect the views of the BBC staff and that it did so fairly.

I was shocked to see that, according to a story in the Evening

Standard (Wednesday, October 28), you were due to run staff views on the *Question Time* with Nick Griffin, but as most views apparently were against the BBC stance on this issue that you decided to drop the feature.

I think you should clarify what happened, or are we left believing that we can't even trust our own Ariel to report the facts and views of BBC staff correctly.

I don't have an issue with the BBC allowing the BNP onto the programme; it was the due political process of this country that allowed them to even stand for election. Or was it a circus?

### **Steven Smith**

network operations manager, WS English

Stephen James-Yeoman, managing editor, internal communications, replies: As a staff newspaper we, of course, focus our coverage on the issues that are of most interest to our staff. The story of Nick Griffin appearing for the first time on *Question Time* was approached no differently.

It is not unusual for any publications to consider a range of features in any given edition and not all appear in print. You only need to look at the edition of that week to see that the story was covered in depth on pages 1, 2, 3 and 10 and previous editions had included staff comments. Ariel remains editorially independent and we wouldn't back away from a story because it was critical of the BBC.

### **More power to King**

For those of us long frustrated by the ignorance shown by network news and current affairs programmes to life in the devolved nations of the UK, the publication of Anthony King's report in 2008 was a welcome watershed. The response since has been patchy but is generally much improved, indicating that, on the whole, the significance of the report had been understood.

However, its lessons have clearly not permeated beyond news and current affairs. On R4's Front Row (November 5) Mark Lawson's perverse line of questioning on the launch of the Welsh National Theatre Company could only have arisen from a deep ignorance and disengagement from anything that happens west of Offa's Dyke.

Is it now not time for the King Report to be studied by all programme makers – particularly perhaps in factual and arts genres – so as to avoid such unprofessionalism in the future? Come to think of it, to what extent does the King Report feature at all in training for researchers, producers and presenters 18 months on? Marc Phillips, national head, MC&A Children in Need, Cardiff

Anne Morrison, director BBC Academy, replies: In response to the King Report, all editors and output editors in News attended Reporting the UK courses run by the College of Journalism, part of BBC Academy. In early 2009, additional courses attracted 327 members of staff. A Reporting the UK online module is available to everyone via learn.gateway and Cojo's website. Cojo advises anybody in a jour-

nalistic role to complete this course.

The King Report has been influential in the development of both the face to face and online training.

A key objective of the BBC's plan to deliver 17 percent of network tv programmes from the nations by 2016 is to improve the way we reflect the whole of the UK to itself. In the next few months, a work stream led by Clare Hudson, head of programmes BBC Wales, will make recommendations about how we can improve portrayal.

# IF YOU WANT TO DING DONG DING DONG DONG DONG MERRILY THIS YEAR... ...say hello to Igor Dvorkin. He's a one-off, a truly innovative composer who can turn his hand to any style, and brings an original twist to everything he does. We're a happy band at Audio Network, all the happier when Igor is writing music for us. This year, we've let him loose on Christmas, so to hear his and other Christmas treats, go to www.audionetwork.com/playlists/christmas We think you'll find them joyful and triumphant.



To find out more, contact Elliott on 020 7 242 2311 or email e.tucker@audionetwork.com

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Fabulous 4 bedroom detached period home in picturesque Worsley Green, 10 minutes from Manchester city centre. Rent by the night,

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Brand new bright spacious 2 bedroom, 2 bathroom corner flat. Balcony, f/freezer, w/machine, oven/hob. Sensational roof garden, u/ground car parking. Borehamwood 10 minutes station. £250pw Paul 07956 392335

Cool, modern, spacious 2 bed, 2 bath flat in Peckham SE15 available end November - balcony. secure parking, 45 minutes door-to-door from BH. £1,200pcm excl bills + council tax (incl water). Facebook pics at tiny.ccjWgka. Telephone 07971 641960

**Double room to rent** in newly refurbished flat, sharing with English male artist in my early 30s, £160 per week excluding bills. Close to Ravenscourt Park. Contact Oliver on 07932 040571

**Ealing Broadway,** friendly 28 November. Large double room in 2 bed flat, Sky+, WiFi, big lounge. £600pcm excluding bills. Call Dan 07957 164533

**Ealing.** Lovely double room in 2 bed flat 20 minutes to TVC £590 + bills. Lucy 07967 047330

week or month. 0161 408 9616

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**Just off Portobello Road W11** a spacious studio flat with balcony separate kitchen and bathroom. £215pw Katy 07973 833429

