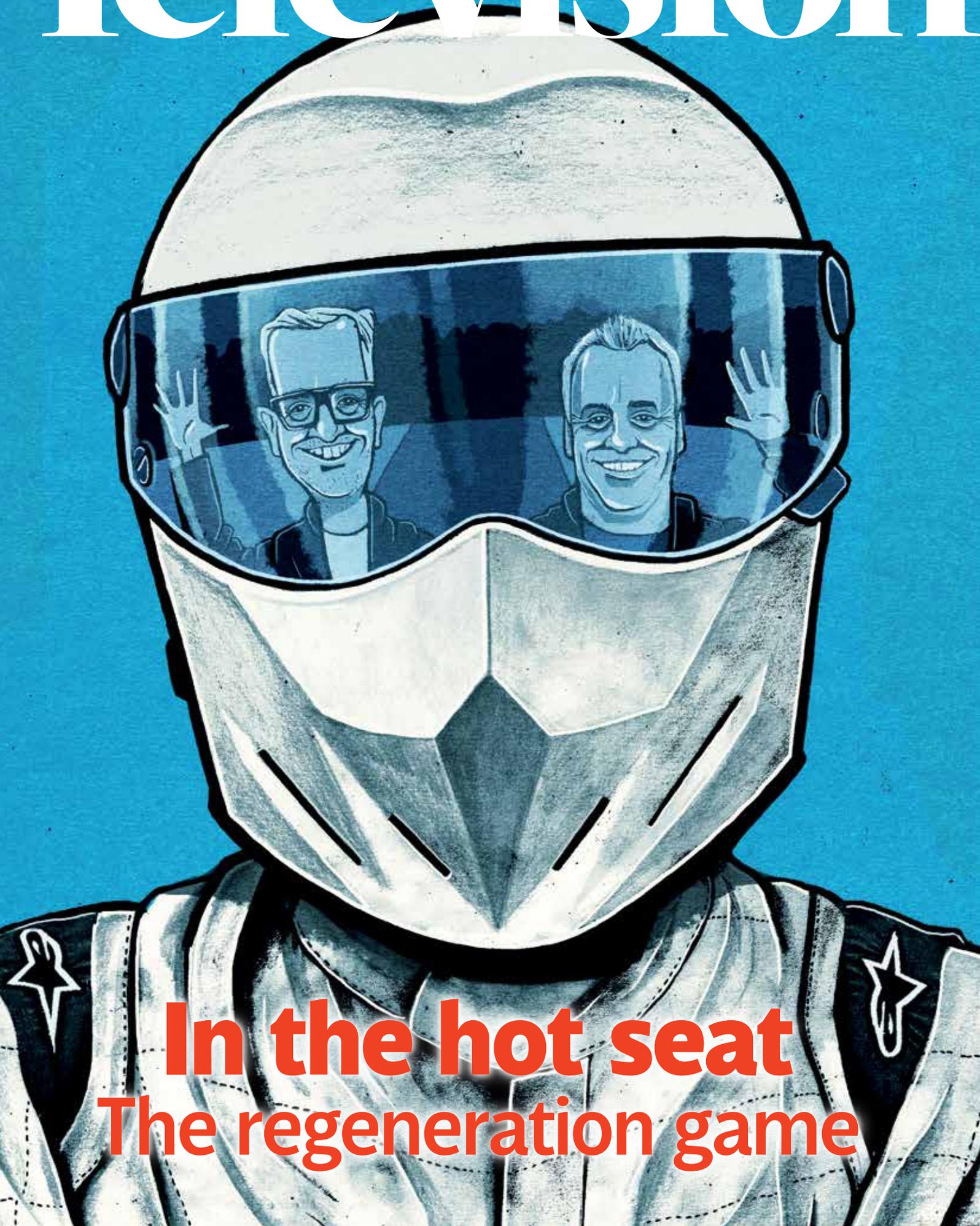


April 2016

Television



In the hot seat
The regeneration game



RTS
STUDENT
TELEVISION
AWARDS
2016

3 JUNE

1:00pm
BFI Southbank,
London SE1 8XT

www.rts.org.uk



From the CEO



The RTS is still buzzing from this year's Programme Awards, held at Mayfair's Grosvenor House Hotel. Richard Madeley was a

superb host, handling an occasionally boisterous crowd with good humour and tact. Congratulations to all the winners and nominees.

Of the 200 or so jurors this year, I can reveal that 52% were female and 27% were black or minority ethnic. I am proud to be part of an organisation that puts diversity at its heart – and a big thanks to the awards chair, Alex Mahon, for making this happen.

It was wonderful to see Lenny Henry being presented with the Judges' Award. The honour recognises Lenny's huge contribution to raising the issue of diversity in our industry and keeping it high on all of our agendas.

Away from the glamour of Grosvenor House, the RTS was treated to a very thoughtful speech from Channel 4's Chief Creative Officer, Jay Hunt, delivered in the inspirational surroundings of the British Museum.

Thanks to Jay and to the evening's chair, John Hardie. His questions provided an extra dimension to a great event.

March also gave RTS members an opportunity to consider the full

implications of the rise of multichannel networks in the early-evening event "Beyond YouTube". Thanks to Kate Bulkley for being such an erudite chair and to all the panellists.

If data is your thing, don't miss "Big Data: What's the big deal?", which will be held at The Hospital Club in London on 19 April. Tickets are selling fast so, if you haven't already booked, I'd recommend doing so right away.

Theresa Wise

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The awards ceremony was hosted by Richard Madeley in London on 22 March. The winners and nominees over seven pages

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Sir Paul Nurse

National events

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Tuesday 19 April

Big data: What's the big deal?

Panellists: Laura Chittick, Senior Manager, Accenture; Mark Connolly, Director Media Performance and Investment, Havas Media Group; Pedro Costa Fernandez, Deputy Head of Analytics, Channel 4; and Jamie West, Deputy Managing Director, Sky Media. Chaired by Torin Douglas. 6:30pm for 6:45pm
Venue: *The Hospital Club, 24 Endell Street, London WC2H 9HQ*

■ Book online at www.rts.org.uk

JOINT PUBLIC LECTURE

Wednesday 11 May

RTS/IET Joint Public Lecture

Sir Paul Nurse: Science as revolution

Sir Paul Nurse is the Chief Executive and Director of the Francis Crick Institute and former President of the Royal Society. He was awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine with Leland Hartwell and Tim Hunt.

Event chair: Tim Davie, CEO of BBC Worldwide. Reception sponsored by Fujitsu. 6:30pm for 7:00pm

Venue: *British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG*

■ Book online at www.rts.org.uk

RTS AGM

Tuesday 24 May

Annual General Meeting

6:00pm start

Venue: *RTS, 3 Dorset Rise, London EC4Y 8EN*

RTS AWARDS

Friday 3 June

RTS Student Television Awards 2016

Venue: *BFI Southbank, London SE1 8XT*

RTS CONFERENCE

Tuesday 27 September

RTS London Conference 2016

Principal sponsor: NBCUniversal International

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

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*

Local events

BRISTOL

■ Belinda Biggam
■ belindabiggam@hotmail.com

DEVON & CORNWALL

■ Kingsley Marshall
■ Kingsley.Marshall@falmouth.co.uk

EAST ANGLIA

■ Contact TBC

LONDON

Wednesday 20 April

Getting in and getting on

With Joe Godwin, Director, BBC Academy, and Jude Winstanley, Managing Director, The Unit List. Chair: Nadine Dereza. 6:30pm for 7:00pm

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

Wednesday 4 May

Lighting from every angle

Speakers include John Colley, General Manager, Arri Lighting Rental, and Stuart Harris, National Film and Television School. 6:30pm for 7:00pm

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

Wednesday 18 May

London Assembly elections

Steven Barnett, Professor of Communications, School of Media, Art and Design, University of Westminster, chairs an industry panel including Jim Grice, Head of News and Current Affairs, London Live. How well did the industry cover the London election and is the capital regularly well served for news and current affairs?

6:30pm for 7:00pm

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

■ Daniel Cherowbrier

■ daniel@cherowbrier.co.uk

MIDLANDS

Thursday 7 July

RTS Midlands Conference 2016

More details soon

Venue: *Spring Grove House, West Midlands Safari Park DY12 1LF*

■ Jayne Greene 07792 776585

■ jayne@ijmmedia.co.uk

NORTH EAST & THE BORDER

Wednesday 27 April

Networking evenings

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

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

■ Jill Graham

■ jill.graham@blueyonder.co.uk

NORTH WEST

Wednesday 27 April

Crime tour

Venue: *Meet at Manchester Town Hall, Albert Square, Manchester M60 2LA*

Tuesday 3 May

The Great Big Telly Quiz 2016

6:30pm

Venue: *Compass Room, The Lowry Theatre, Salford M50 3AZ*

■ 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

■ Gordon Cooper

■ gordonjcooper@gmail.com

THAMES VALLEY

Wednesday 11 May

Annual NAB Review

6:30pm for 7:00pm

Venue: *Pincents Manor, Calcot, Reading RG31 4UQ*

Wednesday 15 June

Summer BBQ and lecture

More details soon

Venue: *Pincents Manor, Calcot, Reading RG31 4UQ*

■ Penny Westlake

■ info@rtstvc.org.uk

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■ hywel@aim.co.uk

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■ Lisa Holdsworth 07790 145280

■ lisa@allonewordproductions.co.uk

TV diary

Kirsty Wark tracks down an exotic Easter treat and summons up the spirit of Simone de Beauvoir in W1A



Easter Monday and a pilgrimage, but in the culinary, rather than religious, sense. I was in the foothills of the Tramuntana Mountains in Mallorca with my husband, Alan Clements.

High above us, up a death-defying mountain track that passed for a road, the ancient white walls of Es Verger restaurant glinted in the sunshine.

Es Verger is always worth a hike, even if on the snaking trail where you have to jump out of the way for Mallorcan drivers, sober on the way up and less so on the way down.

It is a sublime, old family restaurant serving melt-in-the-mouth shoulder of lamb, probably the sister of the one we passed on the road, cooked with herbs and beer in an ancient wood oven for a very long time.

The good news is that they open 365 days of the year. The bad, for unsuspecting visitors with plastic, is that they only take cash. Imagine smelling the delicious cooking, but no euros? It would be enough to make you throw yourself off the top.

■ I managed to be in two places at the same time on Monday. I also started the week presenting *Start the Week*. Normally, it's a live show, but not on bank holidays. So the guests and I imagined that we were starting

the week, but actually we were in a studio the previous Tuesday.

This was quite apt, really, as were discussing Sarah Bakewell's new and rather zany guide to the existentialists and the idea of "being": *At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being and Apricot Cocktails*.

I thought we would have felt the presence of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir if we'd all worn black woollen turtle-neck sweaters, smoked Gauloises and sipped apricot cocktails during the recording.

But it was a bit warm for wool in the studio, the cigarettes would have set off the smoke alarm, and the BBC licence fee doesn't run to apricot cocktails.

■ It was terribly sad to be discussing Zaha Hadid's unexpected death on Thursday's *Newsnight*. I found her to be utterly charming, though her reputation was fearsome. Julia Peyton-Jones, the outgoing Co-Director of the Serpentine Gallery in London, where Zaha was a long-standing Trustee, talked about her with great affection on the programme.

She told a funny story about offering Zaha her first commission for the Serpentine in 1996 – a pop-up shop in a shed so tiny that, when she came to inspect it late in the day (she didn't like early meetings), Zaha, two of her colleagues and her chauffeur could

hardly fit in. The commission didn't happen, but many other temporary structures for the Serpentine did go ahead. The permanent Serpentine Sackler Building is still the British-Iraqi Dame's only building in central London.

■ I find train travel joyous and mostly peaceful, especially for writing, particularly as I'm deep inside my second novel just now.

As I walked to Euston this morning at 7:30am to catch the train home to Glasgow, I stopped outside Honey & Co in Warren Street to marvel at the jewel-like cakes, fresh breads and pastries in the window.

It has to be one of the most enticing sights in London. They were getting ready to serve breakfast and, in the corner of the window, I spied pots of their wonderful home-made marmalade.

