

ariel

THE BBC NEWSPAPER

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Giles wants Panorama to get the 'wow' factor

by Cathy Loughran

THE NEW MAN IN CHARGE of *Panorama* wants to broaden the audience for peaktime current affairs with more reactive stories, smarter marketing and more 'Wow' moments to get people talking.

RTS and Bafta winning exec producer Tom Giles takes over from Sandy Smith in mid-March, having already had a stint as the programme's deputy editor in 2008, and been behind high profile *Panorama* films like Iraq investigation *In the Line of Fire*, with John Simpson.

He was also exec on the recent undercover piece *Hate on the Doorstep*, exposing racist abuse in Bristol, which drew 3.5m viewers and doubled *Panorama*'s record for iPlayer hits.

With 48 half-hours and eight hour-long specials a year, Giles expects to have to 'box clever' with the *Panorama* budget to deliver the ambition and appeal he wants.

Audiences at 8.30pm on Mondays are averaging 2.7m, slightly down on the peaks of 2007 and 2008, after the controversial move from Sundays to a 30-minute format in primetime. Some of the highest recent audiences have been for domestic stories, including about the Royal Mail and dirty beaches. But topics like Obama, Iran, torture and why we're fighting in Afghanistan have also featured strongly.

'The balance to aim for is in stories that are relevant to people's lives, told through

strong original journalism. Of course we will never walk away from important foreign stories, but I think we need to be realistic too about offering broad and accessible material,' Giles says.

'We inherit the biggest BBC One audience at 8.30pm,

women - to engage younger audiences for current affairs on BBC One, with treatments that 'punch through'.

'We can also be smarter about marketing programmes - not just via the programme website, but by pushing related content out through social media, marketing to relevant Facebook groups.' Expect more new faces too, in the mould of Bill Bryson on litter and Frank Skinner on bad language.

Giles was the exec on Andrew Marr's *A History of Modern Britain* and wants *Panorama* to have the same kind of revelatory impact, as often as possible: 'We want more of the 'Wow!' moment, with lots of people talking about us the next day. That's hard to do.'

On the familiar charge of 'dumbing down', Giles says that's been levelled at the programme since ever he can remember: '*Panorama* has always done consumer titles,' he says, from car prices to baby food. 'The trick is to show that [popular current affairs] is not a dichotomy.'

He pays tribute to the legacy of Sandy Smith, who is moving to *The One Show* as executive editor: 'To successfully bring the programme into its 8.30pm slot in the way he did was to manage the biggest single change for years. The next job is to build on that.'

Upcoming stories will 'get much more 'under the skin of the economy, top to bottom', as well as throw new light on pensions, housing and issues like supermarket power.



up against tough competition on ITV. We can't retreat from that.' And he adds: 'We shouldn't assume that just because we find something interesting, everyone else will too.'

The former *Newsnight* producer, famously on duty the night of Jeremy Paxman's legendary interview with Michael Howard, also wants to see more fast turnaround films: 'I think we can be much smarter with news. If you hit a story at the right time it always feels more relevant, more important.'

He sees potential in some of the subjects BBC Three has tackled recently - including dangerous dogs and trafficked

5 live loses some possession

by Claire Barrett

◆ **BBC RADIO 5 LIVE WILL CONTINUE** to have the pick of Premiership fixtures next season, but will broadcast significantly fewer live matches.

The BBC has won four of seven commentary packages from the Premier League covering the next three years - that's two fewer packages than it has currently, equating to a loss of 64 games over the period.

'We will need to work hard to compensate for this,' said 5 live controller Adrian Van Klaveren, 'including thinking about what this means for parts of our programme schedule.'

From the start of the new season in August, 5 live will broadcast live coverage of games which kick off at Saturday lunchtimes, first choice of Saturday 3pm starts, those begin-

ning at 4pm on Sunday and Monday and Tuesday evening matches.

Early Sunday kick-offs and Saturday and Wednesday evening clashes have been awarded to commercial station TalkSport, which itself has lost the second choice Saturday afternoon rights to Absolute Radio.

The bidding process had been more competitive than previously, said Van Klaveren. 'We have had to balance the vital importance of live football to our audience with the need to ensure we are offering value-for-money to all licence fee payers.'

But with four Premiership packages, live coverage of Champions' League, FA Cup, Europa League, Football League, Carling Cup and internationals including the World Cup, 5 live would still offer 'an outstanding service of live commentary'.

NEWS BITES

THE LIVE denouement of *EastEnders'* Who Killed Archie plot was watched by 16.6m people at its peak, almost 60 percent of the audience for the slot. That makes the show the most-watched programme of the year so far on any tv channel, a record previously held by the New Year's Day episode, featuring the Masood wedding. And BBC Three got a record audience for a non terrestrial channel with 4.3m people turning on *EastEnders Live: The Aftermath*.

SHARON BAYLAY, director of MC&A, has been made a non-executive director of BBC Worldwide. Chairman Robert Webb said she brought understanding of marketing and communications and a wide experience of international markets to the post.

BBC THREE is to run at least two more series of *Russell Howard's Good News*, after the first series of the topical news show became the channel's best performing studio-based entertainment programme. Series two begins next month, and the third is due later in the year.

BBC PRIDE debates the question 'Is Britain becoming more homophobic?' on Thursday, February 25. Chaired by newsreader Jane Hill, the question will be discussed by World Service's Liliane Landor, broadcaster Amy Lame, Daily Mail columnist Andrew Pierce and Dominic Treadwell-Collins, a story producer for *EastEnders* who wrote the Syed/Christian storyline. The debate is at 6.30pm in the boardroom, 3rd floor, Media Centre. If you want to attend RSVP Pride@bbc.co.uk

CHARLOTTE CHURCH, Sheila Hancock and *EastEnders* actor John Partridge will be the judges on the latest BBC One talent search for an Andrew Lloyd Webber show. *Over the Rainbow* will find a new Dorothy for the West End production of the Wizard of Oz. Auditions are under way and the show will be broadcast in the spring.

BECTU MEMBERS among Siemens staff at the BBC are voting in a ballot for industrial action over a pay freeze. The ballot was launched on Monday and closes on March 19.

A&M Masterclass

Some of the most well-known names in the business will share their tips on enhancing creativity in more than 25 sessions at Broadcasting House on March 2. Subjects include radio from around the world, using the internet to source stories and what presenters want from production teams. Actor Bill Nighy, controllers Mark Damazer and Roger Wright, presenters Jane Garvey and Bobby Friction are among the speakers. Sessions will also be held in Manchester, Birmingham and Bristol during March. For more information <http://explore.gateway.bbc.co.uk/audioandmusicfestival2008/>



Step back in time:
Visitors line up
in Dorset

PHOTOGRAPH: SUE PAZ

Parents and children flock to history lesson with a difference

THERE WERE QUEUES around the block for *A History of the World* events staged by BBC nations and regions in partnership with the British Museum and local museums.

The half term specials, inspired by the Radio 4 series *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, attracted thousands of people, many of whom took along their own artefacts telling *A History of the World* for their area.

At BBC Hereford and Worcester's

event at Hartlebury Museum, for example, a woman arrived with a silk shawl, made by her grandmother who had farmed the worms that made the silk.

At BBC Lincoln's event one of the most popular objects was the bugle that had sounded the charge of the Light Brigade in 1854.

Elsewhere, personalities proved a big attraction. In Hampshire, for instance, Terry Deary, author of *Horri-*

ble Histories, drew the crowds.

At Reading Museum, lead curator Matthew Williams produced hand-outs listing Berkshire AHOW objects, which visitors then ticked off as they came across them.

■ Radio Gloucestershire's *A History of the World* event looks to have been the most popular attraction at the local City Museum for nearly a century, says producer **Vernon Harwood**.

'Visitor numbers totalled 1742, which is thought to be the largest one-day attendance since the City Museum opened in 1902,' he adds.

'The people who attended met a Roman soldier, medieval surgeons, Cuda the Celtic Princess, a Cotswold wool spinner and a wartime air-raid warden.

'Radio Gloucestershire and *Points West* both mounted live broadcasts, and an exhibition of local artefacts

included the landing wheel of Frank Whittle's first jet plane, the E28/39, which took to the air at nearby Brockworth in April 1941. Also on display was a pair of cow horns from the animal used by the vaccination pioneer Edward Jenner in his experiments to eradicate smallpox in 1796.

'*A History of the World* engaged people of all ages and backgrounds, many of whom had never visited their local museum before.'

Questions for Gosling

by Cathy Loughran

Nottingham's *Inside Out* team has been co-operating fully with police, following Ray Gosling's on-air admission that he smothered to death his sick lover, and the presenter's subsequent arrest last Wednesday. Gosling was released on bail on Thursday after questioning by Nottinghamshire Police for a day and a half on suspicion of murder.

The 70 year old filmmaker was bailed until a date in April. The programme team were first interviewed on the day after transmission.

The inevitable media storm that broke around Gosling, after he admitted in the BBC East documentary to the mercy killing of an unnamed young man suffering from Aids and in 'terrible, terrible pain', appears to have taken the veteran filmmaker by surprise.

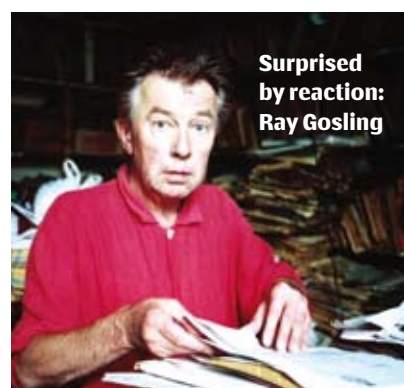
He had not expected his grave-yard revelation to 'cause many ripples', his lawyer Digby Johnson said.