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Loftus Road, 1 double bedroom flat to let £1,200pcm email bonatov@hotmail.com for photos

Luxury room to rent **Macfarlane Road** Shepherd's Bush W12 Large room £650pm bills included. Share kitchen, 2 shower rooms, TV Freeview. WiFi, fridge. Non Smoking Contact Pete 07970 074627 pgraovac@btinternet.com

Media City. Manchester. Luxury 6th floor, two bedroom apartment overlooking Lowry Centre and BBC centre. Available from November. £775pcm. Email Adrian at aj454129@yahoo.co.uk

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Muswell Hill. Large two double bedroom apartment. Kitchen with terrace, modern bathroom, great open plan living/dining room. £350pw. Simon Smith 07867 566420 simonantonysmith@hotmail. com

Newly refurbished Victorian 3 bed flat with access to a shared garden on a quiet road at the border of East Dulwich/ Peckham. Ten minutes equal distance walk to Peckham Rye and East Dulwich station. Excellent amenities. Contact beckfoja@aol.com. Telephone 07780 691267 £1,200pcm

**Notting Hill.** Double bedroom. 2 minute tube journey to TVC. Clean & tidy. £643pcm. Available 14 December. Contact Sarah 07876 550355

One bedroom flat to rent. off Green Lanes, Haringev. modern decor, communal gardens, £800pcm. Call Helen 07812 118821

**Provence** idyllic hillside villa, private pool, stunning views, alfresco dining, close beaches. http://www. provenceholidayrental.co.uk. Telephone 020 8995 6637

Richmond double room lovely flatshare £550. swill41759@aol.com

Room Ealing (2 minutes Piccadilly tube) Stylish open-plan house, spacious room, ample storage, gorgeous garden, relaxed landlord; £575 per month, all bills included (minimum 3 months). Telephone 07956 403987

Stunning 2 bed 2 bath flat near TVC £1,430pcm bills extra. Trudi 07795 205841

Stunning 2 double bedroom Victorian maisonette in Barnes SW13 8DL. 5 minutes walk Hammersmith, 25 minutes walk BBC. Contemporary stylish decor, all modern appliances, separate homeoffice space £1,550pcm available November. Email/call for pics/details: lucy@luciduk.co.uk 07970 416974

To rent. Cool, modern, spacious 2 bed, 2 bath flat in Peckham SE15 available end November balcony, secure parking, 45 minutes door-to-door from BH. £1.200pcm excl bills + council tax (incl water). Facebook pics at tiny. cc/jWgka. Telephone 07971 641960

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Beautiful period 4 bedroom house FOR SALE on River Wye in Chepstow, 30 min commute BBC Bristol, 40 minute BBC Cardiff. Breathtaking views, mooring for small boat, river deck, walled garden. £570K. http://www.theratandmouse. co.uk/riversidehouse/

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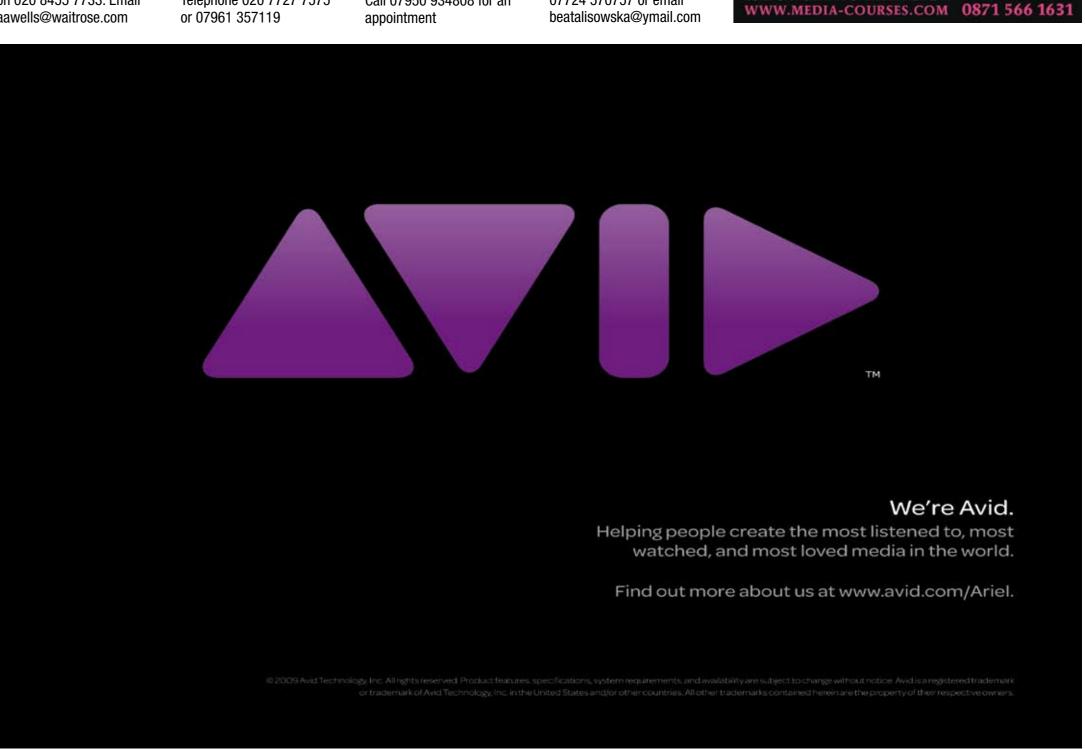
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Series Producer, Great Barrier Reef

