

# Television

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rights hit  
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• ALYUSHA CHAKRIN (VOCALIST - UK)

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## From the CEO



The power of sport to take us out of ourselves may be more important than ever. Television's role in allowing us to watch live sport wherever

we are is crucial to our enjoyment of everything from football to Formula 1.

As our cover story highlights, Indian Premier League cricket's recent innovative TV and streaming rights deal demonstrates once again the value of premium sports rights. The IPL's record-breaking, five-year £5.13bn deal puts it among the world's most valuable screen sports, ranking with the NFL in the US and the English Premier League in cost-per-match terms.

The growing popularity of Formula 1, once regarded as the preserve of petrol heads, is another screen sports success story. This thrilling sport was the subject of a fascinating joint RTS East/RTS Midlands event, which we report inside.

At Wimbledon, we're seeing the next generation of talent emerge. New talent was very much to the fore at last month's RTS Student Television Awards, which were held in person for the first time since 2019. There, we saw a glimpse of the remarkable talent our industry can draw on in the coming years. Congratulations to all the winners and huge thanks to our brilliant host, Yinka Bokinni.

Don't miss Simon Bucks' TV Diary,

in which he outlines how the BFBS Academy is training ex-forces people for new civilian jobs in the media, such as production management.

Another must-read is Shilpa Ganatra's report on a recent RTS event in which intimacy co-ordinator Vanessa Coffey and actor Jessica Reynolds spoke eloquently of how this emerging role is making TV sets feel a lot more comfortable for those who are required to film scenes of an intimate nature.

Do enjoy the rest of the summer, even if you are not a sports fan!

Theresa Wise

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Sponsored by Kinetic Content, the ceremony on 24 June was hosted by Yinka Bokinni and the awards were presented by Theresa Wise

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# TV diary

**W**hisper it, but wars are good for business at BFBS. Our job as a charity is to provide entertainment and information to the military, especially those overseas. Although (officially) there are no UK boots on the ground in Ukraine, there are now several thousand nearby on Nato's eastern flank, bordering Russia, and more on their way.

Thanks to the generosity of the broadcasters and rights owners, we give them great TV plus radio, e-newspapers and magazines.

A key device is the MiPlayer, developed in-house. It cleverly converts satellite signals to live streams and catch-up delivered to the forces' own phones, tablets, laptops and smart TVs. It's an internet-connected experience without the internet, and an amazing morale booster.

■ **A sad phone call to tell me Sir David Nicholas, the great ITN editor, has died, aged 92. He was a remarkable innovator, and television journalism owes him a colossal debt. His proudest achievement was the creation of *News at Ten*: for many years not just an appointment to view but a household brand.**

David was also a mentor to many of us. He once rang me after an especially challenging *News at Ten* and said in his quiet Welsh lilt: "I'll never bollock you for something you've done – only for something you haven't done." It was a good lesson: risk aversion doesn't make for great TV.

David always put the news ahead of the money, resulting in regular rows with his ITV paymasters. Eventually, the harsh economic realities of commercial television were too much, and he wisely quit while he was ahead.



BFBS

## Simon Bucks on keeping morale high in the UK's armed forces and how the RTS's journalism awards are evolving

■ As a CEO, you rarely get a credit on a TV programme, so I was chuffed to executive produce a fascinating documentary, written and presented by Stewart Purvis, another former (and top) ITN boss. It's a remarkable account of a "psychological operations" Spanish-language radio station set up by the Ministry of Defence during the Falklands conflict to demoralise the Argentinians. *My Secret Falklands War* is on our Forces News YouTube channel.

Stewart spent eight years chasing down the story, and his enthusiasm for a gripping yarn is undimmed even after half a century in the business.

■ The RTS Television Journalism Awards, which I chair, are undoubtedly the gold-standard of high quality. But it's vital to give them a regular health check, so, with the help of RTS colleagues and the neutral chairs, we have overhauled the criteria to keep them relevant.

Online video journalism in all its forms is now cemented into the

awards, and I hope that will attract more new and diverse entrants.

Another change is the introduction of a gong for political journalism. It's long overdue: political news routinely dominates the agenda, but the correspondents tend to be edged out of awards by the frontline warriors. Now is their chance.

■ Exciting times at the BFBS Academy, where we train ex-forces people for new civilian jobs in the media. Our latest venture is a course in production management. It's the ultimate win-win: there is a serious dearth of production managers and production co-ordinators in TV and film.

People who have served in the military have many of the skills and qualities for the job: they are good at logistics, they are organised and resourceful, and work well in teams.

Our friends across the industry have helped develop the syllabus; the first trainees start in September and will be on the jobs market early next year.

■ For more than a decade, I campaigned, alongside colleagues from across the industry, to televise trials. The courts are a cornerstone of democracy, helping shape society, we argued, so the public had a right to see their workings on video.

In 2020, the Government announced a small step: the televising of judges' sentencing remarks in Crown courts – but the glacial progress of change in the judiciary means we are still waiting for it to happen.

In truth, this was always going to be a slow-burn revolution. It took 10 years to persuade the authorities to allow cameras into the Court of Appeal, plus nearly the same again to achieve this further, modest concession. So, I don't expect the full Rum-pole in my lifetime, or possibly ever.

*Simon Bucks is Chief Executive of BFBS.*

# COMFORT CLASSIC



BBC

## The Thick of It

**A**rmando Iannucci, who cut his creative teeth on such wondrous radio fare as the news lampoon *On the Hour*, revealed recently that the inspiration for creating his era-defining political satire *The Thick of It*, was the Iraq war. He was infuriated by what he saw as Prime Minister Tony Blair's willingness to "twist the narrative" in order to justify his support for what many regarded as a woefully ill-thought-through conflict.

Recently the subject of Radio 4's excellent *This Cultural Life*, he told interviewer John Wilson that, like so many of us, he had – uncharacteristically – taken to the streets in protest at the war.

He said he didn't want to write a polemic but to craft a comedy that genuinely had something to say. The aim was to make a show from which the

**Steve Clarke revels in the dog-eat-dog world of principle-free political advisors roving the dank undergrowth of power**

public could glean an idea of what went on behind the closed doors off the corridors of power in Whitehall and Millbank, where spin doctors, special advisors (Spads) and their hapless accomplices practise their dark arts. "It's not about showing a scandal. I want to know the dull stuff – what time does a minister get in," explained Iannucci.

The result was *The Thick of It*, a comic masterpiece famously described by its creator as "*Yes Minister* meets *The Larry Sanders Show*". Over seven years and

four series, initially on BBC Four before promotion to BBC Two, this part-improvised show delighted fans, thanks to a cast of fully realised characters, superb acting and a script that crackles and fizzes with so much energy that you could almost run the National Grid off it. Its shaky-camera, documentary style adds to the feeling of verisimilitude.

What started out as a manic, expletive-laden satire on the Blair-Brown years morphed into a mordant, expletive-laden commentary on the Cameron-led coalition by the time of 2012's season 4, *The Thick of It's* final bow.

While we are on expletives – more of which later – it is said that the show holds the record for the number of "fucks" uttered in a single TV episode – averaging one every 12 seconds for episode 7 of season 3, since you ask.

The comic monster at the apex of *The Thick of It* is, of course,

# Ear candy

viper-mouthed Scottish spin-doctor-in-chief Malcolm Tucker, played to uptight perfection by Peter Capaldi.

Iannucci, who also directed *The Thick of It*, denied the character was modelled on Alastair Campbell, New Labour's tormented communications maestro. Tucker was, according to his creator, based on Harvey Weinstein, whom Iannucci presumably encountered when pitching what became the spin-off movie, *In the Loop*.

For connoisseurs of bad language, Tucker's ability to be jaw-droppingly profane borders on the Shakesperian. The internet is littered with such choice examples as Tucker dressing down an MP: "You're so back-bench, you've actually fucking fallen off. You're out by the fucking bins where I put you." Or Tucker complaining about a minister: "He's about as much use as a marzipan dildo." And Tucker to a pair of rival advisors: "Laurel and fucking Hardy! Glad you could join us. Did you manage to get that piano up the stairs OK?"

Researching *The Thick of It*, Iannucci was struck by how young the people who inhabit this tawdry world are. They had "no life experience" and didn't know "how to run a car, let alone a country".

This characteristic is personified in Ollie Reeder (Chris Addison), a gauche and gawky Oxbridge-educated Spad who inevitably takes over as head of comms when Tucker meets his nemesis in series 4.

Rebecca Front is consistently compelling as gaffe-prone MP Nicola Murray, as, too, is a young and not yet famous Joanna Scanlan, who plays prudish press officer Terri Coverley.

It is sometimes suggested that today we need a satire like *The Thick of It* more than ever, but when rules are regularly flouted by populist leaders, the satirist's job becomes especially challenging. Tellingly, Iannucci said on *This Cultural Life* that *The Thick of It* came "from a golden time when there were rules in politics". What would Malcolm Tucker make of Boris Johnson's beleaguered administration? For once, would he be lost for expletives? ■

**The Thick of It is streamed on BritBox.**



I've started watching *Love Island* this year but, for every great water-cooler chat I've had about the previous night's drama, there's been a nose turned up at the very mention of the show.

I say this not simply to air my grievances but to recommend a defence against such snobbery. Pandora Sykes and Sirin Kale's new 10-part podcast, *Unreal: A Critical History of Reality TV*, makes a thorough case for the genre's cultural significance, without turning a blind eye to its shaky ethical foundations.

Many would assume that Marcus Bentley talked reality TV into existence in 2000 with those seminal words, "Day 1 in the *Big Brother* house". Although that is their jumping-off point, Sykes and Kale pinpoint the genre's origins as 1948 with *Candid Camera*, which crossed the pond in 1960.

Their point is that our appreciation for the art of authenticity is nothing new, although *Big Brother* clearly sparked an explosion of the genre from which we're still experiencing the fallout.

As a result, each episode stops off at one of 10 stages between 2000 and the present day. They begin with the talent show boom, epitomised by the likes of *The X Factor*, and the rise of influencer factories such as *Love Island*.

Laced with recordings of reality TV's most glorious – and notorious – moments, it makes for a fun listen.

At least at times.

There are others when it is disturbing. Especially episode 3 on the early 2000s, when it's clear that reality TV tested the limits of the genre in pursuit of a fast buck, be it by depriving people of sleep in *Shattered*, or asking an adopted daughter to correctly pick out her biological father in a room full of strangers in *Who's Your Daddy?*

That we, the audience, continue to lap up such dubious formats is not lost on Sykes and Kale. They confess to any shows they regret enjoying. And they constantly challenge our own viewing motives.

It is a critical history to train critical viewers. ■

**Harry Bennett**

# WORKING LIVES



BBC

*Conversations with Friends*

**Emma Norton's** TV debut as an executive producer was on *Normal People*, and she has followed it up with two more hits, RTÉ/BritBox comedy-drama *The Dry* and a second helping of Sally Rooney for the BBC, *Conversations with Friends*.

## What does the job involve?

Executive producers, and there are usually more than one on a show, are across everything: creative development; scripting; casting and crewing; financing; the shoot; the edit; and marketing and publicity. Essentially, the role lasts for the lifespan of a project.

## Do you focus on any particular areas?

On the projects I've executive produced so far, I've been heavily involved in all the editorial work, casting, creative decisions during the shoot and post-production – the key story-engine areas of a TV show.

## How did you become an executive producer?

I came to the role via development; primarily working in film, rather than

through the traditional TV route. There are plenty of different challenges in television, but my film background is an asset and I'm not shy about asking lots of questions.

## What was the first film you worked on?

I script edited Lenny Abrahamson's *What Richard Did* shortly after moving to Ireland to work for Element Pictures. It was a particularly memorable experience because my husband, Malcolm Campbell, wrote the film.

## What was your first show as an executive producer?

*Normal People*, which was a huge but very satisfying learning curve. Knowing a lot of the team so well from the start made the transition easier and meant that we had a shorthand with each other.

## What makes a good executive producer?

Having confidence in your own taste and, given that so many things are going on at once, the ability to multi-task and delegate. I'm still working on being a good delegator.

## Who do you work with closely on a production?

The writers and directors, the executive producers, series producer, heads of department and the script team.

## What are the biggest challenges of the job?

It's a marathon – it takes a huge burst of energy to get a project up and running, and then you've got to sustain that energy. Through every stage to the very end, you have to maintain quality and apply the same level of care. Last year, I had three TV shows in production, and two of them – *The Dry* and *Conversations with Friends* – are out now. The other is Shane Meadows' first period television drama, *The Gallows Pole*.

The work is undoubtedly intense and there are points when you wonder if you have enough in the tank to keep going. It's hard work but, on the plus side, it's never boring.

## What's a typical working day like?

It depends what stage we are at on a production. Like a lot of people, I've been working at home for the past



## 'THE VARIETY IS THE BEST [PART OF THE JOB]; THE SCALE OF THE JOB IS THE WORST'

I left university, but I always liked reading and was always able to immerse myself deeply in stories – I've monetised that.

### Could you have become a writer?

You need to know your skills and limitations – I'm good at reacting to writing and finessing it; I'm not a writer. Be honest with yourself about your strengths and weaknesses. This industry is hard and you have to work to your strengths. My first job was as an agent's assistant. I was fired – I wasn't suited to it.

### Which show are you most proud of producing?

That's like asking, "Who is your favourite child?" But, if I had to pick one thing, it would be *The Dry* by Nancy Harris. It took a long time to get it off the ground. Getting an original series funded is not an easy task. I've loved working on all my other projects, but this one succeeded against the odds and I'm really proud of that.

### What TV series or genre would you love to work on?

I've done a lot of character-based work recently, where plot is less prominent. When I watched *Mare of Easttown*, I was just so hooked – it has a big crime plot as well as great character arcs. I grew up watching *Taggart*, *Cracker* and *Morse*, and reading loads of Agatha Christie – so I'd love to work on something like that. ■

*Emma Norton was interviewed by Matthew Bell.*

couple of years: I'm only just coming back into the office now. At the moment, I'm developing new projects so there are a lot of script meetings, lots of reading, deals to make and talent searches – and a lot of emails.