Interviewed on the *Today* pro-

gramme next morning, he told Sarah Montague that he would have felt like a 'traitor', to the people who had contributed to his film about dying, had he not revealed what he'd done. And he had no regrets: 'If there's a heaven then he's looking down and he would be proud.'

Some commentators have questioned whether the frail-looking 70 year old should have been allowed to tell his story in the *Inside Out* film, recorded last December,

In a statement, the BBC main-



Surprised
by reaction:
Ray Gosling

tained that it broadcast Gosling's revelation 'for reasons of journalistic integrity', adding: 'We believe we have handled the report sensitively and appropriately.'

The presenter had been kept fully informed about representation of his story and understood that a revelation of this nature could have a number of consequences, the BBC said. 'We were under no legal obligation to refer the matter to the police in these circumstances.'

David Jordan, director of editorial policy, confirmed that the programme team, under editor Tony Roe, had made 'considerable efforts' to reassure themselves that Gosling's story was true.

'He was very well prepared by the team for the implications of what he had chosen to do. No one was under any illusion about the likely consequences,' he told Ariel.

'The film was recorded before Christmas and his wishes would, of course, have been respected, had he changed his mind.'

The play's the thing for Radio 4

RADIO 4'S SATURDAY PLAY on February 27 is the acclaimed Northern Broadsides stage production of *Othello*, starring Lenny Henry.

It will be the first full length Shakespeare play to be broadcast on the station for at least a decade, controller Mark Damazer explained at a press briefing last week.

Damazer said he was looking for 'champion league' British playwrights to write drama for Radio 4, following the success of David Hare's adaptation of *Murder In Samarkand*, starring David Tennant. 'In 50 years time this will be seen as a glorious creative period for British theatre... and we've tried to find ways of celebrating that from time to time,' he said.

Ian McKellen is to star in *Goldfinger* with Toby Stephens as Bond, while Stephen Poliakoff is adapting his play *Playing with Trains* for the network.

David Walliams, who famously swam the English Channel, will front

a programme based around Byron's poem *Swimming The Hellespont*.

Asked what he thought the network's 'weak spots' were, Damazer said there was 'a very fine line' between decent nostalgia and over-sentimentality. 'Slipping gears between subjects which are necessarily dark - depression, euthanasia - and enjoyment and celebration of the contemporary... sometimes we don't get it quite right,' he said.

As for criticism that Radio 4 was too middle class, he pointed out that while it tilted to an ABC demographic, there were 'millions of pensioners who are not very rich and who consume millions of hours of Radio 4'.

Nor was he perturbed about the imminent strategy review. 'The chance that Mark [Thompson] will recommend a major shift for Radio 4 would surprise me. People... may argue about the content, but you don't often hear them asking what the station is for.'

Here is the news from Havana

First live location broadcasts from the heart of Cuba go out on BBC channels this week

A PROJECT which has been more than a year in the planning goes live this week when BBC News reports from Cuba.

It has taken months of delicate negotiation with the Cuban authorities to win permission for the first live location reports by an outside broadcaster. The trip was Kevin Bakhurst's idea. The News Channel controller told Ariel he first thought of it at the time of President Obama's inauguration, when there was talk that the new administration would soften the

United States' hard line on its communist neighbour.

The BBC team is small: Havana correspondent Michael Voss, producer Rachel Humphreys and shoot-edit Rob McGee, with Matt Frie and Bakhurst. Frie will anchor *World News America* from Havana during the week, co-present for the News Channel and World TV, and contribute to the *Ten O'Clock News*. The first packaged material will run on Tuesday February 23, and the week culminates with two days of live output on Thursday and Friday.

Rome Hartman, editor of *World News America*, says: 'There are very few international relationships as complex, fascinating and important as the one between Cuba and the United States. The opportunity to do both in-depth reporting and live broadcasting from Cuba is very rare and very special, and we mean to make the absolute most of it.'



The news team will be reporting live from the streets of the Cuban capital

The team will spend time with a Cuban family, to see what life is like in a state which has been under US embargo since its inception. Voss will

report on how Cuba uses its highly trained medical staff as a diplomatic tool, and there is also an interview with one of Cuba's most important

politicians (after the Castros), Ricardo Alarcon.

Matt Frie will tell the story of the Cuban 5. They are Cuban citizens who were arrested for espionage in the United States and jailed for life. Convicted in 2001 the men have become a cause célèbre in Cuba. Frie has spoken to one of them, Rene Gonzales, in prison in Tallahassee, and will interview his daughter in Havana.

But the stories won't all be about politics and struggle – they will also reflect the vibrant culture of Cuba, particularly its music.

Thursday's lives will come from the bureau in Havana, but on Friday the team will be on location in the city, using a Cuban TV truck. The Cuban authorities are anxious, and so is Bakhurst. He says: 'I want to make this work. It has been a long time in the planning and we've put a lot of money and effort into it; I want it all to go well.'

Youthful ambitions revisited in surprise online hit

NEW RADIO 4 SERIES *When I Grow Up* became an online hit after an article written by its producer was featured on the News website front page.

When I Grow Up looks at a study run over the past 50 years to investigate how childhood aspirations become reality. The study began in 1969, and asked 14,000 British 11 year olds to write an essay on how their life would be once they reached 25. The series meets a selection of the participants, now aged 51, to see how their lives actually turned out – and whether analysis of their initial predictions proved an accurate indicator of the course they would take.

Producer Sue Mitchell wrote up some of the stories for News, complete with archive and recent photos of the people featured. Her team was surprised by the response – not just in terms of readers (around 200,000 hits in two days), but also people's willingness to add their own stories. 'We know interest in genealogy and family history is very strong, but clearly these personal histories have struck a chord,' said series presenter John Waite. 'Within hours of the programme going out people had started to contribute spontaneously, sending in their own memories of childhood ambitions to the website.'

Huw Jones, assistant editor at News Programmes Interactive, called the article 'a definite hit' and argued



Study subject Kim (above, right) in 1969 and 40 years on (left) with her mother Peggy

that it highlights the benefits of writing a piece specifically for the News website. 'It's a valuable place for programme makers to put their stories,' he told Ariel. 'It can get the message out about your programme, and the more people that know about it the more they are likely to watch it.'

Though the majority of content on

the News website comes from within News, one new story a day usually comes from other areas like Radio 4 and Factual. Both parties gain from the deal, said Jones: 'The News website gets to showcase interesting stories, and the programme makers reach a wider audience.'

Any programme makers wanting to offer articles or video clips for the News website should contact Anna-Louise Taylor or Huw Jones.

The word on the Leicester street

EASTENDERS might be the soap story of the week, but on a street in Leicester, a real live soap is taking shape that could make local celebrities out of its cast of residents.

The Street is the brainchild of BBC Leicester presenter Tony Wadsworth who has gone back to his roots in the city's Newfoundpool district to take 'a closer look behind closed doors' at the community that now exists, 50 years after he lived there.

The Street in question is Hawthorne Street, where Wadsworth and his producer Eloise Henderson have literally knocked on doors to recruit potential regulars and tap into their stories.

Among characters already signed up are Geoff and Carol Connelly, who've lived at number 88 for 42 years; lifelong resident Elaine Swan and a 35 year-old grandfather of six.

'We have an initial dozen or so characters and some of the early stories on the street include the joy of an IVF baby, the tragedy of a suicide, an Elvis fan who hasn't worked since the great man died, and much more,' says mid-morning host Wadsworth, who launched the project on Wednesday with a live three-hour OB.

Regular features are planned to keep up with life on The Street: 'We hope this can be a catalyst to bring the community closer together, perhaps building up to a street party this summer,' says the presenter, who hopes that the new contacts made will benefit output beyond the mid-morning show.

Audience feedback has been positive, Wadsworth reports. Or as one listener emailed: 'There are some things that radio does best, and this is one of them.'



Streetwise: Tony Wadsworth makes a new contact in Newfoundpool

Asian Network hopes its new daytime line-up, the first official Asian music chart and a pan-generational appeal will reverse its flagging fortunes, as **Claire Barrett** reports



Family man: Husain Husaini

Right: Chart show presenter Bobby Friction (top); Bollywood stars Shahrukh Khan and Kajol Devgan charm the Radio Theatre audience

KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY

YOU'D EXPECT current Top 40 favourites like N-Dubz and Jedward to have limited appeal beyond their prime teenage targets. But when the Asian Network launches its official chart show next month, listening is likely to be more of a family affair.

The digital station's own research points to overwhelming overlap in music tastes across the Asian audience, irrespective of ethnicity or age.

'There is less distinction between teen and 40 plus tastes than in the mainstream,' believes Mark Strippel, Asian Network head of music. 'At the heart of the community there is a core of shared celebration around music, heritage and culture. Big Bollywood hits like 'My Name Is Khan' or records by AR Rahman and Jay Sean are enjoyed across the whole family.'

Putting concerns aside

His comments come at a time when the whole concept of a single station serving disparate groups of British Asians is being challenged. Earlier this month, chief operating officer Caroline Thomson told the House of Lords communications committee that the Asian Network's endeavours to broadcast 'in a number of different languages to an audience that ranges from younger to older [listeners]' came with 'difficulties', and that the service would be scrutinised as part of Mark Thompson's strategic review.

