

THE BBC NEWSPAPER

ariel

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**It's
Panto
time**

**PANTO
ROYALTY**
Justin Fletcher
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Fruity', 'King'
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jester 'Jingle
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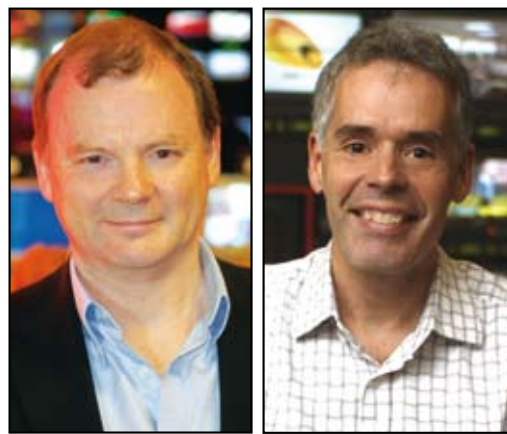


Sambrook takes the 'tough' decision to quit Global News

by Cathy Loughran

THE DECISION TO LEAVE the BBC, after 30 years and some of the toughest jobs in broadcast news, was never going to be simple for Richard Sambrook. As the director of Global News wrote this week on his blog – one of the BBC's most visited: 'The BBC is not an easy organisation to leave. There are few places which are as creative, as woven into the fabric of national life, and which can provide as many opportunities and privileges.'

The former director of BBC News and of BBC Sport will be replaced in March by Peter Horrocks, who will combine his current role as director of World Service with the leadership of Global News. There is no doubt that Sambrook, one of the BBC's most popular and respected leaders, leaves on a high, with audiences for the BBC's international news



Richard Sambrook will hand over to Peter Horrocks – a 'formidable leader' – for coming years

services as large as they've ever been, at 238m each week. Stressing that he's 'leaving, not retiring', the 53 year-old who joined the BBC as a radio newsroom sub in 1980 feels it's 'a good time to step off the ride'. His wife Sue's recent illness has also been a factor in Sambrook wanting to 'rebalance life a bit'. His immediate plans include a spell as part-time visiting fellow at Oxford's Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, after which he will move to a new com-

mercial sector role, still under wraps, outside broadcasting.

Since he moved to Bush House in September 2004, Sambrook has overseen the launch of the BBC's new Arabic and Persian tv services and the relaunch of BBC World News, now reaching 260m households. He was of course BBC News director during the turbulent time of the Hutton inquiry. That remains 'a divisive issue', he says: 'We did get some things wrong, but it was right to report that story and I have no regrets about standing up for the independence of the BBC.'

A former deputy editor of the *Nine O'Clock News*, he became head of BBC Newsgathering, creating a network of hub bureaux in key regions. His memories of producing and reporting include 'being in Berlin as the wall came down, being in China as it started to open up in the 80s, the Iran-Iraq war, Northern Ireland, major disasters and moments of high adrenalin in live tv galleries'.

'There've been some low points too – the deaths of colleagues lowest among them,' says Sambrook, who has led the industry in developing news safety. Deputy director-general Mark Byford paid personal tribute to 'an absolutely brilliant colleague': 'Richard's integrity, huge passion for great journalism and deep interest in new media and its impact, together with his warmth, wisdom and loyalty, have been truly inspiring to us all.'

Horrocks, previously head of the BBC Newsroom, would make a 'formidable leader' of the next stage in Global News' development, Sambrook said. The incoming director expects to make announcements about organisational changes in the new year, some arising from the fusing of the WS and Global roles. The next government funding round, after March 2011, will loom large in Horrocks's in-tray. He told Ariel: 'The need for international news is still great as we deal with globalisation, climate change and the economic downturn. Countries like Russia and China are throwing money into international broadcasting and we need to project BBC news values at a time when commercial news organisations are struggling. All those things make the case for international news from the BBC.'

DG puts website under scrutiny

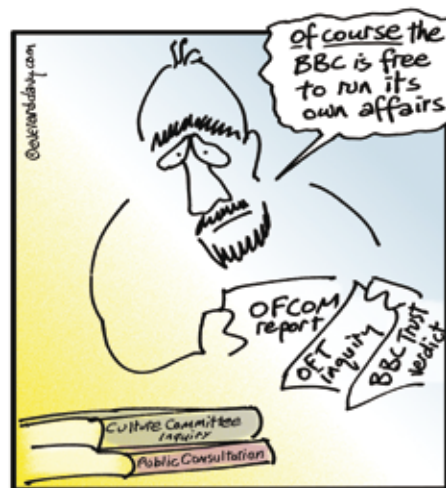
◆ **MARK THOMPSON** is putting his faith in MPs, as he considers the BBC's future. The director general expects British politicians to safeguard BBC independence, impartiality and right to manage its own affairs, despite a European scene where these principles of public service broadcasting were under political attack.

'The aspirations and values of our politicians are different,' Thompson told the Voice of the Listener and Viewer conference last week. 'While British politicians are sometimes as enthusiastic as their continental counterparts to criticise the BBC when they think we've got it wrong ... underlying political support for a strong, independent BBC also remains robust.'

He believed that with the BBC Trust had come 'much tougher scrutiny' of BBC management decisions. 'From where I'm sitting it feels very different [to the Board of Governors],' he said.

Thompson also offered a few hints about his strategic review, which looks ahead to a post switchover BBC and will be put before the trust early next year. The scope of the BBC website was likely to be curtailed, he said, as was money spent on acquired programmes.

Children's, the best journalism, British drama and comedy and national events, meanwhile, were among areas to be given greater priority. He was also committed to those services 'core' to the BBC's public purpose, such as BBC Parliament, and to 'giving space to take a few risks'.



Later, the conference heard shadow culture minister Jeremy Hunt confirm that the Conservatives had 'no plans to tear up the BBC Charter' or to close BBC Three and Four.

Hunt had reservations about the BBC Trust, claiming the current governance model 'lets down licence fee payers' who needed an independent body to hear their complaints and act in their interests. But he said his party 'wholeheartedly supported' the principle of the licence fee and the multi-year settlement. The Tories had created the corporation and 'were as proud of the BBC as the Labour party is of the NHS'.

NEWS BITES

FERN BRITTON, former presenter of ITV's *This Morning*, will make her presenting debut on Radio 2 by covering for Jeremy Vine for the week commencing January 11 and the week starting February 22.

RADIO 2 presenter Chris Evans is to return to tv. BBC One controller Jay Hunt said that Evans, who has not presented a television show on a regular basis since the short lived *OFI Sunday* on ITV in 2005, would cover for *One Show* host Adrian Chiles when he goes on holiday next year.

A 'MOCKUMENTARY' about a deaf porn star and a drama about a man who saves his dreams to VHS are among eight new films made by BBC staff in their spare time that will be shown at this week's BBC Shorts event on December 2 at 6pm in the Council Chamber, Broadcasting House.

THE BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama have entered a partnership that will give Academy students opportunities to learn with the orchestra, take part in concerto masterclasses and work alongside chief conductor Donald Runnicles.

BBC ARABIC has announced a deal that will see its *Sports Bulletin* programme broadcast twice daily on Egypt Radio's Youth and Sports channel.

RADIO LINCOLNSHIRE has changed its name after 29 years. BBC Lincolnshire follows other local stations that have dropped the word Radio from their title to reflect the fact that increasingly they are multimedia operations.

BBC WALES has launched a Green Wales season, examining what people are doing as individuals and as a society to address climate change. The season, across tv, radio and online, offers a range of green-related content during December.

VIRGIN TRAINS is giving BBC travellers the chance to exchange a recent flight boarding pass for a free first class London/Glasgow rail ticket – for business trips only. For more information see the Rail page on Gateway.

FORMER HORIZON producer Aidan Laverty becomes editor of the BBC Two science programme when Andrew Cohen moves to head up the science unit in the spring. Next year will be *Horizon's* 48th year of production.

A GRAPHIC ballet, depicting violence and sexual abuse by a hunchback Pope, has been axed from its pre-watershed Christmas slot on BBC Four after the channel realised the extreme nature of the performance. *Eternal Damnation* to Sancho and Sanchez was one of four Sadler's Wells ballets due to be shown. The other three works will be broadcast between 7.45-9pm on December 18.

Network fault causes chaos across England

System failure

by Candida Watson

Staff in London and the English regions struggled to work effectively from Monday to Wednesday last week, after a bug in the computer network switching system.

At the worst point all of the English regions, and London, were affected to various degrees.

The fault occurred just hours after Siemens mended a separate glitch, which had caused multiple, intermittent, failures of telephony in offices across England for a fortnight.

The network failure affected pcs and telephony. At times no phone calls could be made or received, pcs were offline, autocues weren't working and the more IP reliant parts of the BBC in England were struggling. Arabic TV, the most advanced BBC news service in its use of technology, was forced to restructure its schedule; radio stations couldn't run normal phone-ins; the TVC newsdesks couldn't

make or receive calls.

John Linwood, chief technology officer, FM&T, was one of the key managers at the eye of the storm. He says the cause of the failure has been identified, and the system is now stable and working properly. But he is not complacent. He told Ariel: 'We take this very seriously. It is our job to deliver systems to the BBC, and we need to make sure our network is resilient.' And he paid tribute to the efforts of staff made to work round the problems: 'The response from the staff across the BBC was amazing. They did everything they needed to do to keep the operation running and stepped up and put in the extra effort.'

FM&T had a team working through the night last Monday and Tuesday to identify and repair the fault. Now they are sitting down with Siemens, the service supplier, for a post mortem on the event. Linwood, who joined the

BBC in April, says there have already been major changes in relationships with suppliers: 'They must deliver what they have been contracted to do and the BBC is not a soft touch. This is public money that we are spending, and we have to get full value.'

Because the VOIP phone system has been troubled by faults for so long, it is the focus of much staff ire. Linwood acknowledges that: 'We have had issues with the phone system since we switched to VOIP and it is unacceptable. We have a team working on this.' He insists VOIP phones are essential to the hot-desking planned for W1, and that staff will see the benefits of VOIP as more applications become available.

Looking ahead Linwood says the BBC's corporate network needs to move to a new level of scale and resilience. 'One of my goals is to get to the point where technology is an enabler, not a hindrance.'

