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Collaboration and better use of social media will alter ways of working

Horrocks tells journalists change is coming, embrace it

by Kate Arkless Gray

PETER HORROCKS, DIRECTOR of Global News, has issued a challenge to BBC journalists – embrace change, accept collaboration and make use of new information sources like social media, or re-consider what you are doing.

Delivering the keynote speech at the Global News Creative Network 'Fit for the Future' session in Bush House, (run in conjunction with the College of Journalism) Horrocks said BBC journalism needed to be more collaborative and make better use of the resources offered by sites like Twitter. He said there must be a cultural shift to take account of the way technology is changing both the job and the way audiences relate to output.

He drew on his experiences as a former *Newsnight* editor to highlight the contrast between the programme-based mindset, and his vision of a more open and sharing culture in future. 'There needs to be greater flexibility in the way we all interrelate to each other within the organisation,' he said, explaining that this isn't purely due to the need for efficiency savings, but a result of a changing world in which the lines between specialisms are becoming increasingly blurred.

Turning his attention to editors, he said their role would increasingly become about curation and selection, being aware of what others are doing, and sharing it, with attribution. He said: 'There will be more bringing things together in W1. There will be fewer decision makers. There will be less individual segmented control, and



that will be a good thing. It is a question of adapting to that and realising that that is going to happen.'

He underlined the importance of understanding how audiences relate to the BBC brand by listening to feedback and looking at audience insight gained from marketing teams. 'There's still a persistent, and I think outrageous, mentality towards marketing which sees it somehow as being a kind of lowlier function,' he said, cautioning his audience; 'if there are any vestiges of that around, then that has got to go.'

Horrocks spoke enthusiastically about tools like Twitter and RSS readers as an essential re-

source for journalists, adding that 'this isn't just a kind of fad from someone who's an enthusiast of technology. I'm afraid you're not doing your job if you can't do those things. It's not discretionary'.

He rounded off his talk with a warning; 'There's no excuse for failing to think about this and to throw yourself into it. If you don't like it, if you think that level of change or that different way of working isn't right for me, then go and do something else, because it's going to happen, you're not going to be able to stop it... There's no point being unhappy, is there? You've got to enjoy it for this to work.'

Unearthed: why BH had to be evacuated

by Sally Hillier

◆ **TALKS ARE IN HAND** with EDF over either replacing or removing entirely a power cable that developed a fault, prompting a fire alert and the evacuation of Broadcasting House last week.

The high voltage electric cable, which despite lying inside BH is not used by the BBC (although it used to be, before redevelopment of the site), overheated.

This caused a fire alarm to go off in the basement, resulting in evacuation just before 8am on February 2 and a hurried decamp elsewhere for some programme staff.

As Radio 3's emergency back-up CD kicked in, following two minutes of silence, the network transferred to contingency accommodation in nearby premises, from where Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* was also broadcast.

The TVC-based *Today* programme was unaffected. But *You and Yours*, which involves a live phone-in, had to be found a new home, from where it broadcast at 12 noon, as a precaution, almost two hours after people were allowed back inside BH.

Radio 4 continuity also temporarily relocated (details remain confidential for security purposes) while Radio 3's *In Tune*, along with guest musicians, switched to Maida Vale.

The main casualty was Radio 4's *Yesterday*



in *Parliament*, two editions of which are recorded each day. One lasts five minutes and goes out on *Today* at 6.40am; the other is 28 minutes and goes out on Radio 4 long wave and digital at around 8.30am.

Last Tuesday the short version was aired twice while the 28 minute version did not go out at all.

'The wrong *YIP* went out [between 8.30-9am],' says parliamentary correspondent David Wilby. 'It was one that had been broadcast two hours earlier.'

This was particularly galling for Wilby, fellow correspondent Sean Curran and other colleagues who were at Millbank until almost midnight on Feb 1 preparing the programme.

The electrical problem also had a knock-on effect for BBC Arabic and BBC Persian tv, based in Egton Wing. Although on-air transmission was unaffected, broadcast-critical IT equipment was damaged.

'We were prevented from using our Dalet editing kit, so had to do lots of live interviews to fill air time, although our audience wouldn't have known there was a problem,' explains Sadeq Saba, head of Persian tv.

Overall the BBC's emergency planning worked well on February 2, says Caroline Elliot, Audio and Music's head of business continuity.

'The challenge was immediately to inform people who were already in the building, at a time when a lot of people were arriving for work.'

She paid particular tribute to broadcast duty manager Brian Roberts and duty facilities manager Almira Pereira Jorge.

'All credit to them for the way they led the operation.'

Stars shine at R2 folk night

The annual Radio 2 folk music awards were presented last Monday night, in an evening of live music hosted by Mike Harding. Jon Boden was named folk singer of the year, while for the third year running Lau were best group. Best musician was squeezebox player John Kirkpatrick while Cara Dillon was presented with album of the year for 'Hill of Thieves'. Bob Shennan, Radio 2 controller, said: 'The Folk Awards are a fantastic way to showcase such a well-loved and thriving musical genre.' Performance video, extensive features and a photo gallery can be found at bbc.co.uk/radio2.



Nanci Griffith, who received a lifetime achievement award

PHOTOGRAPH: ELLIOTT FRANKS/BBC

Entertainment controller to pursue 'new options'

by Cathy Loughran

Jon Beazley, the executive who commissioned *Friday Night with Jonathan Ross* and *Strictly Come Dancing*, is to leave the BBC.

Controller of entertainment group since 2006, Beazley has announced that he is leaving BBC Vision Studios in March to take a career break and then pursue 'new options'.

In the last three years he has overseen hits like *I'd Do Anything*, *Dragons' Den*, *Top Gear*, *Weakest Link* and *You Think You Can Dance* as well as events including Eurovision Song Contest and Children In Need.

His departure leaves Pat Younge, Vision Productions' brand new chief creative officer, with one of the biggest jobs in popular television to fill.

Beazley says it was a difficult decision, but he's ready for a change:

'After many hugely enjoyable years I have decided that it's the right time to leave the BBC, take a break and consider some options available to me before deciding what's next.'

'I've been having informal discussion about this for some time. Now it's important to think about handing over the slate – and what a slate. It's so much more than Saturday nights, with production across London, Glasgow, Manchester and Cardiff.'

He would miss 'the great shows, and the brilliantly talented teams who make them', he said, but he was sure his successor would bring 'real energy' to a job that was an unrivalled opportunity in the UK tv industry.

Before his current role, Beazley was controller, entertainment commissioning, responsible for *Strict-*



Jon Beazley

ly, *Jonathan Ross*, *Sport Relief*, *The Apprentice* and all the National Lottery shows. Pat Younge said Beazley had been 'a tremendous force in BBC entertainment for many years'.

Winning formula for motor racing

WITH 19 RACES involving 13 teams, a head-to-head between Jenson Button and Lewis Hamilton, both driving for McLaren, and the return of Michael Schumacher, Formula 1 fans have plenty to look forward to this year.

The new season starts on March 12 in Bahrain and once again comprehensive multiplatform coverage is promised.

As in 2009, when the BBC regained the contract from ITV, the tv team comprises Ted Kravitz, Jonathan Legard, Lee McKenzie, Martin Brundle, David Coulthard and Eddie Jordan. Jake Humphrey returns as anchor and legendary F1 voice Murray Walker is also involved, providing online blogs and reports.

The tv operation includes live BBC One coverage of every qualifying session and race as well as a highlights programme on BBC Three. Viewers

can use the red button to follow practice sessions and get post race analysis – also accessible on the sport website, which will invite emails and texts.

Radio 5 live and 5 live Sports Extra promise live commentary of every race, as well as coverage of practice and qualifying sessions.

In addition there will be Friday night preview and a Chequered Flag podcast available to download with summaries and reaction from the circuit.