However, right now I have another source. Second to the scent of slow-roasted Mallorcan lamb on Easter Monday is the aroma of citrus as Alan slaves over a hot stove, turning oranges and lemons from the garden into saintly St Clements marmalade.

I reckon that if he ever decides to jack in the day job in TV, he might have a second calling.

Kirsty Wark is a journalist, author and broadcaster.



As expectations around the return of *Top Gear* go into overdrive, **Neil Midgley** discovers the secret of rebooting old favourites

How to revive a hit

As the cost of failure in TV gets ever higher, particularly in drama, it is no surprise when commissioners turn to the past to fill tomorrow's schedules. Some of these second-life shows become huge hits.

Poldark returned from 1975 to score as one of the biggest new dramas of 2015. Some reboots, such as *Doctor Who*, become such an established part of the TV landscape that it's hard to believe they ever went away. Others, such as ITV's revival of *Stars in Their Eyes* last year, misfire.

So what goes into reimagining an old favourite and what are the pitfalls to avoid?

"Expectations are incredibly high for *Cold Feet*, so I think the biggest challenge is to make something that moves the show forward and doesn't wallow in previous glories," says Kenton Allen,

CEO of Big Talk Productions, the ITV-owned indie bringing the show back. "We know that it'll attract a large audience for its first episode. How we retain those viewers across the next seven hours is obviously one of the things we talk about all day, every day.

"Ultimately, that has to be about the stories we tell. I think there will be a fascination to see where these characters are now, what they're doing, and how their lives shine a torch on to our lives."

For ITV and Big Talk, re-engaging *Cold Feet*'s writer, Mike Bullen, at the same time as doing deals with the main cast – Hermione Norris, James Nesbitt, Robert Bathurst, Fay Ripley and John Thomson – was a heroic exercise.

Those actors are now playing characters that they left behind 13 years ago. And they are now more fifty-something than thirtysomething.

There is a reason why TV dramas,

particularly those that are relationship-driven, tend to focus on characters in their twenties and thirties. That's when human beings make and break relationships, have kids and forge careers. The lives of the middle-aged tend to be less, well, dramatic.

Or, at least, they used to be.

"Times have changed, and 49-year-olds aren't really in their slippers. Fifty is the new 40," says Steve November, ITV's former Director of Drama, who commissioned the *Cold Feet* revival.

"These aren't characters who feel old, they don't feel sedate, they don't feel like they've slowed down. And, actually, the stories come thick and fast.

"What we've got now – and hopefully this is something that will resonate with the generation of viewers who remember *Cold Feet* – is having ageing parents, who might be demanding, and having teenage kids."

But no IVF this time around? "I



Chris Evans (right) and Matt LeBlanc head the new presenting team of *Top Gear*

wouldn't rule that out, who knows?" laughs November. "I'm not saying 'No!'"

Allen contests the notion that *Cold Feet* is, in fact, a "reboot": this is, he says, just Series 6 of the show, albeit with a long gap since Series 5.

In the US, Fox has pulled a similar trick with *The X-Files*. Following a 14-year hiatus, the show returned with its original showrunner, Chris Carter, and its original stars, Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny.

"The fabulous chemistry between those two leads very much ran through this new series," says Katie Keenan, Head of Acquisitions at Channel 5, which aired the new version in the UK. "But Carter had absolutely reinvented it for 15 years later – these post-9/11 times. It felt very on the money, in terms of the political state of the world as it stands, everything that's happening in the US, the Middle East."

And the viewers are out there: with

a consolidated audience of 5.1 million, the first episode of the new *X-Files* gave Channel 5 its highest-rated drama ever.

Like Allen and November, Keenan doesn't worry that her stars are 13 years less sexy than the last time sparks flew between them. "The chemistry on screen really crackled between them, as it did in the original series," she says. "I think that something such as *Cold Feet* is a really different type of drama.

"*The X-Files* is, at its heart, a supernatural sci-fi horror piece, whereas *Cold Feet* is a much more emotional, relationship drama."

For other dramas – such as *Poldark* – a return to the screen means a new cast and a new take on the original material. And in entertainment, reviving old formats can mean a relatively small twist – as with *All Star Family Fortunes* – or a stunning change, as with *Through the Keyhole*.

"Leigh Francis did a version of *Through the Keyhole* with his friends when he was a teenager – like, a spoof version of it. He used to make these videos and stuff," says Talkback Managing Director Leon Wilson of the new, Keith Lemon-fronted show.

"He loved the format. Even before *Celebrity Juice*, he'd talked to ITV about bringing it back, called *Through the Keith-hole*."

So Lemon was an obvious choice to turn *Through the Keyhole* from its old, cosy daytime incarnation into a post-watershed Saturday-night zoo.

But, says Wilson, very little about the actual format has changed. There are now two VTs for each celebrity house – with the first full of actual clues, and the second more of a skit. And Lemon does both studio presentation and the VTs, instead of handing over to a roving reporter. Aside from that, it's much the same show.

"We were very keen to get the right balance between the comedy and the playability," says Wilson. "The playability still had to be there, so that old fans of the show could still enjoy it for what it was previously, and younger fans could get the comedy they'd expect from Keith."

Not every ITV entertainment reboot,

though, has followed that golden rule. Its 2015 revival of *Stars in Their Eyes*, presented with heavy irony by Harry Hill, flopped.

"Somebody thought that it was a good idea to have Harry Hill essentially send up the old show," says Duncan Gray, a former Controller of Entertainment Commissioning at ITV. "Nobody paid any attention to what it was that people used to love about *Stars in Their Eyes*.

"You'd have a supermarket worker who could barely look you in the eye but, the second he walked through those doors as Neil Diamond, he became an utterly compelling performer. "There was a majesty and a dignity about the show – as well as a cheeky postmodernism if you wanted to look for it."

Perhaps the most pressurised reboot currently in production in British TV is *Top Gear*. Chris Evans and his new team must step into the world-beating shoes of Jeremy

Clarkson et al. The new incarnation lost its Executive Producer, Lisa Clark, at Christmas, and the BBC has now announced an awkward-sounding split between exec Clare Pizey as "editorial lead" and Evans as "creative lead".

The team is in an unenviable position. On the one hand, they don't want to alienate loyal fans but, on the other, they don't want to be seen as simply copying Clarkson and co.

"I worry that it will all be a bit straight, because Clarkson, May and Hammond depended so much on their chemistry," says Tiff Needell, a former *Top Gear* presenter, who now fronts ITV4's *Fifth Gear*. "It could easily lose its edge. The cars will be lovely, the guests will be lovely, everything will be lovely."

The new *Top Gear* team could do worse than listen to November's advice to himself about bringing back *Cold Feet*: "You go back to a much-loved show, to some degree, at your peril.

"The risk of people not thanking you for screwing it up is probably just as big as, if not greater than, the risk of people thanking you for bringing it back.

"We can't rest on the laurels of a much-loved series. We've got to deliver. This has to be really, really, really good."

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE IS TO MAKE SOMETHING THAT MOVES THE SHOW FORWARD AND DOESN'T WALLOW IN PREVIOUS GLORIES

EU referendum

What impact would Brexit have on the UK TV community?
Raymond Snoddy samples opinion ahead of the vote in June

In or out

What's best for British TV?

The UK's successful independent television production sector is having its own European Union "referendum" several months early. John McVay, Chief Executive of Pact, which represents more than 450 indies, has sent out "voting" messages to gauge the attitude of his member companies. These make a major contribution to the estimated £1.28bn of international programme sales and associated services earned by the UK each year.

From a television business point of view, indies have been asked whether the UK should stay in or get out.

"Once I get the result of the survey

I will be discussing with the Pact board what they would like to do," says McVay. He believes it is very difficult to know what effect a UK Brexit vote would have on the TV industry.

What is clear is that about one-third, or £378m, of the UK's international programme sales – including pre-sales and formats – comes from Europe. This could, at the very least, face a period of considerable uncertainty.

If there were to be a Brexit, McVay believes that "there is nothing to stop producers in other EU countries lobbying and saying: 'These guys are no longer part of the club, let's make sure they don't get in [under foreign programme quotas].'"

He adds: "The French have never liked the Anglo-Saxon domination of their media."

Veteran independent producer Bernard Clark is Chair of TVT, the international TV services company, which also makes factual programmes. In the Pact "referendum", he is a definite "Out".

Clark's opposition is based largely on the levels of EU bureaucracy and regulation. He believes that, if people want programmes, they will buy them – whether the UK is in the EU or not.

Roger Graef, founder of Films of Record, which made the first film inside the European Commission during the last UK referendum in 1975, is an equally emphatic "In". Both producers

enjoy increasing trade with a variety of countries beyond Europe (including the US, Japan and China); neither think that their companies will be greatly affected either way.

Carolyn Fairbairn, Director-General of the CBI and a former strategy head for both the BBC and ITV, takes a trenchant view.

She says: "The biggest impact would be not being able to influence EU regulation, particularly around intellectual property and the Digital Single Market (DSM) – having all those rules imposed because we have a stronger industry than many of the European countries, particularly in TV production. There would be a real risk."

The CBI chief believes the notion that the UK could escape the provisions of the DSM through Brexit is nonsense. "Because we still have to sell our programmes in Europe, we would have to abide by EU regulation," argues Fairbairn. "We would simply have those regulations imposed on us without having had a chance to influence them."

Tim Suter, a former Ofcom Partner and now a policy consultant, believes that the UK media industry has benefited greatly from the single-market approach.

He points out that this has enabled a programme licensed in the UK by Ofcom – it has issued more than 600 licences for commercial TV services here – to have access to all the other EU countries.

Following Brexit, the UK would have to renegotiate that kind of access "and it would be by no means certain to me that Europe would be keen, because it's a principle that is already coming under a lot of strain".

Compared with some other EU countries, the UK is relatively liberal on a range of broadcasting issues. These include children's advertising, gambling and alcohol ads, and Russian-language services. The latter are controversial, for example, when broadcast to the Baltic states.

"I think it's very hard to imagine that, after all these years, Europe would just buckle given the sheer dominance of the UK industry. It's a huge political problem for the French," Suter argues.

He would expect UK producers to face tougher terms – although the overall impact would not be huge, he predicts, after a potential period of confusion.

Simon Spanswick, Chief Executive of the Association for International

LEAVE: IF PEOPLE WANT PROGRAMMES, THEY WILL BUY THEM – WHETHER THE UK IS IN THE EU OR NOT

Broadcasters, agrees that one of the main issues would be the likely need to negotiate a new UK framework to replace the Television Without Frontiers directive.

However, Ofcom and the UK's terrestrial broadcasters are declining to comment on the effects of Brexit on the television industry in advance of the referendum on 23 June, for fear of being seen to be taking sides.

The silent approach is particularly marked in the case of broadcasters that run news channels.

An executive at one such company suggests that there is a general view that access to the European market – particularly for US-based broadcasters – is one of the reasons why the UK has been able to create such a successful global production and broadcasting hub.

"Nothing would happen overnight [following Brexit] but, over time, there could be a diminution. If we were going to be broadcasting into Europe, we would need to think about where we would be based," says the executive.

He adds that US broadcasters based in London might split their presence between the UK and a country with EU membership.

Another executive, who works for one of the US majors located in

REMAIN: ACCESS TO THE SINGLE BROADCASTING MARKET WOULD BE VERY COMPLICATED AND IT WOULD ONLY TAKE ONE VETO TO BLOCK

London, notes that there is a general unease about the inevitable uncertainty that Brexit would bring.

"A vote to leave the EU would create uncertainty not just for June, July and August. It would take five years to negotiate something to put in its place," he says. "Getting access to the single broadcasting market would be very complicated and it would only take one veto to block agreement."

British programme-makers might not face tariffs on their programme sales but – in the absence of a deal – they would have to fight with US producers for their share of the non-EU quota. This is 50% (but only 40% in France).

Smaller British indies would also lose access to funding from the EU's Media Programme for co-productions involving two or more countries.

Sky, like the BBC and Ofcom, is not commenting on the Brexit scenario ahead of the referendum, but it is clear that the pay-TV company would barely be affected by a British exit.

The newly enlarged group runs broadcast services in five EU countries, (the UK, Ireland, Italy, Germany and Austria) and does not trade across borders in the conventional sense. Sky would undoubtedly qualify as an EU company still active in four EU countries following a Brexit.