Bristol 10D/Ref: 21576809 **■ ©** 15-Nov-09 **△** 2 years

Deputy Editor, A&M Factual Birmingham

10D/Ref: 20486809 © 15-Nov-09

**Breakfast Producer (Senior** Broadcast Journalist), BBC

Birmingham 8D/Ref: 20035309 **■ ©** 11-Nov-09 **△** 12 months

Chorus Administrator, Symphony Orchestra

London Maida Vale 4D/Ref: 21592809 **E C** 23-Nov-09

### **JOURNALISM**

**Editor Current Affairs** 

London **Bush House** 10D/Ref: 21398209 © 24-Nov-09

**Broadcast Journalist, The** World

London **Bush House** 7D/Ref: 21542509 © 22-Nov-09 ▲ 05 months

**Broadcast Journalist, Online Development (BBC Asian** Network)

London 7D/Ref: 21524109

**■ ■** 15-Nov-09 **■** 06 months

Data Journalist, BBC News Website

London - TV Centre 7D/Ref: 21470209 © 23-Nov-09

**NPR London Producer** 

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**Broadcast Journalist, BBC** Radio York

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BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

Head of Online, BBC Academy

Multi Location SM2/Ref: 21672609 **E C** 29-Nov-09

Head of Marketing

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**Business Continuity Specialist** 

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Adviser, BBC Trust

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**Senior Auditor** London White City 8D/Ref: 21268109

**■**  14-Nov-09

**Finance Analyst** London TV Centre 8D/Ref: 21268309

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Senior Trainer, Journalism and **Production** 

London **Bush House** 8D/Ref: 21575509

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Cambridge 11D/Ref: 21402509 **2**0-Nov-09

Finance assistant White City 5D/Ref: 21387209 □ 16-Nov-09 ■ 18 months

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**Internal Communications** Manager

Broadcast Centre Media Village Under Review/Ref: 21266109 © 15-Nov-09

**NEW MEDIA** 

**■ ©** 19-Nov-09

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BBC People

5D/Ref: 21535409 TECHNOLOGY

© 23-Nov-09

**Executive Product Manager** 

London Henry Wood House 10D/Ref: 12875909

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Communications and **Marketing Lead** 

London White City 9D/Ref: 21468409 

**Senior Product Manager** London 9D/Ref: 21434909

**■ ©** 17-Nov-09 **▲** 12 months **Senior Product Manager** 

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Senior Web Developer

Broadcast Centre Media Village 8D/Ref: 21586109 **■**  19-Nov-09

**Systems Specialist** London White City 8D/Ref: 21419509 ■ 16-Nov-09 ■ 06 months

**Senior Application Support** Broadcast Centre Media Village 8D/Ref: 18173109

Senior Software Engineer, Online Media Group London 8D/Ref: 17142209

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© 11-Nov-09 **Developer (Solutions Team)** London White City

7D/Ref: 21394909 **I** 16-Nov-09 **I** 06 months **Test Engineer** 

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**■** 15-Nov-09

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As good

as it gets News online journalist Patrick Jackson has a

stint with a go-getting

team at World Service

See Attachment

ON PAPER IT LOOKED like swapping new media for old. In fact, my three month attachment from News Online to The World Today left me in awe of radio's possibilities.