### What do you bring to work with you?

An iPad and pen; a KeepCup because I need a lot of coffee; a notebook; and two phones – one work, one personal. I try to keep the two separate.

### What are the best and worst parts of the job?

The variety is the best; the scale of the job is the worst – they're essentially two sides of the same coin.

### How has the TV and film industry changed since you started?

The desire for content has increased so rapidly and the intensity of production has risen to meet that. Element Pictures works across television and film, simultaneously creating things for very different markets. Initially, my career was very focused on film and now it's both. It's exciting.

### Is there a difference between executive producing a TV programme and a film?

The time frame is hugely different. With [the Roddy Doyle-penned and Paddy Breathnach-directed] low-budget film *Rosie*, it was four weeks of intense work on set and a relatively fast development period before that. *Conversations with Friends* for TV was at least two solid years of intensity.

### Have you had to learn a lot about finance?

That certainly wasn't my background, and I'm lucky that Element Pictures has a great business affairs team. Personally, working in development taught me about budgeting and funding. At Element, Andrew Lowe has a creative input but he does more on the financing, which is his area of expertise; Ed Guiney spans both sides; and I probably do more on the creative side.

### What advice would you give to someone wanting to work towards becoming an executive producer?

Use your interests and enthusiasms to guide you. I had no career plan when



Delhi Capitals captain Rishabh Pant playing against Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League

NDTV

# Howzat!

Recent deals have the potential to upend the global TV rights market for premium sport.  
**Ross Biddiscombe** investigates

**R**ecent events in the sports rights industry will both reinvigorate and reset the battle for live TV sport in the UK and beyond.

The 50:50 joint venture between BT and Warner Bros Discovery (WBD), agreed in May, will have ramifications for all the major rights holders. These include the dominant live sports broadcaster, Sky, which continues to have its own sports partnerships with WBD.

BT's deal with WBD also has implications for Amazon and other digital platform behemoths that are poised to increase their live sports content.

On top of this, in June, the sale of Indian Premier League (IPL) cricket rights broke a 20-year-old pattern for such auctions. Some matches were sold "exclusively" to two different domestic bidders – one broadcasting terrestrially and the other digitally. Analysts now wonder if this style of rights selling could become a worldwide trend.

The operational merger of BT Sport with WBD's Eurosport will, for the time being, maintain the existing brands and customer offerings. The telco, having spent an estimated £890m on sports rights in 2021 alone, and having cemented its position as the UK's number one broadband provider by using live sport as bait, must now find ways to work with WBD, which will take on the day-to-day running of the joint venture.

With UK sports fans increasingly happy to watch their favourite sport on streaming services, the ground is shifting in the traditional UK pay-TV business. Specialist sports apps are readily available, but a central question is whether or not the cost of UK live sports rights will rise again.

While Mike Darcey, media consultant and former chief operating officer at Sky, believes the newly merged operator will make bidding for rights such as the English Premier League trickier, there is potential to bring down costs.

"Going for more rights will be complicated with the joint venture in place, because BT will not want to fund such a move, and it will be difficult for WBD to pursue this unilaterally," he says. "If WBD ever exercises its buyout [option] on the joint venture, then perhaps [we could see] a further push. The question is: how strong does WBD think its sports offering needs to be to fulfil its broader strategic objective?"

Tim Westcott, senior principal analyst for digital content and channels at Omdia, believes that, with WBD at the helm, BT's "loss leader" approach to new broadband subscribers is unlikely to continue. He notes: "BT reported an operating loss of £287m in the last financial year. Despite long-term carriage agreements with BT and Sky, the new owners may need to curb sports rights costs to bring the joint venture into profit."

It has been clear since last spring that BT has wanted to focus on its £12bn rollout of full-fibre broadband and on a new 5G mobile network, but questions around content remain because its contracts for the Premier League and European football run until 2025 and 2024, respectively.

Jack Genovese, research manager for sports at Ampere Analysis, believes any changes in the sports rights market will probably be slow to emerge: "All major sports rights are currently locked into pre-existing deals in the UK until 2024. The lack of tier-one sports rights in WBD/Eurosport's

portfolio [with the exception of the Paris Olympics in 2024] suggests that the impact on subscriptions is going to be relatively contained.”

Ampere estimates that Discovery represented only about 1% of the total spend on sports rights in the UK in 2021; BT accounted for about 25%; while Sky’s market share amounted to 54%, or £1.9bn. Genovese says: “Eurosport’s rights portfolio, which boasts popular events such as the next Olympics, will complement BT Sport’s existing rights portfolio.”

From WBD’s perspective, the driver

prices get too silly. But if it thinks it can maintain that position at lower cost, then it will try to do so.”

Omdia’s Westcott points out that Sky in Italy and Canal+ in France have already faced up to the loss of league football “without suffering too much”. Moreover, WBD President and CEO, David Zaslav, has a track record of not paying over the odds for content of any kind.

Managers at Sky have raised the possibility of a Sky minus premium sport. Most recently, Sky Sports Managing Director, Jonathan Licht, has said

five years, cricket became the world’s second-most-expensive TV sport – but what was more shocking was that the Indian domestic deals broke the tacit agreement over exclusivity.

Darcey explains: “The IPL has done precisely what the Premier League shied away from in 2000 (and ever since), and what regulators have consistently been too scared to impose – it sold ‘broadcast’ and ‘digital’ rights to the same set of matches, in the same territory, to two separate pay providers.”

It remains to be seen whether other rights holders, such as the Premier League, can sell “double exclusive” matches in the UK or other countries.

The day after the IPL announcement, Apple stumped up a reported \$2.5bn for Major League Soccer in the US. An executive involved in the bids for IPL told the *Financial Times*: “Sports rights are a very strange beast, it seems, because nothing seems to stop their march. People don’t want to be left out and the fact is, people consume sport regardless [of the economic climate].”

Shortly before *Television* went to press, Amazon secured the UK rights – split with existing holder BT Sport – to broadcast live Champions League football from 2024 to 2027. With Europe’s premier club championship expanding, BT will, in fact, show more matches live. Amazon will have first pick of Tuesday-night games. The deal also sees highlights return to terrestrial TV on a midweek BBC *Match of the Day* show. Amazon already holds the UK rights to 20 Premier League matches a season.

Initially, BT Sport and Discovery subscribers are set to receive BT Sport and Discovery+. Subsequently, a single, newly branded streaming sports service will launch with a huge range of top events.

Westcott believes that football remains key to the future of UK sports broadcasting. While the market for pay-TV sports subscriptions has plateaued, it is still the case that 10 million UK households are prepared to spend £20 a month for premium sport.

“If operators choose not to invest as much to secure the rights to support that business, the option for rights holders to go it alone is much more viable than it was in 2013,” says Westcott. “The next Premier League rights auction will determine in which direction the market goes.” ■

**Additional reporting by Kate Bulkley.**



Andy Murray playing in the tennis doubles at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics

Eurosport

for the joint venture is to accelerate the growth of Discovery+. Ampere’s survey of UK sports fans last year showed that only 9% subscribe to Discovery+, whereas 33% have BT Sport.

Sky has to deal with the threat of a new challenger while controlling its own sports rights spending. At one time, it looked as if sports streamer DAZN would become BT’s partner – but the streamer eventually pulled out.

Unlike DAZN, both WBD and Sky have a commitment to programming other than sports as subscription drivers. Darcey says that, although Sky – which pays £6m for every live Premier League match – has massively upped its investment in original shows, it is not a case of “either or”. “Sport is still very important to Sky and it will want to remain the clear number-one sports bundle.” The question is, he says: “How much sport is needed to sustain this position?”

“Sky has already scaled back and let many properties go elsewhere. This shows it is willing to walk away if

that the loss of EPL rights would be “upsetting” but that the business was no longer reliant on any one property.

The other looming questions about UK sports rights involve the future strategies of the big tech platforms, as well as those of legacy media players such as Disney and Paramount (Via-com). Commentators are still uncertain about whether Amazon will press further into sports, whether Disney will try to replicate its ESPN-type tactics beyond the US, and what role Apple and Netflix might play in sports rights.

Darcey says it is not clear whether sport will become part of the broader battleground between the SVoDs. “But it seems a bit parochial to think that, if this is happening, we will see it first here in the UK, triggered by a local joint venture, as opposed to it starting in the US or somewhere else in the world,” he says.

Indeed, the way the IPL cricket rights were dived for the 2023-27 cycle could be the most telling. With \$6.2bn being paid for 410 IPL games over the next



# Racing into pole position

British Grand Prix 2022 at Silverstone

Clive Rose/Getty Images

**O**nce the preserve of petrol heads, Formula 1 has become a hugely popular television sport. On the eve of the British Grand Prix

at Silverstone, an RTS panel – featuring experts from three broadcasters – discussed how the motor sport has found its va-va-voom.

Dean Locke, director of broadcast and media for Formula 1, who is celebrating 25 years at the host broadcaster and sport's owner, said: "The fan base is growing hugely." He added that the phenomenally successful Netflix documentary series *Formula 1: Drive to Survive*, which has taken cameras behind the scenes at race tracks since 2019, "is a big part of that".

## Formula 1 is bigger than ever. The RTS discovers what's driving its success

According to Formula 1, the cumulative TV audience for 2021 was 1.55 billion, up 4% from the 2020 season. The jump in the UK, though, was huge – a rise of 39%, year on year. Last year's title decider in Abu Dhabi, which saw Max Verstappen pip Lewis Hamilton to the title on the final lap of the race, drew a combined peak TV audience of 7.4 million on Channel 4 and Sky Sports.

Locke identified other factors behind F1's success: "There are lots of incremental things. We've had some really good championships and we have

brilliant broadcast partners... at Sky, Channel 4 and across the world, recently ESPN in the US, putting their shoulder behind it. We're seeing a lot of younger fans. The events are all sold out, as well, which looks good on TV.... There's a lot more activity in the digital space too."

F1 is a technical and complicated sport, which attracts both casual viewers and expert fans. "[Our] ethos is to... cover [the sport] in a way that everyone can understand," said Locke, who stressed the importance of intelligible and informative graphics.

Another F1 veteran, Sky Sports pit lane reporter Ted Kravitz, has worked for a quarter of a century at ITV, the BBC and now Sky, as the motor sport's UK rights moved from broadcaster to broadcaster.

“We’ll find whatever way we can, whether it’s technically complex or quite simple, to explain what’s [happening],” said Kravitz.

Frequently, that involves the reporter taking an idiosyncratic approach. At June’s Canadian Grand Prix, he sat on a skateboard – at much the same height off the ground as he would be in a Mercedes – and was then pulled at 30kph across the tarmac to give an idea of what drivers George Russell and Lewis Hamilton go through.

“The great thing about Formula 1 is that the more you know about it, the more you want to know,” he added.

Since 2019, Sky Sports has held exclusive UK rights to all F1 races, excluding the British Grand Prix. Channel 4 has free-to-air highlights rights and covers the British Grand Prix, with Sky, live.

Channel 4’s lead F1 commentator, Alex Jacques, explained how he approaches his job: “Sometimes, there’s a misconception that [the highlights are] edited and then we talk about it afterwards... that wouldn’t work with the timeframe [in which] we have to turn around the show.

“We have to lose about 30% of the race in terms of the broadcast... That changes the way you commentate for highlights... you know that there are times to hang a killer stat that explains why Lewis Hamilton is having a difficult season. You will hang that on a part... that is not going to be cut... but the rest of the time you’re reacting like you would for a live broadcast.

“If you did it the other way, the viewer would instantly know.... It’s an incredibly complex and dynamic sport [with] a really perceptive audience.... It’s got to be ‘as live’ for that authenticity, and then you’ve got to hope you don’t deliver a killer line that’s left on the cutting-room floor.”

Coverage is part remote, part from trackside. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated remote working and fast-tracked a long-term F1 sustainability project. “We thought we had a few years to do it and then we ended up doing it in seven weeks,” recalled Locke. Formula 1’s media technology centre at Biggin Hill on the outskirts of south-east London now takes camera feeds from the track where the race is directed.

Kravitz added: “Sky has a big drive to be a completely carbon neutral broadcaster.... It was unsustainable to continue air-freighting all the... vision mixing, directing and sound desks.



## Views from the commentary box

**Alex Jacques:** ‘It’s your job to tell the story, not to say what you think... It’s the job of those who’ve been there and done that... to give their opinions. [Former-drivers] David Coulthard and Mark Webber – it’s their opinion that carries weight, they’ve got experience and they’ve risked their necks to get it...

‘If you start favouring one or the other [driver], you get found out pretty quickly by the audience and that’s just not what you’re paid to do.’

**Ted Kravitz:** ‘I don’t care who wins and who loses, and that makes it so liberating. When I was a kid, I liked Nigel Mansell and Ayrton Senna – and I cared.... I would turn on the TV and... I used to get nervous at the start of a race; my heartbeat used to go up.... It’s such a release if you just don’t care...

‘I also take the view of Murray Walker – I was lucky enough to work for Murray as his commentary box spotter [for ITV]. I think Murray did like some drivers more than others – he was close to Damon Hill because he knew his dad, Graham – but you would never have known what Murray thought...

‘You approach it from the view of what the fans would want to know... It’s not my department to have a view...

‘The position I always take is: “What would I want asked if I was a fan sitting at home?”’

**Alex Jacques:** ‘I’ve seen football commentators talk about scripting lines, but... I’d worry about trying to take lines off a piece of paper. The best stuff, I think, comes off the top of your head.’

“Obviously, when you’re at the track you need the camera and sound people [but] more or less everyone else who would normally be in the TV compound can be somewhere else.

“We were doing this before Covid at Sky... it’s been incredible the amount of air miles and CO<sub>2</sub> [saved. We now use] sea freight... to move sets.”