Understandably, it's left the station's 65 staff feeling vulnerable. 'People are a little anxious,' admits head of

programmes Husain Husaini. 'We are all aware that there's a strategic review going on and we are all aware that digital radio is in the frame, but we're doing so much other stuff we have to put those concerns to one side.'

Yes, he accepts, different cultural influences hold sway among Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu people, but others transcend those boundaries. Bollywood for one, as well as many areas of news – racism, obviously, but also issues like health. And all groups share the same perspective on the family. 'It's at the centre of their lives,' says Husaini. 'British Asians tend to live in bigger households – an average of five members compared to the UK average of just two.'

'We build a radio station partly on the things our audience have in common and partly on their differences,' he continues. 'It's tricky, but not impossible.'

Constant tweaks – both on-air and backstage – in a bid to get that balance right may explain why audience figures have plunged; most dramatically by 15 percent to 357,000 in the third quarter of 2009. This led to warnings from the BBC Trust, delivered in an 'or else' tone, that it must improve its reach this year. Latest Rajars for the eight year old station held steady at 360,000 – but still way short of its 2008 high of 535,000.

Putting the family first could be the answer, reckons Husaini, admitting that the station 'slightly overshot'

itself with its former courting of the young crowd. 'The average age for the British Asian population is 30-something,' he explains. 'Influenced by this, we probably got it too young and lost what we were strongest at – being family friendly.'

With this in mind, the daytime line-up has been revamped with a return to

want to talk about.'

Drivetime, meanwhile, has gone up a gear with Tommy Sandhu's move from weekends. 'He's the biggest character, the biggest personality,' says Husaini. 'He brings huge energy and makes you turn up the radio to hear what he has to say.'

Musically, it's the warmth that's

PUTTING ON A GOOD SHOW

■ **The Adil Ray Show:** Weekdays 7-10am. A mix of popular tunes, entertainment and spoofs

■ **Sonia Deol:** Weekdays 10am-12.30pm British Asian lifestyle show with celebrities and discussions

■ **Tommy Sandhu:** Weekdays 3-6pm. Entertainment, news and music to get you home from work

■ **Gagan Grewal:** Weekdays 6.30-8pm. Celebrity interviews and news in Hindi/Urdu and English

■ **Friction:** Mon-Thurs 10pm-1am. Asian beats plus new and unsigned Asian music

■ **Love Bollywood:** Weekends 9am-12. Music, star interviews and reviews with Raj and Pablo.

the weekday fold for popular presenter Sonia Deol. Her new morning show – a mix of music and lifestyle – sees Deol interacting with the audience, speaking to guests from the Asian entertainment scene and even reviving her Undercover Lover romantic song feature.

'She connects amazingly well with listeners,' judges Husaini. The first of her new shows included discussion around the topic of keeping Asian babies indoors for their first 40 days. 'It touched on tradition, family pressures – just the kind of issue our listeners

been turned up a notch in daytime. 'I find myself singing along to it more,' admits Husaini, who welcomes the first official South Asian chart show.

Previously there was no information around UK sales of the music that was traditionally sold in specialist stores with no chart eligibility – and no wider recognition. But this has changed, with a migration from physical to online retail.

'It's a game-changing moment for Asian music,' says Mark Strippel, who has been developing the chart format,

based on UK sales from a wide panel of digital music retailers, with the Official Charts Company for two years.

Bobby Friction will present the three hour Top 20 rundown on Saturday afternoons featuring artist interviews and reflecting the international scene. 'The audience will hear of Rahat Fateh Ali Khan and Sonu Nigam live on the show from Mumbai,' says Strippel, who is reassured by test charts that the station's playlist is already packed with audience pleasers.

A difficult time

One favourite – Slumdog Millionaire composer AH Rahman – was the focus of a day's programming in January. 'It changed the mood and made it feel special,' says Husaini, who's keen for more breaks from routine.

Like this month's Shahrukh Day when the network was host to Bollywood star Shahrukh Khan. He talked to Adil Ray over breakfast, joined Raj and Pablo before a 'squealing' Radio Theatre audience and granted Gagan Grewal an in-depth interview in Hindi. 'You can always get on press conference rounds, but to get the morning with the star benefited the whole station,' reasons Husaini.

For his part, the head is hoping for kinder treatment in the coming weeks. 'We can't make the figures change, but we can improve what we're doing. It is a difficult time, with much uncertainty, but people here are working incredibly hard on what to the Asian audience is a special service.'

ALL FAIR GAME IN THE BUSINESS OF SPORT

BBC experts team up to report how the recession is knocking some sports for six, while others battle for new arenas. Candida Watson reports

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE a devoted football fan to know about the eye-watering amounts of money washing round the Premier League, nor about the equally eye-watering debts that clubs like Portsmouth are carrying, while struggling to stay solvent and stay in the game.

But do you know how the Winter Olympics are impacting on the economy of Vancouver? Or what is the most popular Western sport in China? Or how small sports keep going in a recession, when sponsors are even harder to find?

The business unit, sport news, World Service, news online and 5 live have joined forces to answer those questions – and many more – in a 'loose project' called Business of Sport. The brainchild of business unit editor Jeremy Hillman and part funded by

'Sport is a strange type of business.. people invest for love of it'

Mark Byford's Big Stories, the project hits its stride next week, with multi-platform and multi-lingual coverage of the issues facing sport in a time of recession.

'There couldn't be a better time to be looking at how the global recession and high finance is impacting sport around the world at all levels,' Hillman says. He is particularly pleased that World Service is part of the project, with the language services contributing both stories and insights.

Global and domestic output will include a look ahead to the business issues around the World Cup, which kicks off in South Africa 100 days later. For UK audiences the focal point of the week will be a live debate from Salford on March 2 about the future of football finance. Broadcast on 5 live and the news channel, it will be hosted by Mark Pougatch, with business editor Robert Peston, and soon-to-be sports editor David Bond, a panel of experts and a well-informed audience.

'I think the debate is very well timed on the part of the BBC,' Bond says. 'This is such a big issue, and it is so important, the BBC



should be discussing it with its audience.'

Bond, who is currently sports editor of the Daily Telegraph, has identified several sport business trends for the coming year which he hopes to cover in more depth when he joins the BBC.

'I think we are going to see more and more pressure on English football clubs over their levels of debt and owners,' he says. 'The sport has been in a bit of a bubble, mainly thanks to tv rights, so while the rest of the economy has suffered they have been ok. But I think a correction is coming.'

He says a second trend will be the ongoing global expansion of teams from all sports, and all countries, as they try to tap into the lucrative markets of China and India. One example he cites is the American NBA, which is more popular than the English Premier League in China.

Bond also expects 2010 to be a key year for London 2012: he believes that if any problems with the project, either financial or logistical, are going to show it will be this year.

The themes are already rolling on *World Business Report* and online, where there is a dedicated page covering stories – from how Sri Lanka hopes sport will help drive reconciliation and regeneration after years of civil war to India's Formu-

New sports editor David Bond will join the debate



la 1 dreams.

The website is the work of the business unit's Bill Wilson, who has been writing sport business stories since 2004. 'We noticed that many of the stories were well read, so there was clearly an appetite for them,' he says.

Last autumn the dedicated page went online, becoming a 'home' for sports business stories, no matter where they originated. Richard Burgess, head of sports news, says the coming of high finance to the world of sport has changed things irrevocably.

'Sport can't be anything but a business now, but it's a strange type of business because people will put money into something from which they will never get any return, for the love of it,' he says.

And the BBC is uniquely placed to tell the story: 'We can bring together the expertise of the business unit and our knowledge of sport and make an impact on a big topic across the whole of our output.'

Hillman concurs: 'Above everything this is a great opportunity to combine the incredible knowledge and contacts across specialisms like business, sports, sports news and 5 live to create journalism which is greater than the sum of its parts.'

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in-depth/business/2009/business_of_sport/default.stm

cutting
edge



BILL THOMPSON

How digital will the election be?

THE 2010 GENERAL ELECTION campaign has already begun, even though we don't yet know the date of the election and none of the major parties have finalised a manifesto or decided which issues to focus on.

One thing that many people seem sure of is that it will be a 'digital election', and indeed the BBC has already assigned technology correspondent Rory Cellan-Jones to a temporary role of 'digital election correspondent', something which he announced on Twitter, as you would expect. twitter.com/BBCRoryCJ/status/8806767017

But just calling this a 'digital election' begs the question of what that might mean, and the answer may affect more of us than just Rory.

The coverage of the campaign and results will, of course, be completely digital, and the BBC and other news organisations will use electronic newsgathering techniques developed over many years to report what is happening. Graphics and visualisations will be used to inform audiences and help them

Anticipate at least one 'YouTube moment'

understand the many complex issues that face them as voters, and websites, blogs and the many new forms of social media will be used to get the message across.

We can also expect parties, candidates and campaigners to make use of online tools to get their views across, and most commentators anticipate at least one 'YouTube moment' when an unguarded comment is filmed and posted online, derailing the campaign at least temporarily.

The parties will have websites and will use social sites like Facebook and services like Twitter, while the political blogs will go into overdrive, hoping to pick up readers and advertising income.

But it is far from certain that this activity will do much to affect the outcome, and evidence from organisations like Politics Online, the well-respected US-based organisation, seems to show that online engagement doesn't actually change voting intentions – although it may encourage debate about policy.

