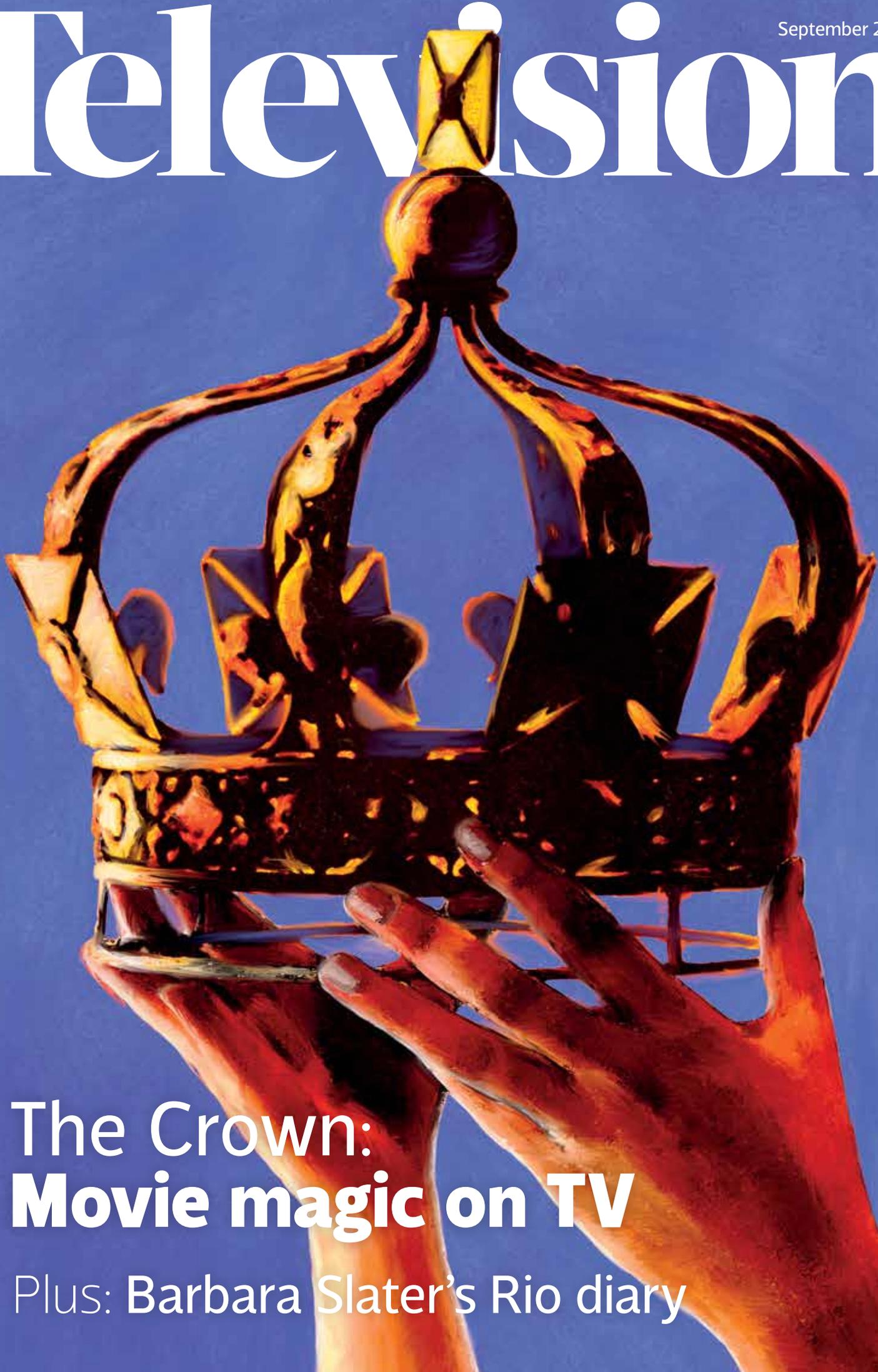


September 2016

Television

A detailed illustration of a golden crown, possibly a Tudor Crown, being held by two hands. The crown is highly ornate with multiple arches and a central orb. The hands are rendered in a warm, reddish-orange glow, contrasting with the blue background. The lighting creates strong highlights and shadows, emphasizing the metallic texture of the crown and the skin of the hands.

The Crown:
Movie magic on TV

Plus: Barbara Slater's Rio diary



With K5
you can

Do incredible things with FUJITSU Cloud Service K5.

It's time your cloud and hybrid IT started to live up to their true potential. Thanks to K5's open platform, your business can offer a whole new range of exciting services, faster.

» [Find out how at With-K5.cloud](#)

shaping tomorrow with you

FUJITSU



From the CEO



The Olympics may be over, summer holidays are a distant memory and soon the nights will be drawing in. But there is no reason to be despondent, as

the RTS's exciting autumn events programme is gearing up.

Our stellar London conference, "Full stream ahead", takes place on 27 September. We have a matchless array of speakers, including two of the US's most impressive media leaders: NBCUniversal CEO Steve Burke; and Ted Sarandos, Chief Content Officer of Netflix.

The conference is chaired by the indefatigable Kevin MacLellan,

Chairman of NBCUniversal International. For a preview of what Steve and Kevin have to say about some of the issues concentrating minds across TV and the broader content spectrum, don't miss interviews with them in this month's *Television*.

Our busy September line-up starts with an RTS Futures event that should be irresistible to addicts of shows such as *Geordie Shore* and *First Dates*. An outstanding panel will dissect "The reality of reality TV".

Also coming up are the latest instalments of our "Anatomy of a hit" strand. For the first one, sports fans will want to join a group of experts to discuss Sky Sports's pioneering coverage of the English Premier League.

If that isn't enough to whet your appetite, the subject of the second "Anatomy of a hit" is BBC TV's gripping thriller *The Night Manager*.

The show itself is mentioned in this month's cover story. In it, Stuart Kemp charts how television is making inroads into territory that was once the clear domain of feature films.

Finally, don't miss Andrew Billen's revealing interview with Sky's head of drama, Anne Mensah, or Barbara Slater's Rio diary.

Theresa Wise

Contents

- 5 Barbara Slater's TV Diary**
Barbara Slater leaves Salford for Rio, where she shares in Team GB's euphoria
- 6 The lure of the small screen**
Netflix's autumn blockbuster *The Crown* is made by film veterans. Stuart Kemp discovers why TV is attracting the best movie-making talent
- 8 The secrets of success**
Steve Burke, Chief Executive of NBCU, explains how the media giant's performance is exceeding expectations
- 10 The global player**
Kevin MacLellan runs NBCU International. He tells Steve Clarke why he is determined to work with the best of the best
- 14 A head for figures**
New media minister Karen Bradley's grasp of maths should make the BBC nervous, warns Anne McElvoy
- 16 Why TV needs religious literacy**
Roger Bolton argues that broadcasters must improve their coverage of faith – or else miss out on modernity's biggest story

- 18 Drama's different voice**
Self-effacing and jokey, Sky's Anne Mensah is an unusual TV executive. Andrew Billen finds out what makes her so unique
- 21 Our Friend in the North**
Graeme Thompson sees the next generation of TV professionals hard at work on two local drama shoots
- 22 High-flyer lands at Channel 4**
Charles Gurassa's business credentials are beyond question, says Maggie Brown. But will he succeed as Channel 4's chair?
- 24 The new game in town**
From YouTube to UKTV, sports fans are watching a huge range of second-tier sports events for free. Ross Biddiscombe investigates
- 26 One giant leap for broadcasting**
Gordon Jamieson looks at how a succession of small steps has transformed the Amsterdam tech-fest IBC

Cover picture: Gordon Jamieson

Editor
Steve Clarke
smclarke_333@hotmail.com
Writer
Matthew Bell
bell127@btinternet.com

Production, design, advertising
Gordon Jamieson
gordon.jamieson.01@gmail.com
Sub-editor
Sarah Bancroft
srbancroft@me.com

Royal Television Society
3 Dorset Rise
London EC4Y 8EN
T: 020 7822 2810
E: info@rts.org.uk
W: www.rts.org.uk

Subscription rates
UK £115
Overseas (surface) £146.11
Overseas (airmail) £172.22
Enquiries: publication@rts.org.uk

Printing
ISSN 0308-454X
Printer: FE Burman
20 Crimscott Street
London SE1 5TP

Legal notice
© Royal Television Society 2016.
The views expressed in *Television* are not necessarily those of the RTS.
Registered Charity 313 728

National events

RTS FUTURES

Monday 5 September

The reality of reality TV

Panellists include: Becky Crosthwaite, games producer; Ruppert Gabriel, series producer and series editor; Coco Jackson, casting researcher; Philip McCreery, developer and director; Craig Orr, director of commissioning and development, MTV International; 6:45pm

Venue: *The Hospital Club, 24 Endell Street, London WC2H 9HQ*

RTS FUTURES

Wednesday 14 September

Sky Academy tour

Waiting list for places only. This event is aimed at students, recent graduates and anyone in an entry-level role. 12:45pm for 1:00pm start (6:00pm finish)

Venue: *Sky, The Hub, Grant Way, Isleworth TW7 5QD*

RTS CONFERENCE

Tuesday 27 September

RTS London Conference 2016

Full stream ahead:

Commissioning, developing and producing TV content in the age of on-demand

Principal sponsor: NBCUniversal International

Speakers include: David Abraham, CEO, Channel 4; Sir Peter Bazalgette, Non-Executive Chairman, ITV, and President of the RTS; Tina Brown CBE, journalist; Steve Burke, CEO, NBCUniversal; Delia Bushell, MD, BT TV and BT Sport; Tim Davie, CEO, BBC Worldwide; Michael Edelstein, President, NBCUniversal International Studios; Andrew Griffith, Group COO and CFO, Sky; Tony Hall, Director-General, BBC; Dido Harding, CEO, TalkTalk Telecom Group; Lorraine Heggessey, Chair, Grierson Trust and Advisor, Channel 4 Growth Fund; Tim Hincks; Jay Hunt, Chief Creative Officer, Channel 4; Stephen Lambert, CEO, Studio

Lambert; Kevin MacLellan, Chairman, NBCUniversal International; Jane Martinson, Head of Media, *The Guardian*; John McVay, CEO, Pact; Jane Millichip, MD, Sky Vision; Tom Mockridge, CEO, Virgin Media; Cathy Newman, Presenter, *Channel 4 News*; James Purnell, Director of Strategy and Education, BBC; Jim Ryan, Chief Strategy Officer, Liberty Global; Ted Sarandos, Chief Content Officer, Netflix; Richard Watsham, Director of Commissioning, UKTV; Sharon White, CEO, Ofcom; and Pat Younge, MD, Sugar Films.

Venue: *Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9AG*

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Thursday 6 October

Anatomy of a hit: Sky Sports Premier League football

Details and venue TBC

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Monday 10 October

Anatomy of a hit: The Night Manager

Details and venue TBC

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Tuesday 1 November

Virtual reality and television

Details and venue TBC

RTS MASTERCLASS DAY

Monday 14 November

RTS Student Programme Masterclasses

Venue: *BFI Southbank, London SE1 8XT*

RTS MASTERCLASS DAY

Tuesday 15 November

RTS Craft Skills Masterclasses

Venue: *BFI Southbank, London SE1 8XT*

RTS FUTURES

Tuesday 6 December

Christmas quiz

6:45pm for 7:00pm start

Venue: *London Studios, Upper Ground, London SE1 9LT*

Local events

BRISTOL

■ Belinda Biggam

■ belindabiggam@hotmail.com

DEVON & CORNWALL

■ Kingsley Marshall

■ Kingsley.Marshall@falmouth.ac.uk

EAST

■ Nikki O'Donnell

■ nikki.odonnell@bbc.co.uk

LONDON

■ Daniel Cherowbrier

■ daniel@cherowbrier.co.uk

MIDLANDS

Thursday 3 November

RTS Midlands Awards 2016

Booking opens in early September.

Venue: *National Motorcycle Museum, Coventry Road, Solihull B92 0EJ*

■ Jayne Greene 07792 776585

■ jayne@ijmmedia.co.uk

NORTH EAST & THE BORDER

Thursday 29 September

Networking evenings

The last Thursday of the month, for anyone working in TV, film, computer games or digital production. 6:00pm onwards.

Venue: *Tyneside Bar Café, Tyneside Cinema, 10 Pilgrim St, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 6QG*

■ Jill Graham

■ jill.graham@blueyonder.co.uk

NORTH WEST

■ Rachel Pinkney 07966 230639

■ rachelpinkney@yahoo.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ John Mitchell

■ mitch.mvbroadcast@btinternet.com

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

■ Charles Byrne (353) 87251 3092

■ byrnecc@iol.ie

SCOTLAND

■ James Wilson 07899 761167

■ james.wilson@cityofglasgow-college.ac.uk

SOUTHERN

Wednesday 28 September

What actually is Ultra-HDTV?