Looking to the future of the sport, Locke argued that its coverage would continue on “the trajectory we’re on now”. He added: “It’s [about] making it easy to watch... and available in which ever way you want it.”

Motor sport broadcasters are constantly looking for new and, more importantly, diverse audiences. “It’s a top priority for Sky,” said Kravitz.

“[Lewis Hamilton] is right – F1 has

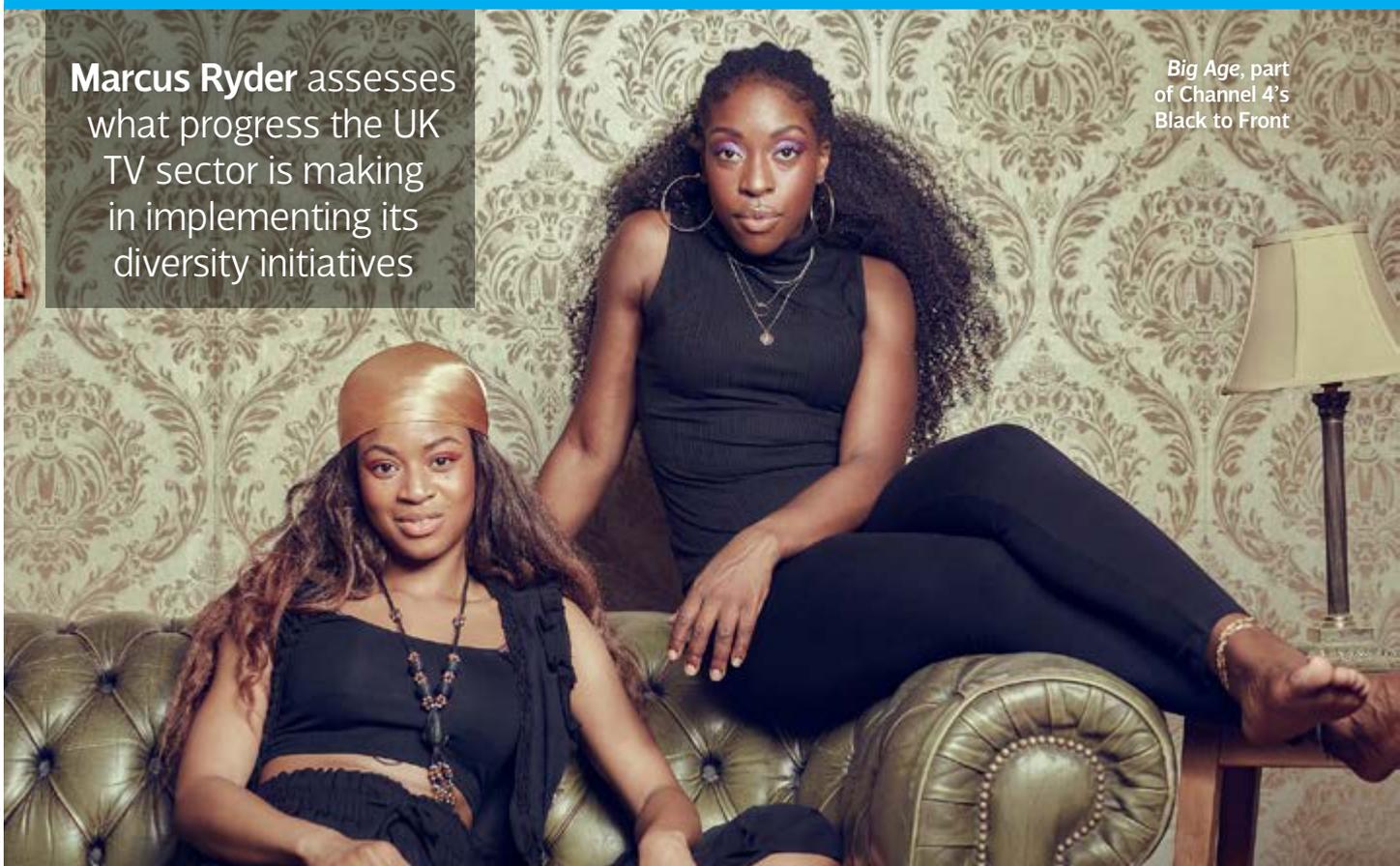
been... predominately white, predominately middle class – there’s been such a change and it’s happening so quickly. It’s so good to see.

“We’re reaching communities that were once not served particularly well by Formula 1... There’s a much more diverse audience... and that’s reflected in the people working in Formula 1, the drivers getting into it.... It is going to take a few more years, but we are getting there.” ■

**Report by Matthew Bell.** *The joint RTS East/RTS Midlands event, ‘F1 on screen’, was hosted by Sky Sports F1 presenter Rosanna Tennant on 23 June. It was produced by RTS East Chair Tony Campbell and RTS Midlands Committee member Sindy Campbell.*

Marcus Ryder assesses what progress the UK TV sector is making in implementing its diversity initiatives

Big Age, part of Channel 4's Black to Front



Channel 4

# On the right path?

**O**n 25 May 2022, I held an online memorial to mark the second anniversary of the murder of George Floyd. In the public discourse, Floyd's death has become much more than the death of one black man in police custody, something that happens far too often. The murder sparked global Black Lives Matter protests, symbolising structural racial inequalities across the world and the need to address them.

This led to numerous major companies and organisations not only acknowledging the issues facing black people, but also announcing policies to address them.

In the UK, the television industry was at the forefront of declaring the need to address the racial inequalities that have plagued it for far too long.

I am proud to work in an industry that publicly took such a proactive approach in accepting it has failed black people and declaring the need to

resolve long-standing and entrenched inequalities. But, as the saying goes, "Talk is cheap."

The biggest and most high-profile policy initiative of the past 12 months, and possibly a defining moment in British television's attempt to address its issues around black representation, behind and in front of the camera, was Channel 4's Black to Front project, which took place on 10 September last year.

This was a day of programming that featured 100% black talent in front of the camera and an attempt to maximise black representation behind it. I am not suggesting repeating Black to Front, but all broadcasters would gain by looking at how the channel approached developing and implementing the policy. What might easily have been an insulting gimmick could prove to be a model for how broadcasters create and initiate anti-racism, diversity and inclusion policies in the future.

Channel 4 recognised that it did not have the necessary skills in-house to

successfully implement Black to Front. So, early on, the broadcaster consulted with the Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity (LHC).

Obviously, as LHC's head of external consultancies, I have a vested interest, but broadcasters recognising the need for external support in general is essential to achieve progress.

Channel 4 knew it was not going to achieve its target of 100% black representation behind the camera, but finding out where it had difficulty filling positions enabled it to look at how to focus on these problem areas.

Finally, it did not "mark its own homework." Channel 4 went back to the LHC to assess what it had done and where it had gone wrong. The principle of having third-party evaluation is another important policy development that broadcasters had not previously adopted (at least, not publicly).

While Channel 4's approach to Black to Front is welcome, it also highlights that the television industry still has a long way to go to achieve racial

equality – and little has changed since the project aired.

Certain key positions, such as studio director, set design and black talent outside of London, clearly suffer from a severe skills shortage.

The Channel 4 experience also demonstrates that there is still a lot of work to be done to foster and grow black-led indies, which have had limited success in gaining commissions.

The success of *Black to Front* points to another glaring problem bedevilling all broadcasters – the lack of black commissioners. Channel 4 acknowledges that the project would not have happened without Vivienne Molokwu, commissioning editor for features. Black commissioners are still the exception rather than the norm and those who do exist are predominantly in junior roles.

While Channel 4's *Black to Front* is useful for taking the temperature of the industry in general, it should be noted that the last year has been marked by other major trends.

Twelve months ago, when I assessed in *Television* how the broadcasters had done since George Floyd's murder, I concluded by saying: "It would be churlish of me not to recognise and applaud the fact that the vast majority of them rolled out new policies... However, most of the policies have been unclear about the most important aspect of the television industry – programme finance. And the policies are not focused on the fundamental issue raised by the protests – anti-black racism."

The good news is that many of the broadcasters seem to have heard the criticism and tried to address the two main points: financing and recognising the importance of focusing on anti-black racism – as opposed to more general racism and discrimination against people of colour, important as they are.

The best example over the past year of this culture change in heeding anti-black racism is the report the LHC conducted for all the PSBs (although sponsored by the BBC) on the term BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic). Although the report was ostensibly about racial language, and focused particularly on news reporting, the fact that it was commissioned demonstrated a clear understanding that lumping all "non-white" people together under one umbrella has serious policy implications when trying to address specific issues.

Similarly, LHC also wrote a paper for Channel 4 on "intersectionality", the concept that people can possess multiple protected characteristics: the issues facing a disabled black woman may be different from those facing a gay black man – although they will also share some common issues.

This cultural move – recognising that it is important to capture a more granular picture of the diversity of

definition of "out of London" – and what was and wasn't a regional indie – that real progress was made. Broadcasters being permitted to create their own definitions (and definitions that are different from those of other broadcasters) – is concerning: it has proved unsuccessful in the past.

The other elephant in the room is retention of top talent, especially in broadcasters' diversity departments:



McKinsey & Company

your black workforce in order to implement policies to address specific issues – is an important development.

The three major PSB broadcasters, the BBC, ITV and Channel 4, have also recognised the importance of finance in addressing under-representation. They have all announced some form of ring-fenced funding for black and ethnic-minority programmes. However, this has been bedevilled by a lack of clarity around the financing, with the BBC possibly being the most confusing. In one press release, it explicitly called it "ring-fenced" funding while denying in public that it is ring-fenced funding.

The other big trend is that all the broadcasters have tried to address the problems facing black-led indies.

While it is too early to tell whether the policies around ring-fenced funding and black-led indies will bear fruit, there are some worrying problems that the industry should be aware of.

One lesson from recent history is that it wasn't until Ofcom and Pact agreed a standard, industry-wide

the BBC and Channel 4 both saw key members leave. This could be an indication that there are internal problems around diversity at the broadcasters that have not yet come to light.

Finally, there is anecdotal evidence of serious cultural issues within the BBC concerning "black inclusion". It seems that senior editorial staff see Black Lives Matter as a controversial political term that its journalists cannot discuss freely in public. However, most black journalists I have spoken to view it as a broader anti-racist term in line with the corporation's public values.

Even two years in, it is too early to tell if progress has been made. There seems to have been a positive cultural shift to diversity and how policy is approached, but there are also some concerns that broadcasters need to address. They almost definitely require the intervention of Ofcom and Pact.

*Vive la révolution or plus ça change?* ■

**Marcus Ryder is a founder member of the Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity.**



# An offer too good to refuse?

**Kate Bulkley** considers the impact that subscription streaming platform Paramount+ could have in a crowded UK market

**T**he UK launch of streaming service Paramount+ last month was accompanied by a showbiz spectacle featuring such celebrities as Graham Norton, who presents the service's drag singing competition, *Queen of the Universe*, and Kevin Costner, star of *Yellowstone*. They took to the red carpet and Uma Thurman fronted a star-studded promo video.

Best known as a movie studio, Paramount hopes this legacy, along with its

numerous TV brands, which include MTV, Showtime and Nickelodeon, and originals series such as *Star Trek: Strange New Worlds* and another sci-fi hit, *Halo*, will present a compelling mix to subscribers. But with so much choice in the UK market and people grappling with a cost-of-living crisis, can Paramount+ cut through and mount an effective challenge to Netflix, Disney+ and other incumbent players?

Recent consumer research by Omdia found that 41% of UK households with

a streaming subscription already have three or more services. Will they pay for another one? "Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+ are the top three in the UK," says Tim Westcott, Omdia senior principal analyst, digital content and channels. "Breaking into that top three is going to be a tall order."

Paramount+, costing £6.99 a month but free to Sky Cinema subscribers, launched with 8,000 hours of content spanning movies, new originals and other TV shows, plus library fare.

Received SVoD wisdom is that, to be a success, Paramount+ must find the exclusive hits that will drive subscribers to pay for the service – as Netflix has traditionally done with the likes of *The Crown*, *Sex Education* and, recently, *Squid Game*.

Paramount+ is trying to mirror the Netflix originals formula with US-made *1883*, *The Offer*, *Mayor of Kingstown* and *Super Pumped: The Battle for Uber*, plus Showtime's *The First Lady* and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*.

But most importantly for the UK market, the streamer announced 19 locally commissioned dramas, documentaries and other unscripted content, including *Sexy Beast* (from Chapter One), *A Gentleman in Moscow* (eOne), *Flatshare* (42), *The Burning Girls* (Buccaneer Media), *The Ex-Wife* (co-produced by Clapperboard Studios, BlackBox Multimedia, Night Train Media and All3Media International) and *The Blue* (New Pictures).

On the unscripted and documentary side there is *Fashion House* (Lambent, All3Media International and Night Train Media) and *Blowing LA* (Fulwell 73 and Endeavor Content), among others.

"A key feature of Paramount+ is that we are going to build upon UK scripted and factual production," says Dan Fahy, senior vice-president for streaming, UK, at Paramount.

The company is well established in the UK through its ownership of the thriving Channel 5, as well as pay channels MTV and other ViacomCBS brands. Omdia's Westcott notes that Paramount "could always move new commissions on to Paramount+."

Despite the announcement about original productions, some analysts believe that Paramount will still focus on its established franchises to attract early subscribers.

"Local productions are important for generating publicity and column inches and good for promoting a new service, but I think Paramount will focus more on the known brands," says

Paramount+



Star Trek: Strange New Worlds

Paramount+

Westcott. “What will be important for Paramount+ in the UK is a first window for new original series and movies – which I believe will go on to the streamer 45 days after cinema release. More of the appeal will be around big brands such as *Star Trek* and *South Park*.”

Fahy emphasised the wide range of Paramount’s content, which caters for all age groups and both men and women: “There will be some big calling-card franchise names but it’s actually the breadth of the offer that’s going to be the biggest subscription driver for us,” he says.

