

THE BBC NEWSPAPER

ariel

Strictly for Pudsey

◆ Spotlight presenter Natalie Cornah and her professional partner Nick Hole took to the floor on the weekend to help raise money for Children in Need.

Cornah was one of 11 presenters from Radio Cornwall, Radio Devon and Spotlight to take part in Strictly for Pudsey, a dance competition held in the Plymouth Guildhall. **See Page 4**



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Guest contributors this week

GARETH HYDES, head of editorial for Children in Need, on the sometimes 'harrowing' stories behind the appeal. Page 4

PETER STEWART, broadcast journalist at Radio Kent, finds a different dimension to reporting the news on the Falklands. Page 15

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BBC to go public with hospitality register and aggregate star salaries

Still more to come

by Sally Hillier

♦ **FAR FROM BEING THE END** of the story, the publication last week of the salaries, out-of-pocket expense claims and centrally booked costs of the BBC's top leaders is part of an on-going process, with further disclosures promised in the new year.

Another round of expenses submitted by senior executives will be revealed, fulfilling a pledge to make such information available on a quarterly basis, and a register of gifts and hospitality will be published. This will set out the gifts and hospitality that have been accepted by executives in accordance with BBC policy.

A register of interests for senior staff is also to be disclosed, including shareholdings and any memberships or directorships of public or industry bodies, as well as business interests held by immediate family members. Such information is already available on Executive Board members and details are now being gathered on people lower down the command chain.

In another move towards greater openness and transparency, the BBC says that early in 2010 it will unveil details of how much it pays celebrity performers, although this will be in aggregate form, shown in total in bands, rather than as a breakdown of individual payments.

The BBC has long argued that it could be commercially damaging to let rivals know what its big names are getting – a case that holds little water with critics who believe that a publicly funded broadcaster should come completely clean on talent costs.

Last week's revelations about the salaries



and expenses of the 107 top decision makers represent 'unprecedented levels of transparency' that 'go beyond any other public body', said chief operating officer Caroline Thomson.

Among almost 3000 lines of information on expenses, only one percent has been redacted (blacked out) to protect confidentiality, she added.

The disclosures, which went live last Thursday on the About the BBC website, and include job descriptions for each managerial role, cover high profile executives such as Mark Thompson, Alan Yentob, Jana Bennett and Peter Salmon as well as lesser known people. 'These senior leaders were selected because

they hold positions on the most senior boards and therefore hold the greatest responsibility for spending licence fee money and for over-seeing the BBC's services in their area of operations,' Caroline Thomson explained.

In an interview with Ariel ahead of last week's publication, Lucy Adams, director of BBC People, said the corporation had thought 'long and hard' about the fairness or otherwise of pitching staff with no public profile into the spotlight by exposing their earnings.

'That's why we went on board structure, rather than just picking people at random,' said Adams. 'If you have a position of responsibility sufficient to be on a board, then you're clearly a senior manager, which means that sometimes you will be on the receiving end of decisions that may not feel very comfortable.'

'We did a lot of consultation and sessions on why we had chosen to do this, and actually the feeling was that while people might find it difficult, they understood that as senior managers it was their responsibility to be part of this.'

Even so, the process of going public was a tricky act to get right, Adams observed. 'We're trying to be open and accountable, but in doing so are revealing the salaries of some of our staff, a number of which are in excess of £100,000.'

'I imagine that if I were earning the national average [about £27,000], and my partner had just lost their job in the recession, and I saw a list of big salaries at the BBC, it would not feel very palatable. However, we can't have a remuneration strategy driven by public opinion.'



Pay list embraces the high profile and lesser known

The salary list of the top 107 decision makers includes both household names and little known managers. Their earnings encompass a wide range, as shown in these examples

BBC DIRECTION GROUP (BDG)
Mark Thompson, director general
Salary: £664,000
Total remuneration: £834,000
David Jordan, director of editorial policy and standards
Salary: £167,000
Total remuneration: £174,800
Jessica Cecil, head of director-general's office
Salary: £122,500
Total remuneration: £130,300

VISION
Jana Bennett, director
Salary: £412,000
Total remuneration: £515,000
John Yorke, controller of drama production and new talent
Salary: £238,119
Total remuneration: £270,919
Claire Dresser, chief adviser
Salary: £98,500
Total remuneration: £103,300

FM&T
Erik Huggers, director
Salary: £223,000
Total remuneration: £274,000
Kerstin Mogull, chief operating officer
Salary: £175,000
Total remuneration: £182,800
Anna Mallett, controller, business strategy

Salary: £120,000
Total remuneration: £127,800

MARKETING, COMMUNICATIONS AND AUDIENCES
Sharon Baylay, director
Salary (May 2009): £310,000
Total remuneration: as a new-comer, this will be in Annual Report and Accounts 2009/10
Jacky Brandreth-Potter, director of brand and planning
Salary: £167,145
Total remuneration: £174,945
Sue Lynas, director of MC&A for audio and music
Salary: £128,375
Total remuneration: £136,175

FINANCE AND BUSINESS
Zarin Patel, chief financial officer
Salary: £346,000
Total: £429,000
Chris Day, group financial controller
Salary: £211,500
Total remuneration: £219,300
Jo Woods, finance and business director, audio & music
Salary: £134,003
Total remuneration: £141,803

OPERATIONS
Caroline Thomson, chief operating officer
Salary: £333,000
Total remuneration: £413,000
Nicholas Eldred, group general counsel and secretary
Salary: £219,751
Total remuneration: £227,551
Tom Sleigh, chief adviser

Salary: £76,300
Total remuneration: £81,100

BBC PEOPLE
Lucy Adams, director
Salary: £320,000
Total remuneration will be in Annual Report and Accounts 2009/10
Robert Johnston, reward director
Salary: £183,750
Total remuneration: £196,550
Paul Greaves, head of safety, security and health
Salary: £114,400
Total remuneration: £119,200

JOURNALISM
Mark Byford, deputy dg
Salary: £471,000
Total: £485,000
Dominic Coles, chief operating officer
Salary: £257,500
Total: £265,300
James Heath, controller of strategy, journalism group
Salary: £85,000
Total remuneration: £89,800

AUDIO & MUSIC
Tim Davie, director
Salary: £325,000
Total: £403,000
Graham Ellis, controller of production
Salary: £200,000
Total: £207,800
Paul Smith, head of editorial standards
Salary: £110,000
Total remuneration: £114,800

We had to check and check again

♦ **THE PUBLICATION OF SALARIES**, expenses and job specifications is the result of many hours of painstaking effort by a number of departments, including procurement, the Freedom of Information team and BBC People.

'It was a very, very big piece of work and great lengths were taken to make sure the information was

clear and easy to understand,' says Lucy Adams (left). 'A lot of time was spent making sure that central charges, such as taxis, were allocated to the right people, and remuneration details also had to be carefully checked.'

'In addition, we had to make sure that managers were happy with their job descriptions, and that these

'Great lengths were taken to ensure that the information was clear'

LUCY ADAMS

were consistent. Some people wrote one line describing their job, while others wrote half a book'

The BBC press team was involved too, making sure it was fully across all the details published on the About the BBC website so that when journalists rang with queries, press officers 'were on the front foot' with answers and explanations.

Thompson for two nights in a top hotel in Las Vegas, the Bellagio, and a flight costing £3,211.70, taken by Alan Yentob to New York.

The creative director's business class seat was justified, said the BBC, because 'he was filming soon after landing'. The explanation will not go down well with staff who are obliged to travel economy when on assignment.

ing they were to be laid bare, Lucy Adams, director of BBC People, told Ariel there had been a 'legitimate dip' over the summer months when there was always less business activity.

Even so, it is notable how modest some of the sums are from April to June, with some managers putting in no expenses at all.

Claims that were submitted included one for almost £650 by Mark

Claims of high flyers cause stir

♦ **WITH ONE OR TWO EXCEPTIONS**, the expenses unveiled last week (for the period April to June 2009) were far more moderate than those published earlier in the year, when the press had a field day over the 'extravagance' of BBC execs and their endless gifts of chocolates, flowers, cupcakes and cashmere socks for celebrities.

Asked whether the bosses had tempered their claims since then, know-

'Surplus' funds new service but no decision on top slicing until 2012/13

Pilots for replacement ITV regional news programmes to start next year

by Cathy Loughran

Pilot regional television news services in Scotland, Wales and one English region – funded by the licence fee 'surplus' from digital switchover – will begin next year, the government announced this week.

And although top-slicing the BBC licence fee remains the government's long term preferred option, no final decision on the funding method for the replacement ITV regional services would be made until 2012/13.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport said that, during the debate about how a plurality of regional news could be provided, some 'credible' alternative funding options had emerged, including spectrum tax. The department added that if 'better options' came forward during the pilot process,

they would be considered.

The pilots will be delivered by independently funded news consortia (IFNCs) 'using public funding to incentivise commercial delivery models and provide greater syndication between news providers', the government says. Media companies who have already shown interest include the Press Association, ITN, Trinity Mirror, Guardian Media Group and STV.

Replacements for the ITV regional services are likely to cost between £40m to £100m a year to run. Neither the shape of the consortia – which are opposed by the Conservatives – nor the final level of any switchover surplus is yet known, but under a timetable announced this week, an independent selection panel to oversee tendering of bids will be set up this month and a decision on which

English region will host the pilot will be made by Christmas.

The selection panel will recommend successful bidders to culture secretary Ben Bradshaw by March, after which pilots could launch. A DCMS spokeswoman said there was no firm launch date in mind.

In its response this week to a public consultation on regional news, the Culture Department said: 'The pilots are an opportunity to test funding models. The government is firmly committed to the multi-year licence fee settlement with the BBC, and will continue to respect it as this is a crucial element of the BBC's independence.'

A final decision on the source of the public funding of IFNCs would be made 'nearer the time of roll-out, in the light of the lessons learnt from the pilot experience'.

The government consultation

attracted 90 responses, with more than half saying that sources of funding other than the licence fee should be investigated. In a separate UK-representative survey for the government, 65 percent supported the proposal to top-slice the licence fee to ensure a variety of providers of regional tv news.

Responding to the DCMS conclusions, the BBC Trust said it 'welcomed the government's announcement that it is prepared to consider alternative options for supporting regional news'.

The trust continued: 'We are carefully considering the document and will continue to engage with the government on the issues it raises. The trust recognises the importance of plurality in regional news and has no desire for the BBC to become the sole provider in this area.'