Presentation by Richard Salmon and Manish Pindoria, BBC R&D. A joint RTS Southern and Thames Valley centres event. Register at www.rtssouth.org.uk/register. 7:30pm

Venue: *Queen Mary's College, Cliddesden Road, Basingstoke RG21 3HF*

■ Gordon Cooper

■ gordonjcooper@gmail.com

THAMES VALLEY

Wednesday 28 September

What actually is Ultra-HDTV?

See Southern for details

Wednesday 16 November

Small camera systems

Speakers TBC. 6:30pm for 7:00pm

Venue: *Pincent's Manor, Calcot, Reading RG31 4UQ*

Friday 25 November

Thames Valley Centre Annual Dinner Dance

This year, we are holding a masquerade ball

Venue: *Kings Meadow, Napier Road, Reading, Berks RG1 8DF*

■ Penny Westlake

■ info@rtstvc.org.uk

WALES

■ Hywel Wiliam 07980 007841

■ hywel@aim.uk.com

YORKSHIRE

■ Lisa Holdsworth 07790 145280

■ lisa@allonwordproductions.co.uk

TV diary

Barbara Slater leaves Salford for Rio, where she shares in Team GB's euphoria



My week starts at BBC Sport HQ in Salford at what is a very exciting time – the Olympics are under way. I walk to our ground-floor operation, where the BBC Breakfast set has been relocated for 17 days so that we can bring viewers all of the action from the previous night.

Join a morning conference call with colleagues in London before starting a day of back-to-back meetings, both with colleagues in Salford and liaising with those in Brazil – the four-hour time difference can make for a very long day.

■ **Prepping for tomorrow, when I'll fly out to Rio to oversee our Olympics production and meet representatives of the International Olympic Committee, the sports community, rights-holders and the world's broadcasters. Before any trip, there is always one of those "what have I forgotten to do?" moments. Today is no different.**

■ Today, I fly out to Brazil (economy, for some who will be interested). When I land, I get my first taste of one of the challenges faced by the teams in Rio – traffic jams. It's a long, hot bus journey to the BBC centre of operations.

It's been very tough: those teams out and about in Rio, and working at the many venues spread across the city, have faced lengthy and tiring delays. Everyone is working long hours. It's intense work but you can feel the sense of pride and excitement to be working at an Olympic Games.

■ **A day in the IBC, where all of the international broadcasters are based. Some broadcasters have more than 2,000 staff – and their own Starbucks. It's the nerve centre of our output and is always a hive of activity.**

Meet with the senior team as well as production teams in the early morning to get a feel of how everything is going. We keep across all the audience feedback and UK media to track how the Games are being received at home.

We look in detail at the previous day's viewing figures and the performance of our digital services. There's a chance to check our radio operation, which is working with an innovative split production for the first time – the control room is thousands of miles away in Salford, with the presenters in Rio.

■ Lots of meetings today. I'm attending the Olympic Broadcasting Services briefing – it's the chance for the world's broadcasters to give feedback on the host coverage. There's also an opportunity to showcase our operations to members of the IOC.

There's still lots of liaison back to the UK, both to Salford and to our London BBC One and BBC Four scheduling teams.

■ **With the Olympics dominating the peak-time schedules, there are critical decisions to make about how the coverage works across the different channels and around programmes such as the Six and Ten O'clock News.**

"Super Saturday" became synonymous with London 2012 due to the

incredible success for Team GB on that night. Here we are again, four years later, with the same three athletes, Jessica Ennis-Hill, Mo Farah and Greg Rutherford, competing for medals and trying to match the many successes of British competitors elsewhere.

Meanwhile, it seems we are breaking digital records every day. Saturday sets an all-time high, with an amazing 17 million unique users on the Sport website and 7 million accessing content before 11:00am UK time.

■ After a late finish, it's an early start. We have another big day of potential Team GB medals. Little do we know that today will soon be dubbed "Super Sunday" in recognition of the medal haul that is to come.

Another six medals, and history's been rewritten and records broken all over the place. On days like today, the editorial teams have to be flexible, agile and able to make good, last-minute decisions and predict where the story is moving to.

When is it right to move to another sport or change shot? These sound like small things but, if we get them wrong, the audience soon lets us know.

If we get them right, we have the potential to create those incredible moments that the whole country talks about. So, it's another late night but the whole team is on a high after a simply incredible day.

The audience reaction is fantastic, as well – what better reward? TV has audience peaks of more than 10 million and, online, we score our own new record, of over 19 million.

Barbara Slater is Director of BBC Sport.



The lure of the small screen

When the latest project from multiple Oscar nominees Peter Morgan (*The Queen*) and

Stephen Daldry (*The Reader*) reaches audiences in November, it won't be in cinemas.

Morgan has created and written *The Crown*, an extended biopic on the life of Queen Elizabeth II. Daldry is the executive producer and has directed an episode of the show. The series begins with Elizabeth's marriage in 1947 and aims to recount the story of her life until the present day.

The Crown stars Claire Foy as the young British monarch and former

Production finance

Netflix's autumn blockbuster *The Crown* is made by film veterans. **Stuart Kemp** discovers why TV is attracting the best movie-making talent

Doctor Who Time Lord Matt Smith as her new husband, Prince Phillip.

An ambitious six seasons of 10 episodes are planned. Netflix is reported to be pumping £100m into the show. The on-demand service hopes that it will be a jewel in the crown of its original programming to rank alongside the remake of *House of Cards*.

Netflix Chief Content Officer Ted Sarandos says that *The Crown*, brought into being by film talent, is a story that his service can "produce on a larger scale than anybody else and that we think we can win the day on".

The series is the latest in a string of mammoth TV projects mounted and produced by people who have been corralled from the big screen: Oscar

winner Steve McQueen is working on a family-and-friends drama set in west London for the BBC; and David Fincher is directing and executive producing the Netflix-backed FBI crime drama *Mindhunter*. Baz Luhrmann, meanwhile, is in post on *The Get Down*, a drama set in 1970s New York, for Sony Pictures Television and Netflix.

Danish director Susanne Bier's glossy John le Carré adaptation, *The Night Manager*, made for the BBC and AMC in the US, showcased the skills she acquired in the movie business.

Oscar winner Jane Campion also switched medium to make *Top of the Lake* as a mini-series for the BBC and the Sundance Channel, while Martin Scorsese executive produced and directed an episode of HBO's music-industry drama *Vinyl*.

These are just the tip of the iceberg. The film-to-TV crossover is fuelled partly by the big bucks that well-heeled global distribution networks such as Netflix and Amazon can afford to lavish on product. But three other factors support the shift.

The first is the tax credits available in the UK to producers of high-end TV programmes. Second, and just as important to film-makers, is the creative breathing space that they are offered when working in TV. Why cram a story into 90 minutes when you could tell it in 10 60-minute parts?

Finally, there is the financial squeeze being felt by mid-range film producers. Hollywood studios and smaller production companies alike are concentrating on fewer, bigger tentpole properties and on established franchises. In the \$35m range, budgets are harder than ever to assemble.

"The creative space that premium drama occupies on television is the creative space that a lot of our films used to occupy," says Tim Bevan, Co-chair of Working Title Films.

He is the co-founder of one of the UK's most successful film production companies. Working Title's credits include *Love, Actually* and *Bridget Jones's Diary*. In 2010, Bevan and partner Eric Fellner took the decision to set up a TV division with backing from NBCUniversal.

"We are probably doing a bit more in the movie space than in the TV space right now, but I can see that changing in the next couple of years, certainly in terms of hours produced," Bevan says.

Six months ago, Working Title brought in renowned TV producer

WHY CRAM A STORY INTO 90 MINUTES WHEN YOU COULD TELL IT IN 10 60-MINUTE PARTS?

Andrew Woodhead to lead the company's British TV arm. He had helped steer Sky's high-profile series *Fortitude*, BBC spy drama *Spooks* and *The Fixer* for ITV. Across the pond in LA, veteran TV executive Andrew Stearn runs the US side of the operation.

"Because of the international marketplace, the budgets are changing. This means that what you are capable of achieving is greater as well," says Woodhead.

With US premium cable shows able to offer between six and 10 hours to tell a story and develop characters, television is a very good space for character-driven material.

Harry Potter, *Gravity* and *Paddington* producer David Heyman formed Heyday Television, a joint venture with NBCUniversal International Studios, last year to create premium, long-form, scripted content for a global marketplace. "Telling a story over multiple seasons gives you the opportunity to explore characters in greater depth, develop them and see them grow over a period of time," says Heyman. "It's one of the many things that happened with [Harry] Potter in both books and films. The audience built a sense of ownership over the characters and that is both appealing and enjoyable."

Film producers Ben Pugh and Rory Aitken, who worked together on Eran Creevy's *Welcome to the Punch*, founded 42 with ex-Independent Talent agents Josh Varney and Kate Buckley in 2013.

It is one of the very few UK companies straddling production and talent management (such entities are common in Hollywood) and moves seamlessly between film and TV projects.

The company hired former BBC drama commissioner and author Eleanor Moran to run its TV division, which has 10 TV projects in active development with UK broadcasters and two with US ones. It is half way through production on a four-part, animated adaptation of Richard Adams's *Watership*

Down for the BBC in the UK and Netflix everywhere else in the world.

The approach to financing *Watership Down* was very similar to that for an independent film in that it involved a tapestry of funders. Moreover, the show is bonded (an insurance paid to guarantee the project is completed), a new thing for television, thanks to the reality of these more complex financing structures.

"We've been doing complicated financial closing on independent films for ages," says Varney. "It's completely new to television, so traditional TV producers who are now doing more international shows are having to learn a new skill just to continue making that type of television. For independent film producers it's the formats, be it series or single films, that they don't know so well."

Also, talent deals are much more transparent in TV, compared with film's infamously opaque world of residuals and box office-related pay. "Talent can probably get a deal that exceeds what you'd expect to make on a feature film," says Bevan. "And television displays certainty."

Number 9 Films, headed by Stephen Woolley and Elizabeth Karlsen, whose recent credits include Todd Haynes's *Carol*, starring Cate Blanchett, is stepping into TV drama production, too. Karlsen is teaming up with Nicola Shindler's Red Production Company to "learn from the best". Together, they are shepherding an adaptation of Henry James's *Portrait of a Lady* to the small screen.

"We decided that we would team up with someone because we haven't done television before," says Karlsen. Her experience in producing independent films for more than 20 years has armed her with caution.

She warns against the notion held by many independent film producers that TV is easier to set up than film, both creatively and financially. "We only get to know about the things [on television] that we see," she points out. "I'm sure there are many stories of things that fall by the wayside."

Another market pressure is that the best writers, whether they work in TV or film, are all booked up now.

"Change breeds opportunity and it's a good time to be a disruptive style of company in an industry that is different to what it was five years ago," notes 42's Aitken. "The only certainty we have is that it will be seismically different five years from now."

Steve Burke, Chief Executive of NBCU, explains how the media giant's performance is exceeding expectations

Q With a diverse portfolio, strong profit growth and numerous divisions breaking records, it has been an amazing few years for NBCUniversal since Comcast's acquisition. What do you credit for this level of performance?

A Our performance over the last five years has exceeded our expectations. Since Comcast acquired NBCUniversal in 2011, we have doubled our cash flow and almost every part of our company is firing on all cylinders.

The NBC Television network, which had been in fourth place for a long time, has won the broadcast season for two years in a row, thanks to hit shows such as *The Voice*, and two of our newest series, *Blindspot* and *Chicago Med*.

Sunday Night Football remains the number-one show on TV, and we added Thursday-night games to the schedule. On top of that, NBC's late-night line-up continues to dominate, with *Saturday Night Live*, *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* and *Late Night with Seth Meyers*.

Our news division is also winning across the board, as *NBC Nightly News*, with Lester Holt, *Meet the Press* and *Today* are firmly back in the top spots.

We secured the Olympic broadcast rights in the US through to 2032 and just broadcast a record-breaking 6,755 hours of compelling coverage from the Rio Olympic Games.

Our film business completed its best year ever in 2015, shattering all box-office records. Universal has had two consecutive record-breaking years and was the first studio to have three blockbuster hits — *Jurassic World*, *Furious 7* and *Minions* — that each exceeded \$1bn at the box office.

This summer, we had a very successful launch of *The Secret Life of Pets*, which broke the record to become the best opening ever for an original film, animated or otherwise.

The Universal theme parks have turned out to be one of the biggest growth businesses in the portfolio, and we have seen our investments in hotels and attractions such as The Wizarding World of Harry Potter pay off — with our cash flow more than tripling since 2009.

We have also placed increased focus on our international business, which is led by Kevin MacLellan and his team, who oversee our businesses in 36 countries.

Our theme parks division is in the midst of global expansion, as we are



currently working on a new park in Beijing and we acquired 51% ownership of Universal Studios Japan last year.

The international television business, in particular, has seen strong performance this year. *Downton Abbey* is the most highly nominated, non-US show in the history of the Emmys, with a total of 69 nominations in its six-series run. We launched hayu, the all-reality SVoD service in the UK and Australia. In Japan, Studio Universal and EI launched a branded SVoD service on Avex, the country's largest mobile-video platform.