“It’s true that we have some strong franchises such as *Transformers*, which is a theatrical title that we are building into a kids’ animated series,” adds Fahy. “It’s the same with *Sonic* [the Hedgehog], where we are doing an animated series with Idris Elba as the lead character’s voice. So, yes, we do have strong franchises that cross over from film, to TV series, to kids – but there are also standalone projects that are not designed with a franchise in mind.”

A recent global slowdown in subscriber growth at Netflix has cast a certain pall over the whole SVoD market. The US streamer reported a net loss of subs in the first quarter 2022 of 200,000 and predicted that it would have lost a further 2 million by the end of June. The news has caused many observers to expect a new focus on

## ‘THE BREADTH OF THE OFFER IS GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST SUBSCRIPTION DRIVER FOR US’

profitability, rather than adding subscribers regardless of the cost.

Indeed, the slowdown validates plans by Netflix and Disney to add advertising tiers to their subscription services later this year. In the UK, Paramount+ will also face the launch of ITVX, the broadcaster’s new, primarily ad-supported, streaming service expected to debut in November.

Paramount+ is launching ad-free. Its ownership of the My5 on-demand service and Pluto TV (an ad-supported streamer of both on-demand and streamed TV channels) means it is already well-served in the ad-supported streaming business.

“We view all our services in the UK, including Channel 5, as being complementary to each other,” says Fahy.

“On the night of Paramount+’s launch, we premiered the first episode of *Halo* on Channel 5 at 10:00pm,” notes Fahy. “We have Channel 5 content

building FAST [free advertising-supported TV] channels on Pluto, and MTV content on My5 and on Pluto. So, there is a kind of flywheel of audience direction and reinforcement between the services because none of them sit in the same segment as each other.”

But Guy Bisson at Ampere Analysis cautions that Paramount is “not a particularly known brand in the UK”, certainly not beyond film.

Another issue is how to avoid consumer frustration with discovering content they might want to watch. “Content exclusivity alone as a draw for a streaming service is past,” says Richard Halton, director at Roku UK. “Now, it’s about innovating the service itself and our focus is on how we help consumers discover and navigate to the shows that they want.”

After the UK, the international roll-out of Paramount+ will continue, with Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and France expected by the end of this year and India set to launch in 2023.

Paramount may be late to the streaming party, but Paramount CEO, Bob Bakish, believes the timing is right. “We think streaming is a great opportunity,” he told the *Financial Times*. “We’re in investment mode and will increase our content investment in 2023. But, beyond that, we see momentum building and, ultimately, see streaming having very TV-like margins.” ■

# All things bleak and beautiful



It's not just the thought of competing in the World Cup this winter that's giving the Welsh something to smile about in challenging times. On screens Welsh noir has put Wales on the global TV map and given the country's film makers a new sense of confidence. These gripping, frequently harrowing, crime dramas that play out against the singular countryside of a nation renowned for its art and culture are now very much part of the TV landscape.

The latest of these series, the six-part thriller *Y Golau*, attracted no lesser actor than A-lister Joanna Scanlan who plays Sharon, the mother of a murdered teenager whose body has never been found and whose life is understandably haunted by the crime.

*Y Golau's* original Welsh-language version made its debut on S4C in May and will be shown – in English – as *The Light in the Hall* on Channel 4 later in the year.

"We've claimed Welsh noir as our own genre and are looking forward to doing more and looking to new genres for our dramas as well that represent a

**Steve Clarke** charts the rise and rise of Welsh noir, crime stories that are giving global audiences a taste of the exotic

modern Wales," says S4C's head of drama Gwenllian Gravelle.

Almost a decade ago, another S4C show, *Hinterland*, single-handedly invented what became known as Welsh noir. The bleak and beautiful west Wales landscape provided the backdrop for what some reviewers saw as a Welsh *Broadchurch*. Angst-ridden detective DCI Tom Mathias, who makes Kurt Wallander look upbeat, finds melancholy and menace wherever he goes. Originally shown on BBC Four, the series was produced by Cardiff-based Fiction Factory and ran for three series and was later bought by Netflix.

"Before *Hinterland*, there was a feeling in Wales that we weren't being

allowed to tell our own stories," says Ed Talfan, co-creator of *Hinterland*, and now creative director at Severn Screen. "It was hard to get home-grown narratives onto the network. S4C and BBC Wales were producing good work locally, but it felt like there was a lack of Welsh drama content making it across the border."

"We were determined, with *Hinterland*, to make a series that would connect with audiences locally and internationally.

"The crime genre appealed to us on a creative level, but it was also the perfect Trojan horse: a genre that was popular with audiences across the globe, and one that also gave us an opportunity to showcase our culture, language and landscape."

Talfan adds: "The partnership between BBC Wales, S4C and All3Media was crucial to the series' success. The support of BBC Four in the UK was also key: its decision to screen the series next to shows such as *The Killing* and *The Bridge* in its Saturday night slot felt like a game changer."

Ten years on from *Hinterland*, the



Hinterland

S4C

local sector is continuing to grow in scale and confidence.

Talfan adds: “There’s been a transformation over the past 10 to 15 years. There is a huge amount of production going on across south Wales. I’d like to think *Hinterland* and other locally produced shows have played their part in that.”

Welsh noir – and Welsh drama in general – is in demand domestically and internationally. And the exoticism of these series is widely appreciated by global audiences. “The Welsh landscape is a key element – it is so distinct, versatile and spectacular – and for many of our buyers – exotic,” explains All3Media’s EVP of content, Maartje Horchner. “It is more than a backdrop in so many of the Welsh dramas we represent – and in the detective series it serves as a separate character in the storytelling. Long sweeping roads, rainy, moody grey skies, remote farms, and villages nestled amid granite hills and valleys. Deep, dark forests with waterfalls are perfect places to hide secrets or bodies.”

The US, Germany, Italy and Australia

have all proved to be strong markets for Welsh noir.

Severn Screen produced *Hidden*, co-created by Talfan, and broadcast by S4C as *Craith*; the bilingual version was shown on BBC One Wales and BBC Four. The final series was broadcast in April.

He says: “Those dramas have a keen sense of place. They also have a distinctive pace. I see them as slow food rather than as fast food. I don’t say that pejoratively but it’s a different way of approaching drama. With *Hidden*, we took a slower look at characters and motivations. It wasn’t so much a whodunnit as a whydunit. To us, that felt more interesting.”

The fact that these shows are made in both Welsh and English was, according to Talfan, “borne in part out of necessity.” He explains: “The only way to make the show we wanted to make was to join the tariffs of different broadcasters and our distributor [AllMedia] and then deliver in two languages.” Streaming service Sundance TV is a partner on *Y Golau*.

S4C’s Gravelle, who has ambitions

to make more single-language Welsh drama, acknowledges that, while filming all the scenes that have dialogue in Welsh and English is time consuming, the actors take it in their stride: “It’s seamless because most people in Wales are bilingual and go from one language to the other with perfect ease. Even though it takes a little bit more time, most of our actors are used to it.”

She adds: “A lot of our actors worked in theatre so it can be quite spontaneous. They know that they don’t want to do it 10 times. They come on set completely on the ball...They can bounce off each other. Most people on set are bilingual. Even if they’re not fluent in Welsh, they’ve learnt a little over the years by working on our productions.”

If the grimness of these shows can seem a little daunting for those looking for a feelgood fix in our dark era, the S4C drama executive thinks it’s important not to overlook the gallows’ humour – or the fact that, like so many great scripted shows, escapism is key to their appeal.

Talfan agrees: “It’s trying to shoot the myth, rather than shooting the ordinary. One of the great gifts we had on the first series of *Hinterland* was that we worked with Polish director of photography Hubert Taczanowski. It was amazing how he came into the landscape of the county of Ceredigion. It was different to what he’d seen before – and he photographed it as if he was revelling in its extraordinariness. It set the tone and confirmed some of the ideas we were circling about trying to give the series a slight sense of the other.”

On *Hinterland* there was a deliberate policy to avoid what could be described as “franchise Britain” – no scenes containing homogenised high streets, supermarkets, or fast-food outlets – and so fashion a more timeless, fictionalised world.

Where, then, does Welsh noir go next? S4C has another one in development, which, once again, aims to provide a new twist on the detective drama. “Welsh noir is definitely here to stay because it’s in our DNA,” insists Gravelle. “We can punch above our weight by doing more shows of this ilk.”

Also expect to see the influence of Welsh noir in cinemas soon: S4C has invested in *The Feast*, a Welsh-language folk-horror movie with strong, brooding characters. It goes on general release in the UK in August.

Make no mistake, Welsh noir isn’t going to go away anytime soon. ■

# OUR FRIEND IN THE NORTH EAST

In our case it was a room on the top floor of Sunderland's new City Hall. In Lin-Manuel Miranda's stage musical *Hamilton*, it was a house in Lower Manhattan. But on both occasions, key players gathered to shape the future.

*No one really knows  
how the game is played*

*The art of the trade*

*How the sausage gets made*

*We just assume that it happens*

*But no one else is in the room  
where it happens*

I was reminded of the lyric when a group of screen sector leaders joined local politicians to launch a new TV and film development agency, North East Screen. The agency – to be based in Sunderland – comes in the wake of a £37m investment in content from a region stretching from the Scottish border to the North York Moors.

The BBC has committed £25m, with a promise of more to follow and, in a unique partnership, all 12 local authorities have raised £12m to establish a production and skills fund. Other broadcasters are keen to join the party.

The BBC, whose commissioning editor for daytime and early peak, Helen Munson, is now based in Newcastle, has already ordered six series. They include *Robson Green's Dirty Weekends*, *Scarlett's Driving School* and a documentary strand with Middlesbrough singer James Arthur.

So, who were the people in the room where it happened? Helen Munson and Tom Wrathmell, the BBC's director of UK strategy, were among the first arrivals. You might also have spotted Jimmy Mulville from Hat Trick, which is developing comedy talent from a region that gave us *The Likely Lads* and Sarah Millican.

**Graeme Thompson**  
hails the launch of  
North East Screen  
– and the room  
where it happened



University of Sunderland

Entertainment chief Malcolm Gerrie was back in his home city of Sunderland, along with Oscar-winning producer David Parfitt, whose parents ran a shop in the city centre.

Johnny Moore, Chief Executive of Fulwell 73, which has opened a production office at the University of Sunderland, was present, along with other company heads, including Kim Tserkezie from Scattered Pictures, Duncan Gray from twentysix03 and US-based Tom Gutteridge, executive producer of Discovery's *BattleBots* and launch chair of North East Screen.

They were joined by new kids on the block from local companies such as Wander Films and visual effects specialist New World Designs.

Of course, the big challenge of turbo-charging the screen sector in a corner of England that has seen relatively little production in the past decade, is the skills shortage. North East Screen has a crew database, but many of those names are working in

other parts of the UK or on existing shows such as CBBC's *The Dumping Ground*. This leaves producers thumbing anxiously though their contacts to find people willing to head north within tight deadlines.

It's a scenario made more challenging by the recent ScreenSkills report that highlighted a UK shortfall of more than 20,000 crew at a time when more than 190,000m<sup>2</sup> of additional studio space is required to meet the demands of film and high-end TV.

So it is no surprise that North East Screen and its funders have put skills development at the top of their priority list. Step one is aligning the education and training offer with professional development and placement opportunities.

Step two is more challenging. In spite of forecasts that predict the UK screen sector – already worth more than £5bn – will grow to £7bn in the next three years, parents, teachers and careers advisors are choosing not to recognise the opportunities. There's a massive hearts and minds task ahead of us to persuade people that careers in film and TV are a viable ambition.

I recently spoke with one parent whose son has been making films since the age of 11 and had his heart set on making it his career. But his sixth form careers advisor strongly discouraged this "poorly paid freelance" ambition and urged him to consider studying physiotherapy at university.

It's not quite the pistols at dawn moment described in *Hamilton*, but I'd love to lock that advisor and like-minded policy-makers in a room with North East Screen to see what happens. ■

**Graeme Thompson MBE is pro vice-chancellor of external relations at the University of Sunderland and Chair of the RTS Education Committee.**



# Cute but controlling

Sky

**T**he horror in Sky's new series *The Baby* comes even before we properly meet the demonic cutie himself. It is in the opening scene, when a poker night hosted by fun-loving thirty-something Natasha (played by Michelle de Swarte) goes terribly wrong. First, her friend's new baby ruins the vibe, then she finds out that another pal (Isy Suttie) is pregnant. A nightmare situation for Natasha, indeed.

Things get worse when, as Natasha takes time out at a seaside cabin, a baby boy literally falls into her arms. He soon demonstrates his ability to wreak havoc when those he encounters die at his whim and, worse still, Natasha can't get rid of him. If ever there was a metaphor for the upending of lives that parenthood causes, *The Baby* is it.

Sky comedy-horror *The Baby* lays bare the pitfalls of motherhood. **Shilpa Ganatra** ducks behind the highchair

For Naomi de Pear and all at Sister (which made *Chernobyl* and *The Split*, among others), comedy-horror appeared an apt medium to deliver a fresh perspective on contemporary motherhood.

"We were looking to make a show about motherhood, but we didn't want to make one about a tired, normal mother coming home from hospital. This felt like a radical way to do it," says De Pear, who is pausing her maternity leave to discuss the eight-part series. "It captured that

feeling of what it's like to come home with a baby. You do feel like you've just caught a baby off a cliff, and you have no idea what to do.

"There is that sense of paranoia that everyone's looking at you. And you do think the baby has mystical powers. Comedy and horror are a great way of looking at the emotions and politics around motherhood that everybody experiences, but in a heightened way."

While becoming a parent is typically portrayed on television as a joyous thing, programmes that have explored the wider repercussions and take a less romantic view, such as *Breeders* and *Catastrophe*, have arguably resonated better.