The 5 live commentary team is led by David Croft, joined by Anthony Davidson and pit lane reporter Holly Samos. Tv editor Mark Wilkin said he was pleased to be able to sign up the same names as in 2009.

The BBC has a five year deal to broadcast F1, from 2009-13 inclusive; it includes exclusive rights to tv, radio, broadband and mobile.

Apprenticeships for school leavers

THE BBC ACADEMY is partnering Westminster Kingsway College to deliver ten training and paid work experience places in 2010, and more in the next two years, through the BBC 2012 - London Apprenticeships.

The scheme is aimed at over-18 year olds with media ambitions, who don't necessarily want to go to university. Apprentices will perform runner-type roles, buy props, book travel

and be expected to come up with programme ideas for tv departments in sport, factual, drama, entertainment and children's.

Course study modules will be completed at Westminster Kingsway College and the year will lead to a creative and digital media apprenticeship level 3, equivalent to A Level, BTECH or NVQ level 3 qualification.

The college provides the academic

study components and the BBC meets the £9000 apprentice pay. It's a move designed to find and train enthusiastic young people who may not have thought the BBC was for them, says BBC People director Lucy Adams.

'We are looking for people who are passionate about the media, full of ideas and with real understanding of the issues facing London's many diverse communities,' Adams says.



Formula One presenters: Jonathan Legard, Martin Brundle, Eddie Jordan, Jake Humphrey, David Coulthard, Lee McKenzie and Ed Kravitz

Freelance contracting team takes a simpler approach

by Sally Hillier

A simplified engagement and payment processing system is being introduced for all BBC freelancers.

It does away with time consuming paperwork and is completely online, making things speedier and easier.

The changes, part of an overall plan by director of BBC People Lucy Adams to cut red tape, are in response to complaints by bookers and freelancers about complex procedures and slow processing times.

Bookers, whose requests to hire people can involve initiating up to six pages, now need to complete only

one, fast loading online portal page.

All contracts and associated documentation, such as forms covering health and safety and declarations of interest, are emailed to freelancers, who can now benefit from a new web-based application called Supplier Self Service.

Piloted by people on *EastEnders*, Supplier Self Service enables users quickly to see and consent to terms and conditions, check the status of purchase orders, convert those POs into invoices and receive rapid payment (normally within three days).

'Visibility' is a key feature of the system – ie

Online hiring and payment processing system launched in response to user feedback

being able to check what is happening at a glance and track progress on a secure webpage, so avoiding the frustration that inevitably results when booking details and payment are seemingly 'lost in the system'.

Until now, the BBC's Freelancer Contracting Team (FCT) has relied heavily on manual processing, with contracts posted to people who then have to sign and post them back, along with relevant compliance forms.

But there have been problems with delays and rejected claims, often because of trivial mistakes made by freelancers supplying information.

'We've listened to feedback and responded with an improved system that cuts the end-to-end process [from booking someone, receiving their e-signed contract and paying their invoice] from 18 to 9 work-

ing days,' says Paul Fiander, head of freelance contracting. 'We've taken freelance contracting off the naughty step, if you like.'

The postal system is not being totally abandoned, he adds, as it is still available to those without online access. He expects though that most freelancers will use the new online initiatives, to be formally launched on February 10.

At *EastEnders*, the test-bed for Supplier Self Service, people report finding it more streamlined and user friendly and welcome the fact that the business of hiring and paying them no longer requires 'a rain-forest of paper'.

Eye tracker project gets go-ahead

by Claire Barrett

A psychology graduate will join BBC Children's this spring on an 18 month project with Salford University.

The part government-funded role will look at the use of eye tracker technology in interpreting how pre-schoolers respond to digital media.

The graduate will do user testing with children, evaluate results and establish good practice guidelines which will be shared with the wider BBC and the rest of the industry.

The eye tracker device measures eye movement, enabling a picture to be established of what it is drawn to first, how long it spends on each element, what it finds most absorbing and what it ignores.

It's the first time the BBC has secured a Knowledge Transfer Partnership award, and the BBC is matching the £36,744 figure.

'It has taken over a year and numerous application forms,' explains children's production innovation exec Fiona Macbeth, who has led the project with Sam Chadwick in R&D.

'[This project] will help us design content for children more effectively, share what we learn with developers and save time. The award is the difference between being able to do all this and not.'

It's the kind of partnership that the Salford Quays set-up is designed to encourage, says Chadwick. 'It represents an important step towards working closely with academia for tangible audience benefit.'

Rajar success for Wogan as he prepares for Sunday show



by Candida Watson

There was good and bad news for the BBC in the Rajar results for the last quarter of 2009. Terry Wogan went out on a high, as his final Radio 2 morning shows attracted 8.1 million listeners a week, equalling his best ever figures. He beat Radio 1 rival Chris Moyles by almost one million and handed a stiff challenge to successor Chris Evans.

Tim Davie, director of Audio and Music, said: 'Terry is a legendary broadcaster... I'm now looking forward to tuning in to his new show later this month.'

Wogan returns to Radio 2 with a Sunday morning programme, starting on February 14. Although BBC Network reach was stable year on year, overall audiences dropped slightly with many stations recording a fall in listeners after a very strong third quarter of 2009.

■ **Radio 4's reach rose to 9.84 million and its audience share to a joint highest 12.5 percent. Today's audience fell from a high of 6.64 million in quarter 3 to 6.41m**

■ **Radio 3 lost listeners, going from 2.19m in Q3 to 1.87m in Q4 – a drop of 14 percent.**

■ **Radio 5 live (including Sports Extra) increased its listenership year on year to 6.19 million, although it too saw a decrease (of five percent) between Q3 and Q4.**

■ **The Asian Network saw its audience fall over the year from 379,000 to 360,000. Last week chief operating officer Caroline Thomson told the House of Lords communication committee she thought the station was 'trying to cater to too many disparate groups simultaneously'.**

■ **Although digital listening dropped slightly last quarter, digital-only channels BBC Radio 7 and BBC 6 Music both added listeners, with the latter recording growth of 12 percent. Meanwhile 30 percent of the 15-24 age group say they have listened to radio via a mobile phone.**

■ **BBC Scotland's audience fell 12.4 percent over the year, but the Q4 figures were up 5 percent on Q3. Head of radio Jeff Zycinski said: 'Radio Scotland is beginning to head in the right direction again and we're at a reasonable starting point as we begin to implement schedule changes planned for the rest of the year.'**

■ **Radio Ulster remains the most listened to station in Northern Ireland, with an average weekly audience of almost half a million, down 56,000 on Q3. Stephen Nolan's weekday mornings show is the station's most popular.**

■ **BBC Cymru Wales Radio also recorded an average weekly audience of half a million.**

■ **Radio Merseyside is the most listened to local station outside London, although again the audience has fallen in comparison to 2008.**

NEWS BITES

ARMANDO IANNUCCI'S *In The Loop* is among five Oscar nominations for BBC Films. The others are *An Education*, nominated for best picture, best adapted screenplay and best actress, and *Bright Star*, nominated for best costume design. In addition, BBC One's commission of the Wallace and Gromit film *A Matter Of Loaf And Death* is nominated in the short film (animated) category.

OFCOM HAS agreed that the BBC and telecoms company Arqiva can jointly sell new capacity on the UK digital terrestrial system, enabling two new national tv channels to be broadcast over Digital Terrestrial TV (DTT). The move comes as a result of the digital switchover process, taking place region by region until 2012.

COMEDIANS JACK Dee and Frank Skinner, footballer Peter Shilton, snooker players Willie Thorne and Dennis Taylor, and *Grumpy Old Women* Jenny Éclair, Linda Robson, Lesley Joseph and Susie Blake have signed up for *Let's Dance for Sport Relief*, which starts on February 20 on BBC One.

RADIO 4'S election night results programme is looking for producers, reporters, runners and other staff keen to get involved. The programme will share OB and hub operations with 5 live, and run from election night through to the following afternoon. Contact Giles Edwards by email or on 0260440.