The story after the floods

The extra reporters and crews have moved on, but for the people of Cumbria the flood story is far from over, and their local BBC radio station will be with them every step of the way

by Nigel Thompson

We'd just mounted a weeklong series of reports looking at Cumbria's council estates, waved goodbye to the country's newest and biggest submarine and were planning an OB from behind bars at the county's only prison when mother nature intervened.

Then the emergency services called; would Radio Cumbria stay on air overnight, to keep the audience informed as a major storm approached. What followed has been well reported; a once-in-a-thousand years deluge. One person died; roads became impassable, bridges demolished or unsafe – the final bill for repair work will run into millions.

It's only four years since Carlisle was flooded, but this time the story was far from BBC Radio Cumbria's main office, and far out of range of traditional radio cars. Tim Tierney and Gayle Mace, our engineers, have led the way in developing new technology, which came into its own. Just two months ago the station took delivery of a VERV – a reporter car that uses satellite, broadband and wifi to allow access to remote locations. So we were able to



mount full breakfast OBs in Cockermouth town centre and the 'forgotten' community of Seaton. Our network of district reporters were live where the floods happened in Ulverston and Kendal and, thanks to the 3G technology, able to reflect what had happened there as well as further north.

Another benefit has been the closer working relationship that now exists between network and regional broadcasting. BBC news reporter Nicola Pearson was live on Val Armstrong's weekend mid-morning show thanks to some fancy footwork by the London control room; Radio 5 live's Nick Garnett also contributed to our breakfast show. Even the technical support team on the ground called us with tip-offs and contact numbers.

As the roads slowly reopen and the national media move on, Radio Cumbria will continue to be part of the story. In the weeks and months to come we'll have a dual role to play. Our journalists will report the recovery process as it gathers momentum. But our other role is just as important; we'll be aiming to support the communities that need help most by highlighting issues that may have been overlooked; publicising health clinics, giving accurate travel – and weather – information alongside our mix of personalities and music. The communities of north west Cumbria have taken a battering; the BBC's reputation has certainly not.

Nigel Thompson is news editor of BBC Radio Cumbria



Dotun Adebayo with his MBE

Award winners around the BBC

It has been a particularly good week for BBC people and programmes at a variety of awards ceremonies.

World TV by **Juliet Gilkes Romero** won Best Play of 2009 at the Writers Guild Awards, for her drama *At the Gates of Gaza*. The play, written while Romero took a sabbatical, toured regional theatres last year. Describing herself as 'thrilled' to win the recognition of her peers, Romero is now a writer in residence at the Hampstead Theatre. She's writing a second play and still working at World TV.

Radio 5 live's *Up All Night* presenter **Dotun Adebayo** received an MBE from the Princess Royal at Buckingham Palace. The award was for his services to the arts.

At the Children's Baftas *Top Gear* presenter **Richard Hammond** won best presenter for his show *Richard Hammond's Blast Lab*. Documentary series *Serious Ocean*, in which eight youngsters sailed around the southern-most tip of South America, won best factual. CBBC's political reality series *Election* won best entertainment prize.

Helen Blakeman won best writer for CBBC's *Dustbin Baby* and the development team for CBeebies Big and Small Online won best interactive.

At the RTS Craft and Design ceremony, **CBeebies** became the first children's channel to take the prestigious Design and Craft Innovation award. The judges said the channel was 'brimming with originality, creativity and talent'.

On the same night, at the international Emmys, **Julie Walters** was named best actress for her role as a terminally ill doctor in BBC One's *A Short Stay in Switzerland*, while **Ben Whishaw** was best actor for BBC One's five-part drama *Criminal Justice*.

Children's drama *Dustbin Baby* – an adaptation of the Jacqueline Wilson novel co-commissioned by CBBC and BBC One – won the Children and Young People award.

Off air, **Extend**, the BBC Academy's work placement scheme for disabled people, won the Personnel Today award for diversity in the workplace. Two-thirds of participants go on to get BBC jobs.

Object lessons on Radio 4

Radio 4 is to tell the history of the world in one hundred objects.

Written and directed by the director of the British Museum Neil MacGregor, the series will focus on a different man-made object from the museum's collection, chosen to shed light on a different chapter of history from around the globe. MacGregor promised that the series would 'take the Mediterranean away from the centre', telling world history from a global, rather than a Eurocentric, perspective.

Boris Johnson will look for meaning in the head of Augustus the Roman emperor who ruled at the time of Christ, while Seamus Heaney will read extracts from the poem *Beowulf*, to accompany a programme about the 1939 discovery of the Anglo Sax-

on ship burial site at Sutton Hoo.

'With the help of the British Museum we have a magnificent way of communicating a set of quite complicated ideas, so that they are hugely accessible to the audience in 15 minutes,' Radio 4 controller Mark Damazer said at the launch.

'I'm full of genuine optimism that it will make magnificent radio and encourage people to go to the site and see the objects.'

The British Museum, BBC Cymru Wales, BBC Scotland, BBC Northern Ireland and English Regions are partnering with museums and institutions across the country.

A History of the World starts January 18 on Radio 4, and will tx every morning at 9.45am.

bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld

BBCW profits should not come before public purpose

by Cathy Loughran

The BBC's 18-month long review of commercial activity raises more questions than it answers. What's clear is that the BBC Trust has endorsed a dramatic reshaping of the way BBC Worldwide will be able to do business from now on.

On the recommendations of BBC management, the trust has effectively called a halt to future Worldwide mergers and acquisitions like the controversial purchase of the Lonely Planet travel guide business. Lonely Planet won't be sold off, just yet, but there won't be any more deals of that 'scale and nature'.

The proposed joint venture between Worldwide and Channel 4, though, is still within scope for the more restricted commercial arm.

Broadly, the trust's conclusions set out clearer parameters for the company's activity, more focus on exploiting BBC intellectual property and a bigger push on overseas business, as activity in the UK market is scaled back.

Brand reputation abroad is seen as a big issue as the business becomes more internationally facing and tighter editorial controls will ensure standards consistent with UK output.

Taking clear account of the external debate about the limits of BBC activity, the trust last week rubber stamped:

- an end to mergers and acquisitions unless there are exceptional circumstances;
- a clearer focus on securing

value from the BBC's own intellectual property;

- an exit from any activity that is not in keeping with the BBC brand;

- divestment of stakes in non-BBC branded international channels (like Animal Planet) over time, where it makes commercial sense;

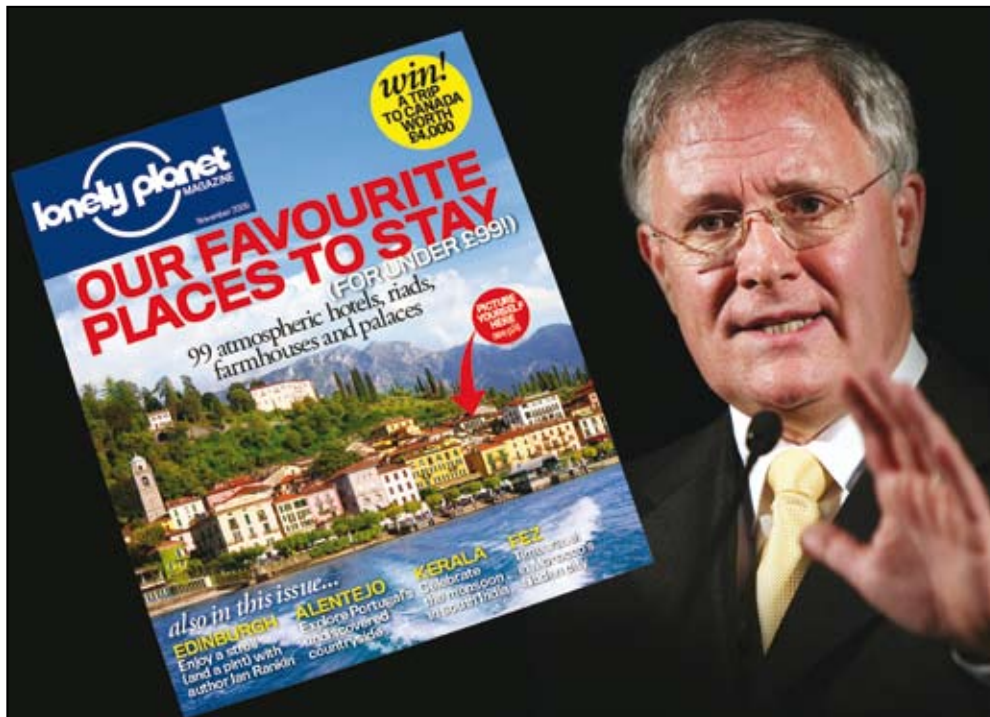
- a more transparent 'first look' with greater market testing to establish the right pricing structures;

- a governance framework (already announced) that gives greater separation between the BBC executive board and the board of Worldwide.

Trust chairman Michael Lyons said that the proposed BBCW/Channel 4 deal, now centred on acquisition of Virgin Media's stake in the UKTV channels – 50 percent of which Worldwide already owns – would count as 'exceptional circumstances'. Stakes in independent production companies, however, would no longer be 'routine'.

In its recommendations to the review, the BBC executive singles out the distribution, via a joint venture partner, of Grazia and Hello magazine titles in India as an 'anomaly' that the BBC should pull out of, in a 'commercially efficient way'.

But it has been the £90m purchase of Lonely Planet in 2007 that has most concentrated the minds of politicians, critics and commercial competitors. Speaking on Radio 4's *The Media Show*, Lyons stopped short of calling the acquisition a mistake, under



PHOTOGRAPH: KEN SINIARD

'Lonely Planet sent a message that the BBC had no boundaries'

the guidelines that existed at the time, but admitted lessons had been learned.

'What we certainly underestimated was the signal this would send out in the UK economy about the scale and commercial ambitions of the BBC... It sent a message that the BBC had no boundaries,' he said.

For issues of commercial sensitivity the chairman also

refused to say which activities Worldwide might pull out of over time. Animal Planet is one international channel that could be affected. 'I have no doubt that there were some activities that are not consistent with the BBC brand,' he added, refusing to list any examples, again on commercial grounds.

Echoing BBC denials of newspaper reports that the corporation is in talks with City banks over a part flotation of Worldwide, Lyons said that a sell-off was currently 'not on the agenda'. Were circumstances to change, any privatised company would not carry the BBC name, nor take any BBC intellectual property.