The last five years have been great for NBCUniversal, but we still have a lot to do and see a lot of opportunity ahead of us.

Q How has the culture of NBCUniversal changed under your leadership? What are the leadership values you introduced to the company and why are they so important?

A We run the company in a very decentralised way. We want business leaders to feel like they are truly in charge of their own divisions.

I believe very strongly that this is the best way to run a company such as NBCUniversal, and it places an even higher premium on making sure that you have the right people in place. We like people who manage decisively, put the company first, treat colleagues and partners well and want to win.

We have also made it a top priority for collaboration to be a core part of our culture. The best example is our "Symphony" efforts, where every one of our 22 businesses gets behind the launch of a new film, TV series or theme-park attraction.

We have also rolled out "Symphony" internationally, and have seen impressive results from our businesses and clients in territories around the world.

A notable example was our partnership with Sky around a joint marketing campaign for *The Secret Life of Pets*, which worked very well.

Q What was the strategy behind acquiring DreamWorks Animation? How might the acquisition bolster NBCU's portfolio, particularly your film, theme-park and consumer-product businesses?

A DreamWorks Animation is one of the world's most admired family brands, with a dynamic film business and an extensive library of intellectual property. The acquisition gives

NBCUniversal broader reach to a host of new audiences in the highly competitive kids and family entertainment space. With the addition of DreamWorks, we will be in a position to launch two more animated films per year.

Thanks to our partners at Illumination Entertainment and Chris Meledandri, we have experienced great success with animated franchises – including hits such as *Despicable Me*, *Minions* and *The Secret Life of Pets* – that have not only fuelled some of our biggest box-office wins, but have also spawned popular attractions in our theme parks and helped build our consumer-products division.

DreamWorks will also give us a strong footing in the kids TV space, thanks to its large production operation in Los Angeles.

Q NBCUniversal has been making a series of digital investments including BuzzFeed and Vox Media, and launching your own SVoD services with hayu and Seeso. How do these investments play into your vision for the company's future?

A One of our top priorities over the next decade is to make sure that the company is well positioned to capture the growing audience of millennials, who are increasingly spending their time on digital platforms. Last August, we invested \$200m in BuzzFeed, and \$200m in Vox – two companies that have had tremendous success in the space and from which we can learn a lot.

The Olympics provided the perfect opportunity for us to partner with BuzzFeed and cover the Games in new and innovative ways. We sent a crew of BuzzFeed reporters to Rio, who captured short, live clips that were distributed via Snapchat.

We are also partnering with Vox's *The Verge* to run a live *Mr Robot* after-show. This is a great way to engage and grow a young fan base.

Seeso and hayu are also good examples of how we are launching digital businesses that are aimed at connecting directly with avid fans of specific genres. Hayu is an all-reality SVoD service, with fully integrated social-media functionality, which launched in the UK, Ireland and Australia in April. We have been pleased with the results, which exceeded our expectations and provided a lot of learnings to the international teams about running direct-to-consumer businesses.

ALMOST EVERY PART OF OUR COMPANY IS FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS

Burke's progress

Steve Burke is CEO of NBCUniversal. He oversees the company's portfolio of news, sports and entertainment networks, a film studio, TV production operations, a TV stations group and several theme parks. In April, NBCU bought DreamWorks Animation for \$3.8bn.

Burke assumed the role of CEO in January 2011 following Comcast's purchase of NBCU from General Electric. He was previously COO of Comcast, having joined in 1998 as President of Comcast Cable.

During his tenure, Comcast became the largest cable company, largest residential internet service provider and third-largest phone company in the US, and launched a wireless business.

Prior to Comcast, Burke worked for Disney as President of ABC Broadcasting. He joined Disney in 1986, where he spearheaded the launch of stand-alone Disney Stores. In 1992, he moved to Euro Disney, where, as President and COO, he turned the business around.

The son of a senior TV executive, Burke holds an MBA from Harvard Business School. He lives in New York with his wife and five children.

Steve Burke, Chief Executive Officer of NBCUniversal, is a speaker at the RTS London Conference on 27 September. He was interviewed by Steve Clarke.

The global player



NBCUniversal

The Chair of this year's RTS London Conference, Kevin MacLellan, the London-based Chairman of International at NBCUniversal, is proof that talent and hard work, rather than privilege and well-placed connections, can take you to the top of the entertainment industry.

His blue-collar Brooklyn background was about as far as you could get from Hollywood or downtown Manhattan. MacLellan's family expected him to follow in his father's footsteps: they wanted him to work for the local phone company. He saw his future differently.

"My parents told me that I was nuts when I gave them the news that I'd got a job as a freelance production assistant working on music videos," he recalls. "They looked at me as if I had six heads. My mum was very annoyed with me... all that money that had been spent on a college education. She wanted me to take the job my father's friends had arranged for me at the phone company."

More than 25 years later, MacLellan runs NBCU's billowing international business. The job encompasses over-seeing growth from TV channels, movie distribution, TV production and a library of more than 75,000 TV episodes plus news and theme parks.

He is a Comcast veteran, under whose leadership Comcast (the US cable behemoth that bought NBCU

NBCUniversal

Kevin MacLellan runs NBCU International. He tells Steve Clarke why he is determined to work with the best of the best

from General Electric in 2011) famously increased its international channel subscribers from 17 million to more than 100 million and grew syndication revenue by over 500%.

His previous jobs include working for HBO in Prague (in charge of the pay-TV outfit's central and eastern European programming group) and Sony Pictures Television International. Based in London, MacLellan was Vice-President of Sony's International TV Networks business.

NBCU's international division spans 36 countries (including the UK) and is a key area for growth at the entertainment giant. He was appointed Chair of International three years ago.

MacLellan looks conspicuously casual and his youthful demeanour may come from being a relatively new parent. He is dressed in off-white chinos and a summer-weight check shirt,

open at the neck, finished off with elegant, suede Chelsea boots. With closely cropped hair and Nordic blue eyes, MacLellan looks more like an off-duty, all-American sports coach enjoying a summer weekend than a media executive at the end of a tiring week.

That is until he starts talking. "I aim to leave in time to be home at 6:30pm to feed and put our 14-month-old twins to bed. But this week I was out three nights out of four and I'm out again tonight," he says ruefully.

MacLellan's manner is direct and upbeat. And so it should be. A couple of days before this interview, *Variety* had published another positive story about NBCU's US business. Steve Burke, the company's CEO, told the paper that advertising dollars were returning to TV after a long period of experimenting with social media and digital.

MacLellan was not surprised. He is convinced that the future of traditional advertiser-funded linear TV is secure.

"Listen, I've never been a naysayer on linear," he says. "I think linear is going to be around for a very long time. I believe there is a place for it that OTT can't replace."

He adds: "My belief is that free-to-air broadcast will continue to be popular and money will continue to move into it.

"As humans, we are pack animals. We crave shared experiences. I do believe that it is linear TV that will



MacLellan on... Brexit

Q Following Brexit, might NBCU move its international HQ from London to Paris or Frankfurt?

A I should never say no to anything but, right now, that's certainly not the plan. Our CEO felt that you go where the money is – and the money is still primarily in western Europe. The obvious place to go was London.

From a trade perspective, the product that we distribute from this office wouldn't be so heavily affected [by Brexit] that we'd have a reason to leave the UK. At least as things are now... Probably the biggest thing that would decide whether we leave or not would be the brain drain.

More than 100 of our London-based employees are non-British nationals. Most of them work at senior levels. If they were forced to move or we weren't able to get visas, that would be a moment to pause for thought.

What London has right now is the best of the best. You get to pool the best talent from different countries. If you close your borders to that you will see companies such as ours starting to see if there is someplace else we should work from.

Kevin MacLellan, Chairman of NBCUniversal International, is also Chair of the RTS London Conference on 27 September.

MY EXPERIENCE HAS BEEN THAT TALENT IS PROBABLY THE RAREST COMMODITY OUT THERE

continue to deliver those shared experiences in a large way."

NBCU's financial results are reported within Comcast's and the contribution made by International is not separated out. In common with other global US entertainment businesses, it is International that is growing faster than the domestic activities.

MacLellan says: "The US advertising market being so buoyant and the pay-TV market there being so large means that there's a long hill to climb before you get to the point where international outweighs domestic revenues. But in 10 years' time..."

"For us, there is growth all over the place." He identifies the UK, Germany, Australia, Latin America and France as key growth markets. "We like to say: 'We build scale where scale matters.'"

He continues: "Obviously, China and India are big growth markets. There's

less affinity to our content but certainly there's large GDP growth in those particular markets and you're seeing a large move to the middle class.

"People didn't use to be able to afford the kind of products and services that we provide."

For many years, Chinese and Indians have consumed a huge amount of TV and film, MacLellan points out. The challenge for companies such as NBCU has been that most viewers have tended to ignore Western-style content – they have generally tuned in to local-language stations. This is changing, now, as young people watch video on their mobile phones. "We are seeing much more of an affinity for English-language content over the phone with young people in those markets. This is great news for us," he says.

Turning to the UK, he points out that NBCU was one of the first US studios to acquire a British producer, Carnival, in 2008. The company became famous for making a certain English country-house drama that became a global phenomenon. But how do you find the next *Downton Abbey*?

"If I knew that, I'd be writing dramas. Listen, you just try and work with the best talent," says MacLellan. "My experience has been that talent is probably the rarest commodity out there – that is, true, creative talent.

"There are lots of discussions about how people make a lot of money or >



NBC and Sky 1 show *You, Me & the Apocalypse*

Sky

are treated incredibly well. That's because there are so few of them.

"It's basic economics. There are so few that they are worth more. Since we got here, our goals in the UK have been to work with the best of the best.

"Gareth Neame at Carnival has done a phenomenal job," MacLellan adds. "We're very proud of that label. It's produced one of the highest-rated dramas in the UK in the past 20 or 30 years. It's had more Emmy nominations and awards than any other drama in its history.

"When you're working with people that good you will find another *Downton Abbey*. But there is no exact way into it... you work with the best, support them and make this a place where they wanna be."

If securing hit shows is always a high-wire act, having access to NBCU's massive distribution network mitigates the risk considerably.

"To be in the production business as a standalone is not a great business," he explains. "But to be in the production business when you're working with a distribution business the size of ours makes a lot of sense."

Including Carnival, NBCU owns five UK producers. The others are Monkey Kingdom, Chocolate Media, Telecopter TV and Lucky Giant.

Is NBCU considering acquiring other UK independents? "Yes," he confirms. "A lot have been bought. There are not a whole lot out there. We do not have a philosophy that more is better. It is more about

quality than quantity. It is not about volume of hours.

"The idea of buying a big All3Media is not really something that is part of our strategy. Our focus is to work with the best of the best in Britain.

"So, if there was a great British writer or director or producer who had their own production entity, we would certainly be interested in working with them.

"From that perspective, we would potentially acquire or fund the start-up of a new production company."

Last year, NBCU announced a joint venture with film producer David Heyman, Heyday Television. The initiative followed Heyman producing BBC Two's classy *The Worricker Trilogy*, made with Carnival and written by David Hare.

It has been widely reported that NBCU has considered making a bid for ITV. MacLellan insists that "none of the stories that appeared were true".

Might it happen one day? "There's a possibility that we make an investment. At this point, there is no plan to make one," he says.

NBCU's strategy in the UK involves continuing "to develop the best possible English-language content and distributing that around the world".

MacLellan explains: "A big part of why we're here, and one of the advantages of having our own office here, is mining the talent that exists in the UK so that we can move that product over to the US. That's the home run for us."

MacLellan on... Netflix

Q What is your take on Netflix?

A Netflix has been a revolutionary delivery platform that has performed very well because it has a great service. It took a very complicated concept and made it quite simple to follow.

Its interface, which, interestingly, looks a little old compared with some new entrants, was groundbreaking when it started. It was simple and intuitive. Add to that, a reliable technical streaming service.

Let me tell you that, having launched these services ourselves, we've realised how difficult that is behind the scenes [NBCU launched reality streaming service hayu in the UK this spring].

The fact that Netflix was able to do it on the scale that it did, reliably and intuitively, and then to add all the content, was incredibly admirable.

We've learned a lot from [how it did that]. The way consumers will interact with a product like that has really set the path for the rest of us.

Music makes it

Finding the soundtrack to tell
your story has never been easier

Original music crafted by the world's
greatest composers, artists and
musicians with the same great service
you've come to expect from us.

Contact Rebecca for more info
r.thomas@audionetwork.com
or +44(0) 20 7566 1441



audio
network

A head for figures



Karen Bradley's appointment as Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport came as a Westminster surprise. Unexpected that is, except to Theresa May's tight-knit coterie, who understand the key operating principles of her rise to the leadership.

The new Prime Minister keeps good faith with those she deems loyal, level-headed, and unflashy. To that extent, the new culture secretary is a thoroughly Conservative appointment of the old school: she is a trusted adjutant, rather than an ideologue or previous expert with hobby horses to ride.