So if the digital side of the election doesn't affect the outcome, does it matter? One area where it does seem to be effective is in helping the parties organise their volunteers, talk to wavering voters and get people to vote when the time comes.

This was certainly the case for Barack Obama's US presidential campaign, and I think it will be the key to the forthcoming UK election. Rory might want to spend his time looking at ways the parties energise their membership instead of what they are tweeting to the general public, as that seems to be the place where going digital will really make a difference.

Bill Thompson is a technology writer

THE ESTATE WE'RE IN

People living in the shadow of London's giant Olympic site talk about their hopes and fears in a new World Service project. Kate Arkless Gray reports

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT the Olympics, a housing estate in the east end of London isn't the first image that springs to mind.

But the World Service is looking at the 2012 games from a different perspective. *Great Expectations* is a documentary series that follows the lives of residents on an estate on the fringe of the Olympic development site in the run up to the games.

'One of the phrases I've heard most often about the Olympic Games coming to London in 2012 is 'the world is coming to London' – but the world is already here,' says Tony Phillips, senior commissioning editor for World Service English. 'We wanted to capture the voices and experiences of the people living in the shadow of this huge enterprise.'

It's clear that residents of the estate – in Hackney, east London – have mixed feelings about the 'greatest show on earth' coming to town. 'There is excitement and there is hope that they will have more opportunities for jobs and training,' says Nina Richardson, producer and presenter. Then there are the new transport links. 'Some are amazed they'll be able to travel to France from Stratford,' she adds.

But while some people feel inspired, they are also concerned that they won't be able to afford to use new sports facilities – and that eventually they will be priced out of the area by inflated rents. One of the people who features in the documentaries is Darrell James, a former gang member and recipient of the Thierry Henry award for his youth work. He fears there could be more crime and a widening gap between the rich and poor.

Others, such as 15 year-old Sintayeh from Ethiopia are hopeful that new fa-



Local touch:
Producer/presenter
Nina Richardson in
east London

PHOTOGRAPH: SUE FOLL

While some residents feel inspired, others are concerned that eventually they will be priced out of the area

cilities will improve their prospects, whether through better transport, new housing, or simply accessing books from the brand new library.

Although dramatic changes are just a short walk away, there is little change on the estate itself. 'As one resident says, his immediate view remains the same – and that is he sees kids on his estate with little money or hope,' says Richardson. 'It's a complex picture.'

The first of her documentaries (to go out on

February 24) looks at sport that is already going on in east London (mainly boxing and football) and whether the Olympics is affecting the inspiration of kids to continue their activities.

The second programme focuses on ambitious regeneration plans and investigates whether the multi-billion pound investment will actually lift the east end out of poverty.

A *Great Expectations* website, which launches on Wednesday, includes an interactive map of the estate with photographs and audio content, background information on the area and some of the people featured in the documentaries. This will continue to evolve with the project as more content is collected over the next two years and will provide an area for debate of issues raised in the programmes. World Service website users will be able to put their questions to estate residents via the website.

With more than 100 languages spoken in Hackney, the World Service will make use of its various sections to tap into the rich mix of peo-

ple living on the estate to create content for the different language services.

An edition of *World Have Your Say* will be broadcast from a boxing gym and a flat on the estate on March 3 and will include contributions from guests in poor areas of Athens and Sydney, to learn about their experiences of living in an Olympic city and find out whether the presence of the Games had a lasting effect on their areas. It is also hoped that the interactive programme will welcome Olympic representatives who will discuss regeneration and legacy.

Darrell James has his own message for the Olympic authorities: 'We never asked the rest of the world to come here, but seeing as you're coming, let's make a party of it – just get us involved.'

The documentaries go out on Feb 24 and March 3. WHYS will be broadcast on March 3.
bbc.co.uk/worldservice/greatexpectations

Campaigning:
Anna Maxwell
Martin plays
Heather Brooke



Making a drama out of a crisis

by Adam Bambury

EVERYONE KNOWS that the Daily Telegraph broke the MPs' expenses scandal, its investigative team holed up in a secret bunker, releasing information from leaked files for which the paper had paid £110,000. Less recognised is the role of campaigning journalist Heather Brooke, whose tenacious investigations in preceding years brought about this sensational disclosure – but not quite in the way she had hoped.

Her story is the subject of *On Expenses*, a new 60-minute drama for BBC Four which charts Brooke's five year quest for a scoop, after submitting a Freedom Of Information request for key MPs to reveal their expenses. Her adversary, the then speaker of the Commons Michael Martin (Scottish actor Brian Cox), blocks Brooke (played by Anna Maxwell Martin) at every turn, convinced he is protecting the integrity of his fellow honourable members.

The film is prefaced by a disclaimer announcing that while it is based on real characters and events, some scenes have been imagined, 'but mostly, you couldn't make it up'. It captures the tone of the piece: a mix of drama and wry humour which director **Simon Cellan Jones** hopes will evoke 'a mixture of shock and laughter' in the audience.

'I've tried to capture the knockabout element that has characterised

the MPs' expenses saga, while not forgetting that the issue of transparency in public life is something we take lightly at our peril,' confirms writer Tony Saint. 'It didn't prove too difficult to poke fun at MPs' general comportment on this issue.'

Bagpipe playing, Irn-Bru drinking Martin is contrasted with disco dancing Brooke (scenes which the dance-phobic Anna Maxwell Martin found 'absolutely hideous and horrifying in every way' to film), who comes from the United States, where political transparency is more prevalent. But this is more than a clash of cultures – it is the old guard meeting the new, and stubbornly refusing to change even when it's clear they've been caught with their fingers in the jar.

Though Brooke eventually forced the request through, taking her case to the High Court in the process, publication of the expenses was repeatedly delayed. Instead, an anonymous whistleblower sold the files to the Telegraph, and the rest is history.

'I met Heather many times and she has been involved right through the development and production,' Saint reveals. 'She's an impressive and formidable woman to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude.'

On Expenses, BBC Four, February 23

week@work

TRADE SECRETS

HOW TO SURVIVE A BBC BOARD

Big interview coming up? If you're having a wobble, the journalism trainee scheme can help. Week at Work asked them for some tips...

...so don't forget to buy us a drink if you get that promotion. Thanks to recruitment manager Sian Ferguson; HR and development manager Rani Randhawa, multi-media trainer Ramaa Sharma from CoJo and Claire Prosser, director of the journalism trainee scheme

APPLICATIONS

- 1 Save a copy of the job description so that you can refer back to it before the interview
- 2 If a contact is listed in the advert don't be afraid to call them – but be sure to do a bit of research first and don't just ask about things that are covered in the advert

3 When filling in the form, provide strong and compelling evidence that proves you can do the job

4 Don't forget to mention organisation, teamwork and communication skills – they allow you to use your specialist skills to best effect. Ignore them at your peril!

5 Look at the attributes that the job specification requires and don't dismiss the 'desirable' qualities – the interviewer may turn to these if they have people on the list who have all the 'essential' skills.

6 Be aware that if there are tailored questions in the application, they will always be part of the selection process

7 It is okay to use bullet points on the form. Make sure that your answers are focused and tailored to the job description.

INTERVIEWS

8 Before your interview, look over the competencies listed in the job specification and make sure that you have at least two examples that demonstrate that you have those skills

9 Do your research and make sure that you are prepared. If you are applying to a radio station, make sure you've listened to it and know its audience. Be specific about what you could do in the role to capture the imagination of the people who are interviewing you.

10 Be positive and enthusiastic: show them you have energy and ideas.

11 Think about the current trends and buzz words in your field. If you've got skills in those areas, articulate them. Don't take your skills for granted.

12 Make sure you're comfortable answering questions on editorial guidelines and know your mandatory referrals.

13 Use current examples rather than ones you've dredged up from your past. Try to make them relevant to the job you are applying for and if you have BBC examples, use them – they are more likely to resonate with the interviewers.

14 If you are asked about a time when you've worked with a difficult person, be very careful about your answer. The interviewers don't want a long rant, they want to know how you dealt with it. Claire Prosser warns that this question brings a lot of people down as it reveals how little self-awareness they have of their role in situations.

YOUR TOP TIPS



Rupert Brun, head of technology for A&M, BBC FM&T

TAKE OWNERSHIP – If you did something or led a team that did, say 'I' to make it clear it was something you did, rather than 'we', which can leave the panel wondering whether you actually did it or just made the tea. And LISTEN TO THE QUESTION!



Diane McGregor, departmental manager, CIO Team, FM&T

DON'T TAKE THE QUESTIONS TOO LITERALLY. If someone says, 'tell me about a programme idea you commissioned in which...' and you don't have an example that perfectly fits, look for the underlying competency and construct your answer around that. You could say 'I don't have an example of that, but if you want to know about my ability to x, y, z, then...' The interviewer is looking for evidence of your abilities, rather than a very specific example.



Richard Courtice, project technologist, FM&T

GO ON A COURSE: I did the 'career development' one and met a wide range of people who had experiences to share – not just colleagues in the same line of work as me. We identified our skills and I also discovered the black arts of CV writing, the BBC board and networking.



BBC IN ACTION



'Take a helping of The Crystal Maze, a dollop of The Adventure Game and season with a dash of Doctor Who and Mission: 2110 is the result.'

In a post-apocalyptic landscape, the children battle with nine foot Roboidz as they journey through space and time, guided only by mentor Caleb (played by Stuart Goldsmith, inset).