Worldwide returned profits of £36m to the BBC last

year and is charged with delivering £400m in dividends within the current licence fee period. Lyons is on record as saying the new restrictions should not prevent the company from continuing to be profitable.

But the conundrum that John Smith's business now faces is summed up when the chairman says: 'BBC Worldwide must not be judged by how much money it makes or how big its investments are. It should be primarily judged by what it does to help the BBC to serve the British public, in terms of our public purposes.'

Worldwide now has until the end of the financial year to develop a three year strategy based on its new limits.

Button and Giggs on SPOTY shortlist

The shortlist for the 2009 BBC Sports Personality of the Year was announced on Monday evening.

The award is decided by the public, and this year they have a choice between ten sportsmen and women, from nine very different sports. They are: F1's Jensen Button; cyclist Mark Cavendish; young diver Tom Daley; Jessica Ennis, the heptathlete; footballer Ryan Giggs; boxer David Haye; triple-jumper Phillips Idowu; tennis player Andy Murray; cricketer Andrew Strauss and gymnast Beth Tweddle.

Several are current world champions in their disciplines.

The shortlist was compiled by a panel of 26 sports editors from national and regional newspapers and magazines.

The winner will be announced live from the Sheffield Arena on December 13.

iPlayer trial on Freesat

The BBC iPlayer will be trialled to a select group of Freesat viewers from December 7. Participants in the trial will initially require a code to access the BBC iPlayer but the service should be more freely available by Christmas.

The trial is designed to work on Humax HD set top boxes, currently owned by one in three Freesat viewers.

ITV Player will also launch in beta, or trial form, early in 2010. Moving the BBC iPlayer from a computer to a tv platform had been a challenge, said Rahul Chakkara, head of tv platforms at the BBC.

'The hardware of set top boxes and IPTVs (Internet Protocol Television) is constrained,' he

told BBC News. 'Set top boxes don't have the same processing power or memory as a typical pc. The software inside the boxes was really made for broadcast.'

The BBC iPlayer will continue to roll out across different devices as they become connected to the internet, he said. Broadband connection is essential for the service to work on tv. Freesat is currently in 750,000 homes in the UK and has experienced considerable growth this year, attracting more new customers than Sky in the past two quarters.

■ BBC HD is offering staff the chance to pre-register for Freeview HD equipment. Last week they ran seminars around

the country to show people what HD TV programmes look like. By the end of the year more than 10 percent of UK households will have HD, and most new tvs bought are HD-ready – but a lot of people still haven't thought about how the new technology might fit in their living room.

Freeview HD starts rolling out this month and the staff offer is for either a set-top box, Freeview + with HD (a PVR) or an iDTV with a Freeview HD tuner built in, all at a discount.

The equipment won't be available in the UK until the beginning of next year, but staff can register an interest at BBCHDDiscountOffer@bbc.co.uk

Reef to pay for duping daytime audiences

by Claire Barrett

The indie company behind *Sun, Sea and Bargain Spotting* has been rapped by the BBC Trust for misleading the audience and has agreed to pay compensation to the BBC.

Reef Television used production staff to act as members of the public on-screen and also restaged actual events without due signposting, the trust said in its findings announced on Monday.

The indie was suspended from the BBC in August after newspaper reports claimed that a cameraman had posed as a buyer in the Angela Rippon auction show. Other breaches were identified in daytime titles *Trash for Cash* and *Dealers: Put Your Money Where Your Mouth Is*, which were also made by Reef Tv.

Richard Tait, chair of the trust's editorial standards committee, acknowledged that the company was unaware that the practices contravened guidelines, but said the breaches were 'totally unacceptable' and 'undermined the public's trust in the BBC'.

'The BBC must not allow its audiences to be misled,' he said.

'It must put steps in place to prevent this and, if misleading material is uncovered, it must be dealt with openly and firmly.'

Reef will now pay compensation to the BBC and has overhauled its compliance processes and editorial standards training to 'an appropriate standard', said the BBC, which has therefore lifted the suspension.

The company will resume work on two existing BBC projects and will be free to pitch new work to the BBC in future. A review of its editorial standards performance will take place in six months.

Changes at BBC Arabic

Head of BBC Arabic Hosam El Sakkari is to spearhead work on user-generated content and social media initiatives for BBC Arabic. He will hand over his current managerial and editorial responsibilities to Liliane Landor, head of Middle East region. El Sakkari will also develop and present a new tv programme, using social media tools.

BBC WALES MAN UNCOVERS A HIDDEN TREASURE

by Sally Hillier

IT'S HARD TO IMAGINE now, but 30 years ago the public went mad over a puzzle book. Masquerade was a collection of pictures telling the story of Jack Hare and a treasure, which he loses, leaving readers to work out its location from the illustrations.

As part of the intrigue the book's creator Kit Williams crafted a gold hare pendant and in 1979 buried it. In 1982 it was found in Bedfordshire by someone acting on a tip-off. The pendant was later sold at Sotheby's.

Masquerade was a global best seller but its creator was a reluctant celebrity and, sick of the spotlight, disappeared from public view. Now BBC Wales producer Julian Carey has done what many have tried, and failed, to do, tracking him down and, crucially, getting him to talk. The result is BBC Four's *The Man Behind the Masquerade*. The profile features a rare exhibition of his art and, thanks to an incredible stroke of luck, reunites him with his famous pendant.

'A year ago I sent Kit Williams a letter via some people who knew him, and was thrilled when he phoned me. I told him I'd always loved his paintings in Masquerade, and wondered what had happened to him.'

Williams, impressed that someone had asked this rather than simply hark back to the treasure hunt, invited Carey to his house in Gloucestershire – the first journalist allowed inside his home in 25 years. Taking a gently, gently approach, Carey persuaded

Williams to do a tv interview – although initially he refused to talk about Masquerade. 'I told him that was like interviewing Paul McCartney and discussing Wings but not The Beatles.'

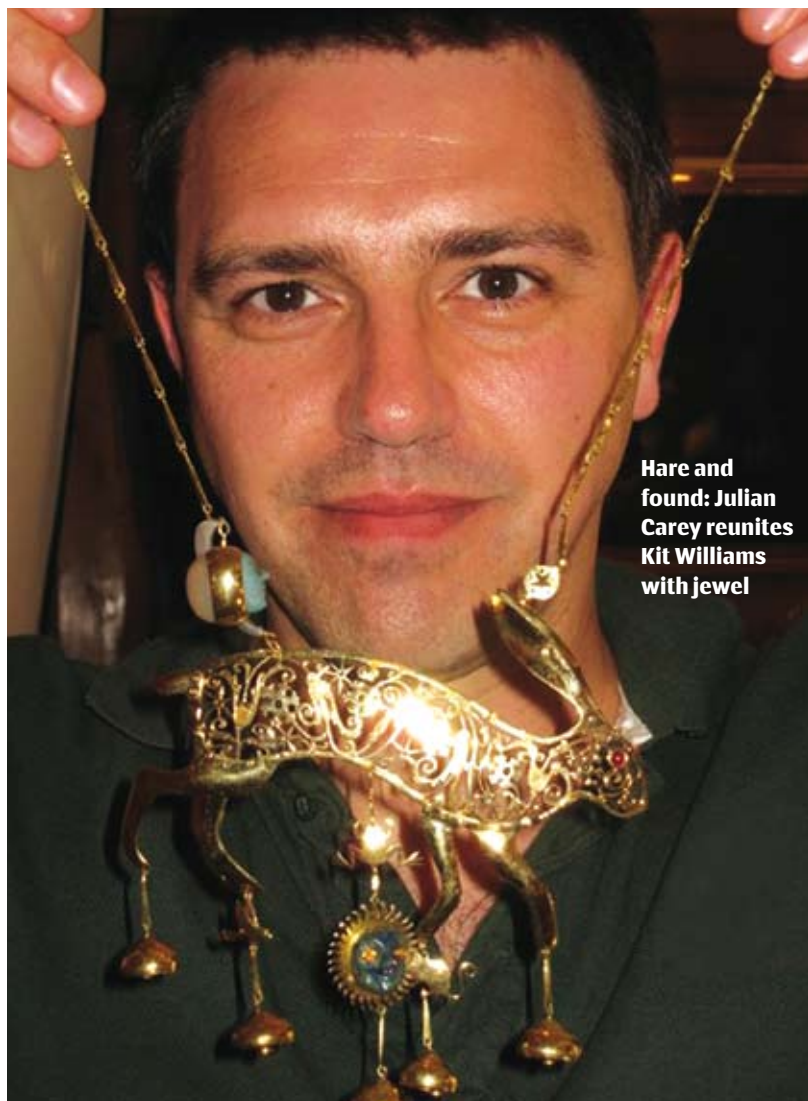
Gradually, Williams let down his guard, agreeing both to discuss Masquerade and to put his paintings on public display for a day in London, to be captured by the tv cameras.

The twist came when, after vowing to speak to no other journalists, he agreed to an interview for Radio 4. Broadcast in the summer, this was heard by relatives of the woman who had bought the hare at Sotheby's. 'The owner lives in the Far East and, amazingly, the relatives were in London, listening to Radio 4 when the programme went out,' says Carey.

The happy result was that the owner, whose identity remains confidential, agreed to return the hare to the UK temporarily. Tim Green, exec producer of both *The Man Behind the Masquerade* and wildlife series *Last Chance to See*, organised the effort to get the jewel back, with *Last Chance to See* production manager Lindsay Davies collecting it from the Far East. Production co-ordinator Helen Baird helped with security on the day the hare was finally reunited with Williams.

'I started out hoping to find out about Kit Williams and through sheer luck ended up with a very different programme,' says Carey.

The Man Behind the Masquerades, December 2, BBC Four.



Hare and found: Julian Carey reunites Kit Williams with jewel



Radio players: (front) AP Tracy Holmyard, controller Michael Carrington and AP Felicity Norton; (back) producer John Leagas, production co-ordinator Luke Fresle, APs Colin Dallibar and Philippa Rae

CHILDREN'S RADIO TURNS THE PAGE

'RADIO IS A LOVELY ASPECT of what we do,' says CBeebies controller Michael Carrington, from what must be the cosiest office in the BBC. High in rain-beaten East Tower, his shelves are stuffed with creatures from *In the Night Garden* as well as Shaun the Sheep's spin-off, Timmy Time.