NEWS BITES

AS PART of Radio 1 and 1Xtra's anti-bullying season, Bebo, Facebook, Habbo, MSN, MySpace and YouTube have teamed up to offer advice on their sites to combat online bullying. Radio 1 is dealing with bullying this week in its output and a website has been created to support the campaign. bbc.co.uk/bullyproof

A REVISED version of the BBC iPlayer is to be launched as a dedicated channel on the Nintendo Wii on November 18. The iPlayer is already accessible via the Nintendo Wii, but the new version is faster and has a full-screen user interface.

BBC ONE drama *The Street*, which has ended with the closure of ITV Studios drama department, where it was made, won five of 13 BBC prizes at the weekend's RTS North West Awards. Writer Jimmy McGovern took the craft award with the judges' award going to the production team. *Dragons' Den* and BBC Three comedy *Massive* were other winners.

TO MARK the 10th anniversary of BBC Radio's Food & Farming Awards Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall will attend this year's ceremony, to be hosted at the end of the month by Mark Thompson in the Radio Theatre at Broadcasting House.

VANESSA WHITBURN, editor of *The Archers*, represented the programme and the BBC at the funeral last week of actor Norman Painting, who played Phil Archer for nearly 60 years. A memorial service will be held in 2010.

THE BBC'S news service in Turkish, BBC Turkiye, will celebrate 70 years of broadcasting on November 20 with a televised debate on the future of news co-presented by the BBC's David Eades and Banu Guven from NTV, the BBC's broadcast partner in Turkey.

GRAHAM LIVER, currently at Radio Leeds, will be the new voice of Radio Lancashire's breakfast show, taking over in January from Tony Livesey, who is joining Radio 5 live to host a late night programme.

THE BBC won the photographic coverage section of the Promax Awards for *Psychoville*, which was shown in June. Ross Walker was picture campaign executive and Phil Borg, photographic designer.

FOR THE first time, the Royal British Legion's Armistice Day event in Trafalgar Square joined up with similar commemorations in Swansea – the only official event outside London. The wartime reflections were shown on the BBC Big Screen in Swansea.

BBC SPORT will provide live coverage of the ATP World Tour Finals from London's O2 Arena between November 22-29. Andy Murray, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal are all scheduled to play in the tournament.

Stories of Children in Need

by Gareth Hydes

This week there will be more than 300 features broadcast across television, radio and online telling the story of projects funded by Children in Need.

The stories we tell are sometimes harrowing and emotional, but in nearly all cases they have an uplifting and positive outcome. Our core aim is to improve the life of a child – and we try to reflect that in our storytelling.

The hardest area of our coverage to get right is when we look at children living in poverty. It's such a difficult word to define, and our audiences tend to have their own firm views of what poverty actually means. The stories are complex to tell. Many are in their situation because their lives have spiralled out of



■ Gareth Hydes, head of editorial, for Children in Need charity

control due to drink, drugs, abuse or mental health problems – it's not as simple as saying 'this child is poor'. It's a big challenge for our reporters to tell these stories. Crucially, we try and spend as much time as possible with the

child or family before we start recording. It's amazing how a child or parent will confide in you when you have visited them a couple of times. Also, it's very difficult for a child to tell their own story of poverty.

They are too young to understand what it means, and in many occasions it is all they know. While we try to make our stories child-led at this time of the year, poverty can be the exception – a project worker, a parent or a carer might well be able to tell the story better.

We fund hundreds of projects across the UK which help children living in poverty, and while we are always looking at different and new ways of telling their story, it is always an inspiration to meet and work with families who are coping with the most difficult of circumstances.

In-house effort

All this week staff are helping to top last year's total of £38million.

■ More than 16,000 people applied for 400 tickets for Plymouth's Strictly for Pudsey dance competition (see cover). Donations on the night totalled £1800. Plymouth-born dance expert Wayne Sleep led the judges.

■ BBC Workplace will be asking people who forget their passes to pay a 'Forgotten Pass Fine' of £1.

■ Radio York will be busking in the city centre on Friday with help from Tinchy Stryder and the York Minster choir.

■ Staff at Pacific Quay are invited to swap their wares at this year's Frock Exchange on Wednesday.

■ Kingswood Warren will host its last charity firework display before R&D moves to Centre House. Last year they raised £1600.

Key science and media roles

ANDREW COHEN, editor of *Horizon*, has been appointed head of the science unit. He replaces John Lynch, Vision productions' current head of science, who is leaving the BBC next year.

In his new role Cohen will lead London's factual science team, which is responsible for programmes such as *Bang Goes the Theory*, and upcoming series *Seven Wonders of the Solar System*, as well as heading up the new virtual Academy of Science, which aims to connect the BBC with science institutions around the UK. He said it was a 'privilege' to be able to build on Lynch's leadership.

'I'm looking forward to working with a highly talented and experienced team of senior executives and one of the most creative and original production teams anywhere in the world.' Next year the BBC will focus on its science programming and will feature a landmark series on the history of science.

ALEX GUBBAY, Sport's interactive news editor, is to be the first social media editor in BBC News.

From January, he will take charge of developing social media initiatives and user-generated content across TV Centre's multimedia newsroom – managing the UGC hub, co-ordinating content from audiences for use on all platforms and making sure News has the technology to support its social media ambitions.

He will also co-ordinate the work of correspondents and reporters already using social media tools. Head of newsroom Mary Hockaday said Gubbay's track record running the popular and successful BBC Sport website, and his strong editorial pedigree, made him an ideal person to lead the development in this area.

Laughing with the MasterChefs



John Torode, Gregg Wallace, 'Audrey' and Andi Peters taste a dish in the Invention Test at MasterChef Live at Olympia on Saturday

PHOTOGRAPH: KEN SIMYARD

Listed events proposals cause furore

by Candida Watson

The Winter Olympics, which take place in Vancouver in February, are skating on thin ice.

To the dismay of snowsports fans, a panel led by former FA chief executive David Davies has proposed dropping the Winter Games from the list of sporting events that are protected for free-to-air broadcasting – the so-called 'crown jewels' considered to have 'special national resonance'.

But the panel suggestion which provoked most comment was to return domestic Ashes tests to free-to-air broadcasting. When England won the Ashes last summer the games were exclusively broadcast on Sky Sports, the first time a home series against Australia was not available to viewers without a subscription package.

Cricket authorities are concerned the loss of revenue will damage the sport. Giles Clarke,

chairman of the England and Wales Cricket Board, told BBC News: 'Listing will have a significant impact on funding at all levels. It will be absolutely devastating.'

In contrast, the chief executive of the British Olympic Association, Andy Hunt, was 'extremely concerned and disappointed' that the Winter Olympics might come off the list.

In a statement, the BBC welcomed the recommendations made by the Davies Panel on Listed Events, 'and the support the report gives to the principle that it is in the public's interest to protect events of national importance to ensure they remain free to air'.

It continued: 'We will be reviewing the findings and recommendations and will respond in full in due course.'

The proposals now go out to consultation for 12 weeks.

Radio arts hub ahead of plan

The teams behind domestic and World Service radio arts programmes are to come together, ahead of schedule, in an arts production hub in Broadcasting House.

Announcing the move, Graham Ellis, audio and music's controller of production, said that staff who make arts programmes for the World Service – including *The Strand*, *World Book Club*, *Charlie Gillett* and *The Proms* – will transfer to W1 next year.

Four posts will close as a result, although no compulsory redundancies are needed. The job cuts are to allow A&M to meet its savings targets for World Service without reducing output. Other programmes in A&M's World Service factual unit, including the daily magazine *Outlook*, will stay at Bush House, becoming part of A&M general factual from April. Anne Tyley, executive editor of WS factual will oversee transition of the Bush House teams and has confirmed she will leave the BBC once the move is complete.

FM&T awards for innovation

Erik Huggers praised R&D's engineers as 'the unsung heroes of our industry' after FM&T won four out of seven categories at the RTS Innovation awards last week.

'They work in the engine room and do a lot of the heavy lifting that creative people take advantage of,' FM&T's director told Ariel. 'But it's their proactive thinking and innovation which has taken us from black and white to colour and from Ceefax to the web.'

He singled out the winning team behind DVB-T2, the technology that makes Freeview HD possible. Without Nick Wells's R&D team 'it would never exist. They have made it possible for us to deliver HD into British households'.

There was also a win for R&D's automated tapeless production system, Ingex. 'You can buy these systems today for hundreds of thousands: this is available for tens of thousands and is already being used by *Dragons' Den* and *EastEnders*,' Huggers said. There was also a prize for CBBC website Bugbears which allows children to 'use avatars to get questions and concerns out into the web in a safe environment'.

iPlayer beat Sky's news app on Apple iPhone to the judges award.

2m for Parliament

BBC Parliament topped 2m viewers for the first time last month, beating its previous best of 1.8m in June.

The record figures (2.08m) covered the party conference season and the channel's average audience size this year has been 2,200, or 0.02 percent share. But controller Peter Knowles says the increased monthly reach is proof that, despite so-called 'disengagement' with politics, there is an appetite for televised debate.

The approach of the election was also a factor, he said, as was Freeview. The audience has doubled since it moved to the platform in 2006.



Auteur and actress:
Poliakoff on set with
Garai, who plays
'Glorious' Anne Keyes

Claire Barrett meets Stephen Poliakoff, whose latest film exposes upper class corruption in 1939

INGLORIOUS TIMES

IT MAY HAVE WON BARACK OBAMA the Nobel Peace Prize, but appeasement never did Neville Chamberlain any favours.

The British prime minister's attempts to reach a peaceful understanding with Nazi Germany – to try to preserve the traditional English way of life by overlooking some of Hitler's more aggressive tendencies – resulted in a ferocious World War II and Chamberlain's supersession by Winston Churchill.

It's a period in history that has lured dramatist Stephen Poliakoff back to the cinema after ten years of making dramas for BBC television. 'People in the industry have been saying 'make a movie, make a movie', he tells Ariel, 'but I wanted to wait until I found a story that I felt belonged on the big screen.'

That came in the tales of duplicity and corruption he discovered at the core of the pre-war British establishment as it sought to maintain the status quo at all costs. 'I didn't realise the British secret service was quite so active in trying to suppress opposition to appeasing Hitler,' says Poliakoff. 'A lot of dirty tricks were brought to bear.'