In a similar vein, co-creators and married couple Siân Robins-Grace (the series writer) and Lucy Gaymer (the producer) began the project >



Florence Watson

## RTS bursary scholar making waves

In 2014, Florence Watson from Liverpool won a place in the inaugural year of the RTS's bursary scheme, which offers financial support and career guidance to students aiming for a career in television. Her aim came good – recently, she joined the production team of *The Baby* as script editor, before being promoted to story producer.

'Working on *The Baby* was definitely a career highlight,' says Watson. 'I was working for Sister, which is one of the best production companies in terms of its output and the bravery it shows with its stories. All of its shows have really interesting angles. *The Baby*'s angle on the joys and horrors of motherhood was definitely interesting, and relevant to where I was at in my own life.'

In a neat cycle of events, Watson is also on the RTS Education Committee, 'which is essentially about finding other students who are doing TV-relevant degrees and offering them a bursary,' she explains.

After graduating in 2017, Watson

worked as a script editor on *Hollyoaks*, then on *Call the Midwife*, before joining the team working on *The Baby*. She has now settled into a staff role as a development executive at South of the River Pictures, the production company owned by Olivia Colman and her husband, Ed Sinclair.

The RTS's bursary schemes support students from lower-income families and, for Watson, 'it ultimately led me to the career I have now', she says. 'I was able to use the money to start my career in a way I wouldn't have been able to otherwise.'

'With my first instalment, I bought myself a camera so I could shoot my own short films. And, in my last year of university, I used the money to travel down to London during half-term to do some work experience in a production company – that was my first ever proper TV experience.'

'It's not only the money that made a difference,' she concludes. 'Things such as workshops and the community of recipients – as we all keep in touch – have helped, too.'

› as a way of acknowledging the ambivalence around motherhood. The idea came when the pair – who met while working at the production company Eleven – were hiking to Machu Picchu in Peru in 2019.

'Lucy turned to me and said, 'I've had this really cool image for an opening scene. It's the image of a baby falling out of the sky and a woman catches it in her arms;'' says Robbins-Grace. 'I thought that was a great idea. We spent the rest of the hike plotting a short film around that image.'

'We asked ourselves who would be the most interesting person to catch a baby from the sky? Probably a woman who doesn't want to have a baby. Then we built out from that. We realised the subject matter was a question occupying us and lots of people around us.'

Certainly, *The Baby* is a 360-degree examination of motherhood: we soon meet Natasha's sister, Bobbi (Amber Grappy), who is trying to adopt, and their own mother (Sinéad Cusack), who never quite drummed up the maternal spirit. There is a host of mumsy mums who have their own ways of coping with their little terrors. Tellingly, the series also brings up the question of bodily autonomy – especially timely since the overturning of Wade vs Roe in the US.

There is sensitivity, too, for the tribulations of new mothers – at one point, Natasha's friend Mags (Shvorne Marks) tells her exasperatedly, 'All I want is a best mate who doesn't judge me for being a mum. Because – you know what? – I already feel like I'm failing at it. All the time.'

HBO in the US and Sky Studios in the UK came aboard early on. Gabriel Silver, director of commissioning for drama at Sky Studios, says: 'At that stage, I didn't fully know the scope and story, but we knew it was going to be genuinely surprising and have a completely new angle of attack.'

'It felt absolutely like Sky could do this. There are a couple of shows, such as *I Hate Suzie*, that Sky put out in recent years that meant we could test what's expected of us and be provocative in ways that aren't just budget-related or to do with high-octane action – we could be culturally provocative.'

The script was then fleshed out into a sprawling eight-part series – aided by an all-female writers room, which enriched the story with its range of experiences and perspectives. Although



Michelle de Swarte as Natasha in *The Baby*; twins Arthur and Albie Hills share the title role

character. Twins were enlisted to act as doubles, alongside a lifelike doll that could stand in when needed. “We looked for triplets, but we couldn’t find any,” says De Pear. “It’s often the case that one of them looks a bit different and they’re not completely identical. But the twins that we cast, Arthur and Albie [Hills], were so angelic that aspect ended up being less challenging than some of the more mundane things, such as organising the many different locations.”

While the dialogue is rooted in smartly observed authenticity, the show’s narrative was given the space to follow the comedy and/or horror the story called for.

To help realise the desired tone, greater collaboration was needed between the production crew, who were largely female. “It wasn’t intentional, but we were very determined to have a diverse crew, to have people who were invested in the themes of the show and to give newer talent a shot,” says De Pear. “We always hire on merit but, yes, it did therefore end up being a quite female-heavy crew.”

With fortuitous timing, the series is being released as the horror genre stretches its tendrils towards a new generation. *Stranger Things* is the prime case in point, but the *Chucky* reboot and Guillermo del Toro’s upcoming Netflix series, *Cabinet of Curiosities*, are also on young adults’ watchlists.

But that’s not the main appeal of the show, insists Silver: “The thing I’ve learnt from this job is that it’s incredibly reductive to talk about the genre, because there are so many different kinds of horror,” he says. “Also, it isn’t that this particular genre only appeals to a certain demographic. For instance, some of the horror in *The Baby* is a deliberate harking back to classical horror, which may be more familiar to older audiences than younger ones.”

If all goes well, there may be more infant-related creepiness, as Silver sees scope for a potential second series. “I don’t want to presume what form that would actually take – that would be entirely in the gift of Siân and the creative team working on it. But I’d definitely say there’s more to uncover.”

In which case we await... *The Toddler*, perhaps? ■

**The Baby aired on Sky Atlantic on 7 July and will also be available to stream on Now TV.**

Sky

forming writers rooms for comedy dramas is usually an American practice, “that’s changing and they’re more common in the UK, especially as TV series need to be delivered to short order”, says Robins-Grace.

“Traditionally, the auteur was a bigger deal in the UK, probably because a lot of TV writers came from the theatre.

But writers rooms are a great way of getting a lot of voices into a story and working with people at different experience levels. Plus, writing can be a solitary process – when you’re working with other people, it’s more fun.”

While the pandemic had an impact on filming, another aspect to grapple with was having a baby as the main

# A safe place on set

The RTS learns how intimacy co-ordinators are helping actors feel comfortable when they shoot TV sex scenes

**W**hen the credits rolled in 2018 for the second series of *The Deuce*, HBO's series about the porn industry in 1970s New York, a job title appeared for the first time on screen – an “intimacy coordinator”. This was a landmark moment for television, instigated by actor Emily Meade in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal.

The break from the norm was particularly needed because of the show's content and, as Meade pointed out soon after: “The process of doing [sex scenes] in a television show is very different from in a film, because you don't have it all laid out when you sign on, and each episode is a new script and a new sex scene; you don't have nearly as much time to process and prepare.”

Cut to five years later, and the role is mandatory in all HBO series containing intimate scenes, and standard practice in other networks in the US. On this side of the pond, notable productions that have made use of this emerging role include *Sex Education*, *Normal People* and *I May Destroy You*.

The job of an intimacy co-ordinator



*Outlander*

Amazon Prime Video

is to prepare and choreograph scenes of a sensitive nature – ones that involve nudity or sexual content, from kissing to sexual violence.

This was the topic of a recent RTS event, “Getting intimate: The evolution of the intimacy co-ordinator”, featuring actor Jessica Reynolds and Vanessa Coffey, who is known for her work as an intimacy co-ordinator on *Outlander*, *Vikings: Valhalla*, *Rules of the Game* and *War of the Worlds*. Before *The Deuce*, said Coffey, “different people were responsible for different [aspects of the job]. What I hope we do is bring it all together in that co-ordinated approach.” She added: “The choreography wasn't

previously done at all. It was like, ‘Let's just put the camera on it and let's see what happens.’ Whereas now, the closest analogy is to a fight director or to a stunt co-ordinator. We would never ask an actor to just walk towards somebody else with a knife and say, ‘Let's just see what happens.’ It's the same thing for us.”

In 2017, a student asked Coffey –who had formerly been a lawyer, an actor, a movement director and then a lecturer – to help liaise with the director on a planned nudity scene. Her varied background came in useful, and that brought her into the world of intimacy co-ordination.

Although at that time the Weinstein scandal was raising awareness of sexual exploitation in the film industry, the issue had been present on sets for decades. The most notable instance was in 1972's *Last Tango in Paris*, in which actor Maria Schneider was sexually humiliated by a surprise change as the cameras rolled, which was planned by co-star Marlon Brando and director Bernardo Bertolucci. "A sexual assault 100% did happen on that set", said Coffey in no uncertain terms.

For most actors working on projects

to get to the most comfortable place that they can, to perform in the best way that they can."

In practical terms, the job of an intimacy co-ordinator is to manage the intimate scenes from conception to post-filming. Ahead of filming, Coffey liaises with showrunners, directors and actors to ensure that each is prepared and agreed on how the scene should play out. Even with a simple kissing scene, it gives the "opportunity to map things out and make sure that the actors are comfortable with where

there are a few, and they are really wonderful," said Coffey. "If you've got an empathic person, I don't see the difference between you having a male or a female intimacy co-ordinator; it's just who's going to be best for that particular job.

Responses to the role are also changing. Coffey said that younger actors, having grown up in a more communicative environment, "are much more vocal about saying: 'This is what I need.' They also recognise that sometimes those [discussions] are



Vanessa Coffey



Jessica Reynolds



Caroline Frost

RTS

containing intimate scenes, the lack of intimacy co-ordinators often meant a lack of sensitive direction, discomfort, and an overwhelming pressure to do what was asked of them, said Coffey.

Reynolds, who plays Malva Christie in *Outlander*, agreed with Coffey's point that actors are trained to say yes to directors: "The success rate of even getting a job is so small, so if you get that job, especially when you're young or coming out of drama school, you're just like, 'I'll do anything.' It's why so many things in the past have gone uncovered, hence Weinstein. If it's been your dream since you were a child, it's very easy to fall into the trap of saying yes."

But in this changed climate, and one with a greater emphasis on mental health, Reynolds said intimacy co-ordinators should be mandatory on sets featuring intimate scenes.

She noted that the change is often seen in a negative way, but intimacy co-ordinators such as Coffey are not there to dictate what happens. "She's there to go, 'What do you need here? Let's both come to an agreement' – because no one has done that in the past. She's ultimately getting the actors

hands are going – how long a kiss is held for, what size of shot it's going to be in, how many shots there are going to be on the day".

It is also her job to ensure that the actors involved are aware of each other's needs, whether that means avoiding a pesky cold sore or a triggering boundary. She also liaises with departments, including costume and hair and make-up, to ensure that everyone is on board with the vision.

While filming is going on, she is there to ensure all goes as planned – and in case an actor changes their mind, though that situation hasn't arisen yet. "I hope, or think, the reason it hasn't happened so far is because we have been able to have those really open conversations beforehand," she said.

For Reynolds, having Coffey as an intimacy co-ordinator on the set of *Outlander* "took all the yuckiness, the taboo" out of the experience. "For the people who can't speak up, she is there to be a voice and to settle you. Now, going forward, I'm praying there will always be an intimacy co-ordinator."

As yet a relatively new role, it is still in flux. Men, for example, are entering the fold. "There are not that many, but

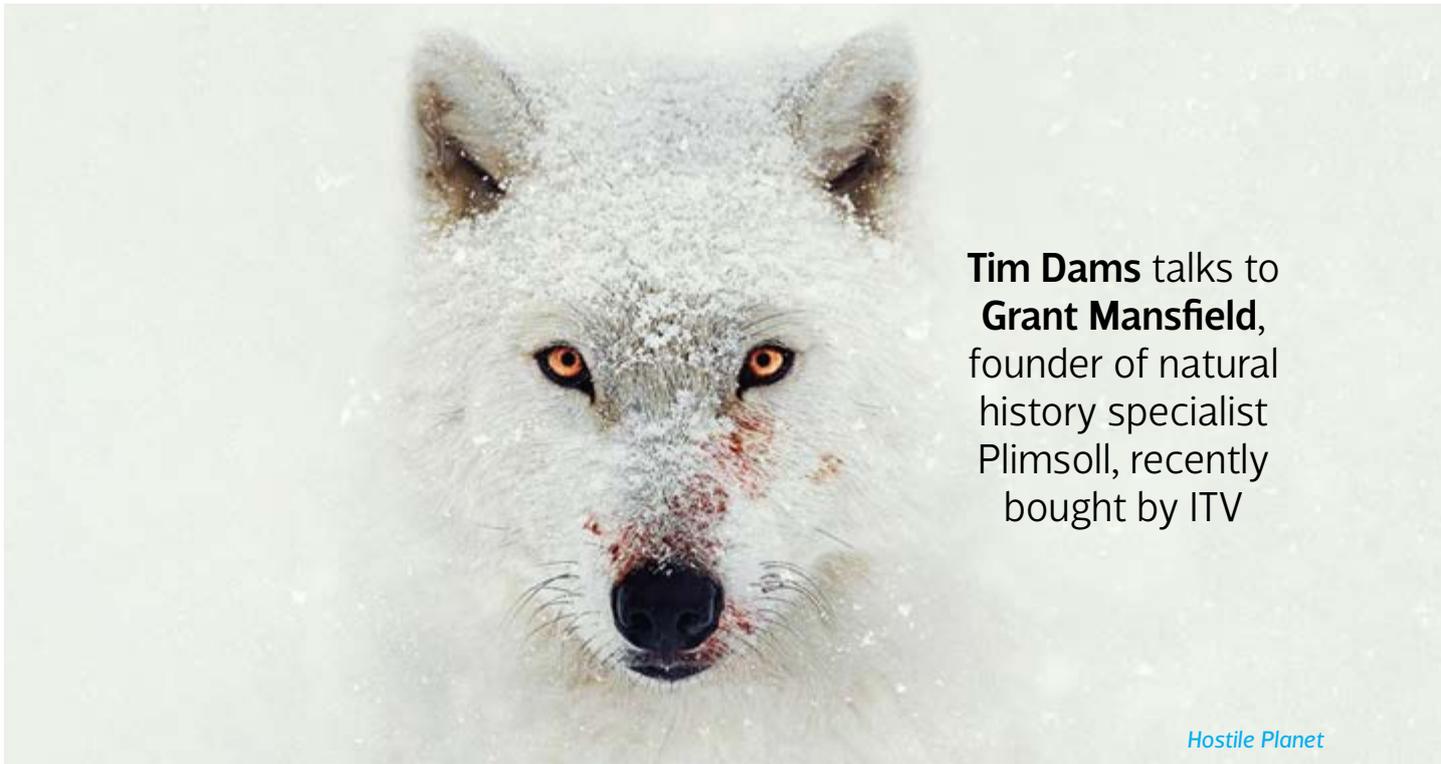
needed for kisses. That is not something I've ever experienced from an older, experienced actor, even if they haven't had a lot of intimate scenes."