As a former shadow culture secretary herself in the mid-2000s, May is confident that she knows enough about the broad brief to make the major decisions.

Bradley's rise is a case of the pendulum swinging from an ideological culture secretary to a technocrat. Her predecessor, John Whittingdale, had a long history of seeking a smaller BBC

Westminster politics

Anne McElvoy warns that new media minister Karen Bradley's grasp of maths should make the BBC nervous

but May has in the past spoken more warmly of a "strong BBC", "important for the UK and the broadcasting industry as a whole".

The elevation of a more moderate ministerial voice reflects May's general approach: avoiding unnecessary controversy as she wrestles with finding a deliverable Brexit plan that does minimum damage to UK plc.

A rung under May's closest ally, Philip Hammond, who has been promoted to Chancellor, the unassuming Bradley is the politician that May trusts to act instinctively with the grain of her own interests.

"She is one of the few people May would spend time with outside the day job," notes a fellow minister. May invites few colleagues for a gin and tonic after work but Bradley is one of them.

In part, this is because May has a personal affinity with the hard-working Bradley. She is a comprehensive-educated maths graduate of Imperial College London, who has slogged away as a senior tax adviser at KPMG.

This relative newcomer – she was elected to the Commons only in 2010 – combines the talents of a flinty politician with high intelligence and a low profile. It was not always certain that she would reach the upper ministerial slopes. Westminster watchers (in this case, me) noted that her main rival for higher office was Andrea Leadsom, a gutsy Brexiteer briefly a candidate for the Tory leadership.

As a former accountant, Bradley knew more about financial projections than many of those in more senior decision-making jobs. "She is very calm and focused, and can juggle numbers at top speed," notes an MP



THE UNASSUMING BRADLEY IS THE POLITICIAN THAT MAY TRUSTS TO ACT INSTINCTIVELY WITH THE GRAIN OF HER OWN INTERESTS

Getty Images

who sat with her on the Work and Pensions Committee.

Her drawback, in a job that involves sweetening many perpetually annoyed groups in the arts, media and sport, has been a lack of discernible personality. But a similar frosty detachment has not stopped her governor rising to the top.

BBC bosses might take note. It is Bradley's ability to master figures and their context that is one of the main reasons she has been given media fiefdom.

The chief focus of the role, as far as May is concerned, is to steer through Charter renewal based on the recent BBC white paper. As for culture and sport, it would be hard to see why Bradley, whose only known cultural indulgence is crime novels, is any better qualified than the next minister.

Policy-makers close to Team May point out that unravelling Charter renewal is not a priority for No 10. Some trailing wires, however, are in evidence and May requires a trusted ally to sort them out.

In essence, the trade-off in the white

paper is a deal struck by BBC Director-General Tony Hall: in return for no major reduction of the corporation's scale and activities, the BBC will pay for the £650m-plus cost of free TV licences for the over-75s.

Some sticking points remain, however. One is the threat of government-appointed members to a new BBC unitary board. The Government's original instinct was to leaven the BBC's tendency to appoint unchallenging Trust members, who ministers saw as inexperienced in the commercial sector and too close to the corporation's status-quo inclinations.

But government appointees run counter to the long-standing principle of BBC independence. They would be resisted fiercely by Lord Hall and prominent corporation supporters.

That, senior BBC sources suggest, might see May trading away the idea of political appointees or agreeing to farm it out to an arm's-length committee.

But in exchange for what? The detail of Hall's "Compete or Compare" strategy on independent production might face further scrutiny. Opening up radio to a 60% quota for independents by 2022 worries internal suppliers.

Will Jackson, Managing Director of the trade body Radio Independents Group, says: "I'd expect the focus to be on ensuring distinctiveness in BBC Radio. The speedy opening up of the schedules to competition from independent producers will be vital."

BBC Television, mired in arguments about market impact and "distinctiveness", may yet find itself with a fight on its hands over "competitive scheduling" of popular shows such as *Strictly Come Dancing* and the effect it has on commercial rivals.

But, says one Tory backbencher, "Theresa does not strike one as the woman who fancies a big ruckus over *Strictly* – not least because she is an occasional viewer herself".

As for the plans for BBC Studios, the likelihood is that a selectively arranged market will emerge in which ring-fenced shows cannot be contended for. Other, less well-known programmes are more likely to be farmed out to indies in order to make the plan work.

Independents fear that the arrangement is still too dependent on commissioners who want to protect the output of existing BBC departments.

The overall impression is that the Government is unlikely to revisit Charter renewal at this stage, suggests

a senior BBC management figure: "It is like fiddling with a piece of embroidery – you pull one thread and the rest becomes unstitched."

Similarly, there is scant sign of interest in resurrecting the mooted sale of Channel 4.

Instead, the main concern of the new DCMS team answering to a PM keen to underline her understanding of the UK outside London and the South East concerns the nations and regions. Bradley will want to ensure that the BBC achieves greater diversity of supply without simply "brass plating" companies based in London.

Incidentally, as an MP for Staffordshire, she embodies the rise of the non-metropolitan, May-era Tory.

May is not always inclined to accept the Cameron-Osborne legacy. One clue to her thinking might lie in Bradley's de facto deputy, Matthew Hancock, as minister of state with a focus on digital innovation.

As the corporation's new regulator, Ofcom will oversee competition questions. But there are indications that the new ministers will be keen to ensure that Ofcom is rigorous in doing so.

"Hancock's commitment to spur on digital innovation [an area he championed at the Treasury] means that he has grounds to look out for outcomes that end up stymying innovation or competition," says an official. "Ed Vaizey [his Cameronian predecessor] saw the job as persuading the culture establishment that not all Tories were out-of-date philistines. Hancock is a tougher, more driven character with a determination to make his mark on the digital economy, and that can rub up against the interests of the BBC."

But Hancock will be constrained by the realities of May's position. A small Commons majority, plus the combination of running Brexit wars and the personality of his boss make it unlikely that he will rock the boat.

A friend of Bradley says: "She is ambitious enough to be wary of the fate of previous incumbents Maria Miller or Sajid Javid, neither of whom left much of a mark, but ambitious enough to know that the job can be a stepping stone to greater things."

Remember Jeremy Hunt, elevated from culture secretary in 2012 to health secretary. And, crucially, that the PM will always take Karen Bradley's call.

Anne McElvoy is senior editor at The Economist.

Why TV needs religious literacy



The Wintershall Players perform 'The Passion of Jesus' on Good Friday in Trafalgar Square, April 2014

Getty Images

‘**M**y generation grew up thinking that religion was completely marginal to British life, which, as for the rest of the world, has been proved more and more wrong,’ historian Simon Schama famously said.

In this, if in little else, Schama and I have something in common. Born in the same year, I was also carried along on the wave of 1960s optimism which assumed that everyone was basically good, life was getting better for all, and reason would triumph.

As a historian, and a Jew, Schama knew this was an illusion, of course, yet even he misread the importance of faith in the modern world.

Religion

Roger Bolton argues that broadcasters must improve their coverage of faith – or else miss out on modernity’s biggest story

When I became a BBC journalist, I was encouraged to read books on, for example, Ireland and the trade unions and to learn about the City. No one ever mentioned the Shia/Sunni split. Indeed, when Ayatollah Khomeini

returned from exile to Iran in 1979, I did not even know which branch of Islam he belonged to or why it mattered so much (Shia, since you ask).

What followed his return was the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq war and just about everything that has happened in the Middle East since.

Today, religious literacy is vital for everyone involved in broadcasting.

Lyse Doucet, chief international correspondent for BBC News, says this: “Sadly, distortions of religious belief and texts are used as political weapons in many conflicts, as well as in clashes over traditional beliefs and practices. That requires us to know more about the tenets of major religions and systems of belief, and to be able to assess and analyse different interpretations.”

In the *Sunday Times*, the journalist AA Gill has written: “Religion has never been more tangible in world affairs and public life. Not having more sensible and serious religious broadcasting isn’t modern, it’s a failure to face modernity.”

In a keynote speech at the 2016 Sandford St Martin Awards at Lambeth Palace this June, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, called on the BBC to treat religion “with the same seriousness as other genres such as sport, politics, economics or drama”. He went on: “The promotion of religious literacy should be a specific duty for the BBC across its broadcasting services.”

The BBC has six public purposes set out by Royal Charter. For some of us, the promotion of religious literacy ought to be a seventh such purpose.

Such literacy is not only necessary to understand the world beyond our shores. Christianity made this country. It is impossible to understand fully our politics and our culture, painting, sculpture, poetry and drama, indeed our new Prime Minister, without understanding the Christian faith.

And it impossible to understand the country we are becoming without understanding the beliefs of those who have immigrated here. The 2011 census recorded that there were 2.8 million Muslims in Britain, or 4.4% of the population; those figures will have increased in the past five years. For many, perhaps most, Muslims, their faith is the most important thing in their lives. How must they regard journalists who know little of their most cherished beliefs and who do not have the knowledge to challenge those who distort their faith?

So, how well are we broadcasters doing? The picture is decidedly mixed. There are some cracking programmes being made, as the shortlist for this year’s Sandford St Martin Awards showed. Entries were welcomed from news, current affairs, factual, arts, music, drama, children’s and comedy genres – as well as from teams producing specifically “religious” commissions. This year’s TV winner was *My Son the Jihadi*, made by True Vision Productions for Channel 4.

In 2011, Sally Evans made a devastating discovery: her son Thomas had left their home in a Buckinghamshire village and travelled to Somalia to join an Islamist terrorist group. The film charted, with immense sensitivity, her subsequent attempts to understand what had

RELIGIOUS LITERACY IS VITAL FOR EVERYONE INVOLVED IN BROADCASTING

happened to her son and to come to terms with his death. Would it have been better if he had never been born?

The Radio Times Faith Award went to a very different sort of programme, BBC One’s *Call the Midwife*, and the Trustees’ Award to Joan Bakewell for her lifelong commitment to ethical inquiry in programmes such as *Heart of the Matter* and *The Ethics Committee*, which enabled her to explore, with judicious impartiality, the most interesting ethical dilemmas of our age.

But if the quality is high, the volume is getting lower.

Take Channel 4. According to Ofcom, its spending on religious broadcasting dropped from £49m in 2008 to £20m in 2013 (the latest figures we have). This period coincided with Channel 4’s decisions to dispense with the role of commissioning editor for religion and to eliminate any religious programming quota.

At ITV, the position is even worse. Spending on religious programme commissions dropped from £40m in 2008 to £2m in 2013. Yes, £2m.

In 2015, according to Ofcom, spending by the PSBs on religious and ethics programmes was £12m, down 6% on 2014. So much, therefore, depends on our main public service broadcaster, the BBC. How well is it doing? It makes some good programmes, and has outstandingly well-informed journalists,

THE PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS LITERACY SHOULD BE A SPECIFIC DUTY FOR THE BBC ACROSS ITS BROADCASTING SERVICES

such as Lyse Doucet and Ed Stourton. But it seems to have little or no strategy, is in an organisational muddle and seems to place religious broadcasting well down its list of priorities.

This may be a harsh judgement, and it would be wonderful if the BBC could produce the facts to contradict it, but consider the following, worrying, evidence.

Ofcom described religious programming as one of several “immediate issues” of concern in its July 2015 report “Public service in the internet age”. The point was repeated in the BBC’s own Charter review report of September 2015, “British, bold, creative: the BBC’s programmes and services in the next Charter”.

But the 103-page corporation document made no further reference to religion – the only programme genre of “immediate issues” that got no mention in the BBC’s proposals for the next Charter period.

Aaqil Ahmed, officially the BBC’s head of religion and ethics, has had his commissioning power taken away from him. TV religious programmes are now commissioned by a non-specialist responsible for several other genres, science, business and history.

BBC News has editors for a vast range of subjects, including consumer affairs, the arts, sport, politics, economics and a host of others. Religion does not have such a senior figure able to influence editorial policy, and its correspondent has to make do with a part-time producer, though that may change.

In the light of this apparent vacuum, the Sandford St Martin Trust has been trying to get answers from the BBC to three key questions:

- Who in the BBC will take overall responsibility for the range, quality and quantity of religious coverage?
- Are BBC commissioners and programme-makers issued with specific objectives or goals to help ensure informed coverage of the range of religious beliefs and practices in the UK?
- Regarding BBC news, does the BBC agree that, in order for good journalism to flourish in this sensitive but crucial area, the same resources and expertise are necessary as in other areas? If so, why is there no editor for religion?

Perhaps the BBC has detailed answers to these questions. If so, could it let us know?

Roger Bolton is a broadcaster and a trustee of the Sandford St Martin Trust.



Drama's different voice

Self-effacing and jokey, Sky's **Anne Mensah** is an unusual TV executive. **Andrew Billen** finds out what makes her so unique

When Anne Mensah left the BBC five years ago to become Sky's drama head, the broadcaster's Chief Executive, Jeremy Darroch, made one stipulation: "Whatever you do, don't do the same. People can get the same for free."