BBC FOUR'S *Chemistry: a Volatile History* on February 4 was the highest rated multichannel programme in its slot, beating Katie Price's latest exploits. That makes it the channel's highest rated science series, and follows the success of BBC Two's *How the Earth Made Us* earlier this month. Both programmes are part of the BBC's celebration of science this year.

CAMERAMAN FRED Scott is in the frame for an RTS journalism award. The BBC has 12 of the 15 nominations but the News Channel is not shortlisted as channel of the year. All Nations and Regions current affairs nominations are BBC, as are those for Scoop of the Year. See all the nominees at www.rts.org.uk

In **Ariel's January 26** cover story, we referred to an estimated six million Palestinians who were driven from their homes during the 1948 Israeli military operation, Plan D. In fact, it is the population of expelled Palestinians and their descendants that now amounts to between six and seven million people.

BBC Two's forthcoming series *The Silence*, in which five volunteers sample life at a retreat, was commissioned by independent commissioning editor Jacquie Hughes and not Aaqil Ahmed, head of religion and ethics, as reported in Ariel last week. Hughes also helped devise the format with indie producers Tiger Aspect.

CHANGING PLACES

♦ **FIONA FOSTER** is the new presenter of the BBC World News travel programme, fast:track....

SAM HODGES joins the BBC from Channel 4 to become head of communications, BBC One, Fiction, Daytime & HD...

SIMON HOBAN (pictured) leaves BBC Newcastle to become the new host for drivetime on BBC Radio Merseyside...

Beginning in March, **HOLLY GOODIER** moves from head of multiplatform planning in BBC Vision, to become head of audiences, FM&T...

PAUL ALMOND passes the baton of heading up communications for BBC Vision to **JULIAN PAYNE**, and starts as head of the new Digital Communications team...

SOPHIE BRENDAL from the central Strategic Communications Unit, will take on the role of head of digital engagement in March...

JAMIE AUSTIN has been appointed to the role of head of communications, A&M.



BBC IN ACTION

DIGITAL RADIO STATION BBC 7 joined forces with BBC Leicester to mark the start of this year's Leicester Comedy Festival. They set-up in a café on Leicester High Street and invited listeners to drop in and put questions to various comics during the afternoon and early evening.

BBC Leicester are provided the equipment and an engineer, while BBC 7 provided Alex Riley to host the event and producer Simon Houlihan to ensure everything ran smoothly. Material from the day will be broadcast on both BBC Leicester and on BBC 7's Comedy Club during the rest of the month to coincide with the rest of the

Leicester Comedy Festival. Pictured front row, from left, presenter Alex Riley, BBC Leicester presenter Jim Smallman, comedian Kent Valentine. Back row, Broadcast Assistant Tim Scullion, BBC Radio Leicester engineer Malcolm Pugh, producer Simon Houlihan and Director of the Comedy Festival Geoff Rowe

WHAT TO WEAR

Rowan McKinnon, broadcast journalist, BBC News Channel

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

My dress is from Zara which is a favourite of mine for work stuff. They are good at getting the balance between smart and trendy right. My shoes are from Jones, they are about as high a heel as I would wear to work.

Do you have to dress a particular way for work?

I have just moved from Newsround to the News Channel so I have had to give up on jeans and converse trainers and get used to being a bit smarter. Anything goes in the Newsroom really but I reckon if I dress smartly then I will think a bit sharper too. Or at least that's the idea.

Where have you taken inspiration from?

I am classic all the way with clothes. I love the way Katie Holmes dresses. She always gets it right in my book and Davina McCall's little black dresses never go out of fashion.

Are you experimental in your style?

I'm afraid not. I am pretty boring really! When ever I go shopping for something colourful I end up coming home with navy, black or grey. Does that make me dull or a creature of habit?



Have you had any fashion nightmares?

Oh yeah...a few years ago I thought those boxer boots with neon laces were really cool. Turns out they really weren't and had to be disposed of...

Whose wardrobe would you most like to rummage through?

That would be Katie Holmes again, or

Gwyneth Paltrow.

What's the worst outfit you were made to wear as a child?

I can remember lots of arguments over a candy floss pink, puffy anorak when I was about eight. It was probably really cosy, but I hated wearing it. Sorry Mum.

SHAMELESS PLUG

Fizzy Edwards: This April I will be taking part in the 25th Marathon Des Sables, also known as the 'Toughest Footrace on Earth'. Over the course of six days I will be running 155 miles across the Sahara Desert carrying all my food and equipment in a backpack.

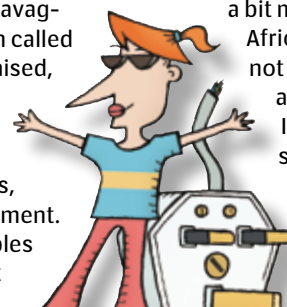
I hope to raise £10,000 for Facing Africa, a charity which helps treat children in Ethiopia and Nigeria who suffer from a ravaging gangrenous infection called Noma. With the money raised, Facing Africa can provide the children with much needed supplies, doctors, plastic surgeons, drugs and medical equipment.

The Marathon des Sables is definitely my toughest

and scariest challenge to date, but I hope that my previous experience of running marathons (12 in total) will help me finish it. I don't even get to put my feet up when I'm done as I'm running the London marathon again 13 days afterwards!

I have created a website www.fizzfundraise.webs.com where you can sponsor me and find out

a bit more about Facing Africa. I am genuinely not a speedy runner or an ultra fit person but I am sure with your support I can do this and I will definitely be digging deep into my hyperactivity reserves!



FACT OF LIFE

THERE are more users of Facebook than there are citizens of the US. With over 350 million active users, if Facebook were a country, it would be the third largest in the world (after China and India) in terms of population.



AI SCORES

THE RICHARD DIMBLEBY LECTURE – BBC One's highest AI of 2010 so far. Broadcast last Monday at 10.35pm, it had an audience of 2.1m and 15.6 percent share. 'A compelling speech written and opened by Sir Terry Pratchett and finished by the passionate and articulate Tony Robinson. A stronger case for euthanasia I do not think has ever been spoken,' said a 37 year-old male viewer. Its high AI of 91 was matched by *Silent Witness* in January.

cutting edge



Zoe Kleinman

TO TWEET OR NOT TO TWEET

IT MAY FEEL LIKE HALF THE BBC is already on Twitter but in terms of an official presence, it's all been a bit piecemeal so far.

Popular feeds such as 5 live presenter Richard Bacon (his username is richardpbacon) and BBC Click (BBCClick) have well over 1m followers each but there has been a great deal of head-scratching over the extent to which informal messages on a non-BBC platform can – and indeed should – be official. Now BBC News is taking a step closer to Twitter, while other divisions consider their options. 'Whatever happens to Facebook, Twitter or YouTube, the phenomenon of people sharing and commenting is here to stay,' says Alex Gubbay, social media editor in News. 'We as a broadcaster are responding to that.'

Guidelines for all News staff about Twitter use are to be issued imminently, and there is also a roll out of 'official' BBC-branded accounts under way. Laura Kuenssberg, chief political reporter on the News Channel, was the first BBC journalist to get one (BBCLauraK). She tweets live from events including the party political conferences and the Iraq inquiry, and has around 4500 followers. The News Channel has just started quoting from her Twitter feed in on-air graphics.

'It seemed obvious we should be engaging in it somehow'

'It seemed obvious to me that we should be engaging in it somehow,' Kuenssberg says. 'I spent six months in the US covering the

elections and I got used to seeing American broadcasters using it. I used it as a search engine – to assess where stories were going and how people were reacting to stories online.'

Her tweets are post-moderated by her editor Steve Mawhinney, who receives an SMS message when she tweets. If she makes a mistake he alerts her and she corrects herself in the following tweet. Just like any other output, official tweets fall under the 'second pair of eyes' editorial check. 'The rule in my head is that I don't say anything on there that I wouldn't say on air,' she says.