I was prepared for a parallel universe of 'discos and donuts' - and I am not talking here about the gold medallions and the well-fed mice of Bush House. But audio postcards, audio fact boxes and billboard clips? That's text boxes, fact boxes and quote boxes to any online journalist.

The World Today team's sheer drive, and the quality of its live input, put me in mind of a certain domestic station. No wonder, given that some of



**I scored** a bowl of fruit while on trolley dolly duty

the editors have a Radio Five background.

One highlight of my stint was helping with a surreal OB from the London Stock Exchange on the first anniversary of Lehman Brothers' collapse. At five in the morning the atmosphere inside the foyer was positively mausoleum-like, but

apt enough, I guess, as our live discos (discussions) explored the banking crash. Another was being trained in the use of Twitter, to net interviewees.

Proud achievements? I did score a bowl of fresh fruit one night while on trolley dolly duty (WT is the poor cousin to Bush newsroom in respect of nighttime catering), and I brought a third Northern Irish accent to the rich mix of WT's voice-overs. I also got some good 'gets' (guests) - from a studio-full of Brazilian young bloods talking about the dangers of being young in Sao Paulo to Iran's last woman cabinet minister before the revolution.

Job satisfaction? Being part of a team of producers hailing from around the globe who reflect it back faithfully on the airwaves, and just the pleasure of watching the presenters in full flow.

'Thank you, esteemed colleagues,' as they might say at WT.

Been anywhere nice? Send your attachment stories to Clare Bolt

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### **NICK ERICSSON**

### PRODUCER, AFRICAN ENGLISH DAILY PROGRAMMES, WORLD SERVICE

### You grew up in South Africa...

I grew up in Johannesburg in the 1980s which was a critical time in the fight against apartheid. I had a very stable childhood, yet down the road the townships were burning. So in many respects my childhood was normal but there was a very palpable sense of unease and fear – the bomb threats, the presence of soldiers and roadblocks, the 'anti-terror' drills at school – and, of course, this idea that the rest of the world didn't like us white South Africans very much.

### Was the election that brought Mandela to power an important time for you?

I was on an exchange trip in Canada at the time and everyone wanted to hear my opinion because South Africa was the big story. I was an 18 year-old kid giving lectures to political science classes at universities and thinking there was nothing abnormal about it. I suppose it was the arrogance of youth. I remember voting at the embassy and meeting lots of South Africans in the line, some from my home town. I'd never felt more of a South African than I did then, thousands of miles from home and voting in that election.

### What did you do when you returned from Canada?

I went to university and then became a high school teacher. That's what I thought I'd do for the rest of my life but I wasn't emotionally or physically fit enough for it. It made me think that maybe my need to teach wasn't necessarily in the class-room so I got in touch with a talk radio station in Johannesburg. I started producing a couple of shows for them and then I progressed to being an overnight presenter. I loved it because it was like being in a classroom again; facilitating discussion and getting people to talk to each other. I did that for five years.

### Do you get to go home much?

I've been back three times so far this year. I miss the beauty of Johannesburg – the clear blue skies on a winter's afternoon – and the people. A large part of me yearns for Johannesburg while a large part of me feels at home here.

### What does your job entail?

I regularly edit *Network Africa* overnight and produce Focus on Africa magazine. The magazine is a labour of love. There's one full time member of staff and three of us who work on a part-time basis, coming in for the intense two weeks of production. We have a difficult job as the magazine has to cover the whole

### CV

**Education:** King Edward VII School, Johannesburg; University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg **First job:** Part time English literacy teacher while at university

Career landmarks: School teacher while at university, talk radio presenter and producer; tv talk show host; World service producer

### When did you move to London?

In 2004 there was something called a Commonwealth visa which allowed people under a certain age to travel and work in England for a couple of years. My wife and I thought we would do it while we still could. At first I was unemployed and then I got a job at the Church Times. But the ultimate goal was to work for the BBC; that was the gold standard. We were about to go home when I saw a job advertised for a producer in the African news and current affairs department of the World Service and got it. Five and a half years later we're still here.

of Africa in just 75 pages and remain topical for three months.