"And that was the most liberating thing anybody could say," enthuses Mensah. We are talking in a meeting room somewhere in the Sky HQ in Osterley, west London. Her commissioning team could comfortably join us because there are just six of them.

This may be a healthy indication that ideas here are not imposed from above, on the whim of a controller, but percolate in from outside. Mensah goes so far as to say: "One reason that our way is not to imprint on creatives is because my taste is terrible."

Admittedly, Mensah is one of the most jokey, self-effacing executives I have interviewed for these pages, and, even more winningly, this is in the context of admitting to loving *Sapphire & Steel* as a child. Even so...

"There is something," she says, "about putting the customer first that keeps you honest. It isn't about whether my mum likes it, or whether critics like it, or whether the industry thinks I'm good. It really does come down to: are you doing something that somebody else, who doesn't know you, and therefore has no vested interest, thinks is worth paying for?"

She says that, for Sky, it is not about the total numbers a show gets, but how excitedly those who do watch talk about it. The BBC has its audience appreciation index. Sky obsesses over its subscribers' "passion scores".

If Darroch was looking for a passion score of near 100% in his creative

team, he found it in Mensah, a 44-year-old graduate from ITV, the indie sector and a decade at the BBC. She may even be topping that score when she describes to me her forthcoming Sky 1 drama *Britannia*, set at the time of the Roman invasion. It will, she promises, encapsulate the idea of "innovation in the mainstream".

It is only, however, when she reveals who is writing it that I share her excitement. It is Jez Butterworth. No one has persuaded the author of *Jerusalem*, the best British play of this century, to write for television for 20 years. To qualify this a little, *Britannia* was not his idea; he came aboard later. Still, Mensah says, we shall hear his voice.

"He's hugely big-brained. He just brings energy and a sense of excitement." We shall witness, she promises, a collision between a modern world and a religiously based world, and we shall note the parallels with today.

Britannia, she thinks, would not fit anywhere on the BBC. This is a big claim and it is worth asking if it means much, particularly given that the current BBC mantra is also distinctiveness. Mensah's examples of distinctiveness at Sky are sometimes as disputable as the BBC's. She speaks of *The Enfield Haunting* in May 2015 succeeding at a time when "nobody else was doing ghost stories". In fact, BBC One's *Remember Me* had been broadcast only five months earlier. Enjoyable though *Agatha Raisin* has been on Sky 1, could it not have sat as happily on ITV? "I definitely think it's spikier than *Mid-somer Murders*," she retorts.

Does she think it curious that Butterworth has chosen to write a state-of-the-nation TV show for Sky, rather than for the national broadcaster?

"I would say, 'Why not Sky subscribers?' It will obviously go out simultaneously in the UK, Italy and Germany and, at that point, you're talking to a huge audience. It will also go out in America at the same time on Amazon, so it has a huge range."

Sky's native dramas, since she joined, have had their highs and their lows. Well promoted, they often begin with "record" overnight ratings and then taper off. The big-budget *Fortitude*, for instance, began in 2015 with 700,000 watching live but was seen by fewer than half that number three weeks on.

The much less grand *Enfield Haunting*, the same year on Living (its last non-acquired drama), beat it with nearly 900,000.

More importantly, people catch up with Sky dramas much more than they do with terrestrial dramas. *Haunting* reached a further 1.1 million for its consolidated audience. The premier of *The Last Panthers* on Sky Atlantic last autumn attracted only 228,000 but accumulated nearly 700,000 on catch-up and recordings. Mind you, by week 2 live viewing had halved.

And, mind you again, the debut of the fifth season of *Game of Thrones* on Atlantic was watched by 1.7 million viewers. Even Mensah, for whom it is not about the numbers, does not pretend that if her British dramas reached such numbers she would lament that she wanted "a more niche audience".

I quote AA Gill in the *Sunday Times* on the (now-renewed) thriller *The Five*: "The real suspense surrounds when Sky is going to manage to make something that is a destination TV moment,

WE DON'T MAKE AS MUCH AS OTHER CHANNELS ON PURPOSE, BECAUSE EVERY SINGLE THING WE LOVE TO DEATH



and originates in Britain, and doesn't look like old stars cashing in."

"Why am I not devastated?" Mensah asks. "Because it's just not what we're trying to do. What I'm realising is that we really are playing a different game."

Perhaps her childhood in south London got her used to being different. Her mother is a Canadian teacher, her late father an accountant from Ghana. They met while her mother was teaching for VSO in Ghana. "I am a little bit global, me," Anne says. "They sort of picked a country that was halfway between." It was a happy home.

"The thing about my childhood is that, if you grow up in a family where neither parent was born in the UK, your references are slightly different. Everyone else will go, 'I grew up reading Tolkien'; whereas I can tell you a lot about *Anne of Green Gables* [the Canadian classic]."

She is one of an embarrassingly small number of black women in a top

job in UK television and actually the only BAME (black, Asian or minority ethnic) member of her own team.

But that, she adds, is because Danny Takhar left to write and Madonna Baptiste went on to produce the Sky 1 show *Stan Lee's Lucky Man*.

Her department has a clear target that 20% of writers on a multi-authored series should be BAME, plus 20% of the cast, and at least one head of a key department.

"I am incredibly lucky. I mean, God, obviously there are issues around skin colour, but I also think there's issues round class and opportunity," she says.

That said, the Mensahs were not well off. Although her sister, who is 10 years younger, went to a private school, Anne went to Sedgill, a comp in Catford, south London. Television became her "friend": *Dallas*, *The A-Team* and, yes, *Sapphire & Steel*. Her mother and she cried with laughter at *It'll Be Alright on the Night*. The future BBC executive was learning to be totally "un-snobbish" about television – not that this prevented her making short films at school of the "angsty teen" genre.

She graduated from Exeter University with a first in American and Commonwealth arts. There at the same time was Piers Wenger, the new head of drama at the BBC. Midway through university, she took off to UCLA in California, a year that convinced her that there were many more talented directors than her. Back at Exeter, her tutors nevertheless implored her to apply for a management traineeship at Carlton TV.

At the London ITV company, she quickly became script editor for the late-night soap *London Bridge*, observing its commercial and creative logic. By 26, quite remarkably, she was Managing Director of Noel Gay Television during its *Red Dwarf* years. She sold *The Fear*, a series of ghost stories, to BBC Choice and was associate producer on *Windrush*, which took the Documentary Series prize at the 1998 RTS Programme Awards.

Her parents must have been incredibly proud? "My dad asked when I was going to go back and do my MBA," she deadpans.

She joined Brighter Pictures, made *Cruel Summer*, a reality game show for teens, and joined the BBC and its tiresomely named "Fiction Lab" in 2001. She rose quickly, becoming, in 2006, head of TV drama for BBC Scotland. In Glasgow, she met her husband, the TV director Marcus Harben (they have >

Mensah's smart moves to date

Anne Mensah, head of drama, Sky Entertainment

Born 6 June 1972

Brought up Lewisham, south London

Parents Father, a Ghanaian accountant; mother, a Canadian teacher

Married to Marcus Harben, producer-director; they have two children

Education Sedgehill School, Catford, London; Exeter University, BA (first); UCLA, graduate film production major

1994 Script editor on *London Bridge*, Carlton TV

1996 Management trainee, Noel Gay Television

1998 Managing Director, Noel Gay

2000 Freelance development producer, Brighter Pictures

2001 BBC Fiction Lab, rising to script executive, then development executive and executive producer, drama

2006 Head of TV drama, BBC Scotland

2009 Head of independent drama, BBC

2011 Head of drama Sky. Her first commission was *The Smoke*, which she axed after one season

Triumphs before Sky *Windrush*; *Waterloo Road*, *Wallander* for the BBC – ‘everything beginning with W’

Triumphs at Sky *The Enfield Haunting*, *Fortitude*, *The Last Panthers*

Triumphs (or not) to come *Britannia*, *Guerrilla*, starring Idris Elba, *Riviera*

Disaster Sky 1's *Critical*. Ironically, it was a critical hit, but she concedes it may have worked better on Sky Atlantic

Watching *Billions*, *Inside Amy Schumer*, *Brief Encounters*

Most influential author Enid Blyton – ‘There's a construction to her books that is almost perfect in terms of the audience’

Hobbies Board games – but no one wants to play against her because she is ‘too competitive’.



› two children, a boy and a girl, aged three and two).

Returning south, she was appointed head of independent drama at the BBC. Within a decade, she had witnessed the renaissance of BBC drama.

‘I got to work with Jane [Tranter], watching the transition when she launched *Spooks* and *Auf Wiedersehen, Pet*, that sudden flourishing. Greg Dyke gave them £50m extra, I think, and it was incredible to see that many clever people putting their minds to it. To be honest, they've never come down from there. They've only gone up. The BBC is an incredible space.’

So why did she leave? ‘Because Stuart [Murphy] said, ‘Do you want to come to Sky?’ I'd been at the BBC for 10 years and he said, ‘We're having a really good laugh here’. And then Sophie Turner-Laing rang me when I was on gardening leave and said, ‘We're going to put £600m into original content.’ I was like, ‘Oh wow, OK, that changes everything.’’

It has, too. Sky drama is a source of constant interest and some frustration. As a critic, I love Mensah's flair and her receptiveness to fresh ideas, but I do wonder whether Sky has the inclination or the cash to make the critical mass of domestic drama from which a breakout hit might emerge. About budgets, she says, Sky never comments.

Her department makes five series a year each for Sky 1 and Atlantic; they just about cover 50 weeks. ‘We don't make as much as other channels on purpose, because every single thing we love to death. That's the whole point.’

Has Sky drama had its breakthrough moment yet? ‘Probably. We've had the breakthrough for our customers: *Fortitude*, biggest audience on Sky Atlantic ever; *Lucky Man*, biggest audience on Sky 1 ever; *Enfield Haunting*, biggest audience on Living ever for original shows. We've had big success. I think there's still room to grow. We haven't had that point where you become part of the national conversation.’

That is an honest assessment. Our conversation comes back to the biggest drama on Sky: a cult, a phenomenon, a metaphor for Westminster and Capitol Hill, an international conversation – and nothing to do with her.

‘I mean, obviously, everybody would want that many people talking about their show globally,’ she says, ‘but was that the ambition the makers went in with? I think all you can do is be as ambitious as you can, and try and get out of the way of creatives so they can do what they want to do.’

‘I'm going to sound like a really bad 1980s movie now. If you build it, they will come. I really, genuinely believe that. I trust our customers. If it's good, they'll come.’

OUR FRIEND IN THE NORTH

As if we don't have enough drama in our lives right now, I have to welcome the fact that so much of the TV variety is being filmed here in North East England.

I dropped in on the set for CBBC's special-effects-laden thriller *Wolfblood*, at a disused office block in North Shields, and of ITV's long-running whodunnit *Vera*, filmed at old shipping buildings on the River Tyne.

It's always fascinating to see behind the scenes as designers and lighting directors transform abandoned floor space into an authentic provincial police station or – in the case of *Wolfblood* – the headquarters of a group of werewolves.

Equally rewarding – for me, at least – was running into University of Sunderland media graduates working as sound recordists, script supervisors, production secretaries and trainee crew. Meeting them on set reminded me why universities who invest in media and creative industries education have such a transformational impact on the next generation of TV professionals.

These are young people at the start of their careers whose relatives have no links to television and, in many cases, are the first in their family to have gone to university.

There is a view – sadly prevalent in Whitehall – that studying broadcast media production, journalism, design and animation is a risky choice for young people because of apparently poor job prospects.

Much better, say the experts, to opt for STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and medicine.

The latest graduate employment survey by the Higher Education Statistics Agency confirms that medical,

Graeme Thompson
sees the next
generation of TV
professionals hard
at work on two
local drama shoots



Paul Hampartsoumian

dentistry and veterinary graduates are top of the league when it comes to getting jobs after university – 93% of them are in work within six months.

But wait: maths graduates fare less well – just 56% manage to land jobs in the same period.

So what of those graduating from media, communications, design and creative arts? Happily, the survey reveals that eight out of 10 media graduates are in work within six months of leaving university. And it's a similar picture in arts and design. Unemployment in this group is 7%, compared with 10% in computer science.

But the reality doesn't easily displace the myth: media and arts continue to be seen as "soft" subjects that attract the same £9,000 tuition fees as "solid" engineering and law.

Parents, teachers, careers advisors and government policy-makers would

do well to eavesdrop on students juggling assignments, placements, showcase events and research alongside seminars and tutorials, before concluding that arts and media are "soft".

I had the privilege over the summer of sifting through more than 100 applications for RTS Production Bursaries. This year, the scheme is awarding cash and mentoring to 20 undergraduates from challenging backgrounds who want to study TV-related media and journalism.

The extraordinary commitment and passion of the candidates is humbling. Many had provided links to showreels created at home or in the classroom, by themselves or with friends.