Technology correspondent Rory Cellan-Jones launched his official feed, BBCRoryCJ, on January 22. Media correspondent Torin Douglas will be next, and the grand plan is to roll them out gradually for presenters, high profile programmes and possibly even subject area feeds. Giles Wilson and social media editor Alex Gubbay are also exploring ways in which the official feeds or some alternative form of short-form blogging might eventually become part of the News website.

If the BBC and Twitter are to be wed after what feels like a long engagement, Gubbay has high hopes for a happy marriage. 'I would like to see a core of efficient, well used and monitored, coherent Twitter feeds,' he says. 'They should look and feel the same. If we have that in six months time, we'll have done well.'

Zoe Kleinman is a BBC News technology reporter

Building platforms for future audiences



Red means 'Go' for TVP's Roux Joubert

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK BASSETT



GEMMA EVANS, who studied electronic engineering at the University of York while being sponsored

by BBC R&D, joined TV Platforms in 2004. Her first project was to deliver CBBC's red button service on Freeview, but it was as lead developer for iPlayer on the Nintendo Wii that she faced the biggest challenges. 'The learning curve was steep. We were delivering an application via the internet, written in Flash for a games console – all firsts for the department.'

Testing, too, was leading a London team while she was in Manchester, as a trailblazer in Salford Quays. 'We've had to learn how to communicate over distance, embrace new tools and new ways of working.'

A GUY'S GOT TO DO his research, after all. When Roux Joubert sat down to watch his favourite programmes, *Have I Got News For You* and *QI*, streamed in high quality onto his living room telly, it may have resulted in a rather lethargic broadband connection on his hard working wife's laptop, but it was all for the greater good.

For this was iPlayer on Freesat – the latest move by the technical manager and his tv platforms team towards giving the public what they want. 'People were ex-

Claire Barrett talks to the team which is bringing the internet to a tv near you

cited about having it on the PC,' says Roux, 'but their eyes really light up when you talk about iPlayer on the television.'

This shift from study to living room is seismic for viewers. 'This is a major event in the history of broadcasting' was one audience comment posted after December's Beta launch – it should go fully public within the next couple of months. 'The service is a revolution,' added another. '... tv will never be the same.'

Nor will the engineers that make up a large part of the 80-strong tv platforms department, which has made its name over the decade since its creation via the Red Button. TVP is responsible for all that happens when you press red, whether accessed via Freeview, Freesat, Virgin Media or Sky. If you indulged in some Christmas karaoke with *Top of the Pops*, handled those hairpin bends alongside Jenson Button or looked over the shoulders of some of the world's finest conductors at the Proms, then you owe TVP a word of thanks. They develop all the systems and technologies that enable this ever increasing interactivity. Their sports multiscreen, for instance, is the tool that allows sport interactive to provide multiple streams from events such as Wimbledon, Formula One and World Snooker.

But with the Red Button an undisputed world leader, used weekly by more than 11m people, TVP reached a 'watershed' mo-

ment. 'In the past our technology was broadcast technology,' explains Roux. 'Then we started to see convergence – web technology was making its way onto tv. We were faced with new platforms, all with an element of IPTV. We had to invest time, energy and expertise in reskilling our product and development teams.'

Through formal training and trial and error, the engineers began to figure it all out. 'The challenge was met with huge enthusiasm,' says Roux. 'Engineers like playing with bright, shiny, new toys – it's what makes them tick.'

Two years ago, they successfully launched the iPlayer on Virgin cable. 'It proved it could be done – there had been a lot of doubt.'

More testing was the delivery of the BBC catch-up service on the Nintendo Wii. 'This was complete greenfield development for us,' admits Roux. 'The Wii's a games console which runs on completely

different technologies. It involved a lot of learning on the job.' So if the folk on the fifth floor of the Broadcast Centre looked like they were playing video games, rest assured it was in the line of duty.

But it wasn't gamers' rivalry that split the team in two. Scheduled to move to Salford Quays in 2011, an advance party of 12 were deployed to Manchester House late last year with a remit to explore emerging platforms and reach out to the wider industry.

'They are the vanguard – both of our move north, and of IPTV applications in the BBC,' says Roux. 'We've been very self contained in the past, but this will be a chance to send out feelers to the wider creative industries.'

For the future to mirror the success story of the past, TVP has to keep ahead of the trends. 'With the convergence of web and tv, there are many more people with experience and expertise in the field. If we can compete, domestically and internationally, we can change the landscape. We are driven by that.'

PENNY CHURCHILL had been



working on 'dull and boring' financial systems in the City for an IT consultancy firm. The

computer science graduate became part of TVP just over a year ago and found her early research into internet connected devices 'much more exciting'. 'I was looking into the types of services we could build that would work on new IPTV enabled tvs and set top boxes,' she says. 'The great thing about these devices is the increased bandwidth, hence content that we can deliver to them. I worked with the people in Food, for instance, to come up with a prototype of step by step recipes, with pictures and audio, that you could follow on your IPTV in the kitchen.'



Genetic engineering was **GIDEON SUMMERFIELD'S** line at university, but 'I was too impatient,' for results admits

the man who went into journalism, then online media in the dot.com boom, when, among other things, he produced Tesco's online shopping site.

He came to TVP about 18 months ago. As product manager – a non-technical role – he champions TVP's variants of the iPlayer on tv, covering issues like design, editorial, marketing and fair trading while dealing with the many third parties keen to have the iPlayer on their devices. 'I'm the product owner, if you like. I ensure the audience gets the best value out of the work we're doing.'

We can make an impact

It's six months since BBC Trustees approved the nations and regions plan that was to be the alternative to the local video services they blocked. **Cathy Loughran** and **Kate Arkless-Gray** look at what the £50m 'plan B' package is beginning to deliver.

MIKE ASHLEY UNCOVERED was a high risk, undercover investigation that the *Inside Out* team in Newcastle had long wanted to pursue.

The film's revelations that controversial Newcastle United owner Ashley sources clothes for his Sports Direct company from sweatshops using illegal labour in the Far East claimed a respectable ten percent share of the 10.25pm Sunday audience on BBC One. It dominated headlines on Tyne-side, attracted national press and Radio 5 live coverage and was followed up in the region's new *Late Kick Off* football show.

Both the *Inside Out* special, presented by Chris Jackson and produced by Dan Farthing, and the Monday night Football League magazine – one of seven weekly regionalised editions across England – were funded by the first year of 'plan B' investment.

The Ashley film, involving undercover recording in Laos and Bangkok,

was made after a successful bid for money from this year's £1.4m English regions impact fund. Another documentary, celebrating North East culture, has been green lit by English regions controller David Holdsworth and Helen Boaden, director of news.

'These specials are a chance for us to step outside of our day to day commitments and reach our audience outside of the *Inside Out* runs,' says Jacqui Hodgson, Newcastle's head of factual programmes.

BBC North West has also transmitted the first of its impact fund specials, *Terror on the Doorstep*, in which reporter Andy Johnson and producer Peter Trollope gained access to the city's counter-terrorism squad and shocking evidence of attempts to radicalise very young children. It became a global story online within days.

The North East and the wider North are areas where BBC approval ratings are lower than elsewhere



JOHN PIENAAR shares insights from Westminster with Radio Solent's Julie Massiter and Ben Bland of BBC Essex, two of English regions' new political reporters. Except that theirs is strictly the local beat – recruited through the new funding to improve the BBC coverage of local de-

mocracy. An initial ten reporters, hired from regional commercial tv, print and BBC local radio, will be joined by a further eight in time for the general election. Training at the college of journalism in London last week, where they had sessions with the 5 live chief political correspond-

ent and Helen Boaden, their brief is to 'get under the skin of local politics' says project manager Gary Keown. They will be attached to local stations but not tied to a rota. 'That should help us find the stories that traditionally local newspapers would have got first,' Bland says.

and so a particular target for impact funding, says Craig Henderson, English regions' head of programmes.