The reality is that not many executives in the television industry have yet begun to think about the issue, mainly because they think that, on balance, it is unlikely to happen. This is an attitude that could change as we get closer to 23 June.

Scripps Managing Director for the UK and EMEA Phillip Luff, for example, says the company (co-owner of UKTV) is not looking at any plan B at the moment. "We think the impact on Scripps would be minimal because of our multinational approach to structuring our business," he explains.

There could be at least one short-term benefit of Brexit for the UK industry. It could lift a threat from the Commission's DSM plans, which could see the end of the traditional way of selling programme rights on a territory-by-territory basis.

And there is one broadcaster that could privately favour a vote to remain in the EU. Such a referendum outcome might end the cabinet career of Brexit rebel and culture secretary John Whittingdale – and, with it, his ambition to privatise Channel 4.

Power, politics and parties

The Billen profile

Charlotte Moore controls a BBC budget of more than £1bn. **Andrew Billen** meets TV's top mandarin



Charlotte Moore

It was a heck of a coming-out party. Promoted in January from Controller of BBC One to the new post of Controller, TV Channels and iPlayer, Charlotte Moore was introduced to the world by no less than the BBC's Director-General at the Serpentine Gallery in March.

Those who, following inquiries about their dietary requirements, were expecting an intimate sit-down discovered themselves competing for canapés with David Dimbleby, Claudia Winkleman, Kirsty Young, Graham Norton, Paul Merton, Brian Cox and, well, *tout le bazar*.

Moore, when she spoke, gave the culture secretary a piece of her mind for questioning her old channel's distinctiveness and gave a clear steer that BBC Two needed rather more of it.

Under her, BBC One would be the big tent in which everyone crowded (a bit like this party). BBC Two would celebrate our differences.

This was one of the most powerful people in television telling some of its most powerful talent how things were going to be, a woman in charge of more than £1bn of licence fee and with more power to determine what we watch than anyone for decades.

"Oh, God, the obsession with power!" exclaims Moore when I meet her a few weeks later in one of those interchangeable offices provided for meetings by New Broadcasting House's architects. "Listen. I've worked as a genre commissioner and a channel controller, and where it works best is where you really enjoy the conversation in the room. It's trying to work on an idea together, develop it and talk about it."

When the DG, Tony Hall, spoke to her about his idea of abolishing channel controllers she saw it as a chance to embrace the new "multichannel, multi-platform, multi-creative opportunities".

She was enjoying BBC One, where she had been since 2013, but this was a way to make all the channels "complimentary and distinctive".

Moore, at 47, is one of those bright, creative people with a background in idiosyncratic programme-making and commissioning who has taught herself to speak BBC mandarin – although, admittedly, this must have been only a minor challenge to someone who mastered Bahasa Indonesia while on her gap year.

Yet, she can also be perfectly down

BBC

to earth. The first problem on her mind the lunchtime we meet is how she will find time to bake for her children's school cake sale the next day. Rice Krispies cakes, I suggest, is the way to go.

Earlier in the year, at the launch for *The Night Manager*, she admitted that watching it was a relief "after the week I've had". The week she had had was one during which she had resigned from her husband's camera-operator business after *The Daily Mail* claimed a conflict of interest with her BBC job.

As I left the screening, I spotted her in the hotel reception, deep in conversation on her mobile. She gave me a wink.

She says, and I believe her, that she is highly sociable, but she can also be direct and pointed. At the Serpentine, she omitted to thank, praise or even name the now ex-Controller of BBC Two, the departing Kim Shillinglaw, who had also gone for the big job.

Was that an oversight? "Listen, it's all about trying to articulate what we want to do with this new portfolio strategy. That's the job I'm here to do and that's what I was wanting to articulate."

She could have said Kim had done a great job and she was going to build on it. "Well, you know, I wanted to articulate how we're going to define the channels."

The words "love", "lost" and "no" bubble into my head.

"Drama has become the big story on BBC Two," she says. "I genuinely believe that factual should be at the heart of what BBC Two is about."

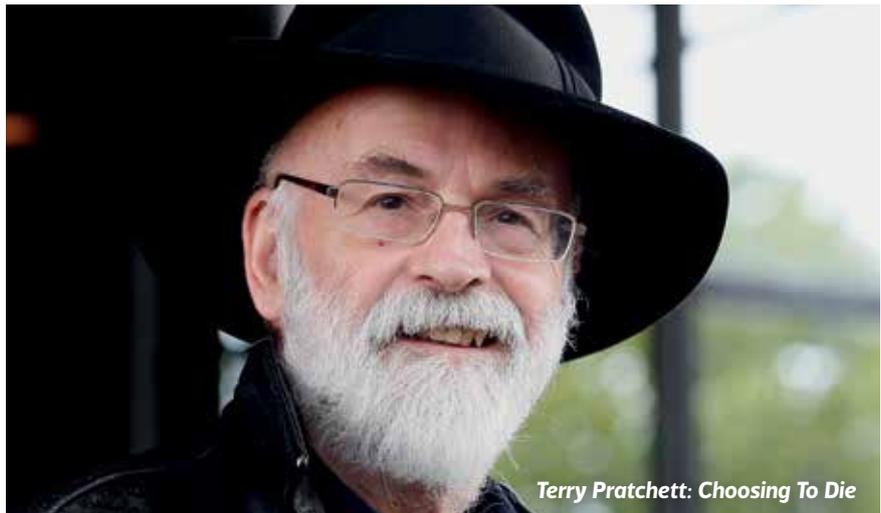
This means, I check, factual programmes most week nights at 9:00pm. She has announced new authored documentaries by Sue Bourne, Nick Broomfield and Fergus O'Brien.

She says that it is an "interesting question" whether the quirky film strand, *Modern Times*, cancelled by Shillinglaw, should return, and praises *Back in Time for the Weekend* as "a really fun BBC Two programme, full of fascinating information".

It is not, she says, about brows, high or low, but "smart television" that expands minds and shows the world from different perspectives.

"Diversity is extremely important to me," she adds. "I've always championed that throughout my career. Being able to look across the channels to see how we can bring diversity into the mainstream and bring new faces to the channels is really important."

While this is borne out by her career in documentaries – filming in the >



Terry Pratchett: *Choosing To Die*



Welcome To Lagos

All pictures: BBC

Moore's moves



Graham Turner/Guardian

Charlotte Moore, Controller, BBC TV Channels and iPlayer

Born 19 June 1968; brought up in Guildford, Surrey; two brothers
Married To Johann Perry, cameraman; two children. They live in west London

Education Wycombe Abbey school; Bristol University (history)

2002 Production Secretary/PA, Ideal World Productions

2004 Head of Documentaries, Ideal World

2005 Head of Contemporary Factual, IWC Media

2006 Commissioning Executive for Documentaries, BBC

2009 Commissioning Editor for Documentaries, BBC

2013 February Acting Controller, Daytime, BBC

2013 June Controller, BBC One

2016 January Controller, BBC TV Channels and iPlayer

Triumphs: *The Great British Bake Off*, *Welcome To Lagos*

Disaster: *Prized Apart*, Emma Willis game show axed after one season

Watching now: Too busy for anything except forthcoming BBC programmes

Reading: Elena Ferrante's novels

Surprising fact: Speaks Bahasa Indonesia, following a gap year teaching English in the country



Dickensian

▶ developing world, executive producing *The Other Side* series for Channel 4 – Moore has, nevertheless, thrown out Lenny Henry's proposal for a ring-fenced fund for BAME employment within the BBC, dismissing it as a potential "tick-boxing exercise". The Campaign for Broadcasting Equality was, to put it mildly, disappointed.

Talking of the mainstream, however, brings us to BBC One, whose control-ship, she is not, really, actually, giving up. While there will be a BBC Two "editor" on the model of Cassian Harrison's editorship of BBC Four, she will not be appointing an editor for BBC One.

"I think that to have someone separate would mean that you then end up being in the same role as the director of TV," she says – and, despite rumours that this post, too, will be abolished, she expects Lord Hall to appoint a director of television soon.

With *The Night Manager*, *The A Word* and *War and Peace* all this year, when, I ask, will people (that is, John Whittingdale) stop bitching about a lack of distinctiveness on BBC One?

"Well, listen, I welcome the debate," she says, which may well mean the opposite. "Of course, I want to get

more distinctive. Of course, I'm always driving to be more distinctive. But I suppose I feel, on behalf of all the creatives I work with, none of us goes into ideas meetings thinking, 'I want to make more of the same.'"

I ask if *The Voice UK*, which has been lost to ITV, is a victim of the political attacks on its lack of distinction.

"ITV bought Talpa [the Dutch production company that owns the format] and, therefore, *The Voice*. I'm a real champion of *The Voice*. It has been a great programme for BBC One. It was all about new talent. I loved the idea that it was not about what you looked like, that it was all about the quality of the voice."

That wasn't quite the issue, though. The issue for critics was that, unlike *Strictly Come Dancing*, it was a bought-in, foreign format.

"Of course, new British shows are a great thing, and, of course, that's what we want to do – but I don't think we should close ourselves off to the global industry," she responds.

Moore says that it is not her role to go out and battle for the BBC. Someone, however, surely needs to explain to its critics that it will never be able to



The Great British Bake Off

commissioned the mind-changing *Welcome To Lagos*. Other hits included the controversial *Terry Pratchett: Choosing to Die* and the phenomenon that is *The Great British Bake Off*.

Briefly Acting Controller of Daytime, she took over from Danny Cohen at BBC One in 2013. He, as her new boss, described Moore as an “outstanding candidate”.

She shows little interest in puffing her career to me and is positively reluctant to discuss what preceded it.

“I was brought up in Surrey. I don’t think there is anything interesting about it. A lovely family.” Two brothers also work in television but it was not a heavy viewing home. “I don’t really enjoy talking about my private life.”

Yet, when *The Daily Mail* discovered this January that she was company secretary to her husband’s business, both she and he – Johann Perry – were all over the paper. The paper did not suggest that she had commissioned Perry Images and the BBC said she had declared her husband’s job, but she resigned anyway. No wonder *The Night Manager* was a welcome relief.

“Oh God, I think I was probably referring to all sorts of stuff I’d been dealing with at the BBC. I’ve always been very clear about what my husband does. He works for all sorts of broadcasters, making all sorts of programmes.”

As a private person, though, is she prepared for that level of scrutiny?

“When you’re in charge of something like BBC One or, now, the other TV channels, clearly there’s a level of transparency and accountability. I totally accept that, but I don’t think my private life’s got anything to do with that.”

She is happy to tell me that she arrives at NBH each morning by 9:15am after doing the school run and is back by 6:30pm or 7:00pm. She resumes her viewing duties after the two children are in bed.

“You have to do the hours to get the work done, but it’s a great way to prioritise. Once you’ve got kids needing you, you can’t walk and say, ‘Sorry. I can’t be there for you.’ It’s quite a leveler, isn’t it? It keeps your feet on the ground.”

With Lord Hall intent on thrusting her into the limelight, that, you may think, is important. Yet, and although I cannot entirely read what fuels Charlotte Moore’s ambition, I really don’t think she is on a power trip. For all that, it has been quite a journey.

compete with Netflix in meeting the Prime Minister’s preference for long-form drama serials.

“But at the BBC it is very much led by the story. In publishing, you don’t say to an author: ‘Give me so many pages.’” Besides, she says, Tony Jordan’s *Dickensian* had 20 episodes.

Is it coming back, I ask eagerly.

“We’ve had to make very difficult decisions, really difficult, about what you bring back and what you don’t.”

So it’s not? “No.”

She is not a native WIA speaker, having begun her career, after reading West African history at Bristol University, in the independent sector. She started working for Ideal World as a researcher and made a mix of travel and history films in her twenties, freelancing at assistant-producer rank. A break came in 1993 with *The Time Traveller*, a film commissioned by John Willis at Channel 4, in which, as Associate Producer, she travelled to New Guinea with the travel writer Norman Lewis, by then 84.

In 1999, she made the Channel 4 observational series *Lagos Airport* off the back of the fashion for airline docs. “It was chaotic. I remember being

asked by Channel 4 if there were any stories about baggage belts breaking down. I said: ‘Baggage belts? They haven’t worked for years.’”