Glorious 39 – a talkbackThames production funded by BBC Films, the UK Film Council and Screen East

– is described as 'a thriller in a historical context' by its writer and director. 'It's a big departure for me,' says Poliakoff, 'telling a story where people suffer violent deaths.'

He concedes that this part of the fiction, which centres around the aristocratic Keyes family, has been heightened, but insists that the backdrop of covert monitoring of

'I read every diary published – it was like time travel'

opponents' phone conversations, the family divisions over which side to take, the profound sense of doom among the upper classes and even the killing of pets in the panic as war is declared are rooted in historical fact.

'I read every diary published, including those by prominent politicians like Harold Nicholson and Henry Channon – a lot of people kept them in the run up to war. It was a

good way of time travelling.'

The resulting script landed on BBC Films MD Jane Wright's desk early last year, courtesy of a deal with Poliakoff brokered by Alan Yentob. Wright had no reservations in backing the auteur. 'He's so iconic as a director and delivers distinctive, visual pieces of work,' she says. 'You could just feel that *Glorious 39* would make a great movie.'

The subject matter, too, had never been dealt with on film before and she found it 'both fascinating and genuinely startling'.

BBC Films committed some of the finance – 'not all, not by a long shot' – and brought in co-production partners. The Poliakoff name proved a potent draw, also attracting a top level cast. Poliakoff had earmarked Bill Nighy for the part of Alexander Keyes, and identified Romola Garai (Anne Keyes) as 'a remarkable talent'. David Tennant, who'd sent 'nice messages about my work via friends', got to play family friend Hector, while 'cinematic legend' Julie Christie stepped in for Maggie Smith.

Shot in around 38 days in rural Norfolk and London, Poliakoff found that little on a film set had changed aside from the stock. But having enjoyed 'total creative freedom' while making his BBC drama cycle – a

luxury he fears would be denied to today's factually-based drama makers by the 'Kafkaesque' compliance committees – he viewed the prospect of a co-production with trepidation. 'With cinema, people watch the cuts and pipe up with their opinions, although if by then they've approved the script, I won't change a word.'

Wright admits that while it 'wasn't the way we work with everybody', Poliakoff was 'probably as collaborative as he's ever been'.

Anyway, he's on her side. With cross-party support for the British film industry, Poliakoff believes BBC Films could be crucial to the corporation's fight for survival, 'especially with a hostile government coming into shape that is intent on cutting it down to size', and believes its budget should be increased.

Besides, he says, investing in quality films is a 'fantastic deal' for the wider BBC – allowing it first broadcast and repeats, while delivering 'high quality drama with incredible casts' to the audience at home.

Wright appreciates the sentiment, but yields to realism. 'In the last round of cuts our budget rose from £10m to £12m. Film Four has been cut, changes are afoot at the UK Film Council; BBC Films is a safe, steady port in this storm.'

WIN THE SIGNED SCREENPLAY

Ariel has a copy of the *Glorious 39* screenplay, complete with colour stills from the film and signed by Stephen Poliakoff. To enter, email Ariel Competitions by November 20 with your answer to the following question:

How did Hitler break the terms of 1938's Munich Agreement?



cutting edge



BILL
THOMPSON

What's television Daddy?

ONE OF THE BEST THINGS about being a technology pundit is that if you say something completely outrageous you may be mocked but, by and large, whatever you said will be forgotten in a few days.

Sadly, the same does not hold for senior executives at world-dominating software companies, especially those with ambitions in the media space. Their speeches and comments tend to attract the sort of scrutiny formerly reserved for speeches from the Soviet hierarchy, and are examined carefully for clues about future strategy and direction.

So when Ashley Highfield, formerly head of FM&T and now UK managing director of Microsoft, told the Cabinet conference that he saw a future where television sets, like video consoles, would be controlled by facial recognition and hand gestures, it attracted some attention.

It was clear he had spent time with the team behind Project Natal, Microsoft's innovative hands-free interface for Xbox 360 games. Natal was well-received by the gaming community, and could well give Microsoft a way to attract those who currently play Wii.

'He saw a future where tv works like consoles'

But he then went on to speculate that your tv will 'interact with you, analyse your facial expressions, your body movements and gestures' and even suggested that the tv would have enough data about your viewing patterns and how they cor-

relate with your mood – as revealed by your facial expressions – to offer you something to watch without all the fuss of trawling through irritating EPG menus.

The problem with imagining a future where our tv sets interact and observe what we're doing is that it assumes that there will be tv sets, and this might not be a safe assumption.

One of my favourite films of all time is *Aliens*, the one where Ripley leads a troop of marines into battle. It's a great film, but I just can't watch it any more because I get so upset by the green CRT screens showing vector displays of coordinates that I have to leave the room.

It wasn't James Cameron's fault that the future portrayed in his SF movie was grounded in the 1980s, but because he did not foresee the massive changes in display technologies and user interfaces, it is simply too dated to watch. Cameron didn't see the future – at least when it came to technology.

And that's the problem with predicting the future of tv and assuming the remote control will be replaced by a touch screen. It assumes there will be televisions, and I'm not so sure.

Bill Thompson is a technology writer



PHOTOGRAPH: ANNA GORDON

I know what it's like to be HIT BY LIGHTNING

Frustrated by sceptics who accuse the BBC of climate change bias, environment correspondent **Richard Black** is fighting back

IN CASE YOU EVER WANT to meet up in the blogosphere, I'm the guy with the target on his back. It's big, it's green and it flashes up a message saying 'climate sceptics – shoot here'.

At least, that's often how it has felt over the four-plus years that I've covered environmental issues for the news website. And as the potentially seminal Copenhagen climate summit approaches, the arrows are flying thicker and faster than ever.

In the run-up to Copenhagen, I'd been planning to write a blog post entitled *Why you need the BBC's climate 'bias'*, making the point that when some readers perceive us as biased towards man-made global warming and others as biased against, where does the bias really lie – here, or in the eye of the beholder?

A few weeks ago this all became suddenly more urgent with the publication of an article by Paul Hudson, a meteorologist appointed as climate correspondent for the north-east.

Paul's web article *Whatever happened to global warming?* discussed one of the arguments most often

made by climate 'sceptics': that taken at face value, temperatures have not risen for more than a decade.

A Telegraph blog anointed this as a 'BBC U-turn' – a sudden switch from our theologically pure doctrine of carbon dioxide equals global catastrophe.

Of course it was nothing of the sort because there is no such canonical BBC position. Would Jeremy Clarkson grace the airwaves if there were?

The Trust report *From Seesaw to Wagon Wheel* places climate coverage in the broadest of churches, but is explicit not to mandate any notion of 'equal time'; the balance of science, it says, sits firmly with the 'warmers'.

Nevertheless, fiction sells, and the mythical U-turn – propagated across the febrile blogosphere – gathered strength.

Website editor Steve Herrmann and I decided the best approach was to bring my planned blog post forward, strip it of its provocative title and use it as a 'lightning rod' to call down all the fury from 'sceptics' using the issue as a club to bash our

overall climate coverage.

Almost 800 comments later – including my 12 interventions – the lightning is still coming.

My basic approach to reporting climate science has always been to let developments speak for themselves; in explaining and defending our reporting, I tried to do the same thing, pointing out the breadth of our coverage, the range of opinions

'As Copenhagen approaches, the arrows are flying thicker and faster than ever'

expressed at different times, and the neutrality of the language we generally use.

Was everyone convinced? Not at all. Some regular commentators maintain there is absolutely no evidence that rising greenhouse gas emissions are driving present-day warming; so of course for them, just about everything we write is by definition biased, whether it is about scientific developments (because very few in reality challenge greenhouse warming) or about the politics (which are predicated on the reality of CO2-mediated

warming).

But it has been a good exercise, and the idea of engaging at such length (while fearsomely bad for my sleep patterns) has been well received on the blog, even by some of those ready to burn the corporation at the stake. Some colleagues have remarked how unusual it is for the BBC to defend its output against criticism.

I agree. One of the biggest BBC bugbears is how reluctant senior managers are to go out and fight our corner. Newspapers can call us anything they like and write what at times amounts to complete fiction, but we must never answer back? Why on Earth not?

If I had stuck to my original idea, the blog might have noted that, unlike *The Guardian*, we cannot campaign for 'action' on climate change. Unlike some papers, we cannot allow columnists with as little understanding of climate science as an elephant has of embroidery to pontificate on the issue.

We have to be impartial and independent and balanced – it's what people expect. And on this issue, it's what they get. I'm glad I took the time to detail the myriad news stories, analysis articles and opinion pieces that prove the point.

The target on my back will remain in use – that's for sure. But the armour feels a little better constructed today.

In Northern Ireland the Stephen Nolan show is changing lives.
Cathy Loughran reports



PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN MCCAULEY

Both sides of the glass: producer Kevin Kelly in the studio with Stephen Nolan, whose show is the most listened to in Northern Ireland

AGENT PROVOCATEUR

'IN THE NAME OF GOD, can not one politician in this country deliver!' They were the words of Stephen Nolan, as he vented his and his listeners' frustrations on air.

In September, his Radio Ulster talk show highlighted the plight of a policeman who'd had death threats from dissident republicans, and had had to move his family to a safe house. A government scheme called SPED, which helps victims of intimidation buy a new home, ran out of money, leaving the officer in limbo.

'There was such an outcry over the case we brought the ministers responsible onto the show and devoted three programmes to the story,' says Kevin Kelly, Nolan's producer.

On the day of Nolan's outburst, finance minister Sammy Wilson and minister for social development Margaret Ritchie, walked out of Stormont and read a joint statement, releasing money for the policeman and 60 others through the SPED scheme.

So when Kelly says the new Northern Ireland administration is at the centre of the biggest stories the show tackles, the proof is on air and online.

Nolan's talk show – the most listened to in Northern Ireland – has run a series of campaigning stories that have affected the government's stance and changed people's lives.

Reporter Peter Cardwell broke the story that Northern Ireland police were training the Libyan force, which, given Libya's history of supplying weapons to the IRA during the Troubles, caused 'a massive backlash', Kelly says. 'It got bigger when it turned out the decision had been approved by Ian Paisley Jr.'