'We want people with great ideas to be able to come off the rota to do in-depth journalism that would otherwise not be possible,' he says.

In England, competitive bids for 14 tv programmes and more than 50 radio ideas have so far been approved. They range from BBC London's ambitious film *When the Olympics Come to Town*, that uses expert projections and CGI graphics to visualise what the 2012 experience will be like for Londoners (tx March 3), to Radio Leicester's unearthing of stories about anti-social behaviour on the estate where a mother and daughter were driven to suicide.

The scheduling of *Late Kick Off* at 11.35pm has clearly caused frustration – vented on the Ariel letters page

last week by Manchester producers Howard Booth and Neil Morrow, who criticised 'shabby treatment' of the seven bespoke programmes.

'We are in the hands of the BBC One schedulers but we're working to get a consistent slot between 11 – 11.15pm,' Henderson says. Even tx-

'We want people with great ideas to come off rota'

ing past midnight, the shows registered one percent above average share for the time slot, and more than 40 percent of viewers watched on-demand.

Across the nations and regions, an extra two weekend news bulletins, at Saturday lunchtime after the *Ten O'Clock News* on Sundays, was a key plank of the plan B improvements. David Holdsworth says that the Saturday bulletins are reaching viewers who don't consume BBC tv regional news at any other times in the week.

The story is the same in BBC Scotland, where the new bulletins are drawing an extra 66,000 viewers. Here, head of news and current affairs Atholl Duncan has also strengthened newsgathering with the appointment of Jamie McIvor as specialist local government correspondent and David Millar as Scot-

land environment correspondent.

The sharper local focus of plan B ambitions has led to hour-long radio opt-outs on the recent flooding in Dumfries and the impact of snow in the Borders, Duncan says, with further local radio opt-outs planned for 2011.

BBC Wales now has a dedicated assistant editor role to co-ordinate the work of local reporters, moving those journalists from programme teams into a new multi-media newsgathering department.

New district reporters have also been appointed in Northern Ireland.

Across England, more than 20 new editorial and technical roles have been created to staff the extra bulletins, Holdsworth says. Elsewhere, including on *Inside Out* specials and *Late Kick Off*, the new output is being produced with no increase in headcount – through rotating staff from weeklies departments and newsrooms, attachments, some freelance hiring and redeployment.

Duncan says he has redeployed journalists from around Scotland to staff the extra output, avoiding possible redundancies from this year's efficiencies.

Overall, the plan B funding, at £49.7m over four years, is less than the £68m earmarked for local video. £8.5m will be spent in this financial year, rising to £15.3m in 2012/13.

And it's clear that the BBC is getting a bigger bang for its buck: 'This is genuinely new funding,' says Holdsworth, 'but it's smaller than the planned efficiencies we're having to make.'



Chris Jackson (right) goes undercover in Far East factories for *Inside Out*



Kaye Adams will host Scotland phone-in

New output for 2010 and beyond

■ Landmark programming and multiplatform content in the nations will include *Snowdonia 1890* (tx this autumn) and *Rolf Harris on Welsh Art* (tx January 2011) from BBC Wales, as well as two series from BBC Scotland charting the story of the Scottish landscape, also airing in the autumn.

■ The impact fund is backing a pan-England tv special on the weather, as part of the year of science, and an England-wide radio investigation into local government.

■ It is also funding local radio in-

vestigations including by Radio Derby into gang culture and BBC Gloucestershire into the Cheltenham sex trade.

■ Radio Scotland has launched the new weekly show *Brian's Big Debate*, in which political editor Brian Taylor takes political debate on the road, and a new phone programme on local and national issues hosted by *Loose Women* presenter Kaye Adams, starts on March 1.

■ Annual state of the nation and state of the region journalism initiatives are still to be announced.



DOOF DOOF...

What were your memorable moments?

FOR ME IT HAS TO BE seeing Ange sink to the lower steps of the stairs in the hall of the Queen Vic, as Den exposes her health scam and tells her he wants a divorce...with the words 'happy Christmas Ange' – classic EastEnders, has it ever been better?

ALISON BANHAM,
CAMERA OPERATOR

I'M SURE SOMEONE else has said it already, but it definitely has to be Kat and Zoe Slater, 'You ain't my mother!'... It was fantastically written, the way the storyline built-up to that moment had everyone on the edge of their seats, and the acting was quality!

LUKE ELLIS,
MEDIA CO-ORDINATOR, NEWSROOM

MY FAVOURITE DOOF DOOF was Grant finding out Phil had been sleeping with Sharon. Grant discovered the affair by hearing it on a tape which he then plays to the whole Vic at Phil's engagement party.

'Sharongate' – classic storyline.

EMMA MURPHY,
HR MANAGER, BBC PEOPLE

STEVE OWEN takes off in a car with Phil Mitchell's daughter Louise in the back. Phil gives chase, they screech down the road, banging into walls and causing Louise's car seatbelt to come off. The phone rings – Steve reaches for it on the back seat, taking his eyes off the road. Before he realises it, it's too late – he loses control of the car and crashes into a shop front and motorbike, trapping himself and the baby inside. Phil rushes to the scene and gets his daughter out of the blazing car but leaves Steve struggling to get out. 'Phil, Phil! Get me out of here – the door is stuck!' he shouts. Phil runs towards the car but realises that it's about to explode, he freezes and then BOOM!! Massive explosion and the end of Steve....
Fantastic doof doof!!

EARTHA BURKE,
TOUR OPERATIONS ASSISTANT

I DIRECTED DOT'S one woman show last February – it was memorable because her performance was so fluid. I was able to rehearse the entire script with June in advance – it was just a joy, very rare for EastEnders and the reason I went into directing.

CLIVE ARNOLD,
DIRECTOR, EASTENDERS

I GREW UP IN WEST LONDON and was the posh kid in a terrifying comprehensive – it was like Little Lord Fauntleroy in Grange Hill. So I wasn't from that world, but I recognised it.

I remember seeing the first episode with my mum incredibly clearly. It was irreverent, noisy and sexy – it felt like London and the characters felt like real people. I thought, this is my programme, I get this – it talks to me.

DIEDERICK SANTER,
EXEC PRODUCER, EASTENDERS

ONE OF THE MOST moving moments was the scene in which Denise Fox (Diana Parish, left) talks to her husband – he was dead on a slab in the mortuary. Parish is a fabulous actress.

SUE MATHERS,
EASTENDERS
LINE MANAGER

25 YEARS OF LIVING DANGEROUSLY



For its silver anniversary on February 19, a live episode of EastEnders will be broadcast in which Archie Mitchell's (Larry Lamb) killer will be revealed. But what happens if it snows? **Clare Bolt** meets the live team

ON FEBRUARY 19 *EastEnders* executive producer Diederick Santer will be standing, arms folded and jaw tense, in a scanner truck in Borehamwood. Or as he speculates, 'dividing my time between there and the toilet'.

And around the country, some ten million people will be flicking over to BBC One to discover – live – who bludgeoned Archie Mitchell to death with a bronze bust on Christmas Day. The whodunnit, Santer hopes, to end all whodunnits.

The script writers spread the net widely: as DCI Marsden has discovered, finding someone in the E20 postcode without a motive for killing Archie is like looking for a natural blonde behind the bar in the Vic. The storyline has seen the

soap move ahead of *Coronation Street* for the first time in three years, notching up 10.8m viewers last month. So why – when you're on a roll – would you risk broadcasting the climactic finale, with an ensemble cast, from five different set locations – live?

From a technical point of view Santer reckons the live episode is only a 'step on' from a normal day on set. 'In tv terms we shoot quite quickly, so our directors and camera teams and actors are used to doing it all in one take,' he says confidently. Although with 35 cameras covering five areas and 50 monitors in the studio galley, he admits the vision mixer will need relaxed fingers...