Mission:2110 is a new 13-episode sci-fi game

show for children produced by BBC Scotland and film crew that we are creating a show that looks sensational while remaining sane throughout all of our logistical challenges.'

It is, he says, credit to the 'fantastic production team and film crew that we are creating a show that looks sensational while remaining sane throughout all of our logistical challenges.'

Mission:2110 txs in the spring.

Behind you: director James Morgan, series producer Nick Hopkin and a friendly Roboidz

COMING UP

♦ BBC Films and AL Films are developing a film together about the celebrated Olympic rivalry between Steve Ovett and

Sebastian Coe, due to be released prior to the 2012 Olympics. Writer William Davies (Flushed Away, Johnny English, Twins) has been signed up to write the screenplay, based on Pat Butcher's account of the rivalry, 'The Perfect Distance'.



CHANGING PLACES

Cerys Matthews (pictured) is set to return to digital radio station BBC 6 Music to host her own weekend show, taking over from Jon Richardson who is leaving after three-and-a-half years to commit to his career as a stand-up comedian.

Graham Mitchell has been appointed to the newly created post of events executive producer working in the Entertainment and Events Department at BBC Scotland, moving from his role of series producer on *The Culture Show*...

Tom Giles moves from being an executive producer for BBC Current Affairs to become the new editor of *Panorama*, taking over from Sandy Smith, who is moving to become the new executive editor for *The One Show*.

WHAT TO WEAR

Philip Smith, broadcast assistant, Steve Lamacq show, 6 Music

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

My jeans and top are from Topman, cardigan from H&M and my trainers, from Superga's, are great except when it's raining, like today, when they get soaked through.

Do you have to dress a particular way for work? Chris Evans once said that everyone at 6 Music dressed like they were in band. So that's the only dress stipulation here.

Are you experimental in your style?

Not at all. If I could get away with jeans and a black t-shirt I'd be happy, but my girlfriend keeps trying to get me to 'wear more colour'. With that in mind I've moved towards a white t-shirt recently. That's as experimental as I'd go.

Have you had any fashion nightmares?

I used to want to be Danny McNamara from Embrace, so when I was 15 I went and bought the same trainers as him and grew my hair like him. Looking back on the mid 90s, he's not remembered as one of the leaders of fashion.

Whose wardrobe would you most like to rummage through?

Russell Brand. Only so I can throw out all of his flip flops. Skinny jeans and flip flops just don't work. I'm not having that.

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

My Superman outfit was pretty special. A couple of years ago I went to interview the new Superman, Brandon Routh, in Paris. I showed him a picture of me aged four, dressed as Superman and asked him if he could feel the responsibility on his shoulders. The worried look in his eye suggested he was more concerned with when the interview was over and what other family photographs I would be presenting to him.



blogbites

What we've found while trawling the blogs this week

BBC News on iPhone

Our Future Media boss Erik Huggers made it clear today that our BBC News and BBC Sport services will be the first official BBC apps to launch on the iPhone.

If you want to see a demo of the BBC News app, David Madden, exec product manager from our mobile team, can walk you through. This is an exciting development for us and a natural progression after providing the best of our journalism – news, sport, weather, travel – on mobile devices for the past 10 years. Our approach has always been simple: web equals mobile; mobile equals web. If we have made great content for our websites – with your licence fee money – then mobile is just another platform to make it available to you.

Pete Clifton, head of editorial development, multimedia at BBC News

bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2010/02/bbc_news_on_iphone.html

Which side are you on?

How old are you – and do you work in the private or public sector? Answer me these two questions, and there's a fair bet I can tell you the kind of recession you've had.

Today's labour-market figures point up two great divides in the labour market experience of British workers in this recession. With few exceptions, this has been a private sector recession – and a recession of the young. For the sake of the public finances, and our broader society, the balance needs to be reversed in the recovery.

Stephanie Flanders, BBC economics editor

bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/stephanieflanders/2010/02/which_side_are_you_on.html

The Death Card

My ceaseless search for programme ideas has led me into some strange places and explains how I came to be in a Galashiels hotel and sitting in front of a fortune teller as he flipped over a tarot card to reveal 'Death'. The Reader – for that is what these dealers in destiny are called – assured me that this card rarely predicts an actual death. It was more likely to signify the end of one life-chapter and the start of the next. Having just moved from Glasgow to the Borders, I told him that this seemed like a credible explanation. I was trying to be polite.

Jeff Zycinski, head of radio at BBC Scotland

bbc.co.uk/blogs/jeffzycinski/

EDITORIAL GUIDANCE



Editorial policy has just updated its guidance on the use of blogs and third-party social networking sites (such as Facebook or Twitter). The newly issued advice on BBC use of social networking, microblogs and other third party websites can be found at tinyurl.com/BBCSocMed and for personal use the updated guidance is here: tinyurl.com/PersonalSocMed

Take more local soundings and report life beyond military lines

by Cathy Loughran

WHEN IT CAME, as he dreaded one day it would, Shoaib Sharifi's kidnapping in south eastern Afghanistan happened because he went against his own best advice. 'I was betrayed by a source – not trapped or hijacked, I hadn't done anything wrong, gone the wrong way,' the Afghan freelance producer recalls.

'The sub-commander of the group I was going to meet simply called our captors and we, in effect, handed ourselves over to them. I'd put my faith in someone else and ignored my own hard-won knowledge.'

Sharifi was taken hostage, with another Afghan journalist and an Iraqi photographer, by bandits in Kunar province while on an assignment for the Guardian. Accused of being US spies, they feared both the possibility of being handed over to a larger group in Pakistan and that they would fail to persuade their guards that they had no western affiliations.

After eight days and many tense hours of pleading, the kidnappers were convinced that they were who they said they were – freelance journalists, too poor to raise a ransom.

Sharifi, a former BBC Pashto presenter and BBC World News producer in Kabul, puts his survival down to having several back stories, including one to fit possible kidnapping: 'I was one of the few kidnapped Afghan journalists to survive. Others have been shot or beheaded,' he says, just months after the ordeal.

'It was an unwanted experience but it certainly adds to your experience and the way you'll approach things in the future.'

It is his depth of experience, in 14 years as a frontline journalist in Afghanistan including many years working with the BBC, that led him to make such an impassioned plea at last month's BBC News Festival, to be given parity with western colleagues: 'I'm a journalist, why call me a fixer? It hurts,' he told his audience.

A former editor-in-chief of the Kabul Times, his call for a ban on the term 'fixer', to describe what he does, struck a chord: 'I've been besieged by BBC 'converts', he says. 'When I produced the Downing Street debate between Brown and Karzai, people were telling me they'd already erased the word from their minds.'

His case is that local journalists, who are often taking the biggest risks and who are the people left behind to face the consequences when media organisations like the BBC pull

After his own kidnap and the murder of his colleague, Afghan producer Shoaib Sharifi urges the BBC to strive to tell the fuller story in Afghanistan



Shoaib Sharifi reporting in southern Afghanistan and (inset) at this year's News Festival

out, deserve the same status as their western counterparts.

People like his former colleague Abdul Samad Rohani, whose regular reports and broadcasts for the BBC Pashto service made him the 'voice' of the BBC to many Afghans. Despite undergoing BBC hostile environment training, he was murdered in Helmand province in October 2008 after being lured to a meeting by a phone call. His body was dumped at a roadside the next day. He'd been shot in the head.

His death was disowned by the Taliban who expressed regret at the loss of a 'fair journalist', Sharifi says. Despite several weeks' of investigations, no one was held responsible.

'Rohani's death was shocking and it brought

home to everyone that local journalists can pay the price for large media organisations' freedom of expression,' Sharifi says. It also challenged the assumption that Afghans were generally likely to be safer and freer to operate than western journalists, he believes.

A BBC safety team flew to the region immediately after Rohani's assassination and evacuated a colleague who was working with him to Kabul. That journalist is still effectively in hiding.

Sharifi argues that the BBC and other foreign news organisations could further reduce risk by consulting local experts before they make almost any move.

He is critical of the annual opinion poll the BBC co-commissions in Afghanistan. The latest results for 2009 suggest that 70 percent of Afghans are optimistic about the future; 72 percent thought President Karzai was doing a good job and 83 percent said it was right for the US to bring down the Taliban in 2001.

Sharifi thinks those findings are 'questionable'. Conducted by Afghan researchers, he says they take no account of low literacy levels and the likelihood that inaccessible rural areas, with greater Taliban support, would not be surveyed.

'Every year we're surprised by the BBC poll. But the BBC is the strongest voice in Afghanistan and when the Afghan media run a week of reports that the BBC says a majority are against the Taliban, the implications for local staff are serious,' he says.

'The next time I have to go into a Taliban area, I'll be hoping that they haven't read those headlines. As reporters for the BBC, we will get the blame for the results. That not only endangers our security, it limits our area of operation. It also feels to me like someone is betraying the BBC's credibility.'

Currently London-based, Sharifi will return to Afghanistan in coming months to work on special reports for *Newsnight* and BBC World News. He doesn't underestimate the need for the best safety measures possible to protect journalists, but is critical of 'embed-heavy reporting', including of the current Moshtarak offensive, which he believes ignores civilian stories, and the Taliban/insurgents' viewpoint.

He accepts that the additional security which might allow more off-base reporting would be costly, but argues: 'We had ten days' notice of this current offensive. The BBC should have spoken to the Taliban then and said, on day one, two and three of the operation we'll come live to you, with an interpreter. The military are saying it's a success, what do you say?'