In the near future, she predicts that the remit of intimacy co-ordinators may well expand to include all types of sensitive scenes. "I've been called on for things such as torture scenes before, where someone had to imagine their fingers being chopped off," said Coffey. "They were in a very vulnerable place for approximately six hours of shooting the scene. That actor talked about knowing rationally that she was not being tortured, but that her body didn't. We've got a process to help them de-role from that.

"Ultimately, we're going to see the rise of a wellbeing co-ordinator. And not just for cast, I think we'll also see it for crew. Because the crew also experience these scenes over and over again, and sometimes we forget about their mental health within this." ■

**Report by Shilpa Ganatra. 'Getting intimate: The evolution of the intimacy co-ordinator' was an RTS event held on 4 July. It was hosted by journalist Caroline Frost and produced by Lily Hawkins at Premier Comms.**

# Inside Bristol's indie powerhouse



Tim Dams talks to Grant Mansfield, founder of natural history specialist Plimsoll, recently bought by ITV

*Hostile Planet*

National Geographic

**B**y his own admission, Plimsoll Productions founder Grant Mansfield is an obsessive jogger. When we speak over Zoom at 9:00am, he has just returned from a run – one of four that he tries to fit in each week. “It has certainly helped keep me sane during the past eight months of this process,” he explains, referring to the recent sale of Plimsoll to ITV.

The broadcaster agreed in early June to pay £103.5m for a 79.5% stake in Plimsoll, valuing the producer of Apple TV+'s *Tiny World*, Channel 4's *Handmade: Britain's Best Woodworker* and Nat Geo's *Hostile Planet* at a cool £131m.

The deal caps a remarkable – excuse the pun – run for Plimsoll. Mansfield launched the company in Bristol in 2013, after more than two decades in unscripted TV. He had recently returned from working in Los Angeles as CEO of Zodiak USA, after spells as Managing

Director of RDF, head of programmes at Granada, controller of factual at ITV and managing editor of network features at the BBC.

Mansfield recalls spending the first day of Plimsoll's life in a “broom cupboard”-sized office writing emails to dozens of potential broadcaster clients.

“By about 3:00pm, I thought, ‘Shit, I haven't got anything else to do.’ Everyone else seemed to be busy doing something, so I spent a good half an hour pretending to type on my keyboard.”

For the first few weeks, he struggled to fill the day: “You just put stuff out there and hope like mad that someone is going to buy a show.”

The breakthrough came when Plimsoll won its first documentary commission, *Prom Crazy: Frocks and Ferraris*, from ITV's then head of factual, Richard Klein (who is now Plimsoll's head of documentaries).

Klein came to visit Plimsoll beforehand. “We were so embarrassed by

the state of the offices that I actually borrowed an office from a friend,” says Mansfield. That friend was Andrew Jackson, then executive vice-president for landmarks and specials at Discovery (who also works at Plimsoll, overseeing international commercial programme activities).

Mansfield admits that *Prom Crazy: Frocks and Ferraris* wasn't Plimsoll's finest hour, but it got the company going. Key milestones in the company's growth were: its first big series commission, *Life of Dogs*, for Discovery International; its first major SVoD commission, *Night on Earth* for Netflix; closely followed by *Tiny World* and *Hostile Planet*.

Some of Mansfield's first hires were instrumental in building the company, among them Dr Martha Holmes, as head of natural history, and Karen Plumb, as head of factual entertainment. The company now has 12 commission-winning executives.

Plimsoll also added key commercial expertise in its early days, appointing the former deputy CEO of private equity group LDC, Paddy Sellers, as Chair, and former DRG group MD Jonathan Jackson as COO and CFO.

Today, Plimsoll has 400 people on its payroll, including staff and freelancers – and has taken over the entire Bristol building where it all began.

ITV is buying its stake in Plimsoll from private equity firm LDC, which took a minority position in Plimsoll in 2019, and from Mansfield and other existing Plimsoll shareholders, including 25 of its management team.

Mansfield stresses that he enjoyed working with LDC, which has exited with a good return. “It was everything that some people tell you private equity won’t be – it was not interventionist and was incredibly supportive.”

But he instigated the switch from private equity because he thought Plimsoll needed a trade partner for the next stage of its life: “We have significant growth ambitions. It’s reached the point where having some media expertise on the board... will be helpful to us.”

Mansfield says that Plimsoll had 17 bidders in total. But ITV and its content division, ITV Studios, stood out: “ITV Studios really understands the sector, but it is also particularly strong in the two markets where we are strong, the UK and the US.”

The ITV deal is also something of a homecoming for Mansfield. He cites former ITV director of programmes David Liddiment as a key figure in his career. It was Liddiment who “plucked” him out of the BBC to work at ITV. “He had a profound influence on me – he is an extremely clever, erudite man, but is absolutely steeped in what I would call popular quality.”

As part of the sale process, Plimsoll carried out due diligence to establish its place in the market. Mansfield says the analysts concluded that Plimsoll was the world’s biggest independent natural history producer (according to its figures, the BBC’s Natural History Unit has 17% of the global market, while Plimsoll has 13%).

But Mansfield stresses that there is more to Plimsoll than natural history, describing the indie as a creator of premium unscripted content across a range of genres. “We are making a lot of big budget, unscripted content outside the natural history space, both in the UK and the US,” he says. A lot of these

draw on the techniques and technologies it has applied to natural history.

Many of these unscripted shows cannot be announced yet, but they include SVoD commissions, two more series of Channel 4’s *Handmade* and another season of BBC Two’s *Marcus Wareing’s Tales from a Kitchen Garden*. Plimsoll is also producing *On the Edge with Alex Honnold* for Disney+, which

Finding the right financial backing was key to Plimsoll’s early success, stresses Mansfield. He started the company with upfront investment from an unnamed angel investor, which allowed him to launch Plimsoll with a small team of execs – Holmes, Plumb, Christine Owen (who has just retired as COO), and specialist factual head Kate Beetham. “I never felt I was



will see the *Free Solo* star climb some of the toughest peaks in Greenland.

Plimsoll launched a factual drama department 18 months ago under Lisa Gilchrist, which has a number of series in paid development.

Mansfield concedes that Plimsoll has also been fortunate. He always thought its growth would come from the US, given his experience working there, “but setting up Plimsoll coincided with the SVoD platforms moving into unscripted and natural history in a big way. I certainly didn’t see that coming.”

Of course, there are now concerns about the growth model of SVoDs as the cost of living crisis bites. Some think that, as a result, they will commission less. But Mansfield believes that unscripted will continue to be in favour: “If you are looking to deliver new, fantastic content to your platform and to control your costs, a very natural thing to do would be to order more unscripted TV.”

doing this on my own – and absolutely haven’t done it on my own. This is so much a team effort,” he says.

Mansfield is also proud that Plimsoll has become an important employer in Bristol. The city’s mayor, Marvin Rees, sits on the company’s board. And he is proud of the wide share ownership in the company, which has 25 staff with skin in the game.

It’s an unusually large number for a UK indie, something that Mansfield describes as right and sensible. “All of these people have helped build something that I think makes a contribution to the city.”

The angel investor has clearly done well, too. “For a relatively small amount of money, they have made an absolutely fantastic return,” says Mansfield. But he thinks they deserve it. “Anyone who says that starting an indie isn’t risky is off their head. You see a lot of very good people starting these indies, and then they fall over.” ■

# RTS Student Television Awards 2022

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CONTENT

The ceremony at the London College of Communication on 24 June was hosted by **Yinka Bokinni** and the awards were presented by **Theresa Wise**

May-Ann Blanch with  
her *Undergraduate  
Drama* award for *Sizzle*



Richard Kendal

## Postgraduate Animation *Night of the Living Dread*

Ida Melum, Danielle Goff, Hannah Kelso and Laura Jayne Tunbridge, National Film and Television School

'A highly sophisticated piece with a great script, engaging characters and a stunning visual aesthetic. A film that a seasoned professional would be proud of.'

### **Nominees:**

- ▶ **A Film About A Pudding**, Roel Van Beek, Jack Pollington, Julie Nørgaard Bonde Jensen, Sonja Huttunen and Team, National Film and Television School
- ▶ **Do Not Feed The Pigeons**, Antonin Niclass, Jordi Morera and Vladimir Krasilnikov, National Film and Television School

## Undergraduate Animation *In Harmony*

Markus Øvre, UCA Farnham

'A brilliant musical animation with unique and engaging characters. The use of music to drive the narrative was well executed.'

### **Nominees:**

- ▶ **Allotment**, Karla Engström and Samuel Carson, Manchester Metropolitan University
- ▶ **Fall of the Ibis King**, Mikai Geronimo, Josh O'Caomh, Giorgia McKenna, Charles Henri-Sanson, Niall Delahan, Stephen Hennessy, Cathal Hughes, Samantha Sack and Alex Voytenko, National Film School/IADT

## Postgraduate Comedy and Entertainment *Ashes 2 Ashes*

Louise Stewart, National Film and Television School

'Laugh out loud funny writing, with excellent on-screen talent performances and a beautifully simple story that was brilliantly executed by all.'

### **Nominees:**

- ▶ **Flavours Without Borders**, Desi Traichevska, Dominika Lapinska, Arushi Chugh and Oliver Wegmüller, National Film and Television School
- ▶ **Britain's Lost Walks**, Melissa Aston-Munslow, Samson Ibitoye, Holly Androlia and Niamh Broderick, National Film and Television School

*In Harmony, Undergraduate Animation and Craft Skills – Production Design*



UCA Farnham



*Night of the Living Dread, Postgraduate Animation and Craft Skills – Production Design*

Richard Kendal



*Ashes 2 Ashes, Postgraduate Comedy and Entertainment*

NFTS

## Undergraduate Comedy and Entertainment

### Heart Failure

Will Wightman, Cleo Yeomans and Will Marchant, Falmouth University  
‘Brilliantly uplifting and funny from start to finish. Super-slick new writing, dynamic directing, ace music production and top-notch editing.’

#### Nominees:

- ▶ **Finsta**, Lucia Debernardini, Anne Sophie Trompert, Felicia Holst and Luis Garcia, Regent’s University London
- ▶ **Flash\_Thunder93**, Reuben Harvey, Matthew Howe, Finnoughla Madden and Robert Montgomery, National Film School/IADT

## Postgraduate Drama

### Requiem

Emma J Gilbertson, Michelle Brøndum, Laura Jayne Tunbridge, Joseph Guy and production team, National Film and Television School  
‘A wonderfully evocative film, which rendered its period setting with astonishing skill, especially given the constraints of both Covid and budget, this was outstandingly acted and directed.’

#### Nominees:

- ▶ **Caterpillar**, Marcus Anthony Thomas, Johannes Schubert, Sonja Huttunen, Paulina Camacho, Lesley Posso and team, National Film and Television School
- ▶ **Triangle**, Peter Engelmann, Arts University Bournemouth

## Undergraduate Drama

### Sizzle

May-Ann Blanch, Luke Keogh, Anna Burns and Rachael Light, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
‘A wonderfully bold and imaginative film, telling a quietly courageous story with humour and pathos. The emotionally truthful central performance, unusual visuals and vivid production design made this a real standout.’

#### Nominees:

- ▶ **Dilemma**, Dora Martynyuk, Regent’s University London
- ▶ **My House of Things**, Ingo Lyle-Goodwin, Nikki Merrett, Ben Collins, Kinga Kovacs, Dylan Saville and Felix Bromage, Leeds Beckett University, Northern Film School

## Postgraduate Factual

### **More Than Just Memories**

Megan Brown, Osian Pearson, Miles Sullivan and Fabio Amurri, National Film and Television School

'Beautifully shot, with a high standard in post-production, this was a really emotional story that tugged at the heart strings, while being sensitive and not indulgent. The lovely story was so gently told.'

#### **Nominees:**

► **All Is Now**, Anna Nørager, Basia Mischczyk, Raluca Petre, Zoltán Kádár, Madison Willing, Francis Qureshi, Ewelina Dziedzic and Emma Beinish, National Film and Television School

► **Last Orders**, Hannah Skolnick, Walteri Vanhanen, Joseph Stevenson and Joe De-Vine, National Film and Television School

## Undergraduate Factual

### **Eden**

Charlie Bush, Patrick Whinder-Montague, Barney Janes, Sam Schoettner, Maryam Bahaari, Guy Newland and Ethan Harper, University of the West of England, Bristol

'Beautifully shot, stunning and poetic. It revealed a hidden story that was "of the moment" and would inspire other trans women to come forward for help and support.'

#### **Nominees:**

**No Comprendo**, Claudia Botton and Bukola Bakinson, University of Greenwich

**On Board DH23**, Cameron Tait, Kiran Wallace, Teddy Howes and Belinda Villa Rodriguez, Solent University

## Postgraduate News and Sport

### **Struggle and Hope**

Aisling Taylor, Sarah Harrison and Alex Prior, Wandesforde, City, University of London

'Took on a complex subject and delivered a detailed, and at times very emotional, documentary. Well-researched and technically strong. The calibre of the interviewees and the sensitivity with which they were dealt were particularly impressive.'