But what happens if – say in

the heat of the moment – Stacey fluffs a line or Jim Branning misses his cue? 'Happily,' he says calmly, 'we will have rehearsed it so many times, it will run like clockwork. Every scene will be shot-listed and camera scripted, so from a production point of view it should unfold in a very predictable way.'

Can they walk it?

Rehearsals begin in tandem with usual filming this week and the cast has been banging on his door asking for a copy of the script. 'I think their worry is that if it goes wrong they will be the ones with egg on their faces, but I've been trying to reassure them it's just one half hour episode and an ensemble episode so no one will be overburdened.'

The actors' biggest challenge may be getting from one scene to the next to hit their cue. Line manager Sue Mathers has booked

East End boy:
Santer on set



three buggies and timed to the last second how long it takes to walk between studios: 'The worst thing that can happen is that we rely on a buggy that breaks, so we're assuming they must be able to walk it and have time to catch their breath,' she says.

Even with the cast note-perfect, the 25 radio mics secure and the scripts checked for continuity (the writers were warned that logistically, the characters can't walk straight out of the Vic and into the Square) there's one thing that the BBC Studios and Post Production team can't predict. 'We're going to have to deal with whatever the weather throws at us,' says Clive Arnold, who will be directing on the night. 'It's a major factor for continuity and snow is one thing over which we have absolutely no control.'

Arnold admits he wasn't initially sold on the idea of a live episode: 'ER started the trend of live episodes – *The West Wing* did one too – and they can feel *oh, look at us* – which I would have felt uncomfortable with,' he says. 'But because it was motivated by the story and the need to keep who killed Archie under wraps, I jumped on board.'

Santer points out that he wouldn't have put himself through sleepless nights and 'incredibly stressful' meetings if it hadn't been storyline-driven and (so far) it's stopped the red-tops from running

a spoiler. 'It made absolute sense,' he says. 'We decided to shoot everything around it and keep that episode back. So we've shot the episodes afterwards, but not even the person who did it knew they were the killer, so we may need to make some tweaks to the [after] scenes.' The fact that now all of the cast look shifty, he says cheerfully, just adds to the drama.

The soap has a long tradition of building up stories patiently over a long period of time to an enormous explosion. 'The more confident you are, the longer the storylines,' Santer says. 'It was one of the show's big innovations – who fathered Michelle's baby, Arthur's depression, Wilmott Brown and Cathy...'

True to form, murder has built up an enormous audience. 'We picked it up at Christmas and carried them through. Hopefully it will be an exciting, fitting celebration of the 25th anniversary. What makes *EastEnders* so influential is its risk-taking spirit – our biggest successes have come from its biggest risks.'

'Complex villains, decent people'

BY JEAN SEATON, BBC HISTORIAN

'EASTENDERS WAS THE BBC RESPONSE

to the urgent problem of attracting audiences in the early evening and beguiling them to spend the evening with their channel. It was carefully planned, plotted and cost more than any other rival.

It was also consciously Dickensian: dark, melodramatic, gross but not vulgar, with complex villains and decent everyday people. It opened in a flourish of grand guignol with a murder and a pregnancy. The carefully chosen cast of 'ordinary' actors (often rather like the characters they played) were among the first to experience the over-powering attention and ruthless intrusions of a burgeoning celebrity culture in the press.

Newspapers like the Sun and the Mail, which routinely complained about almost every aspect of the BBC, also routinely filled their pages and boosted their circulations with lurid stories of the private lives of *EastEnders* actors.'

Visit the Museum of Soap

EXPECT A FLURRY OF ANNIVERSARY

CARDS through soapland's letterbox this year. While *EastEnders* marks its 25th birthday with a dramatic dénouement, *Coronation Street* celebrates its golden anniversary, *The Archers* gets a free bus pass at 60 and *Hollyoaks* hits its mid-teen stride at 15.

To celebrate, BBC History is teaming up with the National Media Museum in Bradford to put on a year of events exploring the public's fascination with soap. From an exhibition of *EastEnders* iconic props and costumes – including Little Mo's iron and Bianca's wedding dress – the public can sign up for lessons in how to shoot a soap script and find out how soaps are actually made, by the people who do it.

Finally, School Report's youth reporters will interview two young *EastEnders* actors and BBC Learning's 21CC will work with media students to come up with future soap concepts for 2020.

bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc



The Mitchells

Minty's mob

The Masoods

The Beales

The Slaters

The Branning/Cotton family

The Jackson/Dean family and the Butchers

The Johnson/Fox family

Why older women thrive in Vision but find newsrooms a tougher beat

As 53-year old former Countryfile presenter Miriam O'Reilly prepares to sue the BBC for 'endemic' ageism, latest internal figures show that behind the scenes at BBC Vision, there are actually more women over 50 than men. But the picture is different in BBC journalism, as **Cathy Loughran**

MIRIAM O'REILLY'S LANDMARK CASE against the BBC is the latest in a catalogue of accusations that, on television at least, mature and experienced women are shown the door at 50, while their male counterparts soldier on with gravitas.

Off screen, that's not the case, with BBC Vision way ahead of both Audio & Music, the journalism group (News, Global News, Nations and English Regions) and the BBC workforce as a whole in not only retaining women over 50, but promoting them.

Figures collated by the BBC Diversity Centre for November 2009 show that 148 women in Vision are 50-plus and 117 men, a female lead of 11.6 percent. Among senior managers over 50, women still edge ahead by four percent (26 female, 24 male).

Granted, the whole of Vision skews female, with almost twice as many women as men in the under-30 bracket (631 against 349). Interestingly though, the drop off of women as a percentage of the workforce, from entry level (under 30) to age 50-59, is less than six percent compared to an average 20 percent drop BBC-wide.

Under-50 former *Blue Peter* producer and channels executive Amanda Gabbittas, now Vision's head of internal communications, thought the stats showed that the division was serious about having a diverse workforce. 'In my own experience the BBC has been very generous, allowing



'Women who are over 50 now had fewer role models' – Lizz Loxam

me two substantial breaks when I had children, and shortly after both of these breaks promoting me to more senior positions. I've always felt that my experience has been valued,' she said.

One over-50, with decades of BBC tv production experience, thought the trick in retaining older female staff was a combination of family-friendly policies, greater stability than the independent sector and variety of opportunity in a culture that she still found 'seductive, informal, interesting, fun and challenging'.

'Women who have risen through the ranks in Vision now serve as role models. The glass ceiling has been cracked,' she told Ariel.

'Women network well and encourage talent regardless of gender. Vision has recognised that in general women have qualities which make them good managers – honed organisational skills, excellent interpersonal skills, they listen, they are supportive and encouraging, fair but firm, good team leaders and players, deliver to brief.'

For Fiona Macbeth, production innovation exec in children's, the question was why hadn't other areas of the BBC recognised the benefits of mature women as senior managers.

'They clearly have more life experience, instinctively zone in on the 'people' aspects of issues and – a huge generalisation – but they can sometimes be less competitive than men, feeling they have less to prove.'

She adds: 'This is a bit of a personal bugbear, but it would be great to have more women involved with technology.'

UNPREDICTABLE HOURS

Across the BBC, the gender split is almost 50-50: 11,663 women (48.9 percent) and 12,171 men (51.1 percent). Among over-50s, the gap widens to 1273 (36.7 percent) and 2196 (63.3 percent) respectively. And among senior managers over-50, the percentage gap is 32.8 versus 67.2 (77 female, 158 male).

There is marginally more female over-50 representation at all levels in A&M and marginally less than the BBC average in journalism.

Among BBC journalists there is a fairly even gender balance up to age 40. In the over-50 range just over a third (727) are women, against 1380 men. At senior level, the female numbers drop to 26 (28.9 percent) compared to 64 men.