Sharifi insists he is a critical friend: 'I love the BBC, I defend its values... it's given me all the editorial standards I have.'

But there is one last thing: 'I'd like us to be one media community in Kabul, not split into the Afghan media, Afghans working for the west (the 'Afghan Press Club') and then the foreign correspondents. That would make a difference.'

'SURVEY CONFORMS TO HIGH STANDARDS'

■ RESPONDING to what Sharifi has told Ariel, BBC News stressed that it takes the safety of everyone it employs 'extremely seriously – whether staff or local people on the ground', and that the industry as a whole is committed to safety training.

The opinion polls that the BBC has commissioned over recent years in Afghanistan, and in Iraq, are carried out by D3 Systems, 'a reliable and respected pollster', a spokesman said: 'The BBC works in partnership with ABC News of

America and ARD of Germany to ensure that the questions, the fieldwork and the presentation of results conform to the highest professional standards. The methodology – which is published – has not been challenged either by governments or other polling organisations. Polling is carried out in every province.'

News also admits it is fully aware that embedding does not tell the whole story: 'Obviously UK audiences are very interested in what is happening to British troops in Af-

ghanistan, but we also need to tell the wider story of the impact of the conflict on Afghan civilians.'

'We recently went to Jalalabad to assess support for the Taliban among the local population. We also focused on the economy in a recent piece from Herat. But this generally involves travelling around the country, which carries a high level of risk, so planning such deployments takes a great deal of organisation and cost. We will continue however to try to do this as far as we are able.'

'Questionable poll results can endanger our security'

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

Inspire not intimidate

Peter Horrocks (Ariel, February 9) is quite right. Change is coming (in fact, it's already with us) and we do all have to embrace it. But he fails to acknowledge that many valued BBC colleagues will need support through these changes.

They may not have all the skills and knowledge they require and may lack confidence. What they need is training, encouragement and good leadership and not what many will see as threats.

Yes, some people will choose to move on rather than change, but a vast majority will take on new ideas and new ways of working with enthusiasm (as they always have) led by good, inspiring and creative leaders.

Ed Goodridge

multimedia sbj, BBC South West

Everyday People

It was interesting to read in Ariel last week that our director of people had a jolly day working on *Blue Peter* to see what life is like at the coalface. More telling was the article published in The Times business section the day before which revealed BBC HR executives occupy 10 of the top 20 best paid jobs in the world of public sector HR.

I am sure Lucy Adams earns her £320,000, but many staff and casuals who have struggled in their dealings with BBC People would like to see more of the HR budget directed at providing a better frontline service.

Peter Kendall

senior operator, BBC London

Toys r bust

Re your article 'Investment in content, not quick wins, sees BBC Mags ride recession' (Ariel, February 16); while I was delighted to read how well this arm of the BBC was doing, I couldn't help contrasting the headline with the poor quality free gifts that have been attached to recent editions of the CBeebies magazine which my wife and I buy for our eager three year old son.

Last week's Wiggly Crocodiles fell to pieces within an hour of purchase and we were unable to sketch on the free plastic wipe clear Etch-A-Sketch type device. I could list other examples from previous issues, but suffice to say that they are all adding to the pile of discarded plastic items in the environment.

Beautiful locations breed the best ideas

Having just watched the Ariel online short film about Kingswood Warren, I can't help thinking what a shame it is that the BBC has sold such a wonderful building, in such a superb location. Much of the technology we all use originated at Kingswood Warren over the last 60 years, and I'm convinced that the location helped play a part in creating the right kind of creative environment for the generations of scientists and engineers who came up with all these innovative ideas.

This was never highlighted more so than last year. There was a series of short films about great scientists and engineers from the past on the *One Show*. We were shown the houses where they came up with their greatest ideas. What

struck me is that they all had a study with a peaceful garden to look out over, the kind of place where you can really 'think' and contemplate. They all had inspiring locations in which to work.

This idea that you can pick creative people up from one location and put them down anywhere else in the UK and they will still feel and perform the same, is sheer madness. Surroundings are everything.

We can't go on simply making decisions based on money. Giving staff the right sort of creative environment in which to work can generate far more money for the corporation in the long run than the short term sale of the land.

Martin Sawyer, *Future Media & Technology*

Is this

not in stark contrast to the green agenda being delivered

to children when they watch the channel, with programmes such as *Tommy Zoom* (pictured), *Eco-Beebies*, *Dirt Girl* and *The Green Balloon Club*?

I appreciate that you can't expect much with a low cover price, but instead of disappointing young readers/viewers when these items rapidly fail or fall to bits, wouldn't it be better to stop the practice of including such free gifts?

David Crickmore

producer, BBC Leeds

Pauline Cooke, Publisher of BBC pre-school magazines, replies: I'm sorry

to hear that you are disappointed with the quality of some of our cover-mounted gifts. We spend a great deal of time and effort to ensure that our gifts are good quality, meet all safety standards, add value, and appeal to this age group. We'd be happy to replace the gifts you mention.

The environmental impact of our products is an issue we take very seriously: all of our paper is FSC certified (we were the first publisher in the world to use FSC paper) and we're exploring ways to reduce the environmental impact of plastics (we've already switched to oxo-biodegradable wrappings for our subscrip-

tions issues).

There is overwhelming evidence that free gifts are an important part of the children's magazine package, for both children and parents, but it is an issue that we'll continue to review so thank you for your feedback.

Barking mad

On a recent (farcical) report on the *Today* programme, it was suggested that dog ownership equates to the same carbon footprint as a family sized car.

May I suggest that, as a solution to this situation, the canine in question be hoisted onto the roof rack and 'plumbed' into the fuel intake of the car engine. The flatus produced would, I expect, propel the car not only down the road but into the very future of carbon neutral technology.

Nick Young

BBC Look East

Basket a bargain?

Despite the expenses controversies that are making indignant columnists froth at the mouth, I'm well aware that I don't work at the BBC for the staff 'perks' that are so much a part of company life these days. If I'd wanted those I would have got a job at Enormocom Broadcasting Enterprises. However, a small staff discount at the BBC Shop is one thing to look forward to on those rare occasions when I decide to treat myself.

Yesterday, I went online to bbc-

shop.com to buy a dvd box set of Mike Leigh At The BBC. Non-staff price: £42.49. BBC staff price: £41.99. A whole 50 pence off. Or 1.1 percent to you, guv. Add in postage and packing and the grand total comes to the nice round figure of £44.44. To be honest, it felt like rather an insult.

A couple of clicks away, however, Amazon is offering the same box set for £39.98 – and no postage costs.

I think the BBC Shop just lost another staff customer, should it care about such matters.

Vaughan Simons

content producer, Vision Multiplatform

Close match



More lookalikes... Steve Mitchell, head of multimedia programmes at Radio News (pictured right) and Giovanni Trapattoni, manager of the Republic of Ireland football team.

Paul Burnell

bj, Manchester

Left with no choice

My Christmas present from the BBC this year was a stark choice. Return to work after a career break (which I wanted to do) but with none of the

flexibility in hours I requested, or give up my career in order to look after a two year old and help care for immediate family members with chronic disabling illnesses.

I always wanted to work for the BBC and never expected to earn big bucks. Staff benefits and working for an employer who cared about its output and its employees made that more than acceptable.

But that once caring employer is now hard to find. I didn't want to have to choose between my family and my job, but I was told that the BBC could not accommodate any flexibility in hours or occasional but regular home working to allow me to juggle my caring duties. This was from a department in which I used to regularly work shifts from home and where the output includes many pre-recorded, weekly or feature programmes for which research etc could be carried out remotely.

I took authorised time out from my career because of terrible personal misfortune, I did not intend to end my career, but I now find myself unemployed in a harsh economic downturn.

Count me as one of the discontented (ex) crew to which PD James referred. Whenever I hear about the excesses of the few in the BBC it makes my blood boil.

Sarah Tempest, *ex-producer, general factual, audio and music*

Tea is cheaper than air

I wonder if one of your more intrepid hacks might be despatched to Bush House canteen to investigate the hole in the space-time continuum that seems to have developed therein.

I speak, of course, of the so-called 'paper cup paradox', wherein an empty disposable cup will, we are now informed, cost you 50p. An empty disposable cup filled with tea will, however, cost you a mere 40p.

Has Bush House canteen perfected the dark art of self-regenerating tea? Or are they simply making a loss on every cup of tea sold? Or, as my more nefarious colleagues may suggest, is this just the latest attempt at shameless profiteering (and an especially brainless one)?

I think we should be told. Oh, and don't forget to take advantage of their special offer of two napkins for 20p. I believe that's cost price.

John Samuelson

trainee studio manager

OBITUARY

VALENTINA VELEVSKA

It is painful to realise that my small team has become even smaller. Valentina Velevska, one of five producers in the BBC World Service Macedonian section in London, has died aged just 45.

Valentina was part of the BBC team in London for almost ten years. She worked on news and current af-

fairs, analysis, features and even music and entertainment. All from a self op and, most of the time, alone in the cubicle. She was



especially proud of her programme on 'lustration' in former Communist countries and the views and the big debate it produced in Macedonia – her favourite programmes were special projects on global issues.

Plagued by bouts of ill health, she was one of the most courageous and optimistic people I've ever known. Everybody who knew her would know what I am talking about. She had endless curiosity, enthusiasm and passion for work. She used to

tell me she didn't mind being persistent and asking questions all the time because that's how you got your answers in journalism.