The Nigerian government hated it so much that its High Commissioner demanded it be cancelled.

She became Head of Documentaries at Ideal World, Muriel Gray’s Scottish indie, and then Head of Contemporary Factual when it merged with Wark Clements to form IWC.

There, she was responsible for *Stephen Fry: The Secret Life of the Manic Depressive*. She left as it was being bought by RDF and, in 2006, joined the BBC as a documentary commissioner under Richard Klein. An early triumph for her was Brian Woods’s Bafta-winning *Evicted: The Hidden Homeless*.

She praises Klein. Now that he has parted company with ITV, is there any chance of him returning to the corporation? “Yes, because Richard’s a talented man. It would be interesting to see what he does next.”

A fiver, perhaps, on him becoming BBC Two’s editor.

Upon his elevation to BBC Four Controller in 2009, she succeeded him. Revisiting an old haunt, she quickly

OUR FRIEND IN THE MIDLANDS

As the quadricentenary of Shakespeare's death approaches, my thoughts turn to a less well-known Midlands anniversary. To work for the BBC was my midsummer night's dream and, 30 years ago, I wrote to Kay Alexander at *Midlands Today*, asking for her advice about a career in television.

She kindly arranged for me to speak to someone in personnel and, eventually, I found myself working as a Regional Station Assistant – not in Birmingham, but in Southampton.

Born in Warwickshire and weaned on BBC Midlands, I never did work at Pebble Mill. I arrived in Birmingham to run the BBC Academy and BBC Birmingham too late – it had gone.

Pebble Mill at one with the earth. But its brutalist form casts a deep shadow over the Midlands media landscape.

In the 20th century, Birmingham wasn't just any old BBC regional centre. In 1922, it was the first and, for decades, the most important. In 2004, the BBC moved to a new city-centre site in The Mailbox, which was modern, efficient and cheaper to run.

But in 2012, as part of a rationalisation of production bases, much of Birmingham's factual TV and radio moved again, this time to Bristol. The Mailbox was suddenly half empty and not so efficient – something that Tony Hall encountered in his second week as Director-General and that he was determined to do something about.

The West Midlands is at an

Joe Godwin gets a job in Birmingham and asks, 'Is this a renaissance I see before me?'



Paul Hampartsoumian

economic and cultural watershed: the Midlands Engine is revving up. HS2 will bring millions of people and billions of pounds straight into the heart of Birmingham. The likes of HSBC are relocating their UK headquarters to the city, and a new John Lewis bestrides the wonderfully rejuvenated New Street Station.

Confidence is high and the focus is increasingly on Birmingham's own huge growth potential and second-city cultural status. We are looking less over our shoulders at our friends in the North and their Powerhouse.

And BBC Birmingham is in the throes of its own mini renaissance. The BBC Academy has joined *Midlands Today*, Radio WM, *The Archers* and

Home Front, *Father Brown* and *Doctors*, and the Asian Network in the city.

Not long ago, The Mailbox felt like the Media Marie Celeste – now it's full again.

Birmingham's next media chapter is going to be about digital; our Digital Innovation Unit is beavering away on stuff for BBC Three. A new team is leading the BBC's six-month online Bard-fest, *Shakespeare Lives*.

Co-curated by the BBC and the British Council, it will open the rich archives of Shakespeare to the whole world, as well as streaming performances and features for the anniversary celebrations.

And it's not just us. New Indies, such as Colette Foster's *Full Fat*, are appearing, and Lenny Henry made the wonderful *Danny and the Human Zoo* here. He is now making the case for the West Midlands to be the place to make a real difference in terms of diversity in TV.

There's a feeling here that Birmingham fell off the BBC's map of Britain. But now we're rebuilding our presence, to become the BBC that this great city and region deserve.

I'm very proud to be the BBC's "Director of Better" for Birmingham. We've got the B-word back on everyone's lips across the BBC. It brought the BBC Music Awards to the city, with more to come in 2016.

Next, our aim is to produce more BBC TV and radio programmes here in the years ahead, and I'm quietly confident that this will happen.

Joe Godwin is Director of the BBC Academy and Head of Centre, BBC Birmingham.



ITN goes global

There was a time when ITN was simply a news provider struggling to make money. Not any more. Today, the company is highly profitable and is as likely to film a Football League match or produce a feted Lego ad for BT as it is to send Tom Bradby to Brussels to anchor *News at Ten*. ITN is even developing drama.

“I don’t think we’ll be doing *Wolf Hall* or *Game of Thrones* any time soon,” says CEO John Hardie wryly. “But looking at some of the bigger stories of the past few years and finding ways to bring those to the screen dramatically is something that I believe ITN can do.”

He mentions Carnival’s award-winning two-parter for ITV, *The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies*, as the sort of factually based material that ITN might invest in.

Considering what Hardie has already achieved at the firm, the idea of co-producing a signature drama, even one as finely wrought as the film he mentions, seems utterly plausible. He was appointed to run ITN during the dark days of 2009. Then, the company’s finances, hit by a £22.8m pension deficit, were so dire that some

Television news

John Hardie tells Steve Clarke how ‘authentic, high-impact storytelling’ is at the heart of ITN’s revival

commentators wondered whether ITN and all the pioneering things it stood for in television journalism were facing extinction.

But Hardie, who had previously held important jobs at ITV and Disney, set about diversifying, and turned the company around.

In 2015, ITN Productions’ revenues rose by 44%, year-on-year, thanks to making shows such as BBC Two’s *Young Vets*, Channel 4’s *Dispatches* and *The Agenda* for ITV. The division’s success helped to raise the operating profits of the ITN group to £5.76m on revenues of £112m.

Last month, the CEO announced another set of expansion plans, as he revealed bold targets to grow ITN’s revenues to more than £180m by the

end of 2020. The group aims to expand on both sides of the Atlantic. Its operations are being reorganised into two divisions: Broadcast News and ITN Productions.

While TV news will remain at the heart of the firm’s activities, ITN hopes its non-news businesses will generate more than 50% of total revenues by 2020. “Our ambition is that ITN will become a world-class production company,” stresses Hardie, adding: “ITN is about world-class television news and business that arises naturally from that.”

Its business philosophy is summed up in what the CEO describes as “authentic, high-impact storytelling”. And it is this mantra that informs the company’s approach to its separate, but related, activities: broadcast news, sports production, digital content services, advertising production and television production.

The plan is for ITN Productions to grow to the same size as the broadcast news division by 2020. Anyone involved in producing content needs no reminding that it is an inherently high-risk business. ITN Productions, however, is already one of the UK’s biggest indies. Its clients include all >

Hardie on... The BBC



BBC

'The BBC may be a rival to us in journalism but it is not our enemy. The BBC is extremely important to television broadcasting. We see the BBC as a client that we want to work with.

'We've worked very hard in the past few years to try and come up with programme ideas that we think work for the BBC. Our ambition is to do a lot more business with the BBC in the future...

'I'm a lot less concerned about BBC Studios competing with us. I'm more concerned that the BBC opens its doors so there are many more opportunities for independent producers like us. If it's a two-way street, we have no problem...

'Everyone talks about what the problem with the BBC is, but there's not one problem or one concern. So long as the BBC is contributing towards a healthy ecology in broadcasting production we have no other issues with it.

'Yes, it is massively better funded than ITN in news, and across all of its business, but we've never advocated a reduction in the funding of BBC News or any part of the BBC.

'Nor have we advocated a reduction in the licence fee. To be honest, I am busy enough running ITN without telling the BBC how big or how well it should be run...

'We used to think that not having 24/7 news was a disadvantage. Now, in the world of Facebook and Twitter, we can break news digitally...

'Does BBC News still need a new channel in an online age? You can argue it both ways. I am genuinely agnostic. In terms of competition, it is more a matter for Sky and CNN.'

National Editor
Allegra Stratton
joined ITN from
the BBC



WE FIND THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE KNOCKING AT OUR DOOR THESE DAYS... WE'VE GOT SOME OF THE BEST IN THE BUSINESS

› the big British broadcasters, alongside US channels such as Discovery and A+E. "We've made great strides in the US in the last couple of years," notes Hardie.

What began as making fast turn-around documentaries for organisations such as National Geographic, the Smithsonian and Discovery, is morphing into a more significant operation.

In 2015, ITN produced its first US series, the 10-part crime show *Killer Instinct*, which was subsequently recommissioned. The objective is for the US "to become 10% of the much larger ITN by 2020", says Hardie.

But in such hyper-competitive and uncertain times, isn't Hardie worried about whether he can deliver such an ambitious strategy?

"I think these are extremely good times to be in the content production business," says the CEO emphatically. "In the US, the spectrum of clients ranges from the classic networks to the cable channels to the Netflixs and Amazons.

"Yes, there is plenty of competition, but we need to be very clear about

what our competitive advantages are. We will win business through the speed and quality of what we do.

"We can make high-quality programmes very quickly. That's what our clients like about us."

The approach is to "get good in one area and expand from that". The commitment is to grow organically, rather than, say, buying a producer specialising in factual entertainment and folding it into ITN.

"There's a lot to be said for, when you grow, keeping it all together in one location, rather than having a patchwork quilt of little production companies all over Soho and elsewhere.

"I want to keep us together as one ITN. I'm not even considering an acquisition just now because, if I did one, I'd want it to be completely absorbed and contribute not just to its own business but to all of ITN."

The synergies that can arise from such a holistic approach to the business are obvious in current affairs series such as ITN's *The Agenda* and Channel 4's *Dispatches*: ITN produces *The Agenda* and is a regulator



ITN covers Aviva Premiership Rugby

ITN

contributor to *Dispatches*. They are also evident in ITN's expanding sports division. "People are surprised at how big we are in sport these days," suggests Hardie. ITN produces match clips and highlights for *The Sun* and *The Times*' smartphone services. It also holds the contract with the Football League to film 1,800 matches a year and assemble highlights packages for, among others, Channel 5.

"We're gearing up substantially," says Hardie. "Consider what sports says: it's largely live production and fast-turnaround journalism. And that's what ITN does."

Yet ITN knows that, at least in the short term, people's perceptions of ITN are wedded to the health – or otherwise – of its flagship news bulletins for ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

It is still too early to give a definitive verdict on the relaunched *ITV News at Ten*, but there is no doubt that poaching the BBC's Robert Peston and Allegra Stratton, respectively Political Editor and National Editor, has given the bulletin extra analytical heft.

The BBC's *Ten O'Clock News* still has more viewers (a consolidated average of 4.2 million against ITN's 1.8 million in the year to date).

Hardie, however, seems content that the programme is heading in the right direction: "Television news is not a business where you make a few changes and suddenly the ratings respond.... I am very satisfied with the ratings, as is ITV."

The CEO adds: "I think it's been noticed by a lot of people that this is

now a very good and very intelligent show that has maintained ITN's edge on great dramatic storytelling, but has moved on into penetrating, deep analysis."

Are other BBC journalists in his sights? "We find that a lot of people are knocking at our door these days. We're open to consider people, but then we've got some of the best in the business in our existing stable."

On the vexed question of persuading younger viewers to adopt the ITN habit, Hardie is clear and not at all defensive. For them, ITN's news needs to arrive seamlessly, wherever they are and on whatever devices they are using.

"It's about a generation on mobile, a generation on social media. Rather than us say, 'If we build it, they'll come', and us investing in websites and dragging people to them, our approach is: wherever you are, we will use social media, breaking and rolling news and tailor it to make it interesting so that it appears naturally," he says.

Meanwhile, the difficulty of dealing with ITN's pension deficit remains. A year ago, it emerged that the deficit had grown to £98.5m, up from £80.4m. How concerned is Hardie by this situation?

"We've made massive headway in profitability but the frustrating thing is that those profits have largely had to be invested in the pension deficit," he says. "One reason why we want to boost our financial performance is that, not only then do we make payments to the pension deficit, but we've also got more money to invest in future growth."

Hardie on... Diversity

'In the past few years BAME (black and minority ethnic) representation among ITN employees has increased from slightly below the national average to slightly above it.

'That's no cause for celebration: it's only national, as opposed to London. I think we're up from 11% to 14%, or something above that....