The view of Rachel Currie, HR director of

News, is that the gender split across journalism is not 'statistically significant' and at senior level is close to the BBC-wide figure.

'On average last year 50 percent of new recruits to Journalism have been female with a similar percentage of female staff leaving, which shows we are not losing a disproportionate amount of women,' Currie said.

News and other journalism areas were keen to improve the numbers of women at all levels, she said, and a new piece of work was under way to try to better understand what motivates women in the workforce.

Not surprisingly, women journalists who spoke to Ariel cited unpredictable hours, family unfriendly shifts and foreign assignments as a factor in making the news environment difficult, particularly for working mothers.

'To climb the ladder, overseas, bureau and/or warzone experience is sometimes seen as an advantage – hard for women with children to contemplate,' says 40-something election results editor Lizz Loxam.

'Also, news, like sport, was a traditionally male preserve 30 years ago when women aged 50-plus now were entering the media. So there would have been fewer role models for this generation. It's different now,' she says.

Features commissioning editor Penny Berry, 50-plus, recalls having to turn down promotion to assistant editor because it meant permanent nights in the newsroom. 'It was just an impossible ask for a single mum and it was another three years before I was offered a substantive assistant editor role again,' says Berry, who has

Over 50s figure it out

AGE GROUP	TOTAL	FEMALE	MALE
Under 30	980	631	349
30-39	1296	799	497
40-49	802	500	302
50-59	235	138	97
60 plus	30	10	20
Total All Staff	3343	2078	1265
Total 50+ Staff	265	148	117

BBC Vision age-gender profile Nov 09

herself decided to leave the BBC this year to embark on a freelance career.

'My perception is that the difficulty of getting promotion and experience at team leader levels, where the shift patterns are worst, is the biggest career block to working mothers.'

Berry also suspects that women may hold themselves back: 'Many women don't shout about success enough or find it difficult to raise problems they're facing without sounding whiny or needy. I can go into battle for my teams, but I know I've sometimes lacked the courage to stand up for myself.'

Another over-50 with long BBC news experience, thought the numbers of older women in the newsroom is bound to drop further: 'Most 50 year olds here will be running out of the door before this April when the age at which you can take your pension rises, by law, to 55,' she told Ariel.

'With a redundancy package, the BBC augments the pension so it's a full pension, not reduced by 24 percent as it would be otherwise. It is, as they say, a no-brainer.'

TRCmedia

BBC Academy

Series Producer Programme 2010

Applications are invited from experienced network television producers based in the Nations and Regions of the UK for the 2010 Series Producer Programme (SPP), a strategic partnership between TRC media and the BBC Academy.

The SPP is a blue chip training initiative designed to hone the skills of network producers to the level of series producer. Over the course of 12 months, the SPP will provide a range of top flight master classes and specialist training in series producer skills, and offer unprecedented access to commissioning editors and key decision makers within the BBC.

The programme begins in April 2010 and is open to freelance, independent and BBC staff producers with a strong track record in network television. It is aimed at indigenous talent in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the English Regions and those who wish to relocate to live and work in the Nations and Regions.

Download details and an application form from www.trcmedia.org

Closing date for receipt of applications is **Tuesday 2nd March 2010**

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

Tip the scales

In response to Paul Brown's letter commenting on Mark Thompson's continued assertion that executive pay at the BBC must be kept high in order to attract the 'best' people, (February 2) I have to say I find this whole ethos insulting, especially after the expenses debacle. The BBC as a whole should be looking for the best people for the job and therefore offer a fair salary for ALL grades in order to maintain this.

There is such huge disparity between, not just the executive boards and the worker bees, but also within each grade. It's long been well-known that to achieve any sort of dramatic pay rise, one needs to leave to work in the commercial sector in order to have the 'bargaining power' to negotiate towards the upper end of a salary grade when returning to the BBC. What happened to 'nurturing talent from within' and 'rewarding those who show loyalty to the BBC'?

We are, on one hand, told that we must 'work for the BBC for the love of it', while being told simultaneously that, effectively, only those in executive positions can earn a large salary while working here.

Mark Thompson should make a full restructure of BBC pay scales his highest priority in order to make the salary grades fairer and more transparent. Failure to do so would be yet another kick in the teeth for the majority of BBC staff.

Sarah Legg, independent programme delivery co-ordinator, BBC Knowledge

Christmas is coming

It is 4.45pm on Sunday February 7 and I'm currently watching the BBC News Channel. E24 comes on with the week's entertainment news...the only problem is that it's not this week's.

I gather from the tv that there is a



Are the doors shut when the quotas are full?

'Host a disability placement and increase the diversity in your team.' I was gobsmacked when I read the above line on the Gateway Homepage.

I find it unbelievable that BBC Training and Development and the wider BBC would advertise and promote training opportunities for disabled people only 'to increase the diversity in your team'.

As a mixed race young man from an ethnic background, I cannot believe that jobs, placements and wider opportunities could be given out to people based, not on their skills or work

experience but on what diversity category they fall into.

Why does it matter if any applicant is disabled or not? Surely the corporation should be going for the best people who show most potential and have the correct attitude rather than resorting to a box ticking exercise to fill quotas. What happens when the quota is full? Does the door then get slammed shut on disabled people who want a career within the BBC?

I wonder how my disabled BBC colleagues feel about this?

Chris Nriapia, BBC Big Screens, Yorkshire

battle on for the Christmas No1 between the *X Factor* and *Rage Against the Machine*, George Michael swore on Radio 2 Drivetime with Chris Evans, and Emma Bunton will be a judge on the new series of *Dancing On Ice*.

In this era of tight compliance (where every aspect of my work is checked – and rightly so to prevent any high profile mistakes), how the hell did this happen?

And by the way, Joe McElderry didn't get the Xmas number one. Maybe they'll tell us that in next week's episode?

Jeremy Buxton
Big Screen Manager, A&M

Kevin Bakhurst, controller, News Channel and News at One O'Clock

says: We ensure that all of our pre-recorded output is properly complied. Unfortunately, on this occasion, the wrong tape was played. We are currently investigating how this happened – and will try to make sure it doesn't happen again.

Wasted opportunities

I have to agree with Matthew Marks's comments about Centre House (February 2). It doesn't take much to make changes to your carbon footprint but most businesses seem to waste paper and hot air telling us to recycle a few disposables rather than addressing the much bigger issues.

No matter how much paper we recycle, if we continue to waste power and not use, for instance, solar heated water or the waste products of our cooling process then we are, as Private Frazer would say, all doomed.

Dave Tutt
production systems specialist, I&A

Less is more

Workplace is working with its service partners to reduce energy use. This has resulted in a decrease in energy use across the BBC, for example, at Television Centre the energy consumption has shown a downward trend for the last four years.

Workplace is completing an upgrade to the emergency lighting system at Television Centre so that lights are only on when required. We are also working to identify savings relating to the heating, ventilation and air conditioning control systems at TVC, including the items highlighted by Mr Lerner (February 2).

As always, faults should be reported to the local facilities helpdesk so that they can be fixed as quickly as possible.

Mark Wilkinson, principal risk manager, environment, workplace

Facing facts

Is there any part of the BBC that has been outsourced to a provider capa-

ble of doing their job?

Don't get me started on Siemens, but this time it's The Trainline. For a recent three-hour rail journey I reserved a forward-facing window table seat, specifically to be able to work during the trip. When I boarded the train, the seat designated was a backwards-facing non-table aisle seat.

It says 'subject to availability' when you book the type of seat you'd like, but there was hardly anyone else on the train. I had no problem finding a suitable seat this time, but what about on crowded trains? It got worse on the return journey, where my seats weren't reserved at all.

The Trainline and the BBC were recently awarded Travel Partnership of the Year. I think not.

Let the train cause the strain.