Maybe that's why she wanted to spend a day – and she did – with her favourite BBC programme, *Newsnight*!

She was always a journalist. Before joining the BBC in London she worked for Macedonian television youth programme, for youth magazines and for a popular daily newspaper, Vecer, where she was deputy edi-

tor and had her own column.

She was very proud to work for the BBC World Service and to be able to make a difference with our programmes in Macedonia. She was also very proud of her family – her husband Vasil and especially her young daughter Anna who was doing exceptionally well at school. And very quickly she fell in love with London.

There is a big void in our small team. We are missing Valentina.

Zaneta Skerlev

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V-Lok

V-Lok Battery-System

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Production Manager, Culture Show Glasgow 8D/Ref: 262222 C 07-Mar-10 A 10 months	Senior Broadcast Journalist, US Edition, News Website Washington 8/9D/Ref: 268396 C 09-Mar-10 A 06 months
Production Manager, Factual Development Glasgow 8D/Ref: 261710 C 25-Feb-10 A 12 months	Senior Broadcast Journalist, News Interactive Nottingham 8D/Ref: 254370 E C 05-Mar-10
Script Editor, EastEnders Elstree 7P/Ref: 267925 E C 07-Mar-10 A 2 years	Newyddiadurwr Darlledu Cardiff 7D/Ref: 265812 E C 25-Feb-10 A 06 months
Development Editor, EastEnders Elstree 7P/Ref: 267924 E C 07-Mar-10 A 2 years	Breakfast Producer (Broadcast Journalist), Radio Kent Tunbridge Wells 5/7D/Ref: 266230 C 02-Mar-10
District Journalists Belfast - Broadcasting House 7D/Ref: 259467 C 01-Mar-10 Various	Broadcast Journalist, BBC Radio Humberside Hull 5/7D/Ref: 263637 E C 28-Feb-10
Vision Operator Glasgow 6H/Ref: 251940 E C 07-Mar-10	Broadcast Journalist / Newyddiadurwr Darlledu, WIWO Cardiff 5/7D/Ref: 262021 E C 07-Mar-10 A 09 months
Production Co-ordinator Belfast - Broadcasting House 5H/Ref: 266760 C 01-Mar-10 A 10 months	Multi-Media Researcher, BBC World Service London Bush House 5D/Ref: 266926 C 28-Feb-10 A 06 months
Music Co-ordinator, 1Xtra London Yalding House 5D/Ref: 267209 C 08-Mar-10 A 09 months	
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JOURNALISM	
Deputy Head of Newsgathering London TV Centre SM2/Ref: 268388 C 01-Mar-10	Head of International Training London Bush House 11S/Ref: 267821 C 07-Mar-10
Executive Producer, Current Affairs London SM2/Ref: 267700 C 03-Mar-10 A 12 months	Senior Economic Adviser, Fair Trading London White City 10D/Ref: 268264 E C 08-Mar-10
Editor, US Edition, News Website Washington 10D/Ref: 268395 C 09-Mar-10 A 12 months	Marketing Planning Manager London White City 10D/Ref: 266320 E C 01-Mar-10
Head of Multi-platform and Development London 10D/Ref: 267547 C 03-Mar-10 A 06 months	Head of Audiences, Vision Multiplatform London Media Centre 10D/Ref: 265541 E C 01-Mar-10
	Business Accounting Team Lead/Arweinydd Tim Cyfrifyddu Busnes Cardiff 10D/Ref: 265033 C 25-Feb-10
	Assistant Editor (Technical) TV News, West Midlands Birmingham 9D/Ref: 268187 C 05-Mar-10 A 06 months
	Programme Manager, Future Now London White City 9D/Ref: 266456 C 01-Mar-10 A 12 months
	Territory Account Manager Reading 9D/Ref: 266099 C 28-Feb-10 A 06 months
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	Metadata Resources Manager Manchester 9D/Ref: 264718 C 08-Mar-10
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	Marketing Campaign Manager London White City 7D/Ref: 266324 E C 01-Mar-10
	Marketing and Fundraising Executive London White City 6D/Ref: 268452 C 02-Mar-10 A 12 months
	Marketing Planner London White City 6D/Ref: 266481 E C 01-Mar-10
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	Regional Officer, BBC Children in Need London Bush House 5D/Ref: 268126 E C 04-Mar-10 A 12 months
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	HR Advisor, BBC Worldwide London Media Centre 2W/Ref: 266247 E C 01-Mar-10
	Multi-media Creative London White City Under Review/Ref: 267467 C 02-Mar-10 A 12 months
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	Senior Technologist London 9D/Ref: 253514 E C 03-Mar-10
	TECHNOLOGY
	Manager, Transmission Operations London Bush House 11S/Ref: 256499 C 01-Mar-10 A 12 months
	Manager, Transmission Developments London Bush House 11S/Ref: 256496 C 01-Mar-10 A 12 months
	Test Analyst London Broadcast Centre Media Village 7D/Ref: 268408 C 03-Mar-10
	Web (Front End) Developer – Solutions Team, Fabric London White City 7D/Ref: 267003 C 04-Mar-10 A 06 months
	Interaction Designer London White City 7D/Ref: 267002 C 04-Mar-10 A 06 months
	Developer – Solutions Team, Fabric London White City 7D/Ref: 267001 C 03-Mar-10 A 06 months
	BBC WORLDWIDE
	Talent Accounting Business Project Manager London 1W/Ref: 267632 E C 04-Mar-10
	Senior Production Coordinator Channels London Media Centre 2W/Ref: 267022 E C 07-Mar-10
	Audience Feedback and Compliance Assistant London 4W/Ref: 266784 E C 07-Mar-10

See Attachment

Never a dull day

Wiltshire newsreader Nicola McHugh goes back to her roots for a stint with Radio Ulster

POLITICAL CLIFF HANGERS and showdowns, a 600lb bomb and that little matter of the First Minister’s wife and her teenage lover. The last six months were far from dull in Radio Ulster’s newsroom.

I came on attachment from a local station in England where I’d been news reading, but in Belfast the radio rota also involved reporting and producing. I was thrown out of my comfort zone but it meant I left with better skills and a grip of new equipment.

It was good being back in my home patch though. I am from Northern Ireland and, oddly enough, the first story I was sent to report on was in my tiny



home village. (That flood had nothing to do with me...)

The shifts were busy – fast paced and at times intense. I rarely worked with the same team for more than a week at a go and had to keep altering my focus between programmes and bulletins.

One of the benefits of such a relentless pace and switching roles is that people are then much more aware of the demands of others in the overall output and daily there’d be meetings between bulletins and programmes about how stories would be covered. I couldn’t have asked for a more interesting period in which to have worked in Northern Ireland.

The night the current affairs programme *Spotlight* broke the Iris Robinson sex scandal was fascinating – as was the fallout over the next few weeks.

My final shift was on the bulletins desk at midnight on February 4 – less than five minutes after the DUP announced they’d found a way to do a deal with Sinn Fein on policing and justice, and in doing so keep the devolved government running.

The newsroom was still buzzing at a quarter to two and I knew I’d miss it. I’ve been lucky to have had a great experience on attachment. I’m back at my substantive post in Wiltshire now, and have brought with me out of the buzz of Northern Ireland a greater sense of calm and more confidence to suggest stories and treatments.

Been anywhere nice? Send your attachment stories to Clare Bolt

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ELLARA WAKELY

LEARNING MANAGER, BBC PROMS AND BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Do you have a musical background?

I was given a violin when I was eight, and as I grew up under the Greater London Authority I got a free place at a Saturday music school. Mum encouraged me, but we're not one of those musical families. If the London school system had been doing home economics I might have ended up as a cook!

Did you intend to become a professional musician?

I joined a local youth orchestra when I was a teenager and started writing my own music, which I went on to study at university. My mum is Colombian

and I'd been to the country as a child, so after university I went out there to teach English. Only when I arrived they invited me to work in the music department.

...and you built a career in music education

People who studied music go into all sorts of careers – I find that musicians are everywhere. Within the BBC I think we could probably create countless orchestras of people who aren't full time musicians.

How did you come to work for the BBC?

The Proms operate with a small core team, but for two months in the summer they double their numbers to cover an intensive period of events. I thought it would be an exciting place to work and I applied.

And was it exciting?

It exposed me to a world of work around music and live performance that I had no idea existed. That job opened lots of doors, including touring with orchestras, which was a highlight of my early 20s. I spent three weeks in central America with a baroque ensemble of 15 mad Italians, in cockroach filled buses.

Do you have any regrets about not being a full time musician?

Not at all. I was never a performer and it's very much a lifestyle choice. Lots of musicians end up married to other musicians and touring makes home life tricky. I work with the BBC Symphony Orchestra and I'm always impressed with how much the musicians do – 13 Proms, a season at the Barbican and about 90 concerts a year. That's a lot of playing. It's high pressure and your lifestyle has to work around being part of a huge group.

CV

Degree: BA Music and History, University of Birmingham

First job: Sandwich-making at the Tower of London

Career highlight: Working for the British Council in Colombia

What does a learning manager for the Proms and Symphony Orchestra do?

It's all about audience participation and getting people involved. Often people see learning and they think that's kids, but our focus is also on young people, families and amateur musicians. The family orchestra is a perfect example: we have a five year old who is learning the violin and an 85 year old who plays the clarinet.

What are you working on now?