'On screen, or for any other part of what we do, our goal is for every part of ITN to be at or above the national average.... In London, where the BAME population is about 40%, we've obviously got a long way to go....

'Lenny Henry's stimulus is making us take this more seriously. We've done a much better job in recruitment in the past few years, making sure that we reach places so that people from those communities realise this is a place you can come and work for....

'Recently, every single manager completed unconscious bias training....The job is not done when you hire people, it only begins when you hire people from different backgrounds to your own.

'You have to create an environment where people feel they can thrive.'

The big breakfast

Channel 4

Chief Creative Officer **Jay Hunt** explains how she helped reinvigorate her channel by nurturing an inclusive commissioning culture

I want to give you a very personal view of what it's been like trying to change the culture at Channel 4 from the inside out. Five years ago, I walked over the glass bridge at Horseferry Road to start my job. It's easy to forget what Channel 4 looked like then.

It had always been an iconic brand that resonated with young audiences. A buzz word for innovation and mischief making.

But it was also battered and bruised. The recession had hit it hard – 20% of headcount had been wiped out. On air, it could be schizophrenic. Two hundred hours of *Big Brother* cast a long shadow. Factual had to fly the flag for the remit. To top it all, the creative team was famously cliquy.

A snapshot supplier survey done just before I arrived made hair-raising reading. Channel 4 was still the indies' champion, but the indies were falling out of love with a broadcaster that they accused of cosy deals with former commissioners and a closed-shop culture that concentrated spend on a favoured few.

Roll forward five years and where are we now? Today, Channel 4 is positively bullish. No *Big Brother*, no begging bowl, no busted business ventures.

So, how has it changed? Well, most obviously, we've worked with brilliant people who've had brilliant ideas and made them into brilliant TV. Writers, directors, producers and editors, all delivering their very best work for C4.

But we've also changed the way we work. Why? Because anyone in TV knows that what we all do is a form of insanity. The roulette wheel at a seedy Vegas casino has better odds than picking hit shows.

When I arrived at C4, I realised we needed to shift the odds. To put it another way, we needed to bring some science to the art of being creative. And there was some urgency. I remember the blood draining from my face when I first read the lofty remit I signed up to.

Creative organisations present a

particular conundrum because they're built on the notion that ideas are king. Many people still subscribe to the view that the televisual equivalent of the artist in the garret is the only real custodian of creative thinking.

But can we really build a billion-pound business on the promise of something that incalculable? We tend to romanticise what we do. There's even a clue in the title. We call ourselves the creative industries, implying that people in other industries do something that isn't creative.

But, of course, this tortured wrestling with ideas is universal. There are brilliant case studies from companies as varied as Twitter and Dyson. The themes are the same: how do you structure to improve your chances? How do you tolerate and nurture maverick thinking but still deliver at scale?

My then-Channel Executive, Ed Havard, was sent on a management course in LA. It was designed to foster

**'PROGRAMME
REVIEWS'...
WERE STUDIES
IN POLITICAL
GAME PLAYING
THAT WOULD
HAVE PUT THE
BORGHIAS TO
SHAME**

new ways of thinking. He'd seen lots of companies but one had really impressed. It's almost a cliché in creative circles now to cite Pixar, particularly after Ed Catmull's excellent book *Creativity Inc.* But, back then, its unique way of working was less well known here.

The Pixar culture is built on robust peer review. At its heart, the organisation is defined by a belief that decision-making is better when it draws on a collective knowledge.

One of the central tenets of the Pixar model is the Brains Trust. It's basically a posh name for a meeting of the top creative team. It was set up during the making of *Toy Story*, with a purpose that could have come straight from the mouth of one of their own superheroes.

It was tasked with "rooting out mediocrity". It became a forum to tease and test a concept in a safe, supportive environment. That might sound like any old meeting you go to, but the difference here is the willingness to be honest.

Catmull's mantra was simple but incredibly hard to deliver. He said: "Candour is the key to collaborating effectively. Lack of candour leads to dysfunctional environments."

And I knew all about those. I'm a strange control experiment all of my own. As the only person to have run channels at 4, 5 and the BBC, I've seen several broadcasting cultures up close. Collaboration was not one of their defining behaviours. And nor, frankly, was candour.

All of them paid lip service to honest peer review, with big meetings inspirationally labelled "programme reviews". These were studies in political game playing that would have put the Borgias to shame. At 4, that behaviour was even more marked.

David Abraham recounts a funny story of his first meeting with the commissioning heads of department before I arrived at 4. They all took their seats expectantly. David kicked off by asking how often they normally met as a group.

One of them, who still works here,



Jay Hunt

Paul Hampartsoumian

piped up: “Well, we never really meet like this.” It was against this rather unpromising backdrop that we started to work in a different way. We would be a different sort of broadcaster. A team working in partnership with indies to improve our collective chances.

I started by organising two-hour meetings twice a week with my own team. We couldn’t manage it consistently. Now we meet every week, first thing on a Tuesday, for 90 minutes. It’s called “the breakfast” but that’s a misnomer: the only sustenance is coffee. We discuss everything and anything.

What should our response be to the growing number of unemployed young people? What would it look like if we took this germ of an insight and planted it over there? How do we capture the current disaffection with conventional politics?

Three years on, it’s become a powerful forum for finessing ideas. Imagine a focus group of people, who genuinely get TV, trying to work out how to get your show on air. And that’s it. No one in the room has any other motivation for being there. They’re not incentivised to help. They don’t have a financial stake in success. They’re just trying to make the good, better. Creatively, it’s become like turning to a clever friend.

And, critically, it’s changed what’s on air. Take *The Island*, a fantastic piece of work delivered by Shine – but the commissioners at 4 did help shape what it would become. In that instance, the breakfast added value. Because what’s not to like about getting some additional brainpower on cracking a show?

I’ve always found the idea of a channel controller sitting there like Nero, giving a thumbs up or thumbs down on a recommission, to be rather cartoonish.

It’s even more so now, when data has given us so many tools to help spot what might work. Did social media leap on the show? Were the audience appreciation scores high? Did it deliver the perfect tick the scheduling team are looking for, where a show launches well, possibly drops off but then grows again?

Metrics help when you are selling a ▶

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q John Hardie, CEO, ITN:

You've described an environment at Channel 4 where commissioners shape the shows and even originate the ideas. Do independent producers share your view of this proactive process?

A Jay Hunt: It is very instructive in a number of different ways... On one level, it makes us very quick at saying no to things... We're often talking about spending hundreds of thousands, sometimes millions, of pounds on a show.

If you are thinking of any other kind of investment – and someone says to you, “Tell you what, you don't need to get involved, but 100 people who know quite a lot about this can give you some feedback, would that be helpful?” – in the main, my experience has been that it is quite helpful.

Instead of being head in hands, deconstructing why a show didn't work, we're upstream of that, helping to shape it so that – together – there's a better chance of it working.

It's a pretty benign process, with another set of brains trying to get something right.

Q You talked a lot about the candour inside Channel 4. Are you confident that this extends to the producers and they know exactly where they stand?

A I think so. One of the things we've wrestled with a lot is: how can producers be actively involved, how can we bring them into the meeting?

There is a fundamental problem around commercial sensitivity. For obvious reasons, I can't have The Garden in there discussing an idea from Ricochet...

We've got nothing to hide. It's a forum where lots of different people are thinking [about how] we can get this closer to being commissionable by Channel 4. If I could find a way of cracking that commercial sensitivity, I'd be very happy to open the doors to everyone.

Q I think I'm right in saying that Channel 5 has eight or nine commissioners, ITV has 17 – and Channel 4 has 56. According to the company's annual report, you are dealing with 338 indies. But that's almost enough people to act as executive producers. Is that how you think things should be?

A No, definitely not. We've spent exactly that. One of the more depressing things I've seen happen recently is indies beginning to assume that this will happen. This is not what Channel 4 is there to do. We're not there to make or exec produce the shows. I'm pretty firm with people that this is not our function.

But are we part of a creative conversation? Yes... we're not a normal broadcaster. We're required to have a perspective, to prompt debate and to engage people in inspiring change... I think you will have a different interaction.

I don't think any indie will tell you that they remember a time when they walked into a broadcaster, put a piece of paper on the table and someone leant over and wrote a cheque.

That's exactly as it should be. It's a dialogue, isn't it?

How do you make something better by talking about it? By getting the best brains you can on making it as robust as it can be before we get it out of the door. I don't make any apology for the fact that we work in a different way.

Q No doubt, for the next several years, you will be committed to Channel 4 but, at some point, you will think about moving on. What would your ideal job be?

A I honestly don't think about it... Channel 4 gets under your skin in a pretty extraordinary way. You become religious about it. It matters to me massively that it is protected and that it continues to be able to do what it does... I am not avoiding your question: I genuinely don't know what I'll do next. But, right now, this matters to me more.

The full transcript of Jay Hunt's speech and Q&A can be found at: www.rts.org.uk/jayhunt



➤ vision to parts of a creative business that needs to make the uncertain certain.

Let me be clear what this strategy is not, though. It's not a short cut to the moment of magic that leads to great TV. In a world where Netflix and Amazon tell me that they can predict what I will watch, I am a refusenik.

You can't run the numbers for surprise or feed my viewing habits into a big machine and tell me I will like something I never even knew existed. The creative flair in this room is still what ignites the flame. To extend the analogy, looking for clues in the data is how we manage to keep the flame alight.

We've stood shoulder to shoulder with other indies to grow shows. *First Dates* became a hit after we bloody mindedly refused to give up on it. Similarly, *The Last Leg* went from struggling to get an audience of more than 1 million to delivering double digit young share and audiences over 2 million.

So certain am I that we need more input into our creative conversations at 4, not less, that the breakfast meeting I hold with my heads of department has been rolled out to the whole of my team and beyond.



All pictures: Channel 4

Once a week, there are at least nine different groups of people kicking around ideas. The team who write our press listings and run our presentation desk have joined in, too. We've even got people from sales in the mix.

In any given week, more than 100 people at 4 are discussing what we could put on the telly. In time, I hope that people from all over the company will become part of this quiet revolution, because they force us to think differently.

And forcing us to think differently has led to a higher number of shows that feel genuinely original. It's also made us work faster, particularly in genres where mass audience taste is so hard to call. Comedy is a great example.

Helped by the breakfasts, *Catastrophe* was recommissioned before it was aired. *Flowers*, our brilliantly dark new comedy drama, was championed in the room not just by my talented Head of Comedy, Phil Clarke, but by our Head of Documentaries, Nick Mirsky.

If it all sounds a bit People's Republic of Channel 4, it's not. You can't churn through the decision-making needed to commission thousands of programmes across a portfolio of channels by putting every decision to a

CANDOUR IS THE KEY TO COLLABORATING EFFECTIVELY. LACK OF CANDOUR LEADS TO DYSFUNCTIONAL ENVIRONMENTS

vote. In the end, like channel controllers everywhere, I have to decide and be accountable to David and the board. But those decisions are now informed by the most inclusive commissioning process I've ever been part of.

So, five years on, these are the things I know. Creativity can be led by teams, not just individuals. Risking failure ensures you succeed. Different perspectives colliding sparks real originality.

I also know that I've been lucky. Lucky because I've had the luxury of being able to experiment. For starters, I've had a boss who understands creative risk-taking. David gets it. He's

been at the coalface himself. He knows that you'll only win if you try and then keep trying.

Not having to deliver a profit has allowed us the space to fail. And being more pragmatic about failing has ensured that we have succeeded. In the maelstrom of political noise we are living through at the moment, maybe it needs spelling out even further. I am absolutely certain that we would not have achieved what we have achieved in private hands.

I know now that 4 can be just as innovative off air as it can on air. Five years on, it's a different kind of broadcaster. A place where brilliant indies work with commissioners who are talented producers themselves to make unmissable shows – shows that move the dial not just here but globally.

At its best, I believe Channel 4 can rival the greatest creative organisations in the world. And, let's face it, who wouldn't want to be part of that.

This is an edited version of a speech by Channel 4 Chief Creative Officer Jay Hunt at the event 'Five years at 4: building a creative culture', which was held at the British Museum on 15 March and produced by Martin Stott.