We're talking about an article in Broadcast, which suggested that the BBC had 'all but given up on children's radio', after Radio 7 lost 40 percent of its listeners when CBeebies Radio moved into its early morning slot.

But the under sixes needn't worry – Carrington hasn't given up on them. 'We had a group of four year-old children sitting around a radio,' he recalls, 'and one little boy said, *I can't see Charlie*, and looked behind the radio. Then a little girl said she *could* see Lola and she was wearing a red dress. It was just delightful – you could see they were using their imagination.' It was the moment that he decided that CBeebies 'absolutely has to do this'.

While dedicated children's radio station Fun Kids gets 100,000 listeners in London, the challenge for CBeebies has always been finding an audience on Radio 7 – an adult station with a remit to carry children's programming. When it launched in 2007, CBeebies Radio was getting around 10,000 listeners in the 2-5pm block – 'very small in listening terms, but good for us,' Carrington says.

Clare Bolt finds out how the web is helping to get children listening

But Radio 7 was losing its older listeners, and the block was moved from 5-8am, so that kids could listen at breakfast time with their parents. But the listening figures dropped off again. The problem, he says, is not that children don't like radio. 'The content is fantastic and there's very strong craft behind all the programmes,' he says firmly. 'But Radio 7 is a digital station and it's not available to everyone.'

One solution was to load audio clips from the radio show onto the CBeebies website, which has 750,000 unique weekly users. The results were dramatic: from 10,000 listeners, they found they had 40,000 children downloading the audio every day.

Last week the CBeebies website relaunched with a brand new look and feel, and this time the CBeebies Radio Player was on every page. 'We'll be looking at this very carefully for impact,' he says. 'But we've been into nurseries and talked to kids and we've got a good idea of the kind of content that might work.'

For now, the focus is on speech radio with a few songs thrown in. Familiar brands like *Lazy Town* and *Nuzzle and Scratch* – especially reversioned by the in-house radio team – are mixed in with stories they might know and ones they

won't, often read by big names like David Tennant and Jane Horrocks. Most of the programmes are made up of entirely original material.

A team of APs script the shows, get all the inserts and record kids voices around the country. 'Over the years we've collected hundreds,' producer Helena Sills says. 'We found that children respond best to other kids, so the programmes are constantly punctuated by children's voices.'

She's 'very proud' of the Radio Player, which is imagined as a yellow cartoon on the CBeebies site. Scrolling over it, children can choose from CBeebies shows *Listen Now*, *Our Picks*, *Join Us* and *Story Time*. 'We felt that in terms of online, it's good to let children choose what they listen to,' she offers. 'It's not listening in the traditional way. Children can control it, which gives them the opportunity to play and experiment, and we've tried to make it as playful as possible.'

The radio team is still experimenting with how much of a visual distraction kids want from the Radio Player.

'We're doing user testing now to see how they use it, but Michael's keen for us to keep it as radio,' Sills says. 'He doesn't want it to be poor telly.'

cutting edge



ZOE KLEINMAN

What price friendship

IN THE HEADY world of social networking, people hook up, disconnect, change their profile photos and their status updates in the blink of a virtual eye. So, in this fickle online domain, what price friendship? The answer, according to video game giant Electronic Arts (EA), is \$300m (£180m).

That's how much the publisher recently paid for a company called Playfish, which makes games for online friends to play on social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. They can only play together if they are linked up as friends on the site they are playing in.

Compared with EA, developers of high profile console-based hits like FIFA and virtual world The Sims, Playfish may sound like small fry. Its multi-million dollar asset is the sheer number of people who log on – over

For the BBC these players could be gold dust

60m a month, from all over the world. The demographic is 18-34 year olds and roughly as many women as men. Compared with the sales figures of even the most successful console games, this is a phenomenally large group of gamers.

For Playfish and ultimately EA, they are an army of potential buyers for virtual goods. The basic game is free but bonus features cost between 5p and £3.

However for the BBC these players represent different gold dust – the very audience it says it needs to futureproof its appeal. Playfish's two most popular games are Pet Society, in which players create pet avatars that interact with those of their friends, and Restaurant City, which makes all players into restaurant owners with friends of their choice on the staff. BBC Two series *The Restaurant* is essentially that format writ large. But while Raymond Blanc mentors nine couples at a time, Restaurant City has nearly 18m individuals engaged in friendly competition.

Dan Taylor, senior portfolio executive, vision multiplatform, says that social gaming is an area the corporation is 'following with interest'. But so far its gaming offerings have not strayed very far from bbc.co.uk, and none exist purely on social networks. So while players are encouraged to interact, they are only able to do so via the BBC website.

The BBC has always exercised caution over where its content appears and it would be a big step to relinquish that control. And whether it will ever be in a position to sell virtual sonic screwdrivers or Albert Square street signs is a matter for Worldwide. But a basic, free-to-use platform could be a quick win for a mass audience – and offer a whole new dimension in audience experience.

Zoe Kleinman is a BBC News technology reporter

by BeeBCamp producer Philip Trippenbach

'A lovely thing about the session was that we could talk about ideas,' Andrew Bowden from Red Button told me. 'Normally in BBC meetings it would be hard to escape talking about the problems and you get bogged down in them. Great to talk about the ideas instead.'

On Friday, 150 creative content producers and technical innovators from across the BBC met in London and Manchester for BeeBCamp 3, the third in a series that I've helped produce.

The idea of BeeBCamp is to break down the barriers between tech and creative communities in the BBC and it's an informal, open sort of forum, hence the name 'unconference'. The schedule is determined on the day by the participants, and any delegate can start a session by writing their name and the subject of their discussion on a white board when they arrive.

The sessions covered the gamut of topics related to the BBC: from augmented reality and audio gaming to web moderation and censorship, blogging war and terrorism and mobile media – as well as 'how to make Gateway work', run by members of the Gateway team.

You can tailor the day according to your interests and everyone is encouraged to have something to say – the sessions are conversational rather than presentations.

While big ideas were in abundance, there was a small but very animated session inviting people to discuss what they would do if they were the director general for a day.

It's a very different sort of meeting from most corporate networking events. 'I'm normally a bit of a cynic when it comes to organised attempts at creativity,' said Paul Murphy, editor of the BBC Internet Blog. 'But I'm happy to admit that in this instance I was very wrong.'

BeeBCamp is sponsored by the College of Journalism, Project North, Future Now and BBC Backstage

Can we organise creativity?



Bubbling up: developer Crystal Hirschorn with head of communication Caroline Boots

What happens when techies and creatives spend the day together? New ideas, say those who went to BeeBCamp 3

Not square:
Technologist Ant Miller holds on to an idea



PHOTOGRAPHS: ED SWINDEN

by Jonathan Frewin, BeeBCamp first timer

'BeeBCamp was just about the only time since I arrived at the BBC that I got a sense of how the organisation could become as creative as Apple or Google,' writes Jonathan Frewin.

The idea is simple: bring together a hundred people from across the BBC, ask them what they want to talk about, and allow groups to gather to discuss those ideas. So the topics varied, from how can I use social media to get people to give me great news stories?, to what should the BBC do with Xbox's project Natal?

People from different parts of the BBC were able to share insights and expertise in a way that wouldn't otherwise happen. We discovered how much we all think about similar things,

'I got a sense of how the BBC could become as creative as Apple'

and how much duplication of effort there can be. If we all drew on our collective expertise like this, there would be no need for expensive external consultants!

The gathering was heavily skewed in favour of the tech savvy, so when we were asked at the beginning who would be tweeting from the event, around half the attendees stuck up a hand (the hashtag was #bc3 if you're interested to see the outcome).

Yet the conversation topics had wide appeal, and you couldn't help but wonder what might be achieved if this sort of event became popular across the organisation.

In fact I might even see whether there is an appetite for shorter lunchtime WSCamps at the World Service, as there's no question that it's difficult to find time to give up a whole day.

Jonathan Frewin works for WS business planning

Period drama goes 20th century with WW2 tale of love and displacement

by Claire Barrett

HOLD ON TO YOUR BONNETS – BBC One period drama is leaving behind its Victorian comfort zone and accelerating forward a century to 1940s Jamaica and a London devastated by the Blitz.

Small Island, the two-part Ruby Television adaptation of Andrea Levy's 2004 novel, takes viewers on a short haul historical hop to the time when the Empire Windrush brought the first major wave of West Indian migrants – along with the seeds of multiculturalism – to a largely unwelcoming Britain.

It raises issues of racism, prejudice and ignorance, but its primary focus is on the personal. 'It's a story of redemption,' attests producer Grainne Marmion. 'It has a real depth of feeling and understanding which the screen-play translates both visually and emotionally.'

If it's managed to shake off all that nineteenth century repression, a drama set in the living memory of some of its audience brings with it a burden of responsibility on the programme makers to get it right. 'Before we started making *Small Island*, I thought a lot about authenticity,' admits director John Alexander, 'about location, costumes, design. But as you get deeper in, your concerns shift to character and storytelling. You build a world which you believe in and no longer question.'

It was only at a preview screening at the Imperial War Museum, attended by members of the Windrush Society, that doubts surfaced. 'I thought, gosh, some of these people have actually lived through this time,' he explains. 'Thankfully, they found it convincing.'

He gives credit to the designers who created the interior sets in Belfast's cavernous Paint Hall studios. 'Queenie's home is almost a character in itself,' says Alexander of the house where Londoners Queenie and Benedict take in Jamaican couple Gilbert and Hortense as lodgers. 'The sets were so believable,' says the director, who also led the exterior shoot in Dublin's broad Georgian streets which doubled as wartime London.



David Oyelowo, who plays Gilbert, feels the heat as he prepares for the taxi breakdown scene during a week of filming in Jamaica

It was the week's filming in Jamaica that posed more of a challenge to fidelity. 'Jamaica is not an easy place to make period drama,' laments Alexander, whose art department had to scour the island for period props and lug costumes from Britain. Gilbert's truck-like taxi had to be assembled from bits and pieces of other vehicles. It looked the part but took the method acting too far. 'We shot a scene about Gilbert's taxi breaking down and, in rehearsal, it did break down. It only ran twice.'

The sunshine scenes were a obvious counterpoint to grim, grey London, but Alexander was careful to avoid a portrayal of the Caribbean island as a glossy idyll. 'You have to remember that these people wanted to leave Jamaica. There was a lot of poverty, crop failures and extreme hardship.'