#### **Nominees:**

► **The Diagnosed: Living with Borderline Personality Disorder**, Cara Mooney, Isabel Suckling and Charlotte Newell, City, University of London

► **The Fight to be Seen**, Nichole Tan, Goldsmiths, University of London



Requiem, Postgraduate Drama

NFTS



Eden, Undergraduate Factual and Craft Skills – Camerawork

University of the West of England, Bristol



Flight of the Puffin, Postgraduate Sustainability

Richard Kendal



More Than Just Memories, Postgraduate Factual

Richard Kendal



Struggle and Hope, Postgraduate News and Sport

Richard Kendal

*The Third Man, Undergraduate News and Sport*



### Undergraduate News and Sport

#### ***The Third Man***

Curtis Pyke, Georgia Savoie, Ian Bedwell, Jenna Wallace and Edward Lawton, University of the West of England, Bristol  
‘We were blown away by the imagination, style and power of this film, centred around a truly original idea. The fantastic animation was of a professional standard.’

#### **Nominees:**

- ▶ ***The Impact of COVID-19***, Isabel Blakemore, The University of Salford
- ▶ ***The Reality of Eating Disorders***, Daisy Herman, The University of Salford

### Postgraduate Sustainability

#### ***Flight of the Puffin***

Rakel Dawn Hanson, University of the West of England, Bristol

‘A joyous, surprising, and sensitively handled film. Deft observational filmmaking that confronted the juxtaposition of hunting and conservation with both empathy and documentary rigour.’

#### **Nominees:**

- ▶ ***Cuttle Shore***, Rosie Ashley-East, Jack Mortimer, Jessie Knierim, Ella Van Cleave and Joe Shelly, University of the West of England, Bristol
- ▶ ***Ghost Ponds***, Amanda Sosnowski, University of the West of England, Bristol

### Undergraduate Sustainability

#### ***The State of Earth***

Innes Letch, Frankie Gray, Drew Graves, Megan Harrison and Eve-Marie Johnson, University of the West of England, Bristol

‘An accomplished and informative film, with good use of archive combined with well-edited new material.’

#### **Nominees:**

- ▶ ***The Future of Fashion***, Lauren Allaway, Bournemouth University
- ▶ ***The Rubbish Countryside***, Rose Thompson, University of Plymouth

### Postgraduate Craft Skills – Camerawork

#### ***Ghost Ponds***

Amanda Sosnowski, University of the West of England, Bristol

‘Stunning photography, with creative movements that perfectly complement the story and message. A remarkable film that gave an insight into the lost world of British pond life, but the quality of the filming and storytelling matches up to any broadcast factual programme. Cinematography at its finest.’



*Ghost Ponds, Postgraduate Craft Skills – Camerawork*

University of the West of England, Bristol



*Heart Failure, Undergraduate Comedy and Entertainment and Craft Skills – Editing*

Richard Kendal



*The State of Earth, Undergraduate Sustainability*

University of the West of England, Bristol

**Undergraduate Craft Skills – Camerawork**

**Eden**

Barney Janes, University of the West of England, Bristol

‘The camerawork was outstanding. The piece flowed with a lyrical and poetic quality. It captured the breath-taking scenery perfectly and put you right in the cold water alongside the subject.’

**Postgraduate Craft Skills – Editing**

**Caterpillar**

Lesley Posso, National Film and Television School

‘The seamless editing from start to finish meant the cuts were not abrasive, and the story was able to breathe and flow when needed. How the dialogue was cut helped immerse the audience in the underground world of producing cannabis through the eyes of this vulnerable young boy.’

**Undergraduate Craft Skills – Editing**

**Heart Failure**

Will Wightman, Falmouth University  
 ‘A brilliantly paced and dynamic film, with the accompanying track giving so much energy to the piece. The great shot choices made it flow so that nothing jarred. It was epic!’

**Postgraduate Craft Skills – Production Design**

**Night of the Living Dread**

Milly White, National Film and Television School

‘The level of detail in all scenes captured the mood and tone of this individual’s traumatic life. The realistic materiality of the objects [contributed to] immersing you into each scene.’

**Undergraduate Craft Skills – Production Design**

**In Harmony**

Markus Øvre, UCA Farnham

‘The film was beautifully crafted, with an amazing character set in a vividly realised and perfectly created world.’



Falmouth University

Heart Failure, Undergraduate Comedy and Entertainment and Craft Skills – Editing



Richard Kendal

Eden, Undergraduate Factual, and Craft Skills – Camerawork



Richard Kendal

Caterpillar, Postgraduate Craft Skills – Editing



NFS/iADT

Fall of the Ibis King, Undergraduate Craft Skills – Sound



In Harmony, Undergraduate Animation and Craft Skills – Production Design

Richard Kendal



Theresa Wise, RTS CEO

Richard Kendal



Flash\_Thunder93, Undergraduate Craft Skills – Writing

Richard Kendal

### Postgraduate Craft Skills – Sound

#### Do Not Feed the Pigeons

Joe De-Vine, National Film and Television School

‘This was sound design at its best. Each scene was clearly broken down and no sound effect was left unturned – even down to the middle-aged man trying to drown out of the sound of a child crying as he read his newspaper! The levels were on point for each sound effect.’

### Undergraduate Craft Skills – Sound

#### Fall of the Ibis King

Niall Delahan, Stephen Hennessy and Cathal Hughes, National Film School/IADT

‘A perfectly realised total soundscape drew the viewer right into the centre of this theatrical world and suspended any disbelief. The sound mix was stunningly professional. A feature-film experience.’

### Postgraduate Craft Skills – Writing

#### Triangle

Peter Engelmann, Arts University Bournemouth

‘The casting, along with believable characters, made for compelling viewing. The light touches of humour and narrative that built up to the roller-coaster ride of emotions for all the characters made the film stand out.’

### Undergraduate Craft Skills – Writing

#### Flash\_Thunder93

Reuben Harvey and Matthew Howe, National Film School/IADT

‘This quirky piece, featuring such idiosyncratic characters with a bizarre, shared obsession was driven by an excellent script: intelligent, original and witty. One of the hardest things in film-making is to make people laugh and this delivered.’ ■



Do Not Feed the Pigeons, Postgraduate Craft Skills – Sound

NFTS



Yinka Bokinni, Host

Richard Kendal



Night of the Living Dread, Postgraduate Animation and Craft Skills – Production Design

NFTS



Triangle, Postgraduate Craft Skills – Writing

Arts University Bournemouth

The RTS Student Television Awards 2022 reward outstanding work produced during the 2020/21 academic year. Undergraduate entries were first judged at a regional level by their local RTS centre in the winter of 2021.

The winning films from each RTS centre, along with all postgraduate entries, were then judged nationally in April 2022.

RTS North West

**Carole Solazzo** hears Disney exec Liam Keelan outline the type of shows he would like to commission in the UK



Pistol

Disney+

## Disney taps UK indies

In something of a coup for RTS North West, Liam Keelan, senior vice-president for original productions in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) at Disney, told a packed auditorium about his mission “to make people think differently about what Disney does”, and what the role of North West indies could be in realising that aim.

Happy to be “back on his home turf”, Keelan was asked by interviewer Alex Farber, deputy editor at *Broadcast*, about his rise from commissioning Jimmy McGovern’s *Moving On* for BBC Daytime to “working at a big global SVoD with 140 million subscribers”.

He may have come a long way but, to Keelan, local

stories are still key. “It’s the same whether you work on BBC Daytime or at Disney,” he said. “Authenticity is really valid and important. Whenever I’m pitched ideas at Disney, for me it’s, ‘Will it work in its local market, first and foremost?’... It’s so important that the audience is reflected back to itself in its full diversity.”

Using a clip from new series *Oussekiné* (based on the true story of a French family’s fight for justice for their son beaten to death by police) to illustrate his point, Keelan said: “And what is constantly at the back of my mind is... challenging the preconceived ideas of what a Disney show might be.”

Asked how he intended to subvert the idea of Disney as

“more family-oriented... safer,” Keelan spoke about new acquisition Star – the brand Disney uses for what he calls “adult-friendly general entertainment”.

Streaming now on Star are: Danny Boyle’s *Pistol*; *The Dropout*, chronicling the rise and fall of Elizabeth Holmes; opioid addiction drama *Dopesick*; and the “beyond graphic in parts” *Pam & Tommy*. Across the EMEA region, Keelan is commissioning 60 to 80 shows, with 80% for Star, 10 to 12 of them from the UK.

So, what is he looking for? “We’re interested in making shows you can’t miss out on,” he said. He wants originals, or “projects with IP behind them”, and on his development slate he has a “mix of

50-50 returning brands and franchises, and limited series”. He added: “But what crosses scripted and unscripted is [that] they have a sense of authorship, something to say, a voice.”

In terms of unscripted, Keelan spoke about a David Beckham project – “not an original idea” – about the former footballer returning to his roots to “give something back, not just to the struggling young grassroots football team, by helping and coaching them, but also... to the wider working-class community... and it was this that, for us, elevated the idea to something that felt different.”

Keelan was quick to add that attaching talent to a pitch is not crucial. New comedy *Extraordinary*, about an ordinary young woman from a world where everyone else has superpowers, was the winning script of a competition for writers new to TV. “It was something we took a punt on... but it was [from] Sid Gentle Films, which has made shows like *Killing Eve*, so you’ve got a certain level of comfort that it’s going to be done the way you want it.”

Keelan doesn’t want “long treatments or bibles. We’re interested in getting a dialogue going,” he said, “getting back [to companies] quickly... and making sure we’re a good place to work with.”

“Is [the idea] based on existing IP? Have you got a writer attached? These are... questions I’ll ask before it moves to the next stage,” he said. “But if those questions can be answered, we fund development as well.” ■

**The RTS North West indie networking event was held at the HOME arts centre in Manchester on 30 June. It was produced by Lynsey Hulme of Beautiful Productions.**

In 1980, the 12-year-old Brian Cox wrote to Nasa asking for photographs of its space missions, including shots from the mid-1970s Viking programme to land a spacecraft on Mars.

Speaking from Seattle at an online RTS London event in June, the physicist and TV presenter recalled: "I was so excited when this package came back."

He continued: "It's one of the most wonderful things that Nasa does. It doesn't only... attempt to answer some of the biggest questions that we can ask, in this case, 'Are we alone in the universe?'... but also, it engages with the next generation."

More than four decades later, Cox walked through the gates of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, to see Nasa's Mars mission guide the Perseverance rover and the Ingenuity helicopter across the surface of the planet for the feature-length BBC documentary, *Brian Cox: Seven Days on Mars*.

The film was shot over seven days at the laboratory, mission control for the Mars 2020 project, to find signs of ancient life on the planet. "Out of these seven days, we had to get a 90-minute film," explained director Michael Lachmann.

The production challenge, he recalled, involved "screwing up your courage and jumping into this environment... and having faith that what's going to happen is going to be interesting enough to fill a film".

Perseverance is collecting rock samples from an ancient river delta, from which scientists hope to "understand the history of Mars" and ascertain whether "it could have harboured life", explained Vandi Verma, chief engineer for Perseverance



Brian Cox: *Seven Days on Mars*

BBC

## Is there life on Mars?

**RTS London** Brian Cox has fulfilled a boyhood ambition to explore the red planet for a new BBC doc, reports **Matthew Bell**

Robotic Operations at the Nasa laboratory.

So far, in just over a year, the rover has covered 12km of the red planet's surface. "It's been a very exciting mission," she added. However, patience is required – the samples will not be brought back to Earth until the 2030s.

Space exploration, like making TV programmes during the Covid pandemic, is unpredictable. The documentary should have been shot in early January, but the Omicron outbreak led to a delay of a couple of months.

As events transpired, this was fortunate – a mechanical problem had left Perseverance immobile during the planned week of filming. "It felt like we had dodged a bullet," said Lachmann. "For the entire week we were

meant to be there, the rover did nothing."

The crew finally travelled to Pasadena at the beginning of March, only to encounter another problem: Perseverance's drill was stuck in a rock on the surface of Mars. "Luckily for us, [Nasa] had a plan to get it out and that became part of the narrative that drove the rest of the programme," said Lachmann.

The documentary offers a fascinating glimpse of life on Mars, thanks to the pictures and sounds sent back to Earth by Perseverance. "When that rover moves, you have a view of Mars that no one has ever seen," said Cox. Yet, "you do see a world that looks extremely similar to Earth".

In fact, it is the only planet, other than Earth, that humans could even stand on. "So, you see a familiar world, but it's

also, we have to remember, an alien world, hundreds of millions of miles away."

At one level, space exploration, continued Cox, "is about detail, engineering, precision and technology", but "at the other end of the scale, simultaneously, it's one of the grandest philosophical quests.

"How is it that collections of atoms, essentially as old as time, that are processed in the hearts of long dead stars, can come together to be us?" ■

**Brian Cox: Seven Days on Mars** was broadcast on BBC Two on 17 June and is now on iPlayer. The RTS London event was held on 8 June, chaired by Ash Potterton, executive producer for the film's maker, Arrow Media, and produced by Terry Marsh and Phil Barnes.

# Sir David Nicholas 1930–2022

■ It is no exaggeration to say that ITN wouldn't be what it is today without the legacy of Sir David Nicholas CBE, who has died aged 92. He was one of the true innovators of television broadcast news.

He was appointed editor of ITN when *News at Ten* was widely regarded as the benchmark for a mainstream news programme and of a higher quality than its BBC rival. In 1977, Lord Annan's seminal committee on UK broadcasting, which led to the creation of Channel 4, opined: "We subscribe to the generally held view that ITN has the edge over BBC news."

David was a familiar face at Royal Television Society events. In 2011, he was in conversation with Sir Paul Fox at an RTS House of Lords event. The Society presented him with the Cyril Bennett Award in 1985, a Judges' Award in 1991 and a Lifetime Achievement award in 2012.

Stewart Purvis, the former ITN CEO, recalled: "In 1967, when ITN persuaded the IBA and ITV to allow a 13-week trial of a half-hour news programme at 10:00pm, David had earned enough trust from the editor, Geoffrey Cox, to be put in charge.