Click to cook

Take a loaf of bread, hollow out the centre, place a Camembert in the hole and bake for 15 minutes. It's not the most original recipe, admittedly, but *Proper Tasty's* 35-second instructional video has clocked up nearly 40 million views since it was uploaded to Facebook in late December.

Proper Tasty, the British spin-off of BuzzFeed's original *Tasty* page, launched in December 2015 and is part of a growing movement of online channels offering cooking inspiration.

If you're on Facebook, it's hard to have missed *Proper Tasty's* eye-catching posts. Each video, rarely over a minute long, offers brief instructions for creating dishes including Yorkshire pudding profiteroles, mojito-marinated chicken and mince-pie doughnuts.

"It's just been phenomenal," says Ailbhe Malone, Head of Life at BuzzFeed UK, of the reaction to the videos, which gained 1 billion views in the first three months.

Internet video

Online food channels are inspiring millennials to hone their culinary skills. **Pippa Shawley** logs on to Food Tube and beyond

The *Camembert Bread Bowl* is just one of more than 80 videos created by *Proper Tasty's* two-person production team since it launched.

Malone believes the success of the videos is down to the "hyper-focused" content aimed at British audiences. What's more, videos on Facebook play automatically, making them easy to engage with.

The reaction to the recipes is typified by a string of comments beneath each post of people referring it to friends,

as well as the use of Facebook's share button. "It's got this inherent shareability," agrees Malone. She believes that experimentation and reviewing audience feedback has been key to the page's rapid growth.

BuzzFeed is the latest brand to target millennials with an interest in food. Jamie Oliver created Food Tube, an online arena for sharing cooking tips and recipes.

A live Twittercast to promote Oliver's *Food Revolution* in 2010 made the chef curious about the possibilities of communicating directly with audiences. Consequently, the chef overhauled his YouTube channel. Until then, it had been a holding pen for videos on JamieOliver.com and promotional clips for his TV shows.

As part of YouTube's original-content partnership scheme, Oliver and his production company, Fresh One, pitched the idea for a cooking channel featuring the chef and new talent.

Fast-forward three years, and today Food Tube is one of the most-watched

culinary channels on the web. “We did make a few mistakes in those early days,” recalls Richard Herd, Food Tube Network Manager at Fresh One.

Originally, the team produced content in a similar way to Oliver’s TV shows, believing that the YouTube audience would just want the same kind of recipe segments, but faster.

“They didn’t,” admits Herd. “They wanted something else, and they told us so in the first few videos. They saw Jamie moving online as a TV person coming into their space.”

While internet criticism can be particularly cruel, the immediate feedback available through YouTube and social media allowed the Food Tube team to see what needed adapting. “It was changing the grammar of how we present to them: it was much more direct, it was much more down-the-lens, it was much more conversational,” says Herd. “It was a bit rough around the edges, which suited us, because we were trying to make things cheaper and faster.... It gave Jamie even more of that freedom to do what he wanted to do.”

Today, the channel has more than 2.2 million subscribers and the videos have been viewed more than 200 million times. Cannily, Oliver has introduced, and collaborated with, upcoming cooks and vloggers, including online nutrition trainer Joe Wicks (alias The Body Coach).

The approach has attracted a younger, male-skewed audience. According to Herd, Food Tube’s core audience is 65% male, aged 20–40. That contrasts with the audience for Jamie Oliver’s main brand, which is aged between 25 and 45, and 65% female.

This 20–40 age group is one that the team behind SortedFood knew well when they founded their YouTube channel while still at university.

“We started writing recipes on the back of beer mats and we wanted to share these with more people,” recalls Jamie Spafford, one of four school friends who would gather in the pub during university holidays to moan about how badly they were eating.

“One of the obvious places for us at the time was YouTube, so we started filming ourselves making these recipes

IT SHOULD ALWAYS BE SOMETHING THAT INSPIRES YOU TO SHARE WITH FRIENDS AND GO, ‘OH, MAYBE I’LL [TRY THAT]’

to share with our wider friendship group,” he adds.

Since then, the channel has gained over 1.5 million subscribers; its videos have been viewed more than 189 million times. While the team has increased to 14, Spafford says that they are not looking to hire any more people.

“For us, it’s about keeping it as a really close-knit and tight team. We very much built it up around friends and family,” he explains.

Now a multimillion-pound business, the group has diversified into cook-books. “It was fantastic, but probably a little bit too early for us – I’m not sure we really had the scale of audience that we wanted,” admits Spafford of the book released by Penguin in 2012. The group has also collaborated with brands, and two years ago it launched an app.

“The thinking behind the app was to create a platform where people could upload their own recipes, their own tips and tricks.... To be able to showcase their stories and their recipes has been amazing.” It’s clear that such collaboration and flexibility is vital to succeed in the online food landscape.

Choosing what content to watch online can be time consuming and the more a channel can listen to its

OUR BEST-PERFORMING VIDEO ON ALL THE CHANNELS IS HOW TO POACH AN EGG WITH JAMIE OLIVER

audience, the better. “You’re borrowing someone’s precious time for that moment,” explains Richard Herd. “There has to be a reason that they watch you rather than the 1,000 other things that are blinking on the right-hand side.

“TV’s much more passive... you might move from one programme to the next without getting up from the sofa. [Online], if you don’t like something, you turn it off and you find something else because there’s another thing that’s flashing at you.”

As for the content itself, simplicity is what excels online.

“It should always be approachable,” advises Ailbhe Malone. “It should always be something that inspires you to share with friends and go, ‘Oh, maybe I’ll put that in the slow cooker and have it for tea tomorrow night!’”

Avoiding “cheffy” food (emulsions, foams, liquid nitrogen), as Malone puts it, is something that even Jamie Oliver’s camp agrees with.

“Our best-performing video on all the channels is *How to Poach an Egg With Jamie Oliver*,” says Herd. “It’s something that people search for all the time... When you see a big list of ‘how to poach an egg’ videos, you’re more than likely going to go to a name that you trust rather than somebody else.”

While audiences will continue to watch the likes of Oliver on television and online, traditional programme-makers are bound to view the popular online videos, produced on significantly smaller budgets, with envy.

While last year’s *Great British Bake Off* finale delighted an audience of 13.4 million, *Proper Tasty*’s most-watched video – for homemade Ferrero Roche-inspired balls – has already been watched over 44 million times.

Each day seems to bring another voice to online food programming. Brands such as Sainsbury’s and Hellmann’s have adopted *Proper Tasty*’s style of snappy, inspiration-heavy videos, and publishers such as Vice’s Munchies have invested time and money in producing longer-form food films.

It seems that the appetite for creating shareable culinary content shows no signs of slowing.

A dramatic take on disability

Within a few minutes of taking tea with television writer Peter Bowker, it becomes clear why he writes such effective dramas on subjects close to his heart. He is a people person: curious, observant and fascinated by family dynamics and human quirks. At one point, he suddenly directs a question at me, and I realise how easy it would be to open up to him.

Aged 57, born in Stockport – his strong northern accent is still intact – he also tends to end every other sentence with laughter. When he talks about his fictional characters, it is as if they are real.

For example, his latest series, *The A Word*, revolves around an extended family's response to Joe, an autistic five-year-old boy, played by Max Vento.

Bowker says that he was so totally engaged that "I wrote a whole case study of the imaginary figure", then qualified as the production's autistic adviser so that he could be on set to check that nothing was changed.

"Unlike many writers, I have no interest in directing. But I didn't want to get a phone call in my study at home, telling me: This couldn't happen.' It is such a controversial area."

Disability is one of the recurring strands in Bowker's versatile output: his first authored series, *Flesh and Blood* (2002), told the story of an adopted man tracing his birth parents and eventually coming to accept their mental impairment. It was hailed as a breakthrough.

Later, there was high praise for *Marvellous*, his touching 2014 BBC Two drama about the extraordinary life of the real Neil Baldwin, a man with learning difficulties, played by Toby Jones.

"It opened doors," says Bowker. "*The A Word* was much easier to sell on the back of it. People were reassured that I could do warm and funny. I thought

Screenwriting

Maggie Brown meets TV screenwriter Peter Bowker, whose show *The A Word* examines a family's complex responses to their autistic son

about a million people would watch it." In fact, *Marvellous* achieved a consolidated audience of 2 million. "I thought they would like it [and then] it would be over. But, my God, even now people stop me and talk about it."

Bowker spent months visiting Baldwin in Stoke-on-Trent before he wrote the script. They became firm friends: Bowker spent last Boxing Day in Stoke with Baldwin, who also stays at the Bowker home in London's East Sheen, and they walk Baldwin's dog in Richmond Park. "I don't live up North in a cobbled street," he laughs.

The experimental, scrapbook approach and daring use of the Neil Baldwin Choir for *Marvellous* reveal another of Bowker's traits, a willingness to take risks.

His 2004 series *Blackpool*, about an ambitious arcade owner played by David Morrissey, married songs (*Viva Las Vegas* was the opening number) and performance with sleaze, referencing

IF AN ACTOR GETS THE EMOTIONAL RHYTHM OF MY WORK, I HANG ON TO THEM

Dennis Potter. It was bought for a remake by CBS – which flopped – but *Blackpool* also brought financial rewards.

After Bowker's fruitful collaboration with Director Julian Farino on *Marvellous*, the pair are working on another idea for an uplifting drama mined from difficult material: Syrian asylum seekers in Britain.

That's another Bowker compulsion, working on two projects simultaneously. The main project absorbing his obviously huge energy is a Second World War drama, not yet green-lit, but probably for the BBC.

It tells the story of the war from multiple perspectives: a Polish family, an American surgeon working in Paris, and German, French, and Canadian protagonists, too.

"And there is a connection between these people. We, as viewers know it, they don't. I describe it as the love child of *Deutschland 83* and *Saving Private Ryan*."

It will, he adds, be "one huge thing – epic, if it happens. I have written the first script, written a huge series bible, the story of the war. It's the hardest thing I have ever done in my life, like being back at school."

Professor Richard Overby, of Exeter University, is the historical adviser for the project, which is being developed by ITV-owned Mammoth.

"The irony is that, whenever I write something, I think of something else. Where is this coming from? I start on something and have an idea for something else," he confesses.

At least with BBC One's *The A Word*, the inspiration is clear – although it coincides with public concern over access to treatment for people who are autistic. Bowker spent 14 years at a Leeds hospital teaching youngsters with learning difficulties, including children on the autism spectrum. "That was my work before I became a writer," he says. Prior to that, he studied philosophy and English at Leeds University.

IT'S THE HARDEST THING I HAVE EVER DONE IN MY LIFE, LIKE BEING BACK AT SCHOOL



The A Word

BBC

might want to tell me to fuck off but...” He adds: “If an actor gets the emotional rhythm of my work, I hang on to them. I have used Stephen Graham more than once. I would always return to Jamie Nesbitt [cast in Bowker’s Iraq war drama *Occupation*]. I think we gravitate towards each other.”

And Toby Jones, after playing Neil Baldwin was the uneasy banker in BBC One’s *Capital*, Bowker’s 2015 adaptation of the John Lanchester novel.

But he hopes he has not finished with autism and *The A Word*: “My real ambition for it is to come back every two years, because the problems and the issues, and what it does to the family, get worse. That becomes more pronounced as they get older. And once a child stops being cute...”

“On a purely selfish, dramatist level, that is satisfying because it is about reality, what we value, the whole drive for our children, for them to be successful at some level.”

Is disability under-represented on television? “I have an agenda, which is: more integrated castings, where, say, one of the characters has cerebral palsy. Make it part of drama.”

Even so, Bowker thought it would be too much to ask of a child on the autism spectrum to play Joe.

How would the young Bowker view you? “Through a haze of amphetamine,” he laughs. “He’d probably think I am a wanker. And that’s right, an 18-year-old should always think that. He’d also be delighted that I was making a living as a writer. I think he would be surprised that I moved south. I am.”

Why south? “I met my girlfriend, [now my] wife, down here. When I first moved down, it was easier to get to meetings.”

A keen theatregoer, Bowker nurses an ambition to write for the stage: “I like the live-ness of it all, the unmediated experience.”

Unsurprisingly, one of his favourites is *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*.

In his thirties, he started a creative writing master’s at the University of East Anglia, before switching to TV scriptwriting when he realised that he was more interested in crafting dialogue. This was followed by work on BBC One’s *Casualty* and ITV’s *Peak Practice*.