Although scantily explored in tv drama, it's a period in history with resonance today. 'It's a profound statement about immigration,' believes Marmion, 'that says as much about the

Polish community in Britain now as the Jamaicans who came to London in the forties. The themes cross cultures.'

For Alexander, it's the sheer strength of the storytelling that earns *Small Island* a place in the mainstream. 'People are saying it's the BBC's first black period drama, but I'm not sure that's such a big issue. It's the fact that it's a great love story that gives it wide appeal – and that's why it's on BBC One.'

Small Island, BBC One, December 5

Tales of abuse and exploitation in the jungle

by Judy Fladmark

A confrontation with semi-naked, blow-pipe wielding tribesmen isn't the usual start to my working day – but this was the heart of the Borneo jungle, not a bad day on the Central line.

Radio 4 *Today* programme reporter Angus Stickler and I had travelled for several days through the jungle to reach the last remaining nomads of the Penan tribe, following a story of the damage being done to the Penan by logging in their pristine forest home.

We weren't expecting a hostile welcome. At least that's what we wrote on our risk assessment form... But walking downhill through dense rainforest we encountered several hunters dressed in loin cloths, their poisoned darts and machetes at the ready.

Fortunately for us our local guide, a headman from a nearby village, soothed the situation. We had been unaware that a tribe member was mysteriously missing in the forest so outsiders were being treated suspiciously. As soon as it was clear we weren't a threat, and proper introductions had been made, we were allowed to set up camp.

We'd gone prepared for wild camping with bivvie bags, a stove and basic food supplies, planning to be self-sufficient. We quickly learnt that sharing is central to the Penan way of life.

We brought rice, noodles and energy bars while the Penan provided fresh jungle fruits. The headman hunted game overnight. Breakfasts included boiled porcupine, mouse deer or, on one occasion, wild cat which was surprisingly tasty, a bit like smoky pork. Angus managed a whole paw in his morning soup.

Angus was gathering for radio and online while I filmed on a lightweight Z5 camera. It was physically gruelling in 35 degree heat and 99 percent humidity. Washing facilities included bathing in leech-free rivers. Much nicer than the makeshift rain water showers we made do with in the villages.

But we weren't there for the exotic fun of it. Serious allegations have been made about the conduct of employees of big logging companies in the area, with claims of exploitation and of rape. We travelled down river, to where settled Penan live side by side with the loggers. The companies say they are bringing progress to local communities. A Malaysian government report has documented dozens of cases of rape, mainly of young girls hitching rides to and from school on loggers' vehicles. We spent a day with one young rape victim. We will be telling her story in our reports on *Today*, BBC World, World Service and online.

Judy Fladmark is a producer for the news programmes multimedia team.

Penan tribesmen – a way of life under threat

WHAT TO WEAR

RUBA JURDI, BROADCAST AND ONLINE ASSISTANT, ARABIC TELEVISION SERVICE, BROADCASTING HOUSE

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

I adore French fashion and here I am wearing a Cop Copine hooded jacket together with the same brand leggings. Underneath I'm wearing a grey Kookai top. I would say this is more of a smart casual outfit which I could wear both at work and day wear.

Do you need to dress a particular way for work?

I try not to wear anything too revealing as I don't want to distract my colleagues! Also it's not very professional. I like to wear something smart. I choose my clothes in the morning as what I wear depends on my mood. I've never been able to pick my clothes the night before.

Are you experimental in your style?

I definitely am experimental when it comes to colours. If I see two colours together in patterns anywhere I try to mimic those for clothes. At the moment I love putting green and blue pieces together as they remind me of the sea. We don't have that in central London so that's the next best thing.

Have you had any fashion nightmares?

I probably did when I was younger but I can't really think of anything too hideous. But I do remember my hair being really bad. I was quite skinny and I had this massive mop of mad curls on my head which were too big for my frame.



myweek@work

Rifat Jiwaïd, Asian Network station editor

CHILDREN IN EID



Mehtaab, 5 years old, who was born with no legs

HOW DO YOU CONJURE UP THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL STRENGTH to rebuild your life after watching your parents drown in a cyclone as you cling to a tree?

And how do you fend for yourself at the age of five if you were born without any legs?

Some might give up, others might blame fate for their misfortunes. But not the children who were interviewed about their lives in various South Asian countries for a special programme for the Asian Network.

Listeners heard some remarkable stories of survival in the face of loss, handicap and extreme hardship in the children's short lives. The programme – dubbed *Children in Eid* – was the brainchild of station editor Rifat Jawaïd.

He wanted to highlight the remarkable children who, despite all their difficulties, didn't give up the fight for life, instead becoming inspirations to others.

'Children in Eid was an irresistible opportunity to tell the inspiring stories of some extraordinary children in the sub continent.

'The idea came off the back of Children in Need and I thought it was a good way of illustrating some of the stories from South Asian countries.

'Our efforts have definitely struck a chord with the Asian Network audience, who responded very positively.

'Reaching these kids was an

uphill task. They often lived in the most difficult terrain and were bereft of even basic modern facilities, such as a telephone network in their village or town.

'But thanks to my previous association with BBC World Service, I could effectively mobilise my contacts across India, Pakistan

and Bangladesh.

'In most cases, my former colleagues were happy to travel to meet these children with satellite phones to conduct the interviews in quality.'

The four interviews ran across the language services from Monday.

The week started with the story of five year-old Pakistani born Mehtaab, who refuses to let the fact that he was born without legs hold him back in life.

Teenager Rakibul Islam described losing his parents in a cyclone, then having to forge a new life on his own..

And one child spoke of an anguished choice he has to make. Muzaffer, a Muslim boy, was separated from his mother in the Gujarat riots of 2002. He was taken in by a Hindu family who adopted him. But his birth mother recently tracked him down, and wants him to leave his new family and return to her. Muzaffer doesn't want to.

The strand concluded with Abbas' story. He lost both his legs in a bomb blast three years ago while attending a relative's funeral in Peshawar. His father also lost a leg in the explosion, so 16 year-old Abbas works full time to support his father and fund his brother's education. The week long programme culminated on Friday with a special three hour Eid Party to celebrate the festival and reflect on the positive aspects of the lives of children.

'REACHING THESE KIDS WAS AN UPHILL TASK'



Rakibul Islam orphaned by a storm

BBC IN ACTION



Ciara's crash practice

It looks serious, but Northern Ireland reporter Ciara Riddell hasn't really been in a major road traffic accident. In fact she was taking part in an emergency services exercise, but Ciara says that should not

minimise the horrors of actually being in a crash.

BBC Newsline viewers were shown dramatic scenes of how Ciara would be rescued by a team of experts if she were

involved in a real-life tragedy.

'It was actually quite frightening,' she said: 'I have been in a real car crash, but it wasn't anything like this.

'I knew it was only an exercise, a simu-

lation, but until you're in that type of situation you can't really appreciate how you would feel. The sights, sounds and smells of being in the car made it an environment that I wouldn't like to be in again.'

CHANGING PLACES



ALEX BUSHILL has secured an attachment as a reporter for BBC London and will be leaving BBC Plymouth for a few months. Meanwhile his colleague **LOUISE HUBBALL** is covering the patch for network in his absence..... BBC Radio Cornwall's **MATT PENGELLY** is re-joining the Spotlight team for a few months to replace her... **SAM SMITH** (pictured) head of research for tv will become head of audience services and operations in brand and planning.

FACT OF LIFE

QUESTION TIME featuring Nick Griffin was the most requested programme on iPlayer in October – it had almost three times more requests than the second most popular programme which was an episode of Strictly.



SHAMELESS PLUG



SARAH WADE, RADIO 7
♦ **I SIGNED UP** for a food writing course and discovered within half an hour I knew nothing about food. The other attendees worked with Gordon Ramsay and Jamie Oliver while I merely read their cookery books. But each week we were introduced to writers,

chefs, masters of wine and they were all potty about their jobs. Intrigued I wanted to know more – how did they get from auditor to freelance food writer, sales assistant to Vogue photographer and be successful. Inspired by this I went in search for similar success stories – housewife to director; insurance clerk to gallery owner; teacher to horticulturist. Before I knew it I had enough material to turn it into a book which I did after finding a co-writer and a publisher. I can confirm the sales figures of **FIND YOUR DREAM JOB** are not that of Dan Brown but hey.

As a spin off there's a Find Your Dream Job Boot Camp event being held in January. Information can be found on Findyourdreamjob.co.uk

COMING UP

♦ Scrabble has had a resurgence largely thanks to online culture, which has boosted sales and seen office workers 'scrabbling' during work hours. In the final **IMAGINE** programme of the series, Alan Yentob travels to the home of the game, New York, where an unemployed architect invented it as a way to make a quick buck during the Great Depression of the 30s.

♦ This winter BBC Three honours the late, great Michael Jackson (below) in a new six-part dance series called **MOVE LIKE MICHAEL JACKSON**. Hosted by Radio 1's Reggie Yates, the show will embark on a nationwide hunt for amazing dancers who can not only move like MJ but put their own unique spin on the moves as well.

♦ Sue Barker, Gary Lineker and Jake Humphrey present the prestigious awards ceremony that celebrates the sporting achievements of 2009. Sheffield is this year's host and the studio audience of 11,000 will be the biggest ever for the live event. The public decide the winner of the main **SPORTS PERSONALITY OF THE YEAR** award, making their votes during the show.



blogbites

What we've found while trawling the blogs this week

Liberals, Lamingtons and Kevin Rudd's longest interview

November has been a blur. We've had Tigermania in Melbourne and Malcolmmania in Canberra – and both have ended with a crash. Add to that the 10th anniversary of the republican referendum, a hike in interest rates, Schoolies week on the Gold Coast, the national apology to Forgotten Australians and former child migrants and a 25-minute face-to-face with the prime minister <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8374709.stm>> – it was hardly Frost/Nixon, but we reckon it is the longest interview Kevin Rudd has given since coming to office in 2007 – and it's been a pretty hectic month.

Nick Bryant, BBC Sydney correspondent
bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/nickbryant

Bollywood Boys, back with a bang

We hit the shows running this week – from the glamtastic heat of Mumbai to the warm glow of the studios where we were enveloped in the arms of the Family – the gorgeous Chay and the Bollywooderful Jeet. They were in the studios after watching this week's big release Priyadarshan's 'De Dana Dan' starring Akshay Kumar, Sunil Shetty, Katrina Kaif, Paresh Rawal, Neha Dupia and Archana Puran Singh, a dog and a FLOOD!! Chay and Jeet loved it – they saw it with all The Family and thought it was wonderful.