And when the father of 19 year-old Gareth Anderson asked for Nolan's help to get his son onto a liver transplant waiting list, the strength of audience response again triggered action. The teenager had fallen foul of health regulations because he'd not been alcohol-free for six months. He was told he had weeks to live. Nolan ran the story on the late night weekend show he presents on Radio 5 live. Soon after, Gareth was flown from Belfast for specialist treatment in London.

Airing Ulster stories on network is something the Sony/RTS-winning presenter does more and more – seldom more powerfully than earlier this month with a mother's raw account of her son's punishment shooting.

'Northern Ireland is in an interesting place right now with the dissident threat harking back to the Troubles,' Nolan says. 'But there is a new generation who may not know what punishment shootings are all about. That goes for the wider UK audience too.'

He has presented the 9-10.30am Radio Ulster programme for six years, doubling the audience to almost 150,000. Latest Rajar figures show the station as a whole has gained 103,000 listeners since the summer, reaching a weekly audience of 554,000.

Controversial and sometimes confrontational, Nolan is not averse to biting the hand that feeds him – as he did on his Friday night 5 live show, criticising BBC 'suits' after a late night spokesman could not be found to talk about top BBC salaries.

His own critics accuse him of appealing to the lowest common denominator in his audience. 'That's patronising to my listeners,' he says. 'I appeal to the working class big time, but I also attract one of our biggest ABC1 audiences.' And if the show's on a roll, it's down to the relationship he has with his editor, a widely experienced Belfast journalist and long standing producer to former Ireland correspondent Denis Murray. 'When press officers are going ballistic down the phone at him on the other side of the glass, it's Kevin's judgement I trust on air,' Nolan says.

'We share an office and mutual respect,' Kelly adds, 'but there are some hard, hard conversations that go on about stories, behind closed doors.'

HOW TO TAKE CHILDREN BACK IN TIME

IT WAS A NOVEL WAY TO TEACH children about hippies, the miners' strike and the death of Diana. Earlier this year, Radio Gloucestershire launched a creative writing project called Time Will Tell and invited children from six local schools to pen a story which reflected one of the last six decades – from the formative 50s to the nerdy noughties. If the children got stuck, they could call on 'decade detectives' – listeners who could share their own memories of those years.

'The detectives told them all about the big national and local

news events, the music, films and fashions,' says Joanna Durrant, who produced the event. 'It was interesting seeing which events and themes struck a chord with the children and what meant the most to them from the decade.'

Children's author Philip Ardagh helped all the children come up with ideas for their stories, while 'detective' and Tewkesbury town crier Mike Keane Price shared his memories of being called a teenager for the first time in the 50s.

'What's been interesting is seeing the teenagers in 2009 learning that teenagers in the

1950s felt exactly as they do now,' Durrant says. 'Most of us have an image of what an era was like, but it's only when you speak to the individuals that you learn what life was actually like.'

Local actor Fiona Ross helped them turn the stories into plays, which they performed at the Cheltenham Literature festival.

Durrant is delighted: 'We brought different communities and different age groups with different interests together,' she says. 'It's fired everyone's imagination, from the children to the listeners.'



The Cotswold School took on the 60s space race

Filling the gap with music

'WHEN IT OPENED 50 YEARS AGO' Watford Gap was the place to be seen,' says Anna Bartlett, Radio Northampton's communities producer. 'People would go there for dates because it was one of the only places you could stay later than 11pm.'

Watford Gap Services was opened on the same day as the M1 motorway in 1959 and, as Bartlett discovered, it remains one of the county's most famous – if not glamorous – landmarks.

To celebrate its 50th anniversary, Bartlett teamed up with local composer and director Benjamin Till to produce a ten minute musical based on people's memories of the motorway stop-off.

'Past employees came forward with tales of meeting The Supremes, Cliff Richard and Leo Sayer,' she says. 'One former security guard used to open the access road so Charles and Diana could reach the M1 quickly from Althorp



Musical interlude: composer Benjamin Till with producer Anna Bartlett

House.'

One hundred listeners attended open auditions and the musical was shot in two days, using runners from the local university and the service station as a backdrop.

All of Radio Northampton were involved in drumming up support for the production: the mid-morning programme even managed to find a double-decker bus and classic 50s car after asking listeners for their help.

Bartlett says they've been 'overwhelmed' by the response, which has helped promote the anniversary more widely. Earlier this month, 300 people descended on the Watford Gap service station for a special screening of the musical – and if you missed it the first time and you're heading up or down the M1 on November 20, you can catch the second screening for Children in Need.

Watch the musical at tinyurl.com/watfordgapmusical

Watford Gap the Musical will be shown at Northampton Cineworld on November 20 at 7pm. Entry is by voluntary donation of £5 and all money raised on the night will go to Children in Need. To book a place call Radio Northampton on 01604 239 100.

week@work

SWITCH ON TO SWITCH OFF

The BBC has set itself a tough target: a 20 percent reduction in electricity usage per person by 2012. But it doesn't mean layering on an extra hoody at work. As Erik Huggers puts it, 'we can make some great reductions in both cost and our carbon footprint by implementing a few small changes'.

AND HERE THEY ARE:
◆ Not to bang on about it, but switching off PCs, televisions, printers and monitors around the office when you're not using them should be a no-brainer. An appliance that is switched off rather than left on standby uses 50kg less of CO2 per year, so unless your office is centrally controlled you can still make a difference.

◆ Only boil as much water as you need when you're making a cup of tea. Amazingly, it's also faster.

◆ Remember not to leave laptops and mobile phones on charge unnecessarily (this one's from the Energy Savings Trust – more at tinyurl.com/stopenergywaste)

◆ Get competitive: see how much energy your building is using compared to the rest of the BBC at tinyurl.com/yourbuilding

◆ If you find your colleagues fail to do any of the



Don't just standby - switch off!

Our target is to reduce energy consumption by 20% per person. Help us achieve this by switching off equipment where you can.

<http://explore.gatewaybbc.co.uk/environment>

Environment Choose to make a difference

above, head to the BBC Environment homepage and download this oh-so-subtle flyer (left) and pin it to their PC.

AND WHAT THE CORPORATION IS DOING...
Automatic PC switchoff: Gradually being rolled out across the BBC, forcing some PCs into standby mode after a short period of inactivity.

Building optimisation
A team from Workplace is looking at BBC buildings to see where it is possible to 'power down' areas. In practice, this means providing lighting, heating and air conditioning only when a building is occupied, or for business critical reasons. Switch-off trials are ongoing and the effect is being monitored.

Buying more efficient PC hardware
New efficiency requirements are now in place for all new PC assets being purchased through Siemens.

Buying greener energy
Most of the BBC's electricity comes from no or low carbon sources. Small sites such as local radio stations are supplied with renewable electricity and the medium to large sites are served with low carbon energy.

SHAMELESS PLUG

MATTHEW NORTH, SENIOR TECHNICAL OPERATOR, PLYMOUTH
◆ I'm taking my band, All Living Fear, on the road for the first time in 11 years later this month. Combining classic rock with technology we've released six albums and have supported *The Damned*, *The Wildhearts* and *All About Eve*. The tour will take in venues in Wolverhampton, Stockport, Glasgow and Sunderland. For more information visit alllivingfear.co.uk.



LEARNING CURVE

FIND A WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND RAISE MONEY FOR DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN
All week the Academy's coaching network is offering group coaching sessions in the run-up to Children in Need. Up to six people can work with an executive coach to make a personal action plan for a minimum £5 donation to the charity. One-to-one sessions are also available for a minimum £10 donation. Usually only available to grade 9s and above, the one-hour sessions are being offered to all staff in London, Cardiff, Glasgow, Caversham, Coventry as well as UKTV. Book a place at tinyurl.com/CiNcoaching

COMING UP

◆ BBC One will follow three girls with selective mutism in a one-off documentary for the channel next spring. **CALLED MY CHILD WON'T SPEAK** it will be made in-house and exec produced by Maxine Watson.
◆ Controller of BBC

CHANGING PLACES

GRAHAM LIVER (pictured) becomes the new presenter of Radio Lancashire's breakfast show. He is currently Radio Leeds' mid-morning presenter... **JANET MORROW**, head of compliance for MC&A, leaves the BBC... **DINA RANA**, brand executive for the iPlayer and Online, becomes future marketing manager... BBC Wildlife magazine has appointed **BEN HOARE** as features editor.



◆ Klein has also commissioned **DADS IN LITERATURE**, a

one-hour programme looking at how fathers have been portrayed in literature. Presented by novelist **Andrew Martin** (pictured left) it will also look at the relationship between writers and their fathers. Made in-house it will be exec produced by Michael Poole.

BBC IN ACTION



Interactive design trainee Joe Fung at Media City in Salford

THREE OF THE BBC'S key trainee schemes went to Salford last week to see the Media City site, meet Peter Salmon, director of BBC North, and find out more about job opportunities in the north. Around 40 people travelled by train from London in the first gathering of its kind of participants from the Production Trainee Scheme, the Journalism Trainee Scheme and the Design Trainee Scheme. 'Some of them come from the north and did not need to be told what it could offer, whereas others had never considered it as a place to live and work,' explains Kate Hoyland, manager, trainee and development schemes. 'Unfortunately it rained on the day but it was still an enjoyable trip with plenty of opportunities to talk to people at the current BBC Manchester building [in Oxford Road] before getting on a coach to see the new Salford site. We were all struck by the size and scale of it.' Interactive design trainee Joe Fung (pictured) said the visit had provided 'an exciting insight' while journalism trainee Jess Creighton said: 'It gave me a sense that something fresh and groundbreaking was happening.' For production trainee Kieran Yeates, Salford 'doesn't seem abstract anymore'.

blogbites

Military losses at home and abroad
The president's morning will begin laying wreaths for Veterans Day; it may end with him very much closer to a decision to send more troops to a foreign war. He's just come back from honouring the dead at Fort Hood – not killed in a war, but almost certainly killed as a result of wars. **Mark Mardell, North America editor** bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markmardell/

Holidays in Iraq; Google Copyright Books Row - your Qs please
After more than six years of conflict Iraq seems an unlikely place for a holiday. But could its status as the birthplace of civilisation see tourists flocking? Iraq is sending representatives to one of the world's biggest tourism fairs for the first time in more than ten years. The delegation to the World Trade Market in London will be led by the chairman of the Tourism Board of Iraq, Hammoud al-Yaqoubi. **Dan Damon, reporter** bbc.co.uk/blogs/worldupdate/