While *The A List* is a reimagining of the Israeli series *Yellow Peppers*, relocated from the Arava desert to the Lake District, it is informed by Bowker’s experience of a friend coping with an autistic child.

“You diagnose autism as a descriptive condition, not a blood test,” he says. “It is very hard to pin down and locate where it begins and ends. The disruption to the family... just about every fault line in the relationship is

exposed. When I was teaching, I reckon 80% of the parents must have split up over it.”

Another Bowker trait is his tendency, when he finds an actor on his wavelength, to keep in touch. Christopher Eccleston played the adopted son in *Flesh and Blood*, and was cast as the blundering grandfather in *The A Word*.

Bowker explains: “I thought it would be fun to have a patriarch comparatively young and who still has a vibrancy and who cannot be patronised – that’s for sure! Not only is he annoying, domineering, controlling, he’s Chris!”

“All that vitality and drive. I had to write the email, to ask him to play a granddad. He’s only 52. I said, ‘You

TV's nemesis?

Multichannel TV

Matthew Bell hears a panel of experts warn that the likes of YouTube are generating a tsunami of content for younger viewers

Traditional TV has been on the endangered species list for many years, yet it has fought off every new media predator to threaten it. But has television finally met its match with the rise of online multichannel networks (MCNs)?

"Now is the most exciting time for companies in the online video space," claimed Rightster chief Ashley MacKenzie at "Beyond YouTube", a sold-out RTS event in March that debated whether online channels were the future of TV.

"It's clear that online video is a phenomenon that's gone beyond just something that's happening on the internet," said journalist Kate Bulkley, who chaired the discussion. "The quality is growing. It's not simply short form and it has certainly gone far beyond the 'cat-on-skateboard' videos that were on YouTube before."

YouTube and Facebook, which between them boast 19 billion daily views worldwide, offer huge platforms to video content producers. And the growth of online video has brought new players, including MCNs, into the marketplace.

Two of these MCNs – Rightster and the Disney-owned Maker Studios – were represented on the RTS panel. But there are many others, including music site Vevo, Endemol Beyond and the entertainment MCN Awesomeness TV, which is majority-owned by DreamWorks Animation.

The audience for online video



Mobile platforms such as Snapchat, with its 8 billion daily views, offer multichannel networks a potential outlet for their video content

remains youthful, argued MacKenzie. He is a veteran of the MCN business, having founded a video service in 2007 called Base79, which he sold to Rightster two years ago.

“The genuine heavy users remain 10- to 18-year-old kids,” said MacKenzie, who took up the reins as Rightster CEO at the end of last year. “I’m not certain whether that’s going to change massively.”

Pay-TV giant Sky has always been a technological pioneer and its new TV service Sky Q includes an online video section, which pulls together content from many digital creators, including Barcroft Media, Red Bull Media House and GoPro.

Julia Barry, Editorial Director, Sky On-Demand, agreed with MacKenzie that audiences were young, but added that there was an untapped older market. “There’s a real opportunity to grow the reach of this content and bring more eyeballs to it by putting it into our Sky ecosystem and opening up access,” she said.

Barry added: “We think that easy-to-understand curation will help discoverability for a 25-plus audience. We’re going for really simple content categories such as ‘quick laughs’ and ‘food and drink’, which we know our customers will go to.”

James Kirkham moved to Bigballs Media in February to run its global football fans’ channel, Copa90, which he said had an audience “sweet spot of 18 to 25”. He argued that barriers were breaking down between different media. Young audiences saw no difference between “on and offline, between a football management game, watching [football] on TV and watching catch-up”.

Mobile platforms such as Snapchat, which now has 8 billion daily views, offer MCNs another potential outlet for their content.

“It demonstrates this insatiable appetite that audiences have to connect,” said Dan’l Hewitt, UK Managing Director of Maker Studios.

Traditional television, though, is still ▶



‘TV has passed its tipping point’

To set the scene for the panel discussion, Ampere Analysis Research Director Richard Broughton outlined the threat that the online multi-channel networks pose to television.

The traditional TV model in western Europe, he explained, had ‘tipped into decline’. Online advertising had already surpassed the value of both public service television and TV ad revenues, with Ampere predicting that it would overtake the revenue of pay-broadcasters before 2020.

The amount and quality of online video is growing, and attracting more advertising. Traditional broadcasters, typically via their online catch-up services, are an important part of this growth but so, too, are the social-video platforms, such as Facebook – which is increasingly focusing on video.

The platform landscape is changing. ‘YouTube is no longer the only horse in this race,’ he said. ‘A few years ago, it was just YouTube, with very small players elsewhere, but social video from Facebook has been rapidly catching up with the other social-media platforms – Twitter and Snapchat – hot on its heels.’

In the past, Broughton explained, MCNs have been squeezed, losing 45% of their ad revenue to the platforms that host their content and much of the rest to the creators of the content.

The solution, he said, was for MCNs to ‘start producing their own content or [build] closer ties to the content creators themselves’, so they ‘no longer need to give away the majority of the revenue that comes through from advertising. A lot of the MCNs have been moving into production.’

Working with brands that want to connect with MCN audiences – including a ‘demographic that has perhaps lost its connection with traditional, commercial broadcast TV’ – would also boost revenues, he argued.

Broughton suggested that the MCNs were in a strong position: ‘They are content creators, they’ve got brand affiliations and they have multiple outlets on which you can view their content.’

‘Traditional broadcasters don’t need to be worried about their business any time soon but, if they or their shareholders are looking for growth, the [online video sector] is where the growth is.’

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q Helen Purvis, Knight Ayton Management: Do you see a time when traditional TV talent will go online?

A Ashley MacKenzie, Rightster: It's an inherently different business model... An independent TV production company goes to a commissioner, the commissioner runs a pilot, gives them a load of money, they make [the show] and hand it back to the channel.

That is entirely different to [online talent]. They spend more time managing their community and responding to comments... There are tools that allow them to do it in near real time. For them, that is a critical, if not *the* most important, component of how they build their audience.

Q Nick Doff, The EPG Shop: How, as an industry, are you working to get a bigger cut of the [YouTube] cake?

A Ashley MacKenzie, Rightster: It's always been a 55-45 split [of revenue] in our favour... I don't know whether 55% is the right number but it's not going to move.

A Dan'l Hewitt, Maker Studios: YouTube is a very important platform and the scale is there... We don't have to pay bandwidth costs [or] invest in ad-serving technology: everything is there for us and we're able to bring in brand partners and sell that advertising.

Q Kate Bulkley, Brand-funded content is "where the money is", isn't it?

A Dan'l Hewitt, Maker Studios: It's [about] scaling, yes. Brands are now looking for these "always-on" propositions. So, Coke now has channels, McDonald's has a channel in the UK, and all these brands are looking for great production partners to help them with storytelling. The opportunities really [are] untapped.

A James Kirkham, Bigballs Media: YouTube is just part



Bloomberg

of the puzzle for us. It's a fantastic part and it's going to remain, but it's definitely not the whole picture... brands are a huge part of it, too. We have the likes of Hyundai and Nissan as big-brand partners.

A Ashley MacKenzie, Rightster: YouTube and Facebook are always going to handle the basic digital ad monetisation – and so they should... Where companies like ours come in is when those companies fall away. They are not going to make the investment in content creation, because it doesn't scale. We have a better understanding of the audience online, especially around our content propositions.

Q Martin Izzard, Red Lorry Yellow Lorry: Where will the growth be in terms of genres and content?

A James Kirkham, Bigballs Media: We're most excited about everything outside the 90... minutes [of a match]... We think [football] fans have been forgotten and [so we] have a fan-centric perspective.

A Julia Barry, Sky: On the Sky platform, we're finding [that there's] much more short-form [content], not just in online video but in on-demand video as well. Fanzine content, whether it's around *Game of Thrones* or *Legends of Tomorrow*, people love that stuff.

A Dan'l Hewitt, Maker Studios: We're developing dramas for Instagram... in 15-second episodes.



From left: James Kirkham, Julia Barry, Kate Bulkley, Dan'l Hewitt and Ashley MacKenzie

relevant in this shiny digital age. Youth brand Vice recently announced that its first European linear-TV channel, ViceLand, would launch in September. "It makes absolute sense for Vice to launch TV channels," insisted Hewitt.

Will bringing Vice's programming into a television environment change the way its content is viewed? Watching online video, whether on mobile or tablet, tends to be a solitary experience, whereas TV is more communal.

"There is the potential to make online video content more communal in the home, in the sense that you sit down [as a family] and watch it together," argued Barry.

Branded content is a growing part of the online landscape and, according to the panel, a profitable avenue to explore. Digital video service Red Bull TV, reckoned Kirkham, set the benchmark by "creating sporting events that were the advert in themselves".

Subscription services, such as the ad-free YouTube Red, which made its



Paul Hampartsoumian

YOUTUBE IS NO LONGER THE ONLY HORSE IN THIS RACE

US debut at the end of last year, were seen as more of a risk. “It’s a tall ask in the short term,” said MacKenzie, who argued that the youthful consumers of online video would not have the means to pay for such a service.

However, he added that “organisations such as [YouTube] are going to go longer, deeper and harder than anyone else. So it would be a brave person to bet against YouTube.”

Hewitt’s company, Maker Studios, made the reality-adventure series *Scare PewDiePie* for Red. The Swedish gamer Felix Kjellberg – his online name is PewDiePie – is YouTube’s biggest draw, with more than 43 million subscribers to his channel.

Kirkham reckoned that a subscription service would stand or fall on the quality of its product: “Does it augment your life and make things better? Is it providing you with stuff that is rich, exclusive or new?”

But who beyond YouTube’s top rank of PewDiePie and fashion and beauty

vlogger Zoella could make a subscription service pay, asked Bulkley.

“They are mainstream media names that have risen to the top,” answered Kirkham. “There are a huge number with staggering followings [below PewDiePie and Zoella].”

Hewitt reckoned that there was an opportunity to work with up-and-coming online talent. “We have to rethink how we commission and develop new forms of programming with these new types of talent. We have to work with them in a different way; they’re not trained actors – they’ve done it themselves,” he said.

DO YOU REALLY UNDERSTAND WHY KIDS WATCH SO MUCH YOUTUBE?

The panellists confessed to feeling their age – most of them were at least a couple of decades older than the typical consumers of their content and services.

“I’m 40,” said Hewitt, “and I [recently] had that experience that I’m sure my mum had a few years ago, where I had to lean over to one of our creators and say: ‘Can you show me what the hell you’ve done on Snapchat because I don’t understand how that works.’”

MacKenzie admitted that it is a world he barely understands. Addressing the audience, he asked: “How many of you really understand why kids watch so much YouTube?”

“I’ve been doing this [job] for nearly a decade and I don’t get it. It is staggering, the social change that’s going on.”

The RTS early-evening event, ‘Beyond YouTube’ was held at the Cavendish Conference Centre in central London on 14 March. The producers were Kate Bulkley and Stephen Gaynor.



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Michaela Coel won two awards: the **Breakthrough Award** and **Comedy Performance**



Judges' Award *Sir Lenny Henry*

'Lenny's call for a sea change in our industry shook us from our complacency and, in the two years since he gave that lecture, real action has been taken.

'Clearly, this is still a case of "work-in-progress", but the journey of change is under way. As a consequence of Lenny's wake-up call to us all, every major British broadcaster has introduced new initiatives and policies about diversity in front of and behind the camera. And the difference is seen on screen. The cast – and the crew – is changing.'

The winners and nominees of the rest of the 27 awards are listed over the following six pages >

Pictures: Richard Kendal/Channel 4

Actor – Female

Suranne Jones – *Doctor Foster*

Drama Republic for BBC One
‘Such a finely judged performance, utterly engrossing.’

Nominees:

Claire Foy – *Wolf Hall*, A Company Pictures and Playground Entertainment Production for BBC Two

Claire Rushbrook – *Home Fires*, An ITV Studios and Masterpiece co-production for ITV

Actor – Male

Anthony Hopkins – *The Dresser*

Playground Entertainment for BBC Two
‘Titanically good, an absolute master-class in acting.’