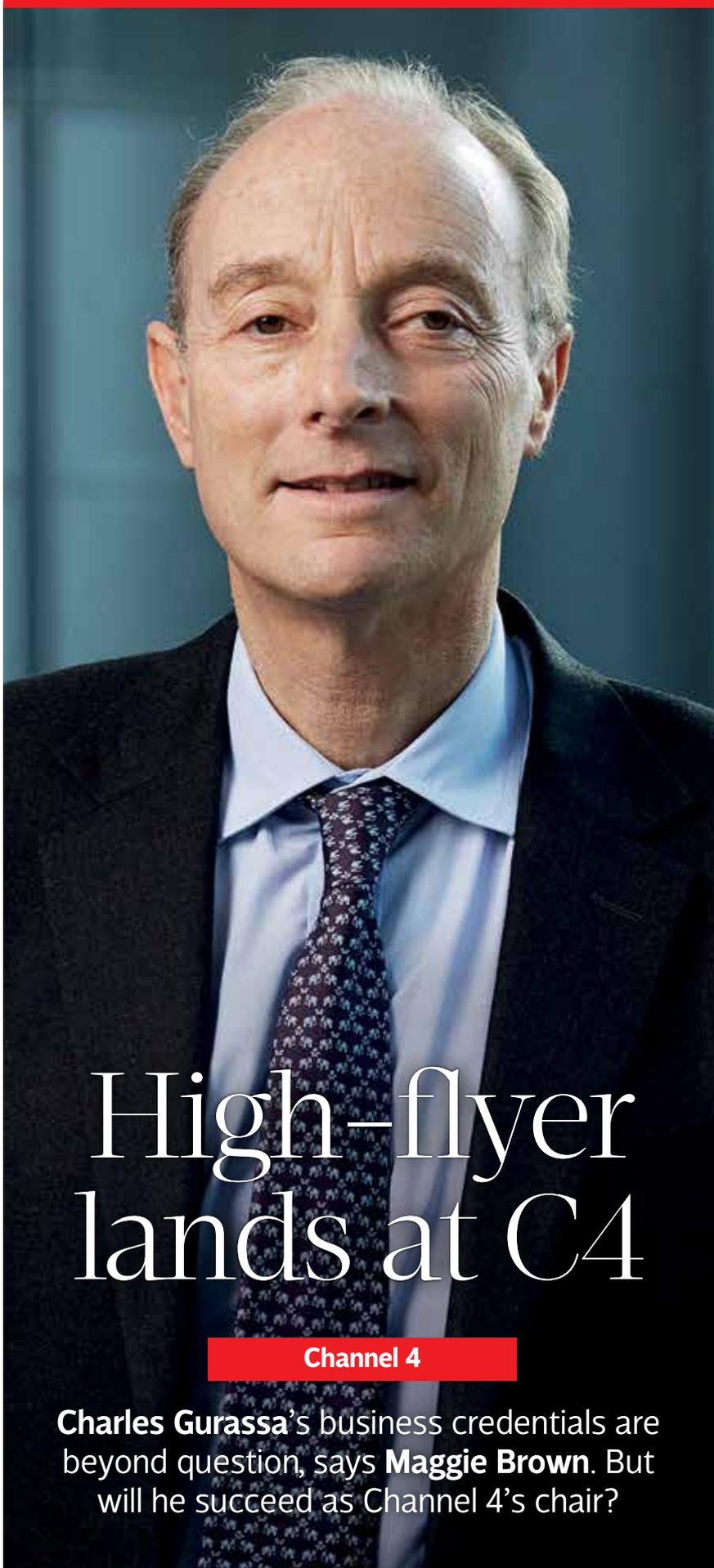
Our selection panel was treated to drama, documentary and animation highlighting their skills in scripting, presenting, directing, camerawork and post-production. And we read glowing testimonials from teachers.

All the applicants had come from poorer backgrounds and represented every corner of the country. Many had overcome family tragedy, illness and other setbacks to complete A levels and pursue their passion for TV.

They had a lot in common with the graduates I met on *Vera* and *Wolfblood*: a strong work ethic and an understanding that what you achieve in the classroom can be elevated by the effort you make and the opportunities you grab beyond the timetable.

Good luck to those that we selected for the bursaries. I hope we've chosen well. They join 40 other bursary recipients from the past two years. And to the ones we couldn't include, I predict that their success after leaving university will provide further evidence of the brilliant careers awaiting graduates with a flair for production and storytelling.

Graeme Thompson is Pro Vice-Chancellor at the University of Sunderland.



High-flyer lands at C4

Channel 4

Charles Gurassa's business credentials are beyond question, says **Maggie Brown**. But will he succeed as Channel 4's chair?

There is never any shortage of top-quality candidates competing to land the job of chairing Channel 4, but Ofcom looks to have played a shrewd hand by appointing an unsullied newcomer to this key role.

Businessman Charles Gurassa is personable and speaks calmly and quietly. He has none of the overriding self-importance common to those as successful as this veteran of the travel industry and several bruising corporate battles.

Gurassa, who celebrated his 60th birthday in February, was appointed as the seventh Chairman of Channel 4 in January. Fears that he was picked solely to facilitate a sale of the company have evaporated – although its future as a publicly owned broadcaster remains uncertain under the current Government.

The doubts that linger over his appointment are whether he is a sufficiently heavyweight public figure to fight for the channel's interests in the brutal Westminster world.

A previous defender of Channel 4 said: "He is clever, and the airline industry is always very, very political. But is he well connected enough and a canny political operator in a sector like broadcasting where, unlike Michael Grade, he doesn't know anyone?"

The indications so far are that Gurassa is settling well in Horseferry Road. His relationship with CEO David Abraham is believed to be good and he seems to be adopting the role of a constructive critic who can encourage creative ambition.

Until 2003, when he retired from full-time executive roles, Gurassa's career was spent primarily in the travel and tourism industries, and, as Deputy Chair of easyJet, he is still linked to the sector. In the airline's founder, Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, he is used to dealing with a restless shareholder.

The central issue for Gurassa and Channel 4 is the sapping uncertainty

HE IS CLEVER, AND THE AIRLINE INDUSTRY IS ALWAYS VERY, VERY POLITICAL, BUT IS HE WELL CONNECTED ENOUGH?

regarding its future ownership and business model. This unresolved policy issue is entering a second year and inflaming the UK's independent production sector.

The May Government has opened a new chapter, installing Karen Bradley and Matt Hancock at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport – though Hancock worked with the previous culture secretary, John Whittingdale, considering options for privatising Channel 4.

Lord Burns, Gurassa's predecessor and a Whitehall insider, made a misjudged intervention during 2015 with his plan to turn Channel 4 into a coupon-paying mutual company. The idea failed to gain traction and, arguably, fanned the privatisation case.

In fact, Gurassa is not without Westminster connections: he knows Lord Best, Chair of the House of Lords Communications Committee. In July, the committee published a hearty dismissal of the case for privatisation.

Best told *Television*: "We found him [Gurassa] fiercely opposed to privatisation. He was extremely impressive." An observer at the Westminster Media Forum in mid-July said: "[Gurassa] is more energetic than Burns, not so safety first. He wants to spend some of Channel 4's cash pile. And, in age, he is far closer to David [Abraham], who is 53".

At the Culture, Media and Sport Committee hearing in June, which examined Channel 4's 2015 annual report, Gurassa reiterated that, overall, he remained "very impressed" by the broadcaster. He said it was "pretty well run" but voiced concern over the lack of succession planning (Abraham has led Channel 4 since May 2010).

Asked whether, given C4's healthy reserves, it could return a dividend to the Treasury, he stressed the need for it to use its money prudently. He said the channel was examining how it could use its resources to "deliver our remit even better", to increase its support to the UK's creative industries and, thirdly, to up its investment in digital.

Despite the possibility of a post-Brexit recession, the new Chairman believes that Channel 4 needs to be less financially cautious. The broadcaster holds cash reserves worth more than £200m, a £100m freehold central London HQ and the ability to borrow up to £200m.

He talks of its "brilliant" flexible business model, comparing favourably its use of external contractors to supply programmes with the heavy running costs of airlines, which have aeroplanes sitting on the tarmac in need of servicing, not always flying.

Gurassa gained his first business credentials reading economics at the University of York, after a childhood in north London, where he attended Christ's College, a boys' grammar school in Finchley. His unusual surname derives from a French forebear who married a Londoner after the First World War. "We're on the World Wildlife Fund's endangered species," he jokes.

He joined Thomas Cook as a graduate trainee in 1978 and, as general manager of retail, travelled to the US, Hong Kong and mainland China. He took an MBA in Hong Kong, where he was the only Englishman alongside nine Chinese. "[A] fantastic experience, I have a deep affection for China," he says.

Hong Kong also gave Gurassa a brush with cable television: he presented six Thomas Cook-sponsored holiday shows, in the vein of *Wish You Were Here...*?

In 1989, in his early thirties, Gurassa was headhunted by British Airways; there he became head of worldwide sales and, later, its director of passenger and cargo.

A decade on, he became CEO of Thomson Travel Group, assisting with its sale to the German Preussag company, rather than allowing it to fall to a hostile bid from Lufthansa. With the business rebranded as TUI and now living in Hanover, Gurassa chaired its European division.

In 2003, buttressed by a bonus, he decided to pursue a portfolio career, feeling this would better suit family life. His experience since then has been

impressive and varied, with work commitments that include not-for-profit and charity posts as well as commercial activities.

"I always think we've been put on earth to make it a bit better," he says. "That was the zeitgeist of growing up in the 1960s in London." He served at the National Trust in roles that included being Deputy Chair for nine and a half years.

Fiona Reynolds, BBC non-executive director and former NT Director General, has said of him: "I loved working with Charles... he was incisive, clear, constructively challenging and passionately committed to the cause."

He continues to sit on the board of English Heritage and is working to establish the UK's first Migration Museum.

Gurassa was Chair of Virgin Mobile when it was sold to NTL in 2006. He also chaired Lovefilm before it became Amazon Prime.

Less happily, he is the senior independent director at Merlin Entertainment, listed on the stock exchange in 2013, but engulfed in compensation proceedings following the crash of the Alton Towers ride last year.

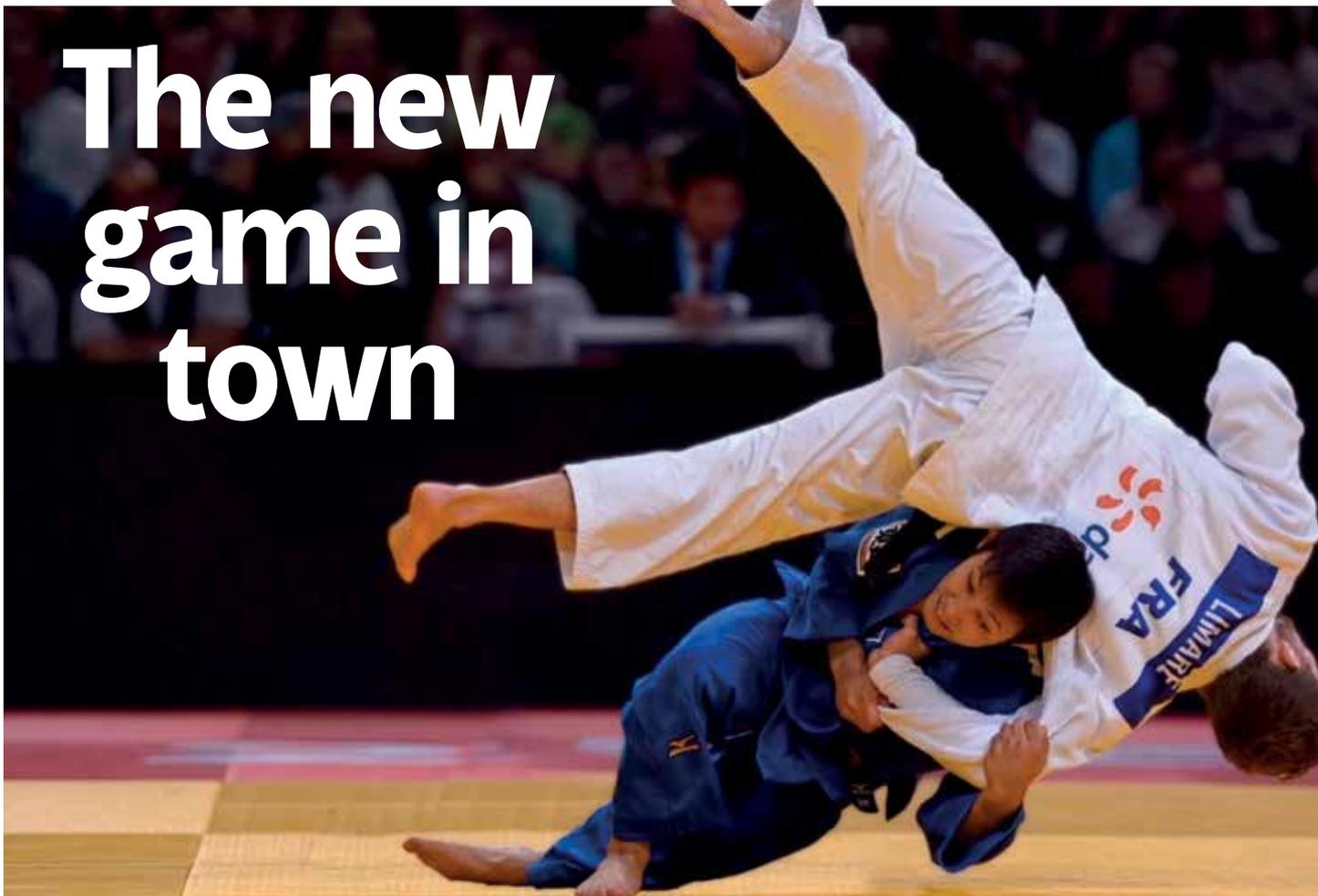
He now splits his time between a home in Notting Hill and holiday place near Lucca, Tuscany, where he cultivates a small vineyard.