"*News at Ten* became a national institution. David called it 'popular photo-journalism', blending vivid picture power, human angles, exclusives and background analysis." Up to 15 million viewers regularly watched the programme in the 1960s and 1970s. It was the UK's first half-hour daily news programme.

In 1978, David, by then ITN's editor and CEO, persuaded Anna Ford to leave the BBC to become *News at Ten*'s first female newscaster.

A year later, he fired *News*



ITN

at *Ten* anchor Reginald Bosanquet over his excessive drinking, which was sometimes evident to viewers.

Live news was his passion. His impact on general election coverage was considerable when he introduced new computer technology.

These programmes were

coverage of the Apollo 11 moon landings. An ITN machine, Titlefile, displayed on-screen captions, instead of experts in the studio, to help understand the conversations between the astronauts and Mission Control in Houston.

Two years earlier, in 1967, David had made broadcast-

David was a problem solver by nature; when the boat's engine failed in the teeth of a gale, he chartered a larger vessel. ITN journalist Richard Lindley was then able to report live, with Chichester in his yacht sailing behind.

He oversaw the introduction of electronic news gathering as video replaced film, and led ITN's successful bid to provide Channel 4's news service when the broadcaster launched 40 years ago. ITN still retains the contract.

Chair of ITN from 1989 to 1991, David was proud of his Welsh roots. He grew up in Tregaron, a market town in mid-Wales, and was educated at Neath Grammar School and Aberystwyth University.

Jobs on local papers followed before he joined *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Observer*. In 1960, ITN hired him as a scriptwriter.

He is survived by his son James, a former ITN cameraman, and daughter Helen. His wife, Juliet, died in 2013.

**Steve Clarke**

## 'NEWS AT TEN BECAME A NATIONAL INSTITUTION – DAVID CALLED IT "POPULAR PHOTO-JOURNALISM"'

also distinguished by cogent analysis from presenter Alastair Burnet.

In the late-1980s, David commissioned the VT-30 graphics generator from Paul McKee, an ITN computer consultant, to show viewers the state of the parties live in graphics as the votes came in. The computer had first been used to design knitting patterns.

Technology was also the fore in 1969 in ITV's 12-hour

ing history by producing pioneering coverage of Francis Chichester completing the first solo round-the-world yacht voyage. He went to extraordinary lengths to transmit live pictures from the Atlantic as Chichester neared home, chartering a yacht laden with engineers and transmitting equipment to send pictures to a dish mounted under an aircraft, which then beamed them to a receiving station.

■ Regional news presenter Harry Gration MBE has died suddenly at the age of 71. The former *BBC Look North* host won no fewer than five RTS awards during a long broadcasting career.

BBC Director-General Tim Davie said: “He had a real connection with the public, who saw him as one of their own. Loved everywhere, but especially in Yorkshire, he will be hugely missed by his many fans and friends.”

Harry was named Regional Presenter of the Year at the RTS Television Journalism Awards in 2015 and again in 2017. On winning for the second time, he told the RTS: “I never really envisaged that I’d end up presenting a television programme as I do every night. It happened as a dream and it has turned into a reality.”

When Batley and Spennings MP Jo Cox was murdered shortly before the EU referendum in June 2016, Harry was one of the first journalists on the scene. “That was the biggest story I’ve ever covered,” he told the RTS.

News was only part of Harry’s life. He was well known to national BBC audiences for presenting *Final Score* on Saturdays and *Sunday*



BBC

## Harry Gration 1950–2022

*Grandstand*, as well as covering judo and taekwondo at the Olympics. In the same RTS interview, Harry said: “I love

this business. I’ve been to nine Olympic Games. I’ve been all around the world to cover BBC sport.”

Harry also won RTS awards for two cricket documentaries, in 1992 (*White Rose in Africa*) and 1997 (*Dickie Bird: A Rare Species*).

In 2015, Harry received a Lifetime Achievement award at the RTS Yorkshire Awards.

The current RTS Yorkshire Chair, Lisa Holdsworth, said: “Harry always struck the right note, whether reporting tragedy or triumph. And his love for Yorkshire was clear from the enthusiasm and professionalism he showed over his many years at *Look North*. And that love was reciprocated by the people of Yorkshire, as can be seen from the tributes pouring in from across the county. He will be so missed.”

Yorkshire born and educated, Harry trained as a teacher and taught history at Rodillian school on the outskirts of Wakefield.

He had already started to work in radio, commentating on Rugby League for BBC Radio Leeds. He first took up the mic for a Batley vs York match in 1971, before giving up teaching in 1978 to work for the radio station.

In two spells, spanning almost four decades, from 1982 to 1994 and 1999 to 2020, Harry presented *Look North*.

He briefly left the BBC, taking on a PR role for the Rugby Football League, but the break was short-lived, with Harry returning to host *BBC South Today* from Southampton in 1995 and then moving back to *Look North*. He left the BBC in October 2020, the day before his 70th birthday.

Harry was busy outside the TV studio. In 2016, tied to *Look North* colleague Paul Hudson, he took on a nine-day, 195km, three-legged walk across Yorkshire, raising more than £190,000 for Sport Relief.

In 2013, he became an MBE in recognition for his work in broadcasting.

**Matthew Bell**

## Core values key to success

RTS Futures An interactive workshop put on by RTS Futures in mid-June offered invaluable advice to people feeling “stuck” in their TV career, equipping them with the skills to set meaningful career goals.

The session, which was run by the founder of The Unstuck Club, Jo Deadman, advised people to “look internally” and identify their “core values” or “fundamental beliefs”.

Deadman said: “They can explain why we feel happy in certain areas of our lives and not in others. We’re more likely to achieve our goals and feel happy in our careers if we live by our core values.”

People, she argued, are too often weighed down by negative thoughts, which need to be challenged.

Deadman worked in TV marketing across a range of shows, including *Love Island* and *Celebrity Juice*, before

retraining as a life coach during the Covid-19 lockdowns and setting up The Unstuck Club.

She said: “I found that I started to enjoy helping other people to work out what they wanted from their careers, more than I enjoyed trying to climb that ladder myself.”

The RTS Futures workshop, “What do you want?”, was held on 14 June and can be seen at: [bit.ly/RTS-unstuck](https://bit.ly/RTS-unstuck).

**Matthew Bell**

# Offspring adopts toolkit

RTS West of England

The Film and TV Charity visited Bristol in June to talk to producers about how to use the Whole Picture Toolkit and to offer an overview of the charity's services, which include bereavement counselling, bullying support and a 24/7 helpline.

It cited Bristol-based Offspring Films as a company that had recently used the toolkit on one of its productions, Apple TV+'s *Earthsound*.

Valeria Bullo, the project lead for mentally healthy productions, talked through the different stages of production, offering tips, sharing



Earthsound

Apple TV+

templates and identifying other tools to help implement positive new ways of working.

She stressed that the toolkit was evidence-based and industry-led, and that individuals and employers should "take the elements

you feel work for you and for your company". She noted that some organisations had been in touch with the charity to say that they had previously found what they needed to achieve overwhelming, so found it help-

ful to have some guidance. Bullo added: "Implementing just one change is enough, be that agreeing a wellbeing plan, planning for rest and time off, or putting exit interviews in place." **Suzy Lambert**

# Fremantle welcomes students

RTS Bursaries

In late June, worldwide producer and distributor Fremantle hosted a networking day for RTS bursary scholars and mentors at its London head office.

Current and previous bursary scholars attended, together with Fremantle representatives, RTS mentors and other leading industry figures.

RTS bursaries consultant Anne Dawson said that these opportunities were "so important", because "they give our students a connection to the industry they wouldn't otherwise have".

Fremantle CEO Simon Andreae welcomed attendees, and affirmed his company's belief in the "strong



Paul Hampartsoumian

link between the maximum creativity that goes into production and the maximum level of diversity across the teams". This, he said, was why Fremantle was attracted to the RTS bursary schemes.

As well as the financial support the schemes provide

students, Andreae also praised the "very special mentor-mentee relationship". This, he added, was "not just a one-way street".

Andreae himself mentors RTS scholar Meg Maguire, who recently completed an internship at Fremantle.

Several other RTS mentors were in attendance, including Piera Cuttica, head of post production at Manor Productions, who last year employed her mentee, Alicia Newing, as a technical assistant.

"It is a funny business, television," said Andreae, who noted that, "when you leave college, there are no obvious routes in to it."

His hope was that, through mentorship and networking events like these, "we help to break that cycle of difficulty when people first try to enter the industry".

Fremantle is the creative force behind a wide range of well-known shows, including *Grand Designs*, *The Investigation* and *Too Hot to Handle*. **Harry Bennett**

## The UPSIDE

### Tomorrow's talent gets its just awards

The RTS Student Television Awards were back with a bang as a physical event last month, following two years of virtual ceremonies.

Held at the new venue of the London College of Communication, the event was a very special afternoon for all the nominees and winners.

The awards' host, the TV and radio presenter Yinka Bokinni, who fronts Channel 4's *How to Hire a Hitman* and is known to thousands of Londoners for her Capital Xtra show, brought energy and joy to the occasion.

There was a palpable buzz

of excitement as the next generation of TV talent was presented with awards across a range of categories, from drama to sustainability to factual. We can't wait to see what they do next.

### Peppa Pig plays with Ukrainian kids

How heartening to see the arrival of Sunflower TV, a not-for-profit YouTube channel created for Ukrainian children displaced by the war, which launched in the UK and Europe on 1 July.

The venture features up to 200 hours of Ukrainian and British content, and includes such kids' favourites as *Peppa Pig*, *Thomas & Friends* and *Mr Bean: The Animated Series*. Sunflower will also showcase programmes made by Ukrainian producers.

The initiative was co-ordinated by Pact, whose

CEO, John McVay, said: "Hopefully, Sunflower TV can go just a little way in providing them with some kind of light relief, if only momentarily, to take their minds off the terrible experiences they've been through."

### Fifty years of Pride gets screen time

2022 not only brings anniversaries for several important UK broadcasters, but also the 50th anniversary of the first UK Pride march, held in London on 1 July 1972.

To celebrate, Channel 4 stepped up to the plate by airing *Joe Lycett's Big Pride Party*, which featured comedy from Mawaan Rizwan and Rosie Jones. There was music from Self Esteem and Steps, and a timely visit from Olympian Dame Kelly Holmes who recently came out. The broadcaster also marked the

occasion by screening a landmark, 90-minute special, *Freedom: Fifty Years of Pride*.

### A legendary Glasto from the BBC

Finally, for those of us who didn't make it to Glastonbury – the first such festival since 2019 – the BBC gave music fans matchless coverage of a weekend party like no other.

For many, the highlight was Paul McCartney's astonishing and riveting nearly three-hour-long set. We were treated to a pulsating version of *I Wanna Be Your Man* and an exquisite acoustic reading of *Love Me Do*, not forgetting the rousing opener, *Can't Buy Me Love*, and the Quarrymen rarity *In Spite of All the Danger*.

All this and Bruce Springsteen and Dave Grohl, too. Check it out on iPlayer or BBC Sounds if you missed the show.

**LOVE TV?  
SO DO WE!**

**CLOSING  
DATE  
29 JULY**

Royal Television Society bursaries offer financial support and mentoring to people just about to start their degree or those currently in their first year of an undergraduate or HND Level 5/6 course, studying subjects including, but not limited to:

TELEVISION PRODUCTION  
JOURNALISM  
ENGINEERING  
COMPUTER SCIENCE  
MATHS  
VFX

Find out more at  
[rts.org.uk/bursaries](https://rts.org.uk/bursaries)

Simon Andreae



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<b>Who's who at the RTS</b>	<p><b>Patron</b> HRH The Prince of Wales</p> <p><b>Vice-Presidents</b> David Abraham Dawn Airey Sir David Attenborough OM CH CVO CBE FRS Baroness Floella Benjamin OBE Mike Darcey Gary Davey Greg Dyke Lord Hall of Birkenhead Lorraine Heggessey Armando Iannucci OBE Ian Jones Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon OBE David Lynn Ken MacQuarrie Sir Trevor McDonald OBE Gavin Patterson Trevor Phillips OBE Stewart Purvis CBE Sir Howard Stringer</p>	<p><b>Chair of RTS Trustees</b> Jane Turton</p> <p><b>Honorary Secretary</b> David Lowen</p> <p><b>Honorary Treasurer</b> Mike Green</p> <p><b>BOARD OF TRUSTEES</b> Lynn Barlow Julian Bellamy Mike Green Yasmina Hadded David Lowen Jane Millichip Simon Pitts Sinéad Rocks Sarah Rose Jane Turton Rob Woodward</p> <p><b>EXECUTIVE Chief Executive</b> Theresa Wise</p> <p><b>Bursaries Consultant</b> Anne Dawson</p>	<p><b>CENTRES COUNCIL</b> Lynn Barlow Phil Barnes Fiona Campbell Tony Campbell Agnes Cogan Stephanie Farmer Lisa Holdsworth Kully Khaila Tim Marshall Will Nicholson Stephen O'Donnell Jon Quayle Cameron Roach Siobhan Robbie-James Edward Russell</p> <p><b>SPECIALIST GROUP CHAIRS Archives</b> Dale Grayson</p> <p><b>Diversity</b> Angela Ferreira</p> <p><b>Early Evening Events</b> Heather Jones</p>	<p><b>Education</b> Graeme Thompson</p> <p><b>RTS Futures</b> Alex Wootten</p> <p><b>RTS Technology Bursaries</b> Simon Pitts</p> <p><b>AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIRS Awards &amp; Fellowship Policy</b> David Lowen</p> <p><b>Craft &amp; Design Awards</b> Ade Rawcliffe</p> <p><b>Programme Awards</b> Kenton Allen</p> <p><b>Student Television Awards</b> Sinéad Rocks</p> <p><b>Television Journalism Awards</b> Simon Bucks</p>
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