We run a young composers scheme for 12-18 year olds with Composer Labs and I spent last weekend with about 70 teenagers, all keen composers. My job is getting musicians to take part, finding the young composers and marketing the whole project.

What are the best bits about your job?

Being face-to-face with the audience. I talk to them on the phone, meet them and take them through the whole event. People are often surprised that the BBC does these events and creates opportunities like this for people to take part.

What do you like doing outside work?

I like making my own clothes, which is coming in handy as I'm having a baby in July and many of them no longer fit me. I still play piano although haven't done any composing for a while.

Are you playing music to your baby?

Yes, although I'm not quite sure if it can hear yet! I'll start developing its tastes in the next few months.

What will you (both) be listening to?

Because I work in classical music, at home I listen to 6 Music and people who are alive at the moment. I also find myself listening to 1970s rock, which is probably a bit of my parents' generation ingrained in me.

Do you think all kids should be given music lessons?

Yes, because I've seen the benefits. But it's not about becoming a musician, and I would steer clear of getting them to be the best in their class.

So what's next for you?

Right now it's the young composer labs, which are happening all around the country. We've just done London and the next stop is Cardiff, then Truro. On April 22 we'll launch the whole programme of Proms events for the summer. And then I'm having my first summer off in five years to have a baby, so I'm trying to slightly slow down.

Interview by Sue Llewellyn

foreign report



LORNA MILTON

ON A MEMORABLE TRIP TO A KENYAN ORPHANAGE

'THAT'LL NEVER WORK!' Standing in a Luton car park I could not see how three bits of folded out plastic was going to get me on air for a two and half hour live show from Kenya.

'That' was a satellite ISDN – kit never seen before at BBC Three Counties, let alone used. We'd borrowed it to cover the opening of an orphanage, the culmination of a Bedford woman's campaign to help Aids orphans in the village of Utange, [reported in Ariel, January 26]. I've covered her work for two years on *Lorna Milton in the Afternoon*.

We arrived to intense, dry heat, and began recording material in and around Utange. I wanted to capture the real Africa. When a taxi driver in the rundown village of Shanzu said: 'Are you sure you want to go here? OK, well just be very careful,' I felt we'd left the tourist trail. It was uncomfortable, tense and as a white woman I was a novelty.

The contrast between the comforts of our tourist hotel and local life was stark. Standing in a confined Utange mud hut, home to a woman and four children, seeing the effects Aids was having on her, the journalist side of me went out the window. I was in tears. The wine bottles outside her home told the story. Like many she had no education, little money for food, or to travel to find work, or send her children to school. She lived day to day, drinking cheap wine and selling herself to local men. 100 shillings (£1) for sex with a condom, 500 shillings (£5) without. This is why Aids is spreading round the village, why one in 25 children in this part of Africa are orphans and how the children at her feet came to be born.

I broadcast for a week from Kenya for Three Counties, thanks to that satellite ISDN, ending with the triumphant opening of the orphanage.

The adventure continued to the end. As I waited at Mombasa for a delayed flight, airport security approached. My passport was taken and I was marched onto the runway. There sat my purple suitcase, cordoned off, and I was repeatedly accused of being a spy or a terrorist. Terrified, I pulled out all the broadcast equipment and tried to explain. I've never had such a reaction to the words, 'BBC'. Now security wanted to know if I'd met the Queen! I decided having seen Her Majesty being driven out of Buckingham Palace while on a day trip to London counted. 'Yes, yes I have!' I screamed. Suddenly I had five new 'best friends' and the next minute I was back in Departures. That sat kit was great, but it also landed me in the most frightening but memorable situation to date.

green room

THE ARIELATOR

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

DOWNSIDE The ritual consumption of pancakes last Tuesday – traditionally marred only by arguments about whether to use an instant or homemade batter and the occasional miss-flip – proved surprisingly controversial...

Blue Peter presenter **Joel Defries** caused a stir in the Buckinghamshire market town of Olney by running in their world famous



Shrove Tuesday race. Since 1445 the pancake race has officially only been open to women who live in Olney, but committee members let Joel run on the condition that he donned an amusing costume and didn't win. Reports in the Telegraph that residents were 'furious' with this break from tradition were rebuffed by the Northampton Chronicle which pointed out that past runners have included 'male actors from the tv comedy *'Allo, 'Allo'* and 1940s comedian Wilfred Pickles.

Radio 1's **Huw Stephens** (right) simply wanted to cook a pancake on air during his Tuesday night new music show – but there was the small matter of Health & Safety to attend to first. After reading out the many regulations he would need to follow before even getting a pan warm, including having security on standby in the studio with a fire blanket and notifying authorities about the amount of cooking oil he was going to use, he told listeners 'quite frankly, we couldn't be bothered'.



EARWIGGING

OVERHEARD AT THE BBC

...you're supposed to take it out of your underpants...

...you know that story about the man who likes to shower with the squirrel on his head... do you have a contact number for him?...

...I'm a lawyer, I don't get involved in moral issues...

...She's a woman at a bad age...

...You just pour it like a Yeti...



TREASURE HUNTERS



On the run: Aneka Rice, presenter Becky Betts and BA Alexajain Wills-Bradfield

A SURPRISE ENCOUNTER for Radio Norfolk presenter Becky Betts last week when celebrity jumpsuit wearer Aneka Rice turned up on popular Sunday morning show *Treasure Quest*.

An homage to 80s series *Treasure Hunt*, in the BBC version Betts must travel Norfolk in the station's radio car solving clues set by the dastardly Questmaster with the help of studio bound presenter David Clayton and the guidance of listeners.

Racing against time across Norfolk with no map every Sunday morning would be taxing enough for most people, but it seems meeting the original skyrunner was a step too far for

Becky. 'It's Aneka flipping Rice' she screamed on catching sight of the presenter at Norfolk Castle, before bursting into tears. Aneka remained unflappable – 'Can I just say listeners, she's crying – and I'm dribbling slightly,' she purred.

Assistant editor Martyn Weston was upbeat. 'It made for terrific radio,' he said. 'Fortunately we only had one complaint from a listener with tinnitus due to Becky's intense screaming on spotting Aneka.' But what did Aneka herself think? 'Who needs a helicopter when you have a radio car and the Norwich one-way system?' she quipped.

SINGING IN THE SQUARE

THE EASTENDERS LIVE EPISODE on Friday may have been a first for the series, but one thing remained pre-recorded – the classic theme by Simon May. So classic, that it's been released as a single three times...

First in 1986 was Anita 'Angie Watts' Dobson's (pictured) paean to the long-term relationship, *Anyone Can Fall in Love*. This funky number comes complete with outrageous guitar solo from Dobson's husband, Queen's Brian May, which segues effortlessly into the resigned 'weeee wow wee wow' whistle at the end of the theme. It also contains the remarkable lyric 'Side by side/ Satisfied/ To stay right here in

one square forever'...

Two years later *Songs of Praise* decided to have a go with a religious take on the theme, *Glory be to God*. Don't worry – the chorus stayed true to the emerging seven-syllable rule by adding the words 'on high' to the song's title.

Best of the bunch is the jazzy coffee-table soul of the Sharon Benson/Simon May effort *I'll Always Believe In You* from 1993, which scores extra points for at least having a hint of subtlety and for its prodigious use of saxophone.

Strangely, there's an overriding theme of positivity to each song quite at odds with the grim realities of daily life in Albert Square. There's obviously room for a new grittier attempt, and today's new breed of streetwise pop-stars are just the ones to do it. An N-Dubz version can surely only be around the corner.



WE HEAR THAT...

SPOTTED: DRAGONS' DEN host Evan Davies being mobbed by star-struck ten year-olds as he struggled to get through the turnstiles at White City underground station after coming off air at Radio 4. Who knew *Today* was so popular with the kids?

A MYSTERIOUS pizza arrived at main reception in TVC last week, apparently ordered by the Business Unit. With no one claiming it, the team went to work on the cheesy treat, only later considering that they were victims of a publicity-seeking pizza delivery company. Did they spit out the dough? Perhaps not straight away... 'We all tucked in... And then realised that it was probably a PR stunt,' says our mole. 'Who cares, free pizza!'

FAST-TALKING FASHIONISTA

Gok Wan's appearance on *Desert Island Discs* has upset some fans of the show. Though Gok (left) discussed his weight problems, difficult childhood, and even delved deeply into the complex issue of what he was currently



wearing, he failed to impress correspondents to Radio 4's *Feedback* who worried his presence was symptomatic of a 'dumbing down' of the series. One listener even branded the stylist's achievements 'slight and unimportant'. He evidently hasn't seen what the man can do with a cheap high-street handbag and set of bangles...

LOOK OUT on the slopes! Word reaches us by alpine horn that both deputy dg Mark Byford and business and economics editor Jeremy Hillman have suffered accidents on their respective skiing holidays...

WIN NEW YORK DELHI SNACKS



NEW YORK Delhi supply Indian snacks and spices which blend the authenticity and quality of real Indian cooking with the style and elegance of top New York delis. Seasoned with their own in-house spice blends, their ViPnuts come in three flavours: Hot Chilli, Chilli Lemon, and Masala. They are available at Waitrose, Fortnum and Masons and other outlets across the UK, USA and

the rest of the world, as well as at the BBC bar. We have one case filled with packets of nuts and Mumbai mix (rrp £36) on offer, plus two runners up prizes of half a case each. **To enter to win, just answer this question: peanuts are not actually nuts. To which plant family do they belong?** Email ariel.competitions by March 1. newyorkdelhi.com