Pablo failed to laugh at all but I got into the spirit of things and guffawed throughout. Rishi Rich came to the studios and gave us the lowdown on Mrs Kundra's wedding – Amitabh Bachchan, Rekha, Aishwariya, Shah Rukh and Lara Dutta to name a few all made merry to the Rishi Rich Collective as they brought the house down. PS Mrs Kundra's maiden name is Shilpa Shetty for the uninitiated.

Raj and Pablo, BBC Asian Network
bbc.co.uk/blogs/bollywood

The troubles we've seen

I've just taken possession of a box set of essays themed around the arts in NI and The Troubles. It features names such as Fergal Keane, Frank Ormsby, Patricia Craig and Ciaran Carson. While I haven't gone deeply into the copy yet, it's certainly a challenging idea that takes in architecture, literature and even prison art.

I have also authored a volume about popular music and the conflict, some 5000 words about punk rock and showbands, suspect devices and the glimmer of an artistic sunrise. A lot of the significant moments of my life are on those pages and I'm looking forward to a launch at the Ulster Museum in a few day's time. Given that I sat in Frank Ormsby's classroom for a few interesting years, absorbing some of his passion for the written word, it's quite a bonus to find myself in printed proximity to the man. **Stuart Baillie, presenter, Radio Ulster**
bbc.co.uk/blogs/stuartbaillie

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You can also contribute to the mail page directly from the Ariel Online home page

Dead ringers

Who is the BBC manager responsible for the disastrous VOIP phones contract with Siemens? It seems beyond belief that more than 130 years after Alexander Graham Bell made his first successful call, it is not possible to supply one of the world's biggest news organisations with phones that actually work.

Theo Leggett

business reporter, World Service

■ I don't think there has been enough praise heaped on the person who decided on the new phone contract with Siemens. Can the person responsible please own up so that we can all send congratulatory emails?

I have heard some complaints, but I seem to work with a bunch of whingers who expect the phone to work all the time. I mean, it does ring most of the time and most of the international calls we make do go through.

And that woman who regularly tells us that 'the phone call can't be completed as dialled' or the number does not exist is only doing her job.

So who was it?

Damian Zane

producer, Network Africa/Focus on Africa

■ Last Tuesday I had 12 emails relating to a telephony fault which had affected large parts of the BBC since 5.30pm the previous evening. All of our VOIP phones in Swindon were displaying 'Limited Server', although rebooting them (a process taking around two minutes per phone) cured this.

Does anyone else remember when telephones were telephones and, on the whole, just worked?

Oh and please don't pretend that the forthcoming HiPath 8000 firmware upgrade will make it all OK – I'll eat my hat if it becomes as reliable as the Ericsson system was. And that's without going into the audio delays/echoes, intermittent lack of ringing tone, inability to provide local 'music-on hold', the huge noisy heat-generating equipment rack etc.

You know how some small children are frightened of people dressed up as Pudsey Bear or Postman Pat etc? VOIP telephones are similar – they look like oversized telephones but they aren't really telephones; they are IP terminals dressed up to look like telephones – like Postman Pat with a large fibreglass head, they are the stuff of nightmares.

Ian Dyer

senior broadcast engineer, BBC Wiltshire

■ Is it time the BBC contacted *Spooks* to see who provides their phone and computer services?

Ros and Lucas never seem to have any problems with their phones and, before he retired, Malcolm was always able to source any database



Slow down to appreciate joys of Postman Pat

My two young children enjoy a daily dose of CBeebies and, quite frankly, as a working mother it is a necessary adjunct to my sanity.

However, keen to expand their viewing repertoire I picked up a 10p Postman Pat video from our local charity shop. I positioned the children, as is the Sturt custom, on the sofa, jolted the antiquated video player into life with a kick and commenced my mad-mum, damage-limitation dash around the house. But Postman Pat stopped me in my tracks. He sounded so old-fashioned. I delayed turning on the hoo-

ver and re-entered the room to watch more. The pace was so slow it seemed alien. Everyone was speaking in a gentle, unhurried way. The red van was pootling. Envelopes were fluttering. The cat was yawning.

I peered at my children. Why no protest? Why no jeers? They too were mesmerised. Perhaps we don't need our kids programmes to be so frenetic. Try going from that to the madcap Lazy Town or zany Tweenies. Honestly, try it. It too will stop you in your tracks.

Chrissy Sturt, *sbj, South TV News*

in an instant. You never hear them complaining about IT and phone breakdown. Thank goodness we're not responsible for saving the world.

Sarah Taylor

radio documentaries

■ Once upon a time I went to a meeting and I was told that typewriters and photocopiers were old technology and no longer capable of coping with the amount of work we had to do and that this new IT stuff would make us more efficient and save lots of time and money. And it came to pass that the money we saved was spent on highly capable IT support staff to make the IT cope with all the things we wanted it to do and store, and they also fixed it when it got a virus and stopped working. And the time we saved, we spent ringing the helpdesk to tell them about our problems and then seeing occupational health for our RSI problems.

Once I went to a meeting and was told that the old phone system would become unreliable and would fail and didn't have enough functionality and this new HI Path system would be marvellous and solve all the problems that I didn't know I had about communication and save lots of money. The money we saved was spent on fixing the new phone system, which was unreliable, and paying mobile phone bills for the staff who had given up using the phone system because it had so much functionality it was too complicated to use.

Last night I dreamt I went to a meeting and was told about a new invention called the CPU – the carrier pigeon unit. During rigorous testing, it's as reliable as current IT systems and has a slightly longer life span. It is slower and has limits on the amount of data each unit can carry, but as data has to be carried by several units, it makes data protection more secure – apart from the CAT problem which is to be rectified by the DOG patch. When the unit eventually become BPR (Beyond Pigeon Repair) then you can cook it and eat it (see bbc.co.uk/CPU for recipes).

Am I the only one who thinks we've swallowed a lot of mis-truths about contemporary technology's capacity to deliver a reliable service? We've be-

come too easily dazzled by shiny gadgets and we need to get that under control as it's costing too much.

Salley Rear

production manager, audio and music

Up to the job

I see from recent expenses revelations that Andy Parfitt, Radio 1 controller, claimed nearly £550 for clothing and equipment for climbing Mount Kilimanjaro for Comic Relief.

Thank goodness for that. Did the BBC owned clothing make it up to Cockermouth in time to help keep our brave reporters, engineers and producers dry while reporting in those terrible conditions on that tragic story?

David Gregory

science and environment correspondent

Hire and hire

With the current scrutiny over expenses and the fact that BBC News has a lot less money to spend than last year, I am especially mindful to get value for money. So after researching car hire rates in Switzerland for a filming trip, I put a booking in for a people carrier for two days last weekend. I was stunned to get the booking through from BBC Transport before the trip – the cost was going to be £834.

Maybe CERN should relocate their experiments to Australia, we could buy the airfares there and back for a lot less than that. Horrified, I cancelled the booking and rebooked on the web for less than a quarter of the price. If I received a pound coin for every time this has happened to me and others over my 28 years at the BBC I would be a very rich BBC man.

Get rid of the procurement 'deals' and the BBC would be a lot richer too. I am sure lots of colleagues can come up with many other examples.

Paul Francis

senior news camerajournalist



Jamie Hindhaugh, head of sourcing, logistics, replies:

I am sorry to hear of your recent experiences with hiring cars abroad. I have investigated this case and have noted our preferred suppliers were having difficulty meeting all requirements around this time which contributed to the unusually high rate you were quoted. I would have expected the booking team to have investigated other options. In cases such as this you are right to challenge and I recommend that you contact BBC Procurement to enable us to follow up with the service provider.

Please be assured we will continue to work to minimise the possibility of such occurrences so that staff can be confident in the service that we provide which includes guaranteed availability, free delivery and collection, full insurance, unlimited mileage and all local taxes within the rates.

Modesty aside

Re the letter from Kyren Burns (November 14). I have a question for someone who might be in the know. How many other 'modest gatherings' for talent and managers are being held and funded by the BBC?

Oh, and at the risk of repeating Kyren, what's the budget per head for these modest gatherings?

Donna Stevenson

gramophone and reference library, Wales

Holding our VERV

The report on Sarah Coker's coverage of the Cockermouth flooding (Ariel, November 24) mentioned the radio car. Our terrestrial radio car coverage is poor in Cockermouth. Some time ago we surveyed the town for 3g mobile broadband coverage, so I sent an email the night before the floods to remind our reporters how we could broadcast. Sarah used a Comrex Access portable, capable of providing quality live audio to many BBC stations. It communicated through the only 3g base station in the area, which narrowly escaped the flooding. As many of us heard, it worked well, but we know that using a public 3g network has risks.

Despite my pleas that weekend, Three, the 3g network provider, went

ahead with planned maintenance in Cockermouth on Monday, stating publicly that it would affect their customers. That was the day of our breakfast OB from the town, so we used our VERV, one of two new prototype district reporter vehicles using satellite technology. This was connected to our radio car. Our Access portables on 3g and the VERV permitted us to provide extensive live coverage of the floods, not only in Cockermouth but Workington, Seaton and other locations.

Tim Tierney

senior broadcast engineer, Radio Cumbria

Weather worn

We all know that breakfast news is repetitive – it has to be or else you'd never fill all those hours, but can the scripts for the weather presenters vary a little please?

This morning (November 25) I watched *BBC Breakfast* for just 45 minutes and I swear I heard the word 'squally' at least ten times. Then the regional presenters had to get in on the act as well.

Yes, we know, it's nice to have a new word to play with but 'squally' isn't a nice word to hear first thing in the morning. It had me reaching for the remote.

Victoria Forbes

trainee studio manager, World Service

Heat treatment

I was dismayed to watch the recent episode of BBC Three's *Don't Get Screwed* in which a woman's coat was set on fire by a member of the production team.

Was this a genuine member of the public whose coat was destroyed? Where do we draw the line on the treatment of members of the public to create content? What if that coat had some emotional significance for the person involved?

What would have been the situation if the person had been so incensed they assaulted the arsonist? What about the stress caused by this action on the victim?