Cat out of the bag on vouchers for boarding school
Perhaps I should have declared an interest over last night's story on the government phasing out childcare vouchers, as I claim the maximum amount of tax-free vouchers for childcare for my three-year-old daughter. I was interested to learn how parents of children at private schools are allowed to use the vouchers to pay for boarding fees (though not tuition costs). And several top public schools, including Ampleforth and Wellington College, encourage their parents to make use of the scheme. What of Eton? I contacted the bursar who told me that none of their parents do so. 'It's not been suggested,' he said. So they're missing a trick there then. What surprises me is how little take-up there is. Three hundred thousand families is a very small fraction of the many millions of parents of children up to the age of 15 who might benefit. Indeed, I suspect that many parents might not have known about the scheme until this row broke out. So ironically Prime Minister Gordon Brown's policy may encourage a lot more people to subscribe to childcare voucher schemes, and claim tax relief while they still can. And that, of course, would end up costing the government money in the medium term, not save it. **Michael Crick, editor** bbc.co.uk/blogs/newsnight/michaelcrick/

From Here To Infirmary
It's a slightly bitter joke that the cultural firebrands of the Seventies are becoming ancient and grizzled. The journey from anarchy to infirmity is well advanced. The kids who once sang 'No Time To Be 21' are now counting down to the free bus pass. They've gone from 'Wild Youth' to severe angina. So how better to console the old folk than to make a shopping visit to punkgrandad.com. You can then deliver their Xmas cheer with an amusing 'Pension Calling' T shirt, or even 'Generation XXL'. And on a rather callous note, there's 'Nevermind The Prostrate' to ring the shiver of mortality ever closer. Cheers. **Stuart Baillie, presenter, radio Ulster** bbc.co.uk/blogs/stuartbaillie/

“YOUSAY” IDOL TALK: WHEN YOU MET YOUR HERO

After Green Room reported on Shelagh Fogarty blushing her way through an interview with her hero, former Wimbledon champ Goran Ivanisevic, we wanted to know whether you'd ever been lucky enough to interview your idol. Did you hold it together and did they live up to expectations?

WHEN I WAS A PRODUCER at MTV in the mid-90s, Toots Hibbert (of Toots & The Maytals) was in the green room waiting to be interviewed. A life-long fan I thought I'd swallow my pride for once and say hello. I walked into the room and muttered something about a few favourite Toots & The Maytals albums. He looked at me blankly for a moment before saying simply and devastatingly 'do you know how to turn the TV on?'. I obliged and left as fast as I could without saying another word; something I'd heard about how you should never meet your idols echoing round my head. **Charles Simmonds, leader ESP**

CATHERINE DENEUVE was always my ideal of the ultimate movie star. Until I interviewed her. She agreed to a half hour *Hardtalk* based on a loose kind of autobiography she had written, but I don't think it occurred to her that she would be expected, in an interview, to say something. It was the worst interview I have ever conducted. She changed the date twice; the time three times; then she arrived two hours late. The interview began and 30 minutes of languorous silences and the occasional Deneuve monosyllables

followed. I tried every technique in the interviewer's repertoire to warm her up, including shameless sucking up. 'You've been described as the greatest cool blonde in cinema history,' I wittered. 'Ees not true,' La Catherine answered. 'What isn't true?' I blurted out in exasperation. 'You're not great? You're not cool? Or you're not really blonde?' Er, the interview got even worse from that point. No more heroes. **Gavin Esler, presenter, news**

I WOULDN'T SAY she's my hero, but Abi Titmuss has always aroused my interest. Interviewing her about her new stage role as Lady Macbeth gave me the opportunity to make my male friends green with envy when I updated my profile picture on Facebook. **Joel Mapp, reporter, Look East**



LAST WEEK we had on country singer Toby Keith. In 2008 my wife and I arranged our holiday in Florida around his tour so we could see him. I had sweaty palms, butterflies, the lot before the interview but they subsided eventually and it went perfectly. My other 'sweaty palm' moment was when I asked Liz Carling to marry me live on air. I was single at the time and she was a favourite of mine when she was in Border Cafe. She was a sweetie, thankfully. **David White, bj, Radio Cornwall**

I TRIED INTERVIEWING Wogan once through the intercom on his front gate. He politely told me to call him. Very embarrassing, but he was lovely when I did eventually call. **Joe Tidy, broadcast journalist, Southampton**

AS A PIANO-PLAYING CHILD and teenager I loved the work of pianist John Lill and would always go to his concerts whenever he played in Sheffield. About ten years ago, I made a programme for Radio 3 and went to interview John Lill in his house in Hampstead. He made me and the presenter, Richard Coles, a cup of tea and sat at the piano demonstrating. I had to pinch myself. Obviously I didn't tell him how much I admired him. It was a treat to realise that he was as nice as I'd hoped he'd be. **Sarah Taylor, senior producer, radio documentaries**

I WAS ON JIM'LL FIX IT in 1983 when Jim fixed it for me to be a presenter on Radio 2 with Gloria Hunniford. It was an amazing but



scary experience, not least because of the legendary presence of Mr Savile. I ended up meeting Sir Jim again in Selby Abbey last year – 25 years later – and it was fantastic. I felt like I was a youngster again. **Jeremy Buxton, presenter, Radio York**

I INTERVIEWED BJORN ULVAEUS from Abba in the mid 90s. Anyone who knows me knows that my knowledge of Abba's back-catalogue is encyclopaedic. I was beside myself, with nerves and excitement. Bjorn agreed to an interview if I was prepared to go to his house in Henley to record it. He was charming throughout, and not remotely patronising when he suggested a way I might get more from my Uher when we were hit with interference. In more than 20 years with the BBC, he is the only interviewee I've ever asked for an autograph. I felt bad at the time, but I just couldn't not, the occasion was so momentous. **Jane Hill, presenter, news**

Hang on to today's talent to get more older women on screen

Amanda Rice wants more than a few more female over-50s on tv. The BBC's new head of diversity tells Cathy Loughran she's looking for new money and new business opportunities

TO SAY Amanda Rice will hit the ground running, as the BBC's new head of diversity, is an understatement.

She's been acting in the job for a year, as successor to Andrea Callender, over a period where her division, BBC People, has undergone a change of leadership. And she's already closely associated with some of the diversity headlines of recent years, including the innovative mentoring and development scheme (MDP) – now in its second intake – which particularly targets ethnic minority and disabled people with the potential to fill senior roles.

The BBC has all but met its 2007 target for minority ethnic representation in the workforce – 12.5 percent – with a current figure of 12 percent, up 0.5 percent from a year ago. At senior manager level though, the figure is static at 5.5 percent – far short of the seven percent goal to be achieved by 2012.

For disabled staff, the target has been stretched to 5.5 percent (currently 4.4 percent). And for the first time there is a senior manager target – 4.5 percent, against present levels of 3.4.

Glass ceiling must go

Targets are not the be all and end all they once were, Rice acknowledges, and they now differ from division to division, reflecting factors like recruitment pools for certain job families and geography. She welcomes high profile new appointments like Pat Young as chief creative officer of vision productions and Aaqil Ahmed as head of religion and ethics. But the glass ceiling in senior manager diversity has to remain a top priority, she says, as the BBC works to reduce its numbers at that level by more than 100.

'The MDP is a long term scheme so we're not expecting to see immediate results. Eight people from the first intake have now moved into more challenging roles. By the end of year three, it may be realistic to start measuring results.'

Early in the new year, Rice will be bidding for new money to continue not just the mentoring programme, but also the restyled journalism trainee scheme (JTS) – which has recruited a considerably broader mix than elite schemes of old – and Extend, the initiative that offers

'The thing about social class is it's almost impossible to measure'



Amanda Rice is excited about the possibilities that will open up through BBC North and wants to see more ideas like the division's 'Dragons Den' pitching session

paid BBC work placements for qualified disabled people.

They are all coming to the end of their three-year funding commitment. Rice is looking for more than finance: 'The executive has always been behind the MDP, but we're looking for more project opportunities for people who were in its first 2008 intake, for example in BBC North.'

She wants to see more openings like the 'Dragons Den' initiative, where aspiring senior managers pitched to Peter Salmon, with a view to developing ideas for the division.

Grabbing opportunities, inside and outside the BBC, looks like being a bit of a Rice theme: 'My aim is to ensure we identify and respond to every opportunity to diversify our output and workforce and show that we are doing just that,' says the former head of equalities for London's Hackney Council.

And she sees industry-wide benefits in broadcasting partnerships, for instance in diversity training.

Part of her job is clearly as a strategic leader, but she also has a role in how the BBC inter-

acts with audiences as well as in workforce planning. And her remit covers output and content.

After a year when the BBC's 'snubbing' of older women on tv has barely been out of the headlines, Rice agrees that there's a job to do in getting more mature female faces on screen. Or rather, keeping them there.

'We have to take this issue seriously, and not just because of the headlines. Why can't we do something about this? We can. We need to look at the successful women we've got on screen now and make sure we keep them there later in their careers,' Rice says, with the Fiona Bruce, Emily Maitliss and Stephanie Flanders generation in mind.

In the output, Rice says there's been significant improvement in ethnic diversity while there's still a need to push for more incidental portrayal of disabled people, as highlighted in the recent BBC/Channel 4 Talking Disability audience research.

She commends Five News, which is this week handing over presenting of its 12.30pm bulletins to James Partridge, who suffered severe facial burns in a car

crash and runs Changing Faces, a charity that campaigns for the rights and inclusion of people with facial and body disfigurements.

'I think it's great that Five News is being so proactive. It will stimulate debate, but that's a good thing,' Rice says. 'Do I think it's something we should be doing? First and foremost we want presenters who are excellent at what they do. If they appear or identify as different in some other way – then good, we are succeeding in reflecting the diversity of our society.'

She cites 'the great swell of support' for disabled presenter Carrie Burnell on CBeebies, 'compared to the very few mean minded comments from a tiny minority of parents', as evidence that audiences are overwhelmingly accepting of difference.

Challenging class issues

The White City-based diversity centre she heads is now co-ordinating with A&M, a pan BBC working group which has commissioned new research into lesbian, gay and bisexual portrayal in BBC programmes.

The issue of class – particularly within the BBC workforce and how that affects content – is a growing debate.

'The thing about class is, it's almost impossible to measure. We're involved in a piece of work at the moment on socio-economic class, looking at what other organisations do,' Rice says. 'It is a bigger issue here than in other public organisations – 'the BBC's not for me' problem.'