### Where does Focus on Africa and Network Africa sit?

We sit in the English for Africa service but form part of the Africa service which includes the Hausa, Swahili, French for Africa and Portuguese for Africa services. There are plans to make Africa news and current affairs the hub of African knowledge. We did it with the Zimbabwe elections where we touted ourselves as the experts and everyone came to us for information. I gave 15 interviews to BBC networks and stations in two hours.

### Where's your biggest readership?

Nigeria, which is the most populous African country, followed by North America. Focus on Africa is an iconic brand that is associated with the programme. It has been going for 20 years and has some very high profile fans. The presidents of Liberia and Botswana have written for us.

### Do you travel much with your job?

I've been to Ghana, Nigeria and east Africa with the programme. I also went to America where we did a road show looking at issues of African identity in America.

### How is the World Service perceived in Africa?

I was lucky enough to cover the Nigerian elections in 2007, travelling with someone who's quite an established name there. Everywhere we went people would ask how she was and invite us into their homes. I remember travelling through a small village when the World Service's Hausa news came on and a remarkable thing happened. Everyone was listening on little radios - on the back of mopeds, walking down the street. In Liberia, Focus on Africa has a strong resonance because in the civil war it was the one reliable source of news.

### How do you see yourself in ten years time?

The plan has always been to return to South Africa. But I love doing the magazine and next month I start an attachment at *World Briefing* where I'll be producing and presenting world news. I speak Afrikaans but my life would be easier if I could speak French and Portuguese so I plan to start French classes. At the moment it's 'parlez-vous Anglais?'.

**Interview by Laura Scarrott** 

# **foreign** bureau



JOANNA IOLLY

NEPAL CORRESPONDENT

I'VE BEEN IN THE HIMALAYAS for more than three months, but for the first two I wondered whether the idea of fresh air and snowcapped peaks were a distant myth as thick, monsoon clouds obscured all views in the Kathmandu valley.

The first month sped by in a whir of traffic, pollution, sticky heat and strange insects crawling out of unexpected places.

I've lived in difficult places before but Nepal has its own challenges, including, for me, power cuts, sewage leaks and 24-hour chanting from the temple next door.

Getting a press pass wasn't easy either. 'You've given me all the correct documents, but there are other documents I'm looking for,' said a Department of Information official.

The first big story I covered was the total eclipse, supposedly visible from Kathmandu. I climbed high for the best view, only to see the ever-present clouds turn from light grey to a slightly darker grey. Eclipses are

### The rains finally arrived after Joanna Lumley's visit

considered evil here and drinking and eating during them a bad idea. It's said that the only safe way to watch is first to immerse yourself in a holy river. Nepal, until last year

the only Hindu kingdom in the world, is full of often medieval practices and complicated ritual. My assistant, Shweta, taught me to spit on fallen hair to stop witches gaining power, to be thankful if I saw a corpse because it was good luck and to cure aches by rubbing my back against a staircase in the morning with nobody watching.

At the end of July, Joanna Lumley arrived. No one was prepared for the mob scenes that greeted her and throughout her visit she was feted like a world leader. Cynics said the attention was government ploy to distract Nepalis from the ever-crumbling political situation. Parliament hasn't functioned here because of a row between the majority Maoists and the ruling coalition.

Joanna Lumley's visit sparked a trend, with Sarah Ferguson arriving shortly afterwards to promote maternal health and then Geri Halliwell. I was starting to enjoy being a celebrity correspondent but more serious news was soon back on the agenda. Although the rains finally came, after Lumley's visit, they arrived late and with an intensity that caused landslides and flooding in areas already hit by a diarrhoea epidemic.

The Maoists started holding rallies, throwing stones at ministers and clashing with security forces. Now, Nepalis are waiting for something to break the political deadlock. And now that I've moved house, sorted out my generator and can finally see snow-capped mountains from my rooftop, I'm ready for whatever happens next.