Kris Temple
bj, BBC Solent

Better collate than never

Why are our lavatories stocked with paper hand towels that make your hands smell like stepped-on dog-do? Is it to encourage us to help cut costs by using those painfully loud hand-drying machines instead?

And why is the default setting on photocopiers 'uncollated'? How often does anyone want 30 sets of handouts uncollated, I ask you.

This generally happens when you're in a hurry and you work yourself up into a frenzy wondering

whether to be un-green and print out another 30 sets or spend 15 minutes collating them manually. Then you lose your stapler under one of the stacks of paper or it isn't strong enough to get through the wadge so you scurry from desk to desk in search of the staple remover...

All this while people are waiting for their copies and thinking what an incompetent employee you must be if running off a bunch of photocopies presents such an insurmountable challenge. And this is the man whose CV said he had exceptional organisational skills, thinks the boss.

Anyway, I reckon this uncollated thing is part of an agreement the photocopier manufacturers have with the paper companies because they know most people would just reprint the damn things.

Don Kong, assistant, BBC People training leadership team

Phil like home

Re: Ariel Online's story last week about HK Gruber's debut as Composer/Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic: I wasn't aware of the BBC Philharmonic 'Orchester' being renamed in German in his honour! And the Master of the Queen's Music is Sir Peter Maxwell Davies...

John Shea
Radio 3 presentation



Bitter chilli

One jacket potato (small) and a generous portion of vegetable chilli for a bargain price of £4.25. That was what the Bush House canteen charged me, claiming I had too much chilli.

I thought I had a reasonable portion for the average UK male, and it doesn't specify how much chilli we are allowed on the notice boards.

I was searching for a cheap meal but I got shafted.

Steven Butler
World Service

OBITUARY

TOMMY HAIR

Tommy was part of the BBC/Sport Relief team making several appeal films for this year's campaign in Bangladesh with presenter Claudia Winkleman. It was the last day of the shoot and the team had been filming for about 20 minutes when Tommy was suddenly taken ill and suffered a massive heart attack.

While recording sound for Bristol productions Tommy usually worked with cameraman Mike Fox. Recent productions include the soon to be



transmitted *Paul Merton's Weird and Wonderful World of Early Cinema*, *Picture Book*, *Paul Merton looks at Alfred*

Hitchcock, *Inside John Lewis* and the Comic Relief appeals with Lenny Henry in Uganda for RND 2009. He was due to start a feature film this coming week.

Tommy was also an iconic musician and dj and a well-respected name across the North East music scene. He made his mark at the age of just 13 when he dj'd at Hendon Adventure Playground. He went on to play a major role in helping launch the careers of many famous Wearside bands, after playing a pivotal role in launching the punk scene in Sunderland in 1977.

Tommy went on to help found The Bunker, which to date continues to give local musicians a place to

hone their talents.

He came from a tough background, by his own admission, and as a child recalls having two televisions stacked on top of each other – one had sound, the other had picture and could be turned on only by using a tin opener.

He was superb recordist. When you're making tough films in tough places you need a team who can trust each other implicitly, who develop a shorthand and have a compassionate way of working together to make the best films possible.

Tommy was such a trusted man, who saw the best in everyone and took everything in his stride. He was always deeply affected by the situa-

tions we found ourselves in – particularly when filming vulnerable children. He would always turn the tables and say, 'You have to think of your own kids and how would you feel if these were your children.'

He was a true family man and always had his family album near his side on his iPhone. He made friends wherever he went and as our friend we will miss him so very much.

Thank you Tommy – we love you. Tommy, aged 48, died surrounded by his team and the local project with whom the BBC was working.

He leaves a wife Joanne, eight year-old son Tom and daughter Hettie, aged six.

Kate Broome

FOR RENT

2 beds, 2 bathrooms, garage and garden flat. 5 minutes walk from TVC. Available immediately short/long term rent. Contact oaklandsgrrove2@gmail.com

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Chiswick. Lovely, light double room in friendly flatshare by Stamford Brook tube. 2 professional flatmates (one BBC). £620pm plus bills. Available immediately. Emily ejekerr@gmail.com. Telephone 07808 268202

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

C

 Date which applications are to be received by

E

 External applicants considered

A

 Attachment/contract

See Attachment

More user friendly

Toby Mildon on making online content more accessible for people with disabilities

I HAD BEEN WORKING as a project manager for Forge, a new technology platform in FM&T which provides support for people around the BBC to develop websites.

But I wanted to work on a product or a service that our audience would use directly – something they would value and which looks good and I landed a 12-month attachment with the usability and accessibility team.

I took over a project which aims to make it much easier for people with cognitive, visual and learning disabilities to consume BBC content online.



The prototype tools we've created let people choose their own themes, which they can apply to all bbc.co.uk pages – for example making the text bigger or choosing a different background colour. I also had the opportunity to launch another accessibility and media literacy project, creating a pilot of a text-to-speech tool so that bbc.co.uk pages speak to you. It's ideal for people who find it difficult to read and links directly to the BBC's media literacy strategy.

I've been lucky in that I've been able to use all my project management skills on my attachment. One day I'm working with suppliers to build our tools, the next I'm meeting senior stakeholders, then I'm managing budgets and writing contracts for our next piece of work.

I've enjoyed working with the user experience and design team and they've asked me to project manage the global visual language project, which aims to give a consistent look and feel across all of bbc.co.uk. I'm also training to be a personal performance coach too and have been able to use my skills with my colleagues by helping them with their goals and ambitions.

Been anywhere nice? Send your attachment stories to Clare Bolt

So, who are the Previews and Promos unit?

We're a small team of five within the publicity unit and we supply DVDs and clips of all BBC priority programmes to press and media previewers and reviewers.

Have you ever sent the wrong clip out?

You have to be careful with content. Sometimes with big dramas it can be a struggle to find excerpts that have no swearing, no dead bodies, no blood and no violence so we get given time coded clips from publicists which have been signed off by exec producers. We then get the tapes, dub the clips and give external broadcasters two or three clips of each programme.

Can anyone get a preview copy?

No – we have to vet them. They have to prove who they work for.

Have you had a fraudster?

We had a student who was obsessed with an entertainment programme and eventually confessed that he just wanted to watch the show. Another guy used to ring once a month and tried to speak to a different member of staff every time. It didn't work.

How did you start at the BBC?

I joined as team assistant to the studio resource managers about 15 years ago and then became the first supervisor of TVC Stage Door reception when that was set up.

That sounds glamorous...

I used to enjoy seeing all these people coming in for shows – we'd have to usher them around and sort out their transport.

Did you see any A-listers?

I'll never forget when Madonna came in to perform for the lottery; that was a highlight, and Pierce Brosnan – I took quite a shine to him.

What was it like dealing with celebs?

The Spice Girls came in one weekend to do some filming for their movie and they were lovely. I also remember when Mariah Carey came in. She had almost a whole floor of dressing rooms and these all had to be a certain way.

How did you get from there to your current job?

After Stage Door I moved to *Blue Peter* for a year to work in the correspondence unit, dealing with competitions and letters.



EMMA BERNSTEIN MANAGER, PREVIEWS AND PROMOS UNIT

While I was there I had to dress up as a Dyson.

...as in the vacuum cleaner?

Yes. A performer at the Edinburgh Festival was coming on the programme with his amazing costumes of landmarks and equipment. The producers need-

ed a small person to fit in to the Dyson one so they asked me. That was certainly my strangest job to date.

Back to previews... Do you watch all the programmes you send out?

No, but we do try to watch a lot of them.

Do you know a lot of tv reviewers?

I do – some are great characters. We have a chat and it's nice because sometimes they ask what we recommend.

Do you find yourself saying 'I've seen that' and annoying your friends?

Sometimes. Most of my mates think I've got one of the greatest jobs in the world and they think I just sit around watching telly all day. I don't do that but I do love the fact that I deal with different people every day.

Interview Sue Llewellyn



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