Yet she points to the success of the journalist training scheme and journalism talent pool, which have thrown the recruitment net wider, to attract not just greater ethnic diversity, but a wider range of socio-economic backgrounds.

She knows that diversity at the BBC will be under ever more scrutiny in the run up to new equality legislation in 2011, which will require by law that the organisation monitors and publishes progress in areas like employment – much of which it already does.

Back on the opportunity front, Rice is excited about the possibilities presented by BBC North: 'There's a great opportunity to be seized here in the range of people we will need to recruit.'

arielview



CANDIDA WATSON

What is Ariel?

THE OBVIOUS ANSWER is that it is the BBC staff paper – the principal forum for debate and information about the company, and window on what it thinks about itself. But what does it mean to you? Are you entertained, informed or enraged by it? Does it bore you to tears? Does it tell you what you want to know, what you don't really want to be bothered with but think you ought to know, or do you just skim it to see if there are any good letters, interesting jobs being advertised, or a picture of one of your friends in it this week?

As the new editor of this BBC institution I'd like to know what you, our colleagues and readers, want from Ariel. I have been a news journalist for almost 30 years, I want Ariel the paper, and the online site, to be as fresh, relevant and newsy as possible. I hope that you'll all think of Ariel when you have something to shout about, good or bad. I know some staff don't read it, reasoning that they can get all the information they want from the office grapevine and corporate emails. That's disappointing for those of us who are trying to make Ariel an entertaining and engaging read, but we can't please everyone.

In fact, when I was appointed the most frequent comment I got, after the obligatory congratulations, was a warning that I was about to try to perform a daily balancing act that would require combining the diplomatic skills of Talleyrand with the political skills of Machiavelli. So you can watch me on that highwire, and I fully expect to hear from you when I slip.

We all know this is a difficult time for the BBC. The licence fee, the Trust, the channels we broadcast, our online strength, executive pay, talent contracts, compliance in comedy – everywhere we turn there are critics. So we could be forgiven for feeling bruised, bunkering down and using our internal discussion forums to unleash our angst. It takes no time at all for a BBC internal communication to be broadcast more widely – quite often you've barely finished reading something before it's online at a rival organisation, or out in the blogosphere. Which is not to say we shouldn't have an open debate about our future; we absolutely should, and hold ourselves to account. I would like Ariel to be the home of that internal conversation, as we strive to adapt to a rapidly changing broadcasting environment, and with the prospect of continuing political pressure on the BBC as a whole.

This paper is your unique platform. You can write a letter to Ariel questioning a policy and we can ask the relevant manager to reply. You get previews of programmes, campaigns and proposals. Some ideas that will be featured in Ariel will never see the light of day, equally you will read here first about major changes to the type of programmes we consume, and the way we access them. So, don't dismiss Ariel, let us know what you would like to see on its pages. If you are a manager be available to Ariel to answer staff questions – let's have a conversation.

Candida Watson is editor of Ariel

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

Prayer for Today

Both Giles Fraser and Ariane Sherine make compelling arguments against and for atheists contributing to *Thought For The Day* (Ariel, November 10). If I were to hear John Humphrys begin the *Today* programme with 'in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit', I think Ariane Sherine would have a point.

Mark Warburton
religion and ethics, Manchester

■ Giles Fraser believe seems to believe that atheists and humanists are purely about denying God and that we are incapable of doing so without attacking other people's belief systems. He neglects to consider the possibility that atheism has positive alternatives to offer and is not just about denial.

Personally I have no strong view on whether or not atheists should be allowed to broadcast on *Thought for The Day*, but I object to the assumption that if it were not 'robustly anti-God' it would become 'like every other secular comment piece that appears in the media' and that is 'about being against something'.

I do not believe in God – I'm not 'against God', I just don't believe there is one and hence I deal with the big ethical and moral issues of life and death from a different perspective to someone of faith. These issues are rarely covered in normal secular comment pieces, and atheist views on them are just as important. I would have thought atheist philosophy would be meat and drink to *Thought for the Day*.

Frances Watson
tv projects

■ Giles Fraser argues that *Thought for the Day* should remain exclusively religious. However, he fails to explain why religion alone should be given a daily opinion piece in the middle of a peaktime news programme. If the slot remains as he wishes it clearly belongs elsewhere in the schedules.

Chris Newell
lead technologist, R&D



■ Reference Ariel articles 'Where do you draw the line? That's no joke' and 'Is it time to give atheists their say on Thought for the day' (November 10).

I looked at the picture of the Atheist Bus and thought there must be a God.

Bryan Morris
Steria Finance

Mathematical solution to religious riddle

Ariane Sherine makes a strong argument in favour of the nearly 25 percent of the adult population who are atheists or agnostics having their voices heard on the BBC (Ariel, November 10). In addition to the programmes she lists favouring those with a religious faith, she could have added The Daily Service on Radio 4.

And Giles Fraser is correct to point out that religion has no monopoly on the virtues normally accredited to it.

However, if nearly 25 percent of the adult population are atheists or agnostics then there is a simple solution – give every fourth edition of *Thought for the Day* over to a non-believer, the same rules against attacking established faiths being applied.

We could then all have our voices heard, and we might hear some interesting points of view. I have one or two ideas myself.

William G Stewart
television/radio producer/presenter

Hit the top

I have to say that the current BBC generated publicity over the question of senior managers' salaries is, at best, disingenuous and, at worst, misleading.

The fact is that a large proportion of so called 'senior managers' are paid a relatively modest salary, in many cases less than people at the top end of the pay band below them. These members of management are not receiving the excessive rewards enjoyed by the few at the top of the organisation. They do not make expense claims for hairdos, posh dinners for well rewarded consultants, or expensive presents for highly paid so called talent. They don't have cars to ferry them backwards and forwards to the station or book into expensive boutique hotels while on BBC business.

The pay freeze, which covers all senior managers, will impact far more severely on the majority of SMs at the lower end of the organisation than it will on the few at the top. Given that executive board members have enjoyed inflation busting pay rises over the last few years, they are hardly going to have to worry about paying the next gas bill if their salary remains constant for a while.

Given that parts of News have seen staff numbers cut by 15 percent over the last few years, it would have been far more equitable if executive salaries were immediately reduced by the same amount. In addition, there should be a pro rata cut in the number of people on the BBC Executive to bring it in line with the cuts made in staffing levels elsewhere in the BBC. It appears to me that we have too many highly paid individuals whose only function seems to be to oversee the work of other perfectly competent managers. That's a luxury we can't afford in the present climate.

Nick Serpell
NEC member, NUJ

Paper money

It is fascinating to trawl the expenses of senior managers but I am not sure which is the greater surprise: That the deputy dg has the energy to

claim sums like 60p for his newspaper or that such claims seem to have been paid out without fuss?

I recall many run-ins with the expenses unit who could not grasp that journalists working in outstations might need to buy the local rag once a week. Do the same rules not apply across the board?

Eric Wise
retired staff

Debt relief

I have just bought Brucie some Lem-sip. To whom may I send the receipt? (Other cold and flu remedies are available.)

Duncan Hess
director

Part of the union



I accept that anyone can make a mistake on a live broadcast, but this goes well beyond a mistake. This is clearly in the category of Ron Atkinson's 'mistake' which saw him lose his job at ITV, and at least as bad as Carol Thatcher's comments in a green room, or even Russell Brand/Jonathan Ross's crass phone call to Andrew Sachs.

I'm not calling for Moore to be sacked for ever, but I am incredulous that his 'mistake' appears to have resulted in no serious sanction. Would this be the case if the man was not part of the rugby union establishment?

So far, the Daily Mail hasn't launched a campaign against Moore, so presumably all will be forgotten, and the incident will provide merri-ment in the future.

Sorry to get all rugby league and

chippy about this matter, but this event can be filed in the, 'there's one rule for rugby union at the BBC, and another rule for the rest of us'. Greg Dyke called the BBC 'hideously white'. In fact, the BBC is hideously rugby union. That's the real problem.

Neil Morrow
Politics Show NW, Manchester

Brian Moore issued the following apology as soon as he came off air: 'I unreservedly apologise for remarks I made pre the England Argentina game. They were completely inappropriate and caused offence and quite simply I should have not made them. I cannot apologise enough.'

Don't do lunch

Anne Branigan (BBC Workplace PR) suggested in Ariel last week that there have been no significant changes to hot food choices in the canteen at Bush House, but the fact of the matter is that the cooked breakfast service – available before the 'refurbishment' to night workers from 0230 – now starts at 0600 – as those night workers prepare to go home.

If the BBC can no longer afford to provide a cook for the whole 24 hour period – unlikely given the salary packages of its senior management – then do away with the Bush House lunch service, when people can use the many other excellent facilities available in the Covent Garden area, and keep the cook for the period from 2200-0600 when alternative facilities are closed.

Night shifts are difficult enough without arbitrary decisions which make them even more difficult from office hour managers.

Pierre Vicary
Bush House newsroom

Expensive date

Two years ago Zarin Patel is quoted in Ariel saying that not printing bespoke BBC diaries would save the BBC 'up to £60,000 depending on how many people want the non-branded diary that will still be available'. My department immediately

tried to stop even providing the non-branded diaries but did a u-turn after staff quoted Ariel.

However, I'm sure that this year the BBC's chief financial officer will be pleased that, even though many of us still require paper diaries for our work, we are finally being banned from ordering her cheaper replacements. News staff requiring to note their BBC shifts and meetings for 2010 are now expected to subsidise the corporation by making a purchase from their own taxed income.

I understand this will make a grand saving to News of 99p a year for each member of staff. But I'm sure colleagues will be pleased to know that similar diaries are available to purchase at TV Centre's WH Smith for four and a half times that figure.

Gordon Findlay
tv news director

Rings false

Re the story about Gordon Brown's letter to the mother of a dead soldier. What difference is there, in terms of genuine editorial standards, between broadcasting excerpts from both ends of a phone call recorded without the subject's consent, and broadcasting actuality of one end of such a recording, with an actor voicing the words spoken by the participant being duped?

I struggle to see any.

Phil Tanner
BBC Monitoring

Call for help

Old lags like myself will be familiar with SPAAGIS, the BBC's staff accident insurance scheme, but does it still exist? I think it must do because it still appears as a deduction on my payslip every month.