I presume this was in the risk assessment – so why was it allowed?

Martin Griffin, *audio supervisor, Scotland finance and business*

Objective Productions, the producers of this show, reply:

All relevant editorial guidelines are followed when filming and no contributors suffer any loss. All the contributors on *Don't Get Screwed* sign release forms after the event and are happy with the items being broadcast as well as with their experiences on the show.

Don't Get Screwed is all about empowering consumers and explaining the laws that exist to protect us. At the end of each hidden camera item, expert presenter Max Flint gives concise, easy-to-understand practical advice that has been highlighted by the 'sting'.

It's amazing how many people don't know their rights.'

PROGRAMME MAKING

Editor 5 live News
London / Salford Quays
SM2/Ref: 22637009
07-Dec-09

Network Development Producer, TVCA
Belfast - Broadcasting House
8D/Ref: 22651109
09-Dec-09 06 months

Radio Content Producer, The Zones
Glasgow
7D/Ref: 22443009
20-Dec-09 09 months

Promotions Writer and Producer
London
Bush House
7D/Ref: 21867109
06-Dec-09 11 months

Assistant Producer, A&M Factual
Birmingham
5/7D/Ref: 22643109
11-Dec-09 03 months

Broadcast Assistant, Radio Drama
Manchester
3/4D/Ref: 22587809
03-Dec-09 11 months

JOURNALISM

Regional News Editor, West Midlands
Birmingham
11D/Ref: 22538409
09-Dec-09 16 months

Editor, Good Morning Scotland
Glasgow
10D/Ref: 22488609
06-Dec-09 06 months

Regional Editor (South Asia), WSNCA
London
Bush House
9D/Ref: 22534009
30-Dec-09 12 months

Regional Editor (Middle East), WSNCA
London
Bush House
9D/Ref: 22533909
30-Dec-09 12 months

Regional Editor (Asia Pacific), WSNCA
London
Bush House
9D/Ref: 22533809
30-Dec-09 12 months

Regional Editor (Africa), WSNCA
London
Bush House
9D/Ref: 22533709
30-Dec-09 12 months

Regional Editor (Europe), WSNCA
London
Bush House
9D/Ref: 22533609
30-Dec-09 12 months

Producer, Operations, BBC Weather
London
TV Centre
9D/Ref: 22491009
06-Dec-09 03 months

World Briefing Presenters, WSNCA
London
Bush House
8/9D/Ref: 22534109
30-Dec-09 03 months

Senior Broadcast Journalist
London
TV Centre
8D/Ref: 22414809
07-Dec-09

Senior Broadcast Journalist - BBC Jersey
Jersey
8D/Ref: 12916109
11-Dec-09

Assistant Producer, BBC Sport
London / Salford Quays
7D/Ref: 22649209
14-Dec-09 Various

Broadcast Journalist, On Demand
London
TV Centre
7D/Ref: 22493509
07-Dec-09

Assistant Producer, Interactive, BBC Weather
London
TV Centre
7D/Ref: 22467409
07-Dec-09 06 months

Video Journalist, BBC Look North
Leeds
7D/Ref: 22450809
07-Dec-09 09 months

Broadcast Journalist (Ivan Noble Bursary)
London
7D/Ref: 22442209
14-Dec-09 06 months

Multi-media Health BJ, UK Specialists
London
7D/Ref: 22426809
13-Dec-09 12 months

Programme Manager, BBC North
London
TV Centre
11D/Ref: 22642409
14-Dec-09 12 months

Senior Project Manager, BBC North
London
10D/Ref: 22642309
14-Dec-09 12 months

Head of Marketing, BBC Radio 5 Live
London
TV Centre
10D/Ref: 22575409
17-Dec-09 12 months

Performance & Process Manager
London
White City
10D/Ref: 21938509
7-Dec-09 6 months

Regional Manager, Anglia Region
Multi Location
9D/Ref: 22318009
14-Dec-09 2 years

Development Producer
London
Media Centre
9D/Ref: 20584209
07-Dec-09 12 months

Production Business Manager
Belfast - Broadcasting House
8D/Ref: 22591209
08-Dec-09 09 months

Project Manager, Blast
London
8D/Ref: 22452909
06-Dec-09 06 months

Community Producer
Belfast - Broadcasting House
8D/Ref: 22382009
08-Dec-09 06 months

Communications Manager, BBC Trust
London
8D/Ref: 22316809
09-Dec-09

Press & PR Officer - Midlands, East & London
Birmingham
7D/Ref: 22515509
08-Dec-09

Site Manager, Blast on Tour
Multi Location
7D/Ref: 22453009
06-Dec-09 08 months

Contract Executive, Television Locations
London
6D/Ref: 22593309
08-Dec-09

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

Media Assistant/Cynorthwy-ydd y Cyfryngau
Cardiff
3D/Ref: 22219409
03-Dec-09 03 months

Correspondence Assistant, Blue Peter
London
TV Centre
2P/Ref: 22472109
02-Dec-09 06 months

NEW MEDIA

AV Manager, Content & Channels Team
London
White City
8D/Ref: 21972209
02-Dec-09

Uwch Gynhyrchydd, Addysg a Dysgu Rhyngweithiol BBC Cymru
Cardiff
8D/Ref: 12915809
02-Dec-09 09 months

Content Producer, BBC Switch
London
7D/Ref: 22561709
09-Dec-09 06 months

Digital Design Executive, Content & Channels Team
London
White City
6D/Ref: 21972409
02-Dec-09

SPECIALIST TECHNICAL AND DESIGN SERVICES

Trainee Graphic Operator
Glasgow
3/4F/Ref: 22002209
06-Dec-09 06 months

TECHNOLOGY

Senior Technical Architect
London
Broadcast Centre Media Village
10D/Ref: 22652509
13-Dec-09

Senior Test Automation Engineer
London
Henry Wood House
8D/Ref: 22366309
03-Dec-09

Technical Project Manager - Solutions Team, DMI
London
White City
8D/Ref: 12916209
10-Dec-09 12 months

Software Engineer - Interactive TV Platforms
London / Salford Quays
7D/Ref: 21533709
07-Dec-09

Developer (Solutions Team)
London
White City
7D/Ref: 21394909
01-Dec-09 06 months

Junior Software Engineer - Interactive TV Platforms
London / Salford Quays
5D/Ref: 21535409
07-Dec-09

Intern, Development Format Production
London
Media Centre
5W/Ref: 22324609
06-Dec-09 06 months

See Attachment

BJ to film maker

BBC Essex BJ Colleen Harris learns to make films with Inside Out East in Norwich

AS A DISTRICT REPORTER AT BBC ESSEX, my job involves coming up with ideas and feeding them to our editor, Diana Hare. A year ago I had a film commissioned about how permanent make-up is being used to restore confidence to people with alopecia or who are having chemotherapy. It was entered into the East of England media awards and helped the station win best tv current affairs programme of the year.

I loved presenting, but co-producing my own film was wholly satisfying. I wanted to learn more and I wanted to prove myself a credible journalist in tv, as well as radio.



That's when Stepping Stones opened the door, with a three month attachment as a broadcast journalist with *Inside Out East*.

Starting an attachment often means treading unfamiliar ground. I was lucky as I'd worked with the *Inside Out East* team for two years as a casual presenter.

The pace took a little adjusting to, as I was used to daily deadlines rather than broadcast dates three months in the future. Instead of jumping in the car and getting audio on the spot, I was organising filming permission forms and booking crews. But there was still no time for chit chat – the time flew.

I've learnt from some fantastic producers and I can now add to my production credits films on Property Guardians, the National Express and Travelling Show-people. It's been a privilege to get this opportunity, and it couldn't have happened without the support of management in Norwich and BBC Essex's station manager Gerald Main.

It's certainly opened doors for me. Thanks to a film I made for *Inside Out East* I've just become one of the winners of the Royal Television Society's Next Big Presenter competition.

The change of pace was a challenge

Been anywhere nice?
Send your attachment stories to Clare Bolt

FULL DETAILS AND HOW TO APPLY

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

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PHOTOGRAPH: MATT CARBY

EMMA BRITTON

BREAKFAST PRESENTER BBC RADIO SOMERSET

Before we talk about your job, you've got a pretty unusual claim to fame, haven't you?

It was before I worked here full time but, yes, I was nearly the voice of the speaking clock.

How did that come about?

I'd heard a trail saying 'do you want to be next voice of the speaking clock' so I thought why not and rang the number. I didn't practise or anything. I just did it and thought no more about it. Two weeks later I had a call to say I'd been shortlisted from 18,500 applicants to 500 people. They rang to ask some questions – I suppose checking to make sure there were no skeletons in the closet like being a secret lap-dancer or something. Anyway, a week later they called me and said I was in the final 15.

Somerset girl gets shortlisted; you must have been a bit of a hero

Yes, the local press went mad. I was taken to Bristol Temple Meads station to make train announcements and they followed it all on local radio and telly. In the end I didn't get it but how cool would it have been for the Speaking Clock to have been with a Somerset accent.

You've had a pretty varied career.

My first job was on a building site where I learnt how to handle myself, have a laugh, a bit of a banter and get on with lots of different types of people. After that I worked in a job centre, then a removals company then as a sales rep for Trebor Bassett, selling Licorice Allsorts and Jelly Babies. The problem was I didn't actually sell any. I loved the company car and power suits but am rubbish at selling. I ate more than I sold.

So what happened next?

I got into exercise. I realised that you didn't have to be a stick insect to be fit. So I got myself fit and decided to show other fat people they could be fit. I went to college one night a week and trained to be an aerobics teacher and qualified in 1998. Then I ran classes and because I was fat and fit the classes were really popular and I had a bit of a niche market. I gave up the day job and went self-employed as a fitness instructor.

Do you think your size got you noticed?

I'm a size 20 so I'm quite a big girl and because I was happy being fat and fit I appeared on *Tricia* and *Kilroy*. Rather than being a fat activist, I'm more about promoting health and feeling positive about yourself instead of trying miserably to be a size 10. I was self-employed for six years and still teach three classes a week now as XL Emma.

How did you get started in radio?

I sent a press release to local media saying that I'd appeared on *Tricia* and much later BBC Somerset asked me to do an interview on the morning programme. Afterwards they asked me two questions: Can you come back every week and do a weekly fitness slot, and can we call you Extra Large Emma. I did this for four years and never got paid but it was nice publicity and it raised my profile.