**16** ariel 10·11·09

# green room

### **THE ARIELATOR**

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



upside The rise and rise of Radio
1's Fearne Cotton continues. The presenter took Switch's Stylish Human award at the multiplatform teen strand's big awards bash on Sunday, beating the

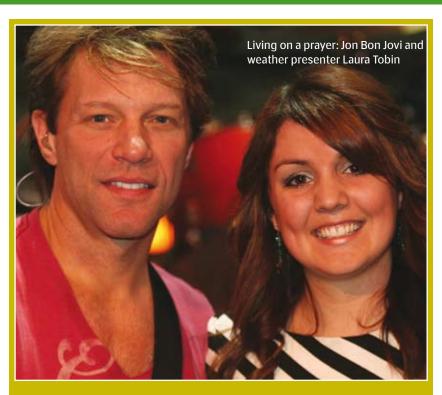
likes of MTV's Alexa Chung, Girls Aloud's Nicola Roberts and freewheeling hair-cut maverick Agyness Deyn to win the award thanks to her quirky indie princess style. The award's curious title (Stylish Human?) suggests other animals may have their own category next year, for style is a truly universal language that transcends all cultural and species barriers. Our money is on Australia's achingly hip Yellow-bibbed Lorikeet (right) to triumph in Switch's Stylish Avian category.

### **DOWNSIDE**

No longer will **George Lamb's** rough and ready – yet strangely compelling – tones be heard gently rasping from any radio tuned to 6

Music on weekdays 10am to 1pm, as they have done for the past two years. The elegantly dressed presenter is being replaced by the equally compelling but slightly less husky voice of culture (show) vulture and sometime indie popstar Lauren Laverne. But Lamb fans shouldn't panic – he is moving to a weekend

slot on the same station,
7 to 10am from December
5, and George is apparently happy with the move.
'The fact that we've
clashed with This
Morning has always
left a bitter sweet
taste,' he admits.
'The good news
is, This Morning
isn't on at the
weekends.'



# THE FORECAST IS... ROCK

Never meet your idols. No matter how great they may seem, celebs in the flesh are invariably more boring, more wrinkly and, most of all, much more tiny than they appear in the delightful fantasies of your mind. But very occasionally a lucky few manage to escape with their illusions safely intact – so it was for broadcast meteorologist Laura Tobin who, after doing the weather on Greg James's Radio 1 show, found herself being offered the chance to interview her idol, a Mr Jon Bon Jovi, the next day.

Laura got her first Bon Jovi single in 1990 and has been a rabid fan ever since, so she managed a tearful 'yes' and spent a sleepless night considering what to say, and – equally importantly – what to wear. The big day arrived and she entered the Live Lounge studio to find her hero nonchalantly jamming away. 'I felt overwhelmed, like I'd given birth,' Laura told Green Room poetically. Despite 'not being able to see' through sheer adrenaline, she managed to keep it cool when interviewing the great man (which is more than can be said for some of our more seasoned interviewers, see We Hear That). Laura left - again in tears - clutching signed JBJ memorabilia, while Jon Bon took away his own memento: a signed Met Office photo of the weather presenter. You can't say fairer than that. See the Bon Jovi session at bbc.

co.uk/radio1

### WE HEAR THAT...

**Scarrott with your story** 

WHILE WEATHER presenter Laura Tobin kept her cool when interviewing Jon Bon Jovi (see left), seasoned interviewer Shelagh Fogarty went to pieces on Thursday morning when former Wimbledon champ Goran Ivanisevic (below) featured as a guest on 5 live breakfast. Co-host Nicky Campbell had to take over the interview because Shelagh was blushing and babbling – 'I've come over all unnecessary', she said. She later stated 'my life is now complete' and at one point had to leave the studio to compose herself. It reminds us of when Boris Becker unexpectedly came into the 5 live studio a few years back and sent host Victoria Derbyshire and her producer into swoons of star-struck excitement. Ever had to interview your hero? Email Laura

THE INTERNATIONAL search campaign instigated by the Chris Moyles show's Comedy Dave to find the wedding ring he lost while swanning about on a beach in Florida has succeeded thanks to the help of a particularly resourceful chilli cheese dog vendor. Willy Kochounian, the Floridabased snack food purveyor who owns a café near the Pine Island beach where the ring was lost, helped Dave put up a \$200 bounty for its safe return and also got his cause into the local press. On Wednesday he received an email from American treasure-hunting enthusiast Greg Miller saying he had found the ring, and now it will be brought to the UK for Christmas by Dave's in-laws. Only one question remains – just what is a chilli cheese dog?

### **Win 3 cult classics**



**THIS WEEK** we have three complete series dvd box-sets on offer from Fabulous Films:

**Tales of the Golden Monkey** – An adventure show set in a backwater corner of the South Pacific in 1938 where an American adventurer and friends transport people on the run in a ramshackle seaplane, as seen on the BBC in the mid 1980s.

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**The Mysterious Cities of Gold** – The first English dvd release of the classic 1980s animated series set in the 16th century Americas and watched by millions on CBBC.