However, there is no record of it anywhere on Gateway, and I've heard nothing from the scheme since they last sent me a policy schedule in 2006. Try calling phone numbers on this elderly schedule and all you get is a 'number unobtainable' tone.

HR Direct have just one contact, a financial intermediary, who has promised me a new schedule from the insurers – but that was over two months ago.

Let's hope I don't have an accident in the meantime...(i.e. HELP!)

John Hemingway
senior studio manager, A&M Operations

Anneke Heaton, reward manager, BBC People, replies: SPAGGIS (which is a voluntary personal accident insurance scheme) is still alive and well and details can be found on the my-Deals pages of gateway here <http://sites.gateway.bbc.co.uk/myreward/mydeals.shtml>.

The administrators of the scheme are Marsh and they can be contacted on 01376 395 060.

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Lovely two bed garden flat Kensal Green close tube. robin.pagnamenta@googlemail.com Telephone 07776 152093

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

MediaCity, 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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PROPERTY

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Dorset. Thatched cottage. Sleeps four. Near Lulworth Cove. Website www.snailsplace.co.uk

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Producer, Newsround
London
TV Centre
9D/Ref: 21962709
📅 29-Nov-09 📅 08 months

Sport Broadcaster, Chris Moyles Show, Radio 1
London
7D/Ref: 21990209
📅 29-Nov-09 📅 12 months

Producer, Radio 7
London
Broadcasting House
7D/Ref: 21975409
📅 30-Nov-09 📅 06 months

Assistant Producer, TVCA
Belfast - Broadcasting House
7D/Ref: 21932809
📅 23-Nov-09 📅 06 months

Broadcasting and Online Assistant, Vietnamese Service
London
Bush House
4D/Ref: 21751309
📅 21-Nov-09 📅 06 months

Broadcast Assistant, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire
Cambridge
3/4D/Ref: 21492309
📅 25-Nov-09 📅 06 months

JOURNALISM

Political Correspondent, Political Programmes
London
Millbank
10D/Ref: 21938909
📅 24-Nov-09 📅 06 months

Interactive Producer, BBC Weather
London
TV Centre
9D/Ref: 21939909
📅 30-Nov-09 📅 03 months

Is-Olygydd, Radio Cymru
Cardiff
9D/Ref: 21750909
📅 19-Nov-09 📅 08 months

Video Journalist - BBC North West
Manchester
7D/Ref: 21924609
📅 20-Nov-09 📅 05 months

Cynhyrchydd Radio a'r We, Radio Cymru
Cardiff
7D/Ref: 21750409
📅 18-Nov-09 📅 06 months

Researcher - BBC North West
Manchester
5/7D/Ref: 21924409
📅 20-Nov-09 📅 05 months

BA (Meeter & Greeter), Political Newsgathering
London
Millbank
4D/Ref: 21873809
📅 25-Nov-09 📅 Various

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT

Head of Online, BBC Academy
London - White City
SM2/Ref: 21672609
📅 29-Nov-09

Controller Production
London / Salford Quays
SM2/Ref: 21912609
📅 23-Nov-09

Head of HR & Development, BBC Vision
London
TV Centre
SM2/Ref: 21866709
📅 23-Nov-09

Head of Secretariat and Governance, BBC Trust
London
SM2/Ref: 21648109
📅 30-Nov-09

Business Manager, R1 1X & Popular Music
London
Yalding House
11D/Ref: 22002009
📅 01-Dec-09 📅 09 months

Chief Adviser, BBC North
London / Salford Quays
11D/Ref: 21913609
📅 30-Nov-09

Production Executive, Drama
Glasgow
10D/Ref: 21899509
📅 29-Nov-09 📅 12 months

Manager, Production Talent
London / Salford Quays
10D/Ref: 21895409
📅 30-Nov-09

Employment Tax and Reward Manager
London
White City
10D/Ref: 21799909
📅 24-Nov-09

Lawyer, BBC Legal
London
White City
9D/Ref: 21959509
📅 23-Nov-09

Schedule Manager - BBC ONE
London
9D/Ref: 21952609
📅 23-Nov-09 📅 06 months

Financial Analyst, Journalism Group
London
8D/Ref: 22007209
📅 23-Nov-09

Policy and Learning Manager, BBC Children in Need
London
White City
8D/Ref: 21855409
📅 24-Nov-09 📅 06 months

Operations Manager, Blast on Tour
Multi Location
7H/Ref: 21874109
📅 30-Nov-09 📅 10 months

Assignment Adviser
London
White City
6D/Ref: 21993309
📅 01-Dec-09

Scheduling Manager, Multimedia Newsroom
London
TV Centre
6D/Ref: 21783809
📅 22-Nov-09

Event Organiser, Blast on Tour
Multi Location
5H/Ref: 21590009
📅 30-Nov-09 📅 03 months

Production Co-Ordinator
London
White City
5D/Ref: 21884609
📅 24-Nov-09 📅 12 months

Team Assistant & PA to Head of Operations & Business Affairs, Commissioning
London
TV Centre
4D/Ref: 21990109
📅 22-Nov-09

Category Assistant
London
White City
4D/Ref: 21885609
📅 23-Nov-09

Animations & Acquisitions Assistant
London
3P/Ref: 21685609
📅 22-Nov-09 📅 06 months

Assistant Post Production Co-ordinator
Bristol
3H/Ref: 21952809
📅 23-Nov-09 📅 08 months

Management Accountant, BBC World News
London
Media Centre
2W/Ref: 21966909
📅 23-Nov-09 📅 10 months

NEW MEDIA

Interactive Lead, Short Video Form
London
Media Centre
10D/Ref: 21511009
📅 24-Nov-09 📅 12 months

Editorial/ Visual Designer
London
TV Centre
7D/Ref: 22010209
📅 29-Nov-09 📅 12 months

Content Producer
London
Media Centre
7D/Ref: 21851109
📅 25-Nov-09 📅 04 months

Content Co-ordinator, Blast on Tour
Multi Location
6H/Ref: 21928009
📅 23-Nov-09 📅 08 months

Touring Facilitator, Blast on Tour
Multi Location
6/7H/Ref: 21928209
📅 23-Nov-09 📅 08 months

Broadcast Media Researcher - Music Library
London
TV Centre
4H/Ref: 12917209
📅 26-Nov-09

SPECIALIST TECHNICAL AND DESIGN SERVICES

Software Engineering Team Leader, TV Platforms
London / Salford Quays
9D/Ref: 21532609
📅 30-Nov-09

Broadcast Engineer
Nottingham
5/7D/Ref: 21402809
📅 25-Nov-09 📅 12 months

TECHNOLOGY

Senior Web Developer
London
Broadcast Centre Media Village
8D/Ref: 21761609
📅 22-Nov-09

Technical Co-ordinator, Blast on Tour
Multi Location
7H/Ref: 21928109
📅 23-Nov-09 📅 08 months

Systems Administrator
London
Broadcasting House
7D/Ref: 21302009
📅 19-Nov-09

BBC WORLDWIDE

Events Manager
London
Media Centre
2W/Ref: 21821209
📅 25-Nov-09 📅 06 months

See Attachment

Learn all about it

Radio Lincolnshire web producer Michelle Andrews embraces a new lifestyle in Devon

I'D BEEN AT RADIO LINCOLNSHIRE for seven years before I went on attachment. The time was certainly right. I'd been a website producer from day one of the Lincolnshire website – part of the team that gave birth to a tiny site and watched it grow, helped to steer it through its difficult adolescence (migrating the site to a new production platform) and finally seeing it blossom. It felt like it was time for me to face some different challenges. The only problem was I wasn't sure what those challenges should be.

There has always been a part of me that loves organising events, and whenever the opportunity came up to work on projects, be they local ones or



Children in Need, I would always take it. So when the new post of Learning project assistant was advertised as an attachment it seemed too good a chance to miss.

The initial three month attachment was extended for another nine months. About halfway through I was already starting to think about what would happen at the end of that time. As much as I love the website and the team that produce it, I didn't really want to go back, and that is where fate stepped in.

My fiancé was brought up in Devon and, after a holiday there this April, decided it was time to move back. A week later the Learning project manager South West post was advertised.

There is no doubt at all that if I hadn't taken the attachment, I would never have got the LPM post. The experience of working with partners, planning events and delivering BBC Learning projects gave me hands on experience that it would be impossible to get by any other means, and having already worked in the department, it made the change of location as well as the change of job much easier to cope with.

I love my new job and it certainly offers the challenges I was looking for. Added to that I am now living in a completely different part of the country and my lifestyle has changed too: I live in a little barn on the edge of Dartmoor and have fully embraced the outdoor life (although learning to kite surf can wait until the weather is a bit warmer!). It is no exaggeration to say that an attachment completely changed my life.

Been anywhere nice?
Send your attachment stories to Clare Bolt

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PHOTOGRAPH: MARK BASSETT

CHRIS HOLLINS

PRESENTER BBC BREAKFAST SPORT
AND STRICTLY COME DANCING CONTESTANT

Nine weeks on Strictly and you survived another Saturday night. How was your Paso Doble?

We went for it big time, and got a mixed reception from the judges. I had to pull ridiculous facial expressions, but I gave it the full monty – and we've survived to dance another week.

How have your Breakfast colleagues reacted?

I sometimes find myself gliding across the newsroom, counting my steps and standing by the editor in a pose. That's a bit weird. Bill has been great and it helps that he has been in it. He used to send me texts in the afternoon on Saturday saying things like *desire*, *believe* and *concentrate*. Sian has texted me to say good dance, but shut your gob – when I've been dancing with my mouth open.

What does your family think about you being in Strictly?

Mum's initial reaction was, oh my God, are you sure you want to embarrass yourself? I told her I was just going to be me in a dancing competition, but I think she was really worried, as the whole family was.

You've done incredibly well to get this far. Could you dance before you started?

No, and every time we start a new dance I'm petrified. For the latest one on Saturday, the Paso Doble, I had to act masterful and mean which just isn't me. At the beginning of the competition I was worried that I'd make an idiot of myself because I couldn't dance. I've lost about 8lb through

worry and not eating lunch because we're training all day.

Did you know who you'd be paired with before meeting Ola?

No, but there wouldn't have been much point pairing me with someone tall. We hit it off from the word go and we have a good giggle. I'm basically a very slow learner. It takes me forever to learn the steps and seconds to forget. She gives

Does everyone get on?