His Channel 4 appointment surprised everyone, including the broadcaster's board. So far, he has sidestepped questions from MPs about whether he would resign if the Government chose to back privatisation. One reason for this is almost certainly because, since Channel 4's constitution is based in statute, change would not be achieved quickly.

"I knew [Channel 4] as a consumer," he says. "It matters hugely, [as] an important, different voice."

Whatever the future for the broadcaster, Abraham is now in his seventh year as its CEO. At some point, Charles Gurassa will be the person who hires Abraham's successor.

The new game in town



There has never been a better time to own a second-tier sports event. While first-tier contracts generate mountains of cash – such as the three-year, £5.14bn deal for the English Premier League – it is the market for second-tier sports rights that is currently the most dynamic.

With darts on Dave, the Henley Royal Regatta on YouTube and talk of a Netflix for sports, there are many more ways to deliver live sport to a broadcast audience than the UK's two pay-sports providers and their terrestrial rivals. Second-tier sports rights holders have a new kind of leverage, too, with potentially large, global audiences available online on platforms such as Facebook Live.

This year witnessed a major breakthrough with a new channel entering the sports arena. UKTV's Dave had been mulling over an expansion into sport when former world heavyweight boxing champion David Haye offered the channel his comeback fight in January.

Television sport

From YouTube to UKTV, sports fans are watching a huge range of second-tier sports events for free. **Ross Biddiscombe** investigates

An astonishing peak viewing audience of over 3 million (more than four times Dave's best-rating entertainment programme) prompted the channel to look at other sports.

A second Haye fight, broadcast on Dave in May, delivered a peak audience of 2.5 million. This was followed by the British Darts Organisation's World Trophy event and Caribbean Premier League cricket.

The original sports opportunity caught the broadcaster by surprise.

"We were contacted about five weeks before the fight," says Richard Watsham, UKTV's director of commissioning. "The call happened to coincide with our own thoughts about exploring doing live sport on Dave.

"The Haye camp wanted a free-to-air partner that would give the fight an entertaining coverage style. That fitted in with our own ideas."

Haye also knew that, by avoiding the sports pay-TV options (his earlier fights were shown on Sky Sports Box Office), he was likely to attract a larger audience for a fight that, frankly, was never going to be on everyone's radar.

The boxer said at the time: "Hopefully, my fights will keep being free for people to watch. I want to keep building the viewing figures and, obviously, get more sponsorship. The more the viewing figures climb, the more sponsorship gets involved and the less you rely on subscriptions."

Second-tier rights owners have four basic broadcast options:

■ Follow the well-worn path to a sports pay-TV channel, with relatively low audiences but plenty of repeat

WE ARE ALL ABOUT PUTTING THE FAN IN CONTROL: WATCHING THE SPORTS THEY LOVE, ON THE DEVICE OF THEIR CHOICE

The International Judo Federation Paris Grand Slam was broadcast by French channel L'Equipe 21

L'Equipe 21

showings and almost certainly no rights fee

■ A similar no-money deal with a free-to-air terrestrial channel that might deliver a larger audience, but fewer repeat broadcasts

■ A more adventurous partnership with an online platform such as YouTube, which offers a potentially big, global audience and a share of advertising; or

■ A mix of all three of the above.

Stephen Nuttall, senior director of YouTube EMEA, says the question for second-tier sports rights holders is this: why would they *not* have a channel on his platform?

"These days, YouTube is an option for rights holders large and small. We showed the Champions League and Europa League finals this year even though BT Sport was screening them as well. But, then, we also got the Henley Royal Regatta on screen for the first time in 33 years," he says.

The coverage of Henley rowing in 2015 was a coup for YouTube. Moreover, thanks to the Henley Rowing Club committee paying many thousands of pounds to producer Sunset+

Vine for such a high-quality production, this year's competition was broadcast simultaneously on BT Sport.

"We have a partnership team that works with a rights holder and also with broadcasters," explains Nuttall. "That way, there is an option for events to work on a number of platforms. We're fine with that."

Terrestrial networks such as the BBC and ITV are also innovating. Having lost almost all the crown jewels of sport, the BBC is turning to second-tier sports such as the triathlon or swimming for its quota of live action, especially following the November 2015 announcement of a £35m cut in its sports-rights budget.

Under its director of sport, Barbara Slater, the BBC is promoting these sports to new and potentially large audiences. "Competition for sports rights is increasing all the time," she says. "We know how highly rights holders value the BBC's huge reach. In 2015, while only accounting for 2% of all TV sports hours on UK television, we delivered a staggering 37% of all the viewing."

The BBC and ITV can also offer second-tier rights holders valuable audiences via their online services. This summer, the BBC ran live streaming trials with British ice hockey and basketball matches, while ITV4 once again live streamed the Tour de France. The terrestrials' websites are also attractive to second-tier sports: the BBC Sports website, for example, attracts 20 million unique users per week.

Second-tier sports rights holders naturally want big numbers of committed viewers. This is increasingly pushing them to online platforms.

Richard Ayers, CEO of leading European digital sports consultancy Seven League, says: "An engaged audience is what sponsors and the sports themselves want.... Surfing competitions can't always start when a normal programming schedule wants them to because of the conditions in the ocean. An online site can alert fans virally and gather a large core audience very quickly."

Pay-TV giants Sky Sports and BT Sport, meanwhile, will never abandon second-tier sports: they have hundreds of hours of airtime to fill.

Take sports such as speedway on Sky Sports or UFC mixed martial arts on BT Sport: the pay-channels can supply lots of on-air promotion and razzmatazz, and even some primetime slots. Sky also has Now TV, the online

service that it launched in 2012, to help grow audiences.

While the rights holders will continue to look for income from sponsors or perhaps via a sports federation, the options for building audiences and revenues are expanding. Facebook Live formally launched this spring. It has already captured the imagination of the sports world. It works with video production and publishing platforms such as Grabyo.

Gareth Capon, CEO of Grabyo, says that his clients include tier-one sports rights holders, such as Spain's La Liga football champions Real Madrid. The club uses the online streaming option as a supplementary service: it showed the post-game Champions League celebrations online this spring.

By contrast, Formula E motor racing (for electric cars) has used Facebook Live as its primary broadcast option. "There are 30 million people accessing Facebook every day in the UK alone," says Capon. "A sport like Formula E loves those numbers – and the fact that social media is a place that promotes notification and discovery of events."

This shows how the pendulum of power for second-tier sports is drifting towards the holder, rather than the broadcaster – and that a "Netflix for sport" concept is not too far away.

Indeed, the UK-based media company Perform Group has already had that tag attached to its open-internet service DAZN, which it launched last month. The service is already available in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Japan.

DAZN offers live coverage of the English Premier League, Germany's Bundesliga and Spain's La Liga plus more than 10,000 other live sporting events. These range from handball to darts. The service is available across any connected device for a monthly fee.

"We are all about putting the fan in control: watching the sports they love, on the device of their choice with one simple, affordable price and no long-term contract," says John Gleasure, Perform's chief commercial officer.

The DAZN business model rewards rights holders who drive the subscriber base and viewing levels. In other words, the deeper the penetration of a particular sport on DAZN, the more money that rights holders receive.

The growing choice enjoyed by second-tier sports, from triathlon to taekwondo, means this area of broadcasting is a whole new ball game.

IBC preview

Gordon Jamieson looks at how a succession of small steps has transformed the Amsterdam tech-fest

As the International Broadcasting Convention (IBC) approaches its 50th year, the annual conference and trade exhibition is evolving at the same dizzy speed as the industry it serves.

IBC's metamorphosis from 500 delegates and three dozen vendors in a corner of a London hotel in 1967 to 55,000 attendees and 1,600 exhibitors in Amsterdam's sprawling RAI centre is more than simply one of scale. The organisers have made increasing efforts to curate and integrate the technological developments on the show floor with the themes being debated in the conference programme.

Jostling for our attention are the big, highly visible advances, such as immersive virtual reality, Ultra-HDTV and drones. But the hesitant migration of the broadcasting industry towards an internet-protocol (IP) infrastructure is every bit as revolutionary as the shift from standard-definition pictures to HDTV and now to Ultra-HDTV.

IP is inherently far more flexible and cost-effective – but not necessarily as reliable as the technologies that currently connect each part of the production and transmission chain. A wholesale, overnight switchover is simply not feasible, so television companies need each new deployment of IP connectivity to work reliably within their existing infrastructure.

IBC is addressing this with an IP Interoperability Zone, at the heart of which is a live, IP-connected studio managed by Belgian broadcaster VRT and the European Broadcasting Union, together with 12 technology suppliers. In all, some 30 companies are demonstrating their IP products in the zone.

Visitors will be encouraged to verify for themselves how the studio set-up handles signal timing and transport, as well as discussing case studies with vendors. "It will be a showcase for the reality of the technology, and a



demonstration that the industry is converging on a common roadmap," says Michael Cronk, Grass Valley VP of core technology.

IP and interoperability will also be prominent in the IBC Content Everywhere area and conference sessions. Content Everywhere is one of IBC's most heavily curated strands, with the emphasis firmly on connected devices, social media, personalisation and cloud services, rather than on the traditional broadcast environment.

"Attendees tell us that the rate of change in their industry is accelerating, and that the amount of information they are confronted with about new technologies is vast and growing – and they say they need it curated for them," says IBC Chair Tim Richards. "We are trusted as an honest and reliable provider of business information."

Content Everywhere has been a proving ground for this approach to curation. IBC originally intended to use the Content Everywhere brand to expand its geographical range, with plans for regular shows in the Middle

East and Latin America. Dismal economic conditions in those regions quashed that ambition. But the experience of putting on a single show in Dubai early last year paid dividends, with a healthy increase in Middle Eastern visitors to IBC last September.

"IBC is not a European show *per se*: we attract manufacturers, speakers and visitors from all over the world. Increasingly, it is a very broad church that we are trying to serve," says Richards.

There was a time when CEOs didn't go to IBC: instead, the most senior visitors were chief technology officers and their senior engineers pushing shopping trollies around what was effectively a specialist supermarket.

IBC's Leaders Summit may have started off as something of a *crèche* for CEOs in the midst of what was still quite a hardware-focused market, but it has been a very successful part of the convention's evolution.

"Four years ago," says IBC's CEO, Michael Crimp, "I'm not sure that WPP's Sir Martin Sorrell would have seen IBC as a natural place to speak or to inform

Out of this world: Nasa TV will make a presentation at this year's IBC

One giant leap for broadcasting

Nasa

himself by speaking to other attendees. We are pleased that thought leaders who want to talk about the business of media know that there will now be an audience here for their ideas.”

This year, there will be sessions on Eurosport's strategy to sign up 1 million open-internet subscribers by 2017, and on Spotify's experience of changing the way audiences consume music. IBM Global Business Services will present empirical research on the changing shape of television. But, as with previous summits, the debate will remain behind closed doors and the guest list will remain select, with no more than 150 media chieftains in attendance.

Speakers this year include: Alex Green, Managing Director of Amazon Video; Dominique Delpont, Chair of Havas Media Group; Gidon Katz, Managing Director of Now TV; and Susanna Dinnage, Managing Director of Discovery Networks UK & Ireland.

IBC's Future Zone is a formal part of the Leaders Summit tour, as well a popular destination for ordinary ticket holders. “It is an opportunity to give

senior people pointers to the future so that they can make informed strategic decisions,” says Crimp.

On show will be ground-breaking prototypes and proofs of concept from 18 of the world's R&D labs. Among them will be US manufacturer Sphericam. It will be demonstrating a fully spherical, 360-degree camera that can record Ultra-HDTV video at 60 frames per second – then automatically stitch the component pictures together and live stream them to a smartphone, tablet or VR headset. The company is now accepting pre-orders for its \$2,500 Sphericam 2 model.

The overarching trend toward IP-based infrastructure and software tools will also be on display in the IBC Launch Pad area, where 23 first-time exhibitors will be gathered.

“New companies sometimes find themselves thrown into the deep end without arm bands in this industry, and they are up against companies that have been exhibiting at IBC for 50 years,” says Crimp. In return for providing marketing assistance – and a degree of

hand-holding – to these start-ups, IBC can push the range of products on show that little bit further towards the bleeding edge. This, in turn, widens the appeal of the exhibition.