We have three of each box-set to give away.
To enter to win one of each, just answer this
question: What novel was The Mysterious Cities
of Gold loosely based on?

Email ariel competitions by November 16.

### **EARWIGGING**

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...Or you could get a hobby and stop watching tv...

...Oh dear, my arm has fallen off...

...Let me speak to my man with the rabbit...

...We're bringing Pudsey into disrepute...

...I'm not prepared to work with anyone who's got a moustache...

...They sucked out his brain and put an apricot in there...

### THE HOUND OF LOVE

hound, consisting of an eager 'hello' They say dogs are a man's best directed at any passing female ('I friend, but last week sbj Stephen had to come up with a form of words, Chittenden found there's more to that credential than camaraderie and the and I thought 'hello' might be quite occasional tug of war – they can also good,' said Stephen, explaining his attract the opposite methodology). This met with no Reporting for 5 response but averted eyes and a breakfast, Stephen quickening of pace, so he moved undertook a strict on to the main event and sat on a scientific experiment bench with Myrtle by his side. to see if his dog Success! And this time the Myrtle would help ladies even approached Stephen, naming Myrtle's him meet women in wagging tale as the the park. motivating stimulus. As scientific 'It was fun, but not method even in the top ten dictates, he weirdest things first carried I've done for that programme,' says out a control the intrepid scientist. test minus his

> IF YOU HAVE A STORY FOR THE GREEN ROOM, CONTACT ADAM BAMBURY



# 2009 BBC staff photography competition



### UNEXPECTED BEAUTY

Whale in the wild by Lindsay Pretorius, PA to TVL Management Team, Licence Fee Unit



### UNEXPECTED BEAUTY Runner IIn:

The Swimmer
by Nigel Jarvis,
Senior Technician,
FM&T

### UNEXPECTED BEAUTY Commendation:

Liquid sunlight by David Fawcett, Head of Policy Development, Strategy







Harry (aged 110) and Richard by Robert Wicks, Senior Broadcast Journalist, English Regions, Bristol •••••



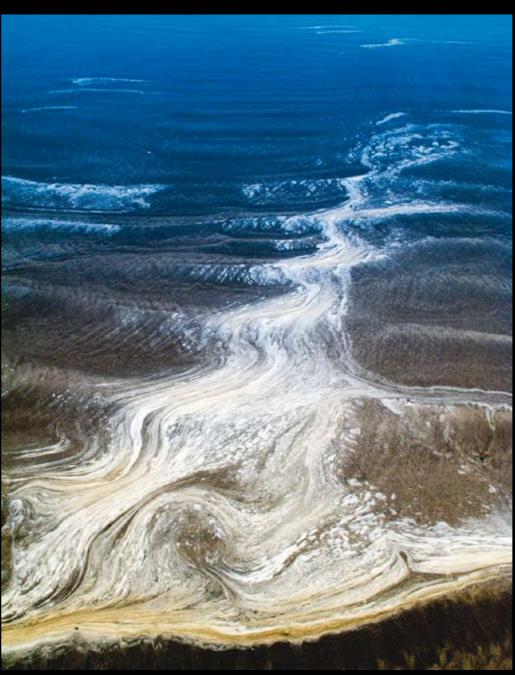
LD Runner Up: Kabul Kabab by Derrick Evans, Technical Operator, Africa & Middle East, World Service



by Gareth Ford Williams, Senior Content Producer, FM&T User Experience & Design,

Foam on Broadhaven Beach by Paul Evans, Senior Producer, Wales Production







ABSTRACT Runner Up: Worthing no5 by Nigel Jarvis, Senior Technician, FM&T

# ABSTRACT Commendation: Dry earth and sprouting seed by Jeremy Toogood, Broadcast Camera Journalist, Newsgathering, Bristol



ABSTRACT ACTIVITY Winner:
Notting Hill Carnival 2009
by Ping Shum,
Producer,
BBC Chinese ••••





### ABSTRACT ACTIVITY Runner Up:

Worthing August 2009
by Alex Fielding,
Senior Broadcast
Journalist, Asian Network, Birmingham



by Andy Gallacher, Reporter, Newsgathering, Miami



High Tide by Andrew Dunn, Producer/Director, **TV Music Entertainment** ••••



Broadcasting House worships All Souls by Richard Leeming, Executive Producer, Syndication, A&M Interactive