Nominees:

Tom Courtenay – *Unforgotten*, Mainstreet Pictures for ITV

Adam Long – *Don’t Take My Baby*, BBC Documentaries Production for BBC Three

Arts

Handmade

BBC Scotland Arts Production for BBC Four
‘Understated in a powerful way, a programme that challenged many conventions of contemporary television. It was direct, adventurous, and beautiful.’

Nominees:

Grayson Perry’s *Dream House*, Swan Films for Channel 4

Hockney, A Blakeway and Fly Film Production for BBC Two

Breakthrough Award

Michaela Coel – *Chewing Gum*

Retort Television for E4
‘A talent that breaks through in every direction.’

Nominees:

Richard Bentley – *The Stranger on the Bridge*, Postcard Productions for Channel 4

Sian Gibson – *Peter Kay’s Car Share*, Goodnight Vienna Productions for BBC iPlayer

Children’s Programme

My Life: I Am Leo

Nine Lives Media for CBBC
‘An uplifting piece of television that had, at its heart, an unexpected joy.’

Nominees:

Lily’s Driftwood Bay – Goodbye Seabird, Sixteen South for Nick Junior
The Dumping Ground, CBBC Productions

Drama Serial: *The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies*



Breakthrough Award:
Michaela Coel – *Chewing Gum*



Children’s Programme:
My Life: I Am Leo



Drama Series: *No Offence*



Host: Richard Madeley



Arts: Handmade

Pictures: Richard Kendal/Paul Hampartsoumian/BBC/Channel 4

Comedy Performance

Michaela Coel – *Chewing Gum*

Retort Television for E4

‘Fresh, totally unique, edgy and brave... utterly original.’

Nominees:

Sharon Horgan and Rob Delaney –

Catastrophe, An Avalon Television production with co-producers Birdbath Productions and Merman for Channel 4

Nick Helm – *Uncle*, Baby Cow Productions for BBC Three

Daytime Programme

Judge Rinder

ITV Studios for ITV

‘Incredibly watchable, distinctive and entertaining.’

Nominees:

Posh Pawnbrokers, Boomerang for Channel 4

This Morning, ITV Studios for ITV

Documentary Series

The Romanians Are Coming

Keo Films for Channel 4

‘Amazing casting and full of exquisite layering.’

Nominees:

Reggie Yates’ *Extreme Russia*, Sundog Pictures for BBC Three

The Detectives, Minnow Films for BBC Two

Drama Serial

The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies

Carnival Films for ITV

‘Compelling and tender... it took the viewer on a deeply moving emotional journey.’

Nominees:

This Is England ’90, Warp Films for Channel 4

Wolf Hall, A Company Pictures and Playground Entertainment Production for BBC Two

Drama Series

No Offence

Abbott Vision for Channel 4

‘It felt like nothing else, and brought something new to the genre. Clever, funny, tense and with strong performances at its centre.’

Nominees:

Humans, Kudos Film & TV for Channel 4

The Last Kingdom, Carnival Films for BBC Two >

Scripted Comedy:

Catastrophe



Actor – Male: Anthony Hopkins – *The Dresser*



Actor – Female: Suranne Jones – *Doctor Foster*

Entertainment

Release the Hounds

Gogglebox Entertainment for ITV2
'Brilliantly made, with great production values that really move the genre forward.'

Nominees:

The Graham Norton Show, So Television for BBC One

The Last Leg, Open Mike Productions for Channel 4

Entertainment Performance

Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly – I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!/Britain's Got Talent/Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway

ITV Studios/Thames and Syco/ITV Studios and Mitre Television for ITV
'Consistently excellent, warm, funny and ridiculously versatile.'

Nominees:

Adam Hills – The Last Leg, Open Mike Productions for Channel 4

Jack Whitehall – A League of Their Own, CPL Productions for Sky 1

History

Holocaust: Night Will Fall

Spring Films/Angel TV for Channel 4
'A landmark film, an affirmation of the importance of television as a medium of truth and a document of record in itself.'

Nominees:

Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners, BBC History Production for BBC

Dagrau o Waed: Rhyfel Corea (Tears of Blood: Korean War), Awen Media/JTV for S4C

Live Event

VE Day 70: The Nation Remembers

BBC Events Production for BBC One

'It felt so very special... we loved it.'

Nominees:

Alternative General Election with Jeremy Paxman, Zeppotron/ITN for Channel 4

BRIT Awards 2015, BRITs TV for ITV

Popular Factual and Features

DIY SOS: Homes for Veterans

BBC Features Production for BBC One
'Great to see a format being re-invented to such great effect and feeling so relevant.'

Nominees:

First Dates, Twenty Twenty for Channel 4

SAS: Who Dares Wins, Minnow Films for Channel 4



Entertainment:
Release the Hounds



Live Event: *VE Day 70: The Nation Remembers*



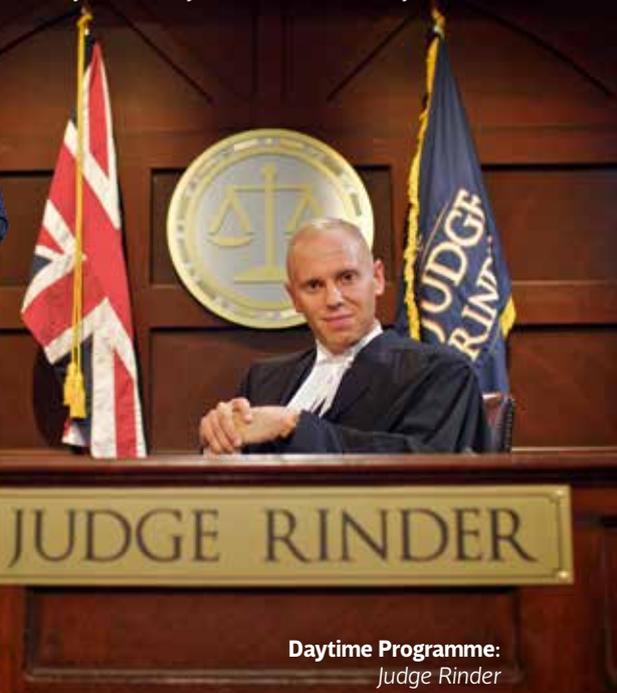
Scripted Comedy:
Catastrophe



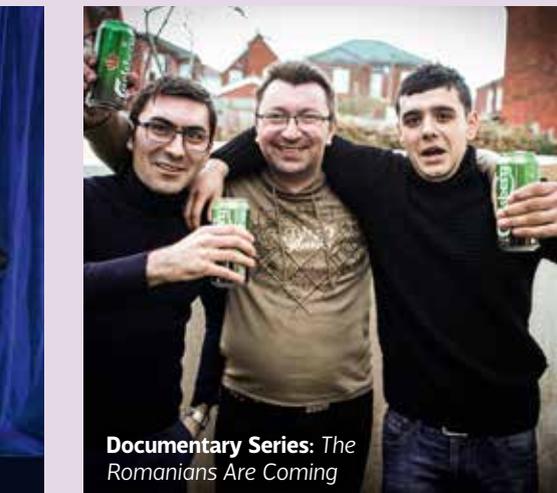
History: *Holocaust: Night Will Fall*



Entertainment Performance: Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly – *Celebrity.../...Talent... Takeaway*



Daytime Programme:
Judge Rinder



Documentary Series: *The Romanians Are Coming*

Single Documentary: *Storyville: India's Daughter*



Presenter: Reggie Yates – *Reggie Yates' Extreme Russia*

Presenter

Reggie Yates – *Reggie Yates' Extreme Russia*

Sundog Pictures for BBC Three
 'He seems so natural, coming through the screen as highly relatable and unaffected.'

Nominees:

David Olusoga – *Britain's Forgotten Slave Owners*, BBC History Production for BBC Two

Grayson Perry – *Grayson Perry's Dream House*, Swan Films for Channel 4

Science & Natural History

Oak Tree: Nature's Greatest Survivor

Furnace TV for BBC Four
 'Incredible!... Innovative in approach and execution, it seemed perfectly pitched for its audience.'

Nominees:

Big Blue Live, BBC Natural History production for BBC One

Japan: Earth's Enchanted Islands, BBC Natural History production for BBC Two

Scripted Comedy

Catastrophe

An Avalon Television production with co-producers Birdbath Productions and Merman for Channel 4
 'Brilliantly intelligent characters delivering dialogue that was simply laugh-out-loud funny.'

Nominees:

People Just Do Nothing, Roughcut TV for BBC Three

Peter Kay's Car Share, Goodnight Vienna Productions for BBC iPlayer

Single Documentary

Storyville: India's Daughter

Assassin Films for BBC
 'A faultless film, both remarkable and important.'

Nominees:

Going Clear: Scientology and the Prison of Belief, Jigsaw Productions for Sky Atlantic

My Son the Jihadi, True Vision Productions for Channel 4

Single Drama

Coalition

Cuba Pictures for Channel 4
 'A clever and very original film that was funny and perceptive... as well as beautifully written and performed.'

Nominees:

Black Mirror: White Christmas, Zeppotron for Channel 4

Cyberbully, Raw Television for Channel 4 >

Pictures: Richard Kendal/BBC/Channel 4/ITV

Soap and Continuing Drama

Emmerdale

ITV Studios for ITV

‘Strong, confident storytelling in the finest tradition of British continuing drama.’

Nominees:

Coronation Street, ITV Studios for ITV
EastEnders, BBC Drama Production London for BBC One

Sports Presenter, Commentator or Pundit

David Coulthard

BBC Sport for BBC One

‘It’s his personality that draws you in – a fantastic broadcaster with great insights to share.’

Nominees:

Gary Neville – **Monday Night Football**, Sky Sports
Alan Shearer, BBC Sport for BBC One

Sports Programme

Monday Night Football

Sky Sports

‘A show that sets the sport’s agenda, with an articulate, immaculate team of pundits happy to go all out to lay their opinions on the line.’

Nominees:

Champions League Goals Show, BT Sport
The Ashes, Sky Sports

Writer – Comedy

Rob Delaney and Sharon Horgan – Catastrophe

An Avalon Television production with co-producers Birdbath Productions and Merman for Channel 4

‘The humour in this writing felt genuinely authentic, yet packed full of jokes and constantly subversive.’

Nominees:

Michaela Coel – **Chewing Gum**, Retort Television for E4
Peter Kay, Sian Gibson, Paul Coleman and Tim Reid – **Peter Kay’s Car Share**, Goodnight Vienna Productions for BBC iPlayer

Writer - Drama

Peter Morgan – The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies

Carnival Films for ITV

‘This writing was exceptionally skilful and poignant... absolutely first rate.’

Nominees:

Russell T Davies – **Cucumber**, Red Production Company for Channel 4
Shane Meadows and Jack Thorne – **This Is England ’90**, Warp Films for Channel 4

Lifetime Achievement Award

Joan Bakewell

‘Through the second half of the 1960s, the black and white image of the fashionably dressed Joan Bakewell interviewing the agenda-setting creative artists of the day became almost emblematic of 1960s Britain.

‘Here – at last – was an un-intimidated, intelligent woman ready to challenge everyone she spoke to on television, to move the interview format on from the deferential to the truly inquiring, and to do so in her own unique style. And while she wasn’t the only early role model for the women that followed her into television, she was certainly one of the most inspiring.’



Sports Presenter, Commentator or Pundit: David Coulthard

Sports Programme: Monday Night Football



Writer – Comedy: Rob Delaney and Sharon Horgan – Catastrophe



Popular Factual and Features:
DIY SOS: Homes for Veterans



Science & Natural History:
Oak Tree: Nature's Greatest Survivors



Single Drama: *Coalition*



Soap and Continuing Drama: *Emmerdale*



Writer – Drama: Peter Morgan, *The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies*

Pictures: Richard Kendal/BBC/Channel 4/BSkyB/ITV

Students celebrate success

The University of South Wales took home three of the five top prizes at the RTS Wales Student Television Awards, which were held at Bridgend College's Sony Theatre in mid-March.

A team of students from the university won the Animation award for *Evanescent*, which, said the jury, "presented a breathtaking vision of a world coming to life, with striking imagery and an evocative soundtrack".

Zak Campbell, Simon Pax McDowell and Santa Aumeistere took