When you're watching on a Saturday night and you see them all getting upset and cuddling each other you think, what a load of tosh. But when you're a part of it and everyone has had a hard week, and it clicks that someone's going to go out, it is upsetting. But it's not so competitive that you forget your manners.

Are you naturally competitive?

It's not like a football or rugby game where you can influence someone else's dance by doing a rugby tackle. The only thing that I'm in control of is my own performance, so there's no animosity to anyone else.

You were pretty fit yourself

Yes, I've always been pretty sporty. When I was born, Dad was playing for Chelsea and they'd just won the FA Cup. Then he played for QPR, Arsenal and for England. We socialise as a family by playing sport.

Did you try to follow in your father's footballing footsteps?

After university I played professional cricket and pro football. I was offered some trials for Charlton and I played a bit for them and QPR but nothing was really happening so I thought I should get a proper job.

What sort of proper job?

I nearly became an accountant with Coopers and Lybrand but didn't get the job because they didn't believe that I really wanted to be an accountant. So

I wrote off to Sky Sports asking if they could show me how tv works and I got a job as an editorial assistant on *Soccer AM*.

What did you do next?

After six months I thought I'd like to be a reporter or presenter so I took a huge risk, left Sky Sports and went to Channel 1, a London based cable station where I was a video journalist. When this closed I joined Meridien which was a baptism of fire. It was my first bit of real live television – car crash tv sometimes – but great experience.

How did you get from there to Breakfast?

After being given £75,000 to make my own six part golf series, which must count as one of the best jobs of my career, I went to GMTV and *London Tonight* until I joined BBC News 24 in 1999. Since then I've done stints at *Football Focus*, *Grandstand*, indoor bowls, pretty much every job in sport.

What was your biggest break?

When I joined I got to go to Brussels to do the draw for Euro 2000 as the main live presenter/reporter for it. My second big break was during the Sydney Games in 2000 when everybody was away except me, and I ended up as the sports news presenter on the *Ten O'Clock News*. Then I got the dream job I'd always wanted on *Breakfast*.

What do you get up to in your free time?

I sold my flat and I'm waiting to move into my new house, so for the last three months I've lived the life of a 13 year-old. In the morning I go to Breakfast school, then I say goodbye to my teachers and go to meet Mrs Jordan for dance lessons until 5pm. Then I go home to Mummy and Daddy. Then I have dinner and I'm in bed by 9pm.

Interview by Sue Llewellyn

foreign report



PETER STEWART

RADIO KENT BJ FINDS NEW CHALLENGE ON FALKLANDS

'MUD HUTS AND NO ELECTRICITY.' Apparently that's the kind of view many people in the UK have of the Falkland Islands, where I went for a 'working holiday'.

Eight thousand miles away, the British dependency is somewhere most Britons have heard of, but few people ever get to, so when I was invited there on a 'consultancy' basis by the management team at the radio station in Stanley I jumped at the offer. I was not representing the BBC and went in my own time.

I held workshops on libel and defamation, presentation techniques, news writing, reading and interviewing. By the end of my stay the news output had increased (adding hourly three minute on-the-hour bulletins to the existing three ten-minute news programmes), and new production techniques and programme features introduced.

Falklands Radio is funded by the Falkland Island Government. It takes limited advertising

Changes in currents mean that stocks of fish are at an all time low

from the 3000 residents and few local businesses, and is overseen by The Media Trust which also gives guidance to the weekly paper, *The Penguin News*. Between them, they keep people in touch

with what's happening on the Islands, as well as news from the UK and South America.

There is a lower 'threshold of news' for stories than in the UK, but almost everyone tunes in. And the residents are hugely politically aware: it's much more obvious how decisions taken by the Falkland Islands government affect them ... and of course the chances of meeting the decision-makers in the street or pub are far higher than in the UK.

There's a great deal of news: changes in currents mean stocks of fish around the Islands are at an all time low, creating a hole in FIG finances. That in turn means that health-care (which used to be free, paid for by foreign fishing licences) now has to be paid for. But by taxes or by private insurance? Difficult decisions will have to be made...

I reported on the trial of a teenager charged with causing a friend's death by reckless driving. Never before have I had such a reaction to a story. Everyone listened to the station to hear what had been said in court. It certainly concentrates your mind, sharpens your reporting, and adds more empathy to your voice when you know that the mother of the accused, and of the victim are listening. And that you'll meet many of them later that day...

And yes, there are brick buildings and electricity on the Falklands ... and internet, mobile phones and possibly offshore oil reserves too. And any discovery of that really will be big news for the broadcasters there, here and in Buenos Aires.

green room



NEWS VIEWERS were reminded to watch out for hedgehogs hibernating in their bonfires by graphics designer Simon Hunt, whose hedgehog was spotted crossing the weather headline graphic last week.

THE ARIELATOR

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



UPSIDE

A round of tea for Sandy McCracken who scooped 'runner of the year' at the first freelance awards this week.

Not only can Sandy keep his cool in 'highly pressurised situations',

the ProductionBase judges enthused, but while working on *Antiques Road Trip* he taught himself to draw caricatures and sketched each of the presenters as a gift – a bold and, as it turned out, not a career-ending gesture.

The 26 year-old, who also worked for the BBC on *In It To Win It*, clearly has a way with people. 'Sandy always used his initiative and would often second guess the needs of the producer/director,' said one former colleague. 'A very valuable skill indeed.' Green room wagers we'll be hearing more of Mr McCracken.

DOWNSIDE



Question Time titan **David Dimbleby** was across all the papers last week thanks to a bullock encounter. The presenter was knocked out while loading one of the animals onto a trailer at his home in Sussex and had to spend the night in hospital. 'I haven't missed a *Question Time* in over 15 years. Trust my wife's bullock to take me out. I'll be giving bullocks a wide berth in future,' said Dimbleby. John Humphrys, who parked himself in the *Question Time* chair as replacement on the night, was characteristically terse: 'You will have noticed I'm not David Dimbleby.'

EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...You sneeze like my mother...

...I'm in my lair waiting for him...

...The thing is, even as far as Walkabouts go, the one in Shepherd's Bush is PARTICULARLY bad...

...It's meant to be lucky to have an elephant in your house...

...You can never find your way around and it smells of cabbage...

...Oh, I thought it was regarding the spanking story, I'm so sorry. Goodbye...



IT'S NOT EASY BEING GREEN

MAGGOT, member of Welsh 'comedic rap' act Goldie Lookin' Chain and sometime star of *Celebrity Big Brother*, has been wearing a green monster outfit and sitting in a rubbish bin. Don't worry – he hasn't been forced to emulate everyone's favourite passive-aggressive homeless character Oscar the Grouch due to his band being dropped from Atlantic records. The rapper has actually been looking at the truth behind

environmental myths in an exclusive web video series for BBC Wales called Maggot's on a Mission. Thankfully this isn't an excursion into climate change denial – the myths are more along the line of whether it takes more energy to turn TVs on and off rather than leave them running, and Maggot sets the record straight with a host of experts. Which still doesn't explain why he has to wear that itchy suit...

Win tickets for radical drama

RADICAL TV is a season at BFI Southbank critically examining how 'radical' drama has explored the divisions in British society since the 1960s. From December 1-11, the second part of the season looks at how a new generation of writers began to emerge with a more tenuous connection to the leftwing ideology of the 60s and 70s than their predecessors. From Newcastle-based drama *Our Friends in the North* (right) in 1996 to the examination of the mistrust and cynicism engendered by New Labour in Stephen Frears's *The Deal*, the season considers what it means to be a radical dramatist now.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE special discussions involving *Skins* writer/creator Bryan Elsley as well as talks from a number of writers, producers and directors such as Peter Flannery, Ian



Curteis, Stephen Frears and Peter Morgan.

ARIEL HAS three pairs of tickets to any screening or talk in this second season (from December 1 to 11). To enter to win a pair, just answer this question: What is the name of the only main character to feature in all three series of *Skins*? Email ariel competitions by November 23.

TINYURL.COM/BFIRAD

WE HEAR THAT...

TALK.GATEWAY HAS hosted many discussions concerning the pressing issues of our time. But few have succeeded in penetrating so deeply into the very nature of what it is to work at the BBC as the great pudding debate currently raging under the heading 'equal pay for equal pud'. The issue? The varying price of hot puddings across different BBC buildings. Apparently, up until last month, the puddings, which cost 85p in White City, were costing a pound-barrier busting £1.25 for those unfortunate enough to be eating in the TVC canteen. Aramark rectified the disparity, but comparisons continue – 65p for a pudding in Kingswood Warren and 90p for the high-rollers in Cardiff. The debate has even moved on to soup. Forget salary revelations – this is where the real inequality is being revealed...

RUMBLINGS OF discontent at the location of the 'first joint newsroom and newsgathering Christmas party'. It's scheduled to be held in Aussie-themed pub chain Walkabout – a venue more commonly associated with drunken wannabe antipodeans stumbling around in school uniforms listening to hits from the 80s. A far cry from the refinement of past venues, but that's what you get when the management aren't footing the cheque. 'Outrage, grim times, boycotting it,' mumbled our news channel source...

Win a Blackadder Box Set



TO CELEBRATE this week's launch of all four *Blackadder* series becoming available to download on the iTunes store and the release of BBC Audiobooks' *Blackadder*

The Complete Collected Series on cd, BBC Worldwide is offering the entire cd box-set to the lucky winner who can complete the following sentence: 'Blackadder: Am I jumping the gun, Baldrick, or are the words _____ marching with ill-deserved confidence in the direction of this conversation?' Three runners up will receive series 1, 2 or 3 on cd of the BBC Audiobooks *Blackadder* series. Email ariel competitions by November 23.

Win tickets to 1Xtra Live

1XTRA LIVE is the station's flagship event and it boasts a line-up of acclaimed UK music artists including: Dizzee Rascal, Tinchy Stryder, Chipmunk, Taio Cruz, Jay Sean and JLS. Artists will perform across two stages in front of up to 12,000 people, making it the biggest standalone event in the station's history. We have five pairs of tickets to give away for the event at Sheffield Arena on Saturday November 28.

TO ENTER to win a pair, answer this question: What is the title of Dizzee Rascal's debut album, which won him the 2003 Mercury Music Prize? Email ariel competitions by November 23, and look out for a feature on the event in next week's paper.