Another feature designed both to bring in new punters and demonstrate to regular attendees how the boundaries of “television” are become ever more porous is Hackfest. IBC describes Hackfest, now in its second year, as a creative playground for software developers, designers and entrepreneurs. Around 100 of them have been invited to spend 36 hours brainstorming apps or ideas for discovering or sharing content in education, entertainment or sport.

To an extent, Hackfest is an unashamed pitch to bring in young, cool celebrities but, as Richards points out, app development “is part of our new reality, so it is important that we expose people in the more traditional parts of the content business to this way of working. It is also about cross-fertilisation.” At least some of the companies attending IBC must agree, because several of last year's hackers were offered jobs on the strength of their performance.

Perhaps the most spectacular event at this year's IBC will be a presentation by Nasa – the space agency has been a ground-breaking TV producer since its inception. Carlos Fontanot, imagery manager for the International Space Station, and Kelly Humphries, the voice of mission control for more than 50 shuttle missions, will talk delegates through six decades of space exploration video.

Multi-Oscar-winning director Ang Lee, famous for his innovative uses of new production technologies, will deliver the Big Screen Keynote, using clips from his latest film, *Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk*.

While such crowd-pleasers certainly play a role in boosting visitor numbers, getting potential buyers and sellers together is still IBC's *raison d'être*. And where the tech fest can really add value is the degree to which it can improve attendees' picture of where television is headed before they shake on that deal.

Crimp is clear that “curation across the whole of IBC is our next big step” and that the organisation will have to develop more in-house editorial expertise in order to deliver useful content all year round.

Future IBC delegates may be able to extend their creative congress long after their footsore week in Amsterdam.

The RTS has teamed up with Individual Restaurants to offer members a free Club Individual reward card with a £20 welcome gift.



CLUB INDIVIDUAL

Rewarding loyalty

JOIN OUR LIFESTYLE
CLUB-INDIVIDUAL.CO.UK



Club Individual is an exclusive loyalty card that can be used in all its restaurants across the country.

PICCOLINO

restaurant
bar + grill

BANK
RESTAURANT & BAR

OPERA
GRILL

Gino
D'ACAMPO

KEY BENEFITS

- Free to join
- £20 welcome gift
- Reward points for every visit
- Exclusive monthly rewards
- Over 35 restaurants nationally

For further information visit ww.rts.org.uk
and follow the 'join the RTS' link

Support for young film-makers

Sometimes, the most inspired images can be created by chance, suggested director Eryl Huw Phillips during a discussion with young film-makers at this year's National Eisteddfod of Wales.

The "Directors of the future" event was held in early August at "Sinemaes", a cinema in a tepee on the Eisteddfod field.

Sinemaes hosted 50 events over eight days in a partnership that included RTS Wales, Bafta Cymru, Film Hub Wales and the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales.

Phillips began as an actor but moved into producing and directing. His credits include S4C political drama *Byw Celwydd*, BBC One comedy drama *The Indian Doctor* and the 2012 film *The Gospel of Us*, starring Michael Sheen.

He was talking to a fellow panellist, 13-year-old Hedydd Ioan, producer of the short *Bywyd*, a winner at the Zoom



Actor Rhys Ifans supported many of the Eisteddfod events

Cymru International Youth Film Festival in March, which was shown during the event.

Phillips suggested that one scene, showing a red pepper being sliced, evoked images

of a botanic garden seen later in the film, but Ioan admitted that this was probably a happy accident.

Both agreed, however, that the best way to learn about film-making was simply to keep making films.

The other panellists, who were also members of the remarkable Nantlle Vale Film Club in North Wales, were: Begw Dafydd Roberts (11), who worked on her own film about an alien invasion; Cian Dafydd Roberts (13) and Gethin Cennin Williams (13). The last two contributed to the three short films shown during the discussion.

The group has notched up an impressive 11 awards and nominations over the past two years at youth film festivals. At this year's Zoom festival, Ioan took home two first prizes and a second place as well as the award for the youngster showing the most promise.

Hywel Wiliam and Tim Hartley

ONLINE at the RTS

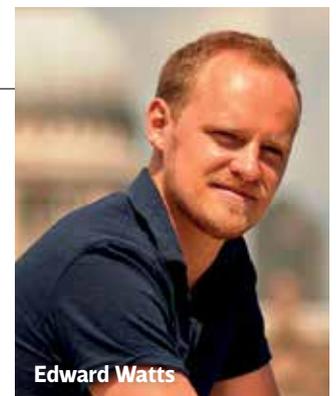
■ It was all change at the RTS digital desk as we said a fond farewell in July to Tim Dickens, who has swapped the world of telly and Twitter for the good life. I am excited to follow in his footsteps, supported by online journalist Ed Gove and digital interns Toby Hood and Holly Barrett.

■ We're gearing up for the RTS London Conference this month, where we will be live tweeting from every session. You can find information about the conference, including how to buy tickets, on our microsite at www.rts.org.uk/LondonConference.

■ Elsewhere on the site, Ed Gove has broken down the new TV licensing rules into handy bite-sized chunks at www.rts.org.uk/tvlicence.

■ Toby Hood has been behind the scenes to film at independent post-production facility Halo Post in London's Soho to find out what goes on behind its hi-tech doors. Managing Director Will Garbutt explains why now is an exciting time to be working in post-production, and how Halo is trying to remain competitive (www.rts.org.uk/halo).

■ We have also spoken to documentary film-maker Edward Watts about his Grierson-shortlisted and RTS Award-nominated film for ITN Productions, *Dispatches: Escape from Isis*. He explains that the story of the captured Yazidi women and their rescuers at the heart of the film hit him harder than any other doc he'd worked on. In the feature, Watts also talks about why he decided to collaborate with the Middle East charity Amar Foundation to raise funds in the aftermath of making the film (www.rts.org.uk/EscapefromIsis).



Edward Watts

■ The RTS website continues to evolve and expand, and we are always keen to hear about stories we should be covering. To get in touch, please email pippa@rts.org.uk
Pippa Shawley



Midlands hosts conference...

Sixty delegates and guest speakers gathered at the West Midlands Safari Park, Worcestershire, in early July to discuss diversity, digital skills and production opportunities.

At the RTS Midlands Centre conference, Joe Godwin, director of the BBC Academy and BBC Birmingham, discussed training and apprenticeship schemes, as well as the success of BBC Drama.

The diversity workshop was chaired by former BBC community affairs correspondent Barnie Choudhury, and featured actor and broadcaster Phina Oruche, BBC head of business development Tommy Nagra and Godwin.

Choudhury asked whether diversity had been “high-jacked by those who want to stop creativity”, prompting an impassioned debate.

Ian MacKenzie, Channel 4 nations and regions manager, encouraged producers to contact him so he could make introductions and increase production across the region.

Colette Foster, the founder of Birmingham-based factual entertainment indie Full Fat TV, was enthusiastic about the future of television production in the Midlands. The former Joint Managing Director of Remarkable TV has been responsible for some of the most successful popular factual programmes on television, including Channel 4’s *Supersize vs Superskinny*.

Des Tong, a producer and presenter from Walsall-based local-TV channel Big Centre TV, talked about the region’s newest broadcaster.

Naz Mantoo, audience development manager at the Edinburgh International Television Festival, discussed the development schemes open to young people and those new to the industry at the festival.

BBC trainer Marc Settle offered tips, and showcased apps and gadgets for journalists and producers wanting to get the most out of their smartphones.

Dorothy Hobson

Goodhand wins young tech award

BBC trainee broadcast engineer James Goodhand is the winner of the 2016 RTS Young Technologist of the Year Award.

“James impressed the jury with his technical knowledge, ability to solve problems and his understanding of the needs of the user,” said digital media consultant Terry Marsh, who chaired the award jury.

Goodhand graduated from UCL with a degree in physics



before joining the BBC’s trainee scheme. “He is an extremely impressive and visionary engineer,” said BBC head of newsgathering operations Morwen Williams.

Goodhand added: “I would like to thank all of those who have been involved in my training and development since entering the industry.”

The runner-up prize, the Coffey Award for Excellence in Technology, went to BT designer Christos Danakis.

Matthew Bell

... and crowns child TV champs

■ A team from Weobley High School, Herefordshire, has won Midlands Centre’s competition for schools.

Billy the Bear, their idea for a TV programme that features a teddy bear who educates and entertains kids, stole the hearts of the judges, winning them a VIP tour of BBC Birmingham.

Midland’s education programme is in its third year. The RTS Centre visited local secondary schools, offering 12- to 14-year-olds an insight into TV and visual media.

The centre held a series of workshops at the schools, where students learned about a variety of TV jobs, ranging from the more obvious roles, such as writers, directors and camera operators, to those less associated with the industry, such as accountants, engineers and facilities managers.

The students were then divided into small teams to create a new TV show and pitch it to a commissioner.

At each workshop, a guest speaker from BBC Birmingham

talked to the students about their life in TV, and picked a winning team from the school to go forward to the grand finale.

Fifteen schools took part in the programme, with the winning teams attending the finale on 29 June at the University of Wolverhampton.

At the finale they presented their ideas to a panel of expert judges including David Jennings, head of regional and local programming at BBC Birmingham.

Matthew Bell

Peter Morley
Documentary-maker
1924-2016

Memorial celebration
Thursday 15 September,
12:30pm, at St Michael’s
Church, Highgate, London



RTS PATRONS

RTS Principal Patrons	BBC	Channel 4	ITV	Sky
------------------------------	-----	-----------	-----	-----

RTS International Patrons	Discovery Networks Liberty Global NBCUniversal International The Walt Disney Company	Turner Broadcasting System Inc Viacom International Media Networks YouTube
----------------------------------	---	--

RTS Major Patrons	Accenture Amazon Video Audio Network BT Channel 5 Deloitte	Enders Analysis EY FremantleMedia FTI Consulting Fujitsu Huawei	IBM IMG Studios ITN KPMG McKinsey and Co Pinewood Studios	S4C Sargent-Disc STV Group UKTV Virgin Media YouView
--------------------------	---	--	--	---

RTS Patrons	Alvarez & Marsal LLP Autocue Digital Television Group ITV Anglia ITV Granada	ITV London ITV Meridian ITV Tyne Tees ITV Wales	ITV West ITV Yorkshire Lumina Search PricewaterhouseCoopers	Quantel Raidió Teilifís Éireann UTV Television Vinten Broadcast
--------------------	--	--	--	--

Who's who at the RTS	<p>Patron HRH The Prince of Wales</p> <p>Vice-Presidents David Abraham Dawn Airey Sir David Attenborough OM CH CVO CBE FRS Baroness Floella Benjamin OBE Dame Colette Bowe OBE Lord Bragg of Wigton John Cresswell Adam Crozier Mike Darcey Greg Dyke Lord Hall of Birkenhead Lorraine Heggessey Ashley Highfield Armando Iannucci OBE Ian Jones Baroness Lawrence of Clarendon OBE Rt Hon Baroness Jowell of Brixton DBE PC David Lynn Sir Trevor McDonald OBE Ken MacQuarrie Gavin Patterson Trevor Phillips OBE Stewart Purvis CBE Sir Howard Stringer</p>	<p>President Sir Peter Bazalgette</p> <p>Chair of RTS Trustees John Hardie</p> <p>Honorary Secretary David Lowen</p> <p>Honorary Treasurer Mike Green</p> <p>BOARD OF TRUSTEES Tim Davie Mike Green John Hardie Graham McWilliam David Lowen Simon Pitts Jane Turton Rob Woodward</p> <p>EXECUTIVE Chief Executive Theresa Wise</p>	<p>CENTRES COUNCIL Lynn Barlow Charles Byrne Steve Carson Dan Cherowbrier Isabel Clarke Alex Connock Gordon Cooper Tim Hartley Kingsley Marshall Nikki O'Donnell Fiona Thompson Graeme Thompson Penny Westlake James Wilson</p> <p>SPECIALIST GROUP CHAIRS Archives Steve Bryant</p> <p>Diversity Marcus Ryder</p> <p>Early Evening Events Dan Brooke</p> <p>Education Graeme Thompson</p> <p>RTS Futures Donna Taberer</p>	<p>History Don McLean</p> <p>IBC Conference Liaison Terry Marsh</p> <p>RTS Legends TBC</p> <p>RTS Technology Bursaries Simon Pitts</p> <p>AWARDS COMMITTEE CHAIRS Awards & Fellowship Policy David Lowen</p> <p>Craft & Design Awards Cheryl Taylor</p> <p>Television Journalism Awards Stewart Purvis CBE</p> <p>Programme Awards Alex Mahon</p> <p>Student Television Awards Phil Edgar-Jones</p>
-----------------------------	---	---	--	---



ROYAL
TELEVISION
SOCIETY

NBCUniversal
INTERNATIONAL

Tuesday 27 September - RTS London Conference 2016

FULL STREAM AHEAD



COMMISSIONING,
PRODUCING &
DISTRIBUTING
CONTENT IN AN AGE
OF ON-DEMAND