How did that lead to a presenting job?

A BA job came up on the station and someone said go for it. I wasn't sure at first because I was happy freelancing and I thought if I was going to be in radio full-time I'd want to be a presenter. But then a client went bust and I questioned if I wanted to be self-employed. More than 80 people applied for the BA job, and I got it. That was in April 2007 and within about nine months I started being given presenting jobs covering for people, which went well. This became more regular and I really enjoyed it. Eventually I got offered the *Breakfast* show full time and I started in January this year. I never set out to be a presenter, and had no interest in a media career, but I find myself with my own radio show.

Talking of which, congratulations on the recent Rajar figures

We're quite a small station and our *Breakfast* audience figures have gone from 19,500 to 29,400. That might not sound much but it's a 50 per cent increase from when I took over the show in January.

What's the secret of your success?

The secret is that I am who I am – on air or off air. There's no pretence or façade and virtually no topic that's off limits, much to my boyfriend's horror.

Have there been any particularly

memorable moments?

I've had loads. My producer had me zorbing back in May. This is where you climb inside a huge plastic see-through ball and roll down a hill. Now I'm a big girl and it was like giving birth twice because I had to get in and I had to get out. They were recording me as I went down the hill and it was hysterical.

What do you most enjoy about your job?

It's not like a proper job. You get paid to chat to people and have fun. We were at a local flower show and I was chatting to some listeners and this lady ran up to me and put her hand on my stomach and wobbled my belly and went 'oooo I love listening to you' and then ran off. People feel they know you and it's such an honour that you're part of their lives. I love that.

What do your family think about you being on the radio?

My two year old niece just can't understand how she can hear me but can't see me. She goes around the house looking for me but can't find me. I haven't got kids but live with my partner John in Bridgwater. My Mum's extremely proud of me. She'll stop people in the street and tell them to listen. I lost my Dad recently. He was a very quiet man and quietly proud and when he became poorly he'd always listen to me. He'd tell me if he didn't like something or if something was boring. When I came back from compassionate leave after he died the listeners were really sweet and supportive. I only wish he could have known about those Rajar figures.

Interview by Sue Llewellyn

foreign bureau



WILL GRANT

REPORTER, VENEZUELA

THERE'S A FAMOUS salsa bar in Caracas called El Mani es Asi. It's a dingy looking dive, but all the big names have played there over the years. The walls are adorned with photos of salsa legends like Ruben Blades, Hector Lavoe and Tito Puente.

Last time I was in El Mani, one man – staunchly pro-Chavez – ranted to me in one ear about how the Bolivarian Revolution was the start of the rebuilding of Venezuelan society. In the other ear, his friend, an 'anti-Chavista', told me it was all lies and that nothing in Venezuela worked any more. It felt like an analogy for the tone of the political debate here – two men shouting in my ears after too much rum! To say the arguments are often shrill is an understatement.

On arriving in the sprawling cauldron that is Caracas, I was determined not to fall into the trap of starting every piece with 'The Venezuelan president, Hugo Chavez, has said...'. The plan went awry within hours: 'Hugo Chavez responds to President Obama's election' was my first despatch, followed by other gems like

Inflation is the highest in Latin America and crime is spiralling

'President Chavez has won the right to stand for continuous re-election.' It's not hard to see why some stringers make a living solely by reporting what El Presidente says and does.

As the months have passed, I've found it is possible to get beyond the revolution. A trip to the border with Brazil took me into the thick forest near Guyana, an area rich in diamonds and gold. I went to an illegal diamond mine and spoke to miners living beneath the radar of the authorities. I also went over the border into Colombia with a taxi driver who smuggles petrol.

Hopefully, their stories helped shed a bit more light on the country. But try as you might, you can never get too far from the Bolivarian Revolution. It pervades society at every level. I recently visited a shanty-town where potable water is delivered just once a month by tanker, yet many residents still had Chavez posters up on their walls.

The opposition is growing. Inflation in Venezuela is the highest in Latin America and violent crime is spiralling out of control.

But there's nowhere else I'd rather be. As a Latin Americanist by trade, this is a chance to see up close a modern equivalent of what others saw in Cuba in the 1960s or Central America in the 1980s: a revolution unfolding.

Caracas is the epicentre of Latin American politics and, as newsgathering posts in Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Sao Paulo prepare to close, the emphasis on telling the tale from Venezuela may grow. I hope so, as I for one am sure that audiences are still interested in this vibrant and challenging region.

CV

School: Left school at 16; started training as a beauty therapist but left after six weeks. Did A level psychology as an adult
First job: Office junior with a construction company
Vice: Chocolate
Family: Partner John, mum, brother, three nieces and a nephew

green room

THE ARIELATOR

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



UPSIDE BBC Oxford came to the rescue of BBC Sussex presenter **Phil Jackson** last week when a band he was looking after ran into trouble on tour. Phil tour manages

Staff Benda Bilili – a critically acclaimed Congolese band made up of eight street musicians – while they are in the UK. In Oxford Ricky Lickabu, one of four musicians in the band disabled from childhood by Polio, broke his crutches. Phil gave BBC Oxford a call, and the gang ended up on air for 20 minutes. 'A listener offered his old crutches, we drove down to pick them up and Ricky was over the moon,' relates Phil. 'Thanks to his background on the street it would probably have been pretty tough for Rickie to get another pair of crutches back in his home town of Kinshasa – quite possibly down to what they would have cost him. All credit to the drivetime team at BBC Oxford and to Tim Bearder who put me in touch initially.'



DOWNSIDE Pubs are apparently closing around Britain at a rate of 50 a week, and it seems even BBC boozers are falling foul of this worrying trend. The latest victim is the **Club White City bar**. Famously lacking in natural light, not even a retro revamp could save it from the athletic advances of the gym lobby – there is already a gym at White City, but it seems space is needed for a further exercise studio. Bar flies are being reminded that Club TVC is 'a mere hop, skip and a jump away', but anyone coming back from an absence in the New Year is going to be surprised to find people pulling Pilates postures rather than pints.

EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...Naturally I associate the Tudors, more than any other family of monarchs, with hip hop...

...The first thing that came into my head was a parsnip, followed by a carrot...

...We need him to stop cocking his head over...

...It brings all the enjoyment back to drying your hands...

...Is there anything sadder than 'generic' dead fish?...

...I am not a member of 'The Pudding Club' that serves up puddings in Gloucester, I am a member of THE PUDDING CLUB - i.e I am pregnant!...



MO' MONEY? NO PROBLEM!

THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE of moustaches on people's faces in the past month may have had you thinking you were living in an American Apparel ad/70s cop show/'blue movie'. In fact you were witnessing Movember – a fundraising campaign initiated by The Prostate Cancer Charity that involves growing a sponsored moustache for the month – in action. BBC Scotland had the CBBC 'Tache' Team (pictured above) – a crack team of mo mavericks who went a week with upper-lip insulation. 'Everyone's done so well with their growth apart from me, as mine has nearly blown off in

the wind,' says member and ap Dave Coulson (far left). Elsewhere, technologist Ant Miller (top right) grew a fine handlebar, while ap for CBBC comedy development Claire McCarthy (top left) proved sex was no barrier by spending two weeks drawing different taches onto her face, raising over £1000. 'I travelled by tube with people staring at me, attended meetings at TVC and went out in the evenings feeling embarrassed!' she told Green Room. To sponsor a mo, go to their 'mospaces': tinyurl.com/cbbctache, tinyurl.com/antache, tinyurl.com/clairemo

LARRY ROCKS OUT

A SURPRISE INSIGHT into musical history for producer turned copyright detective Stephen Garner. While watching old jazz videos as research for Radio 4 programme *The House That Jazz Built* presented by Paul Merton (December 3, 11:30am), Stephen was shocked to hear the opening bars of the Deep Purple rock classic *Smoke on the Water*. Rockers hadn't invaded the stage – it was being performed by harmonica player Larry Adler on a BBC documentary from 1957, at least 13 years before Purple guitarist Ritchie Blackmore claims to have conceived the riff. 'As soon as I heard the opening

bars of Larry's harmonica I thought that's *Smoke on the Water*,' Stephen relates. 'Although not an exact replica, I'm surprised Larry never picked up on the similarities when Deep Purple introduced their rock classic 15 years later.' Altogether now: Duh Duh Duh, Duh Duh Duh Duh, Duh Duh Duh, DUH DUH...



WE HEAR THAT...

GREEN ROOM felt a certain sympathy for BBC Two's highbrow pub quiz team, who finished last in the Children in Need pub quiz – losing to the young uns at BBC Three. According to Media Monkey, controller Janice Hadlow (pictured) was heard to mutter darkly that the questions (which included one called 'Alan Yentob: six degrees of separation') had been 'dumbed down'. On the bright side, the inter-channel quiz raised £650 for the charity.



THE BAR at White City may be shut (see Arielator) but spare a thought for the good people at BBC Dorset who are celebrating finally getting a kitchen fitted in an empty cupboard on the premises, complete with microwave, kettle and, yes, a fridge. 'It's only taken 16 years, but washing up cups in the loo is finally a thing of the past,' enthuses online producer Sue Paz.

IF YOU'RE in the vicinity of TVC on Tuesday then look out for CBeebies presenters Andy and Sid hanging about in the bar. Don't worry, kids – they're only raising money for charities Georgie's Fund and Tumaini Orphanage with a night that includes a dj set, quiz and raffle with prizes donated by local businesses Malika and Galton Flowers, both based in Westfield. Let's hope they do CBeebies favourite The Big Fun Song.

ARE YOU preparing to don the greasepaint for this year's panto season? If so, Clare Bolt would like to hear from you.

WIN A BOX of cupcakes for your team

BUTTERCUP CAKE SHOP is the first London bakery dedicated solely to cupcakes. It boasts an array of handmade American-style cakes ranging from the 'vanilla purist' to banoffee, chocolate peanut butter or cookies 'n' cream. They are offering BBC staff 15 percent discount on production of ID at their kiosk in the Westfield London shopping centre. They can also be found online at the website buttercupcakeshop.co.uk, where cupcakes can be ordered online for delivery in central London Monday to Friday.

TO ENTER to win a box of 24 cupcakes for your team (or yourself) delivered to you at work in London only, just answer this question: What are cupcakes also known as in the UK? Email ariel competitions by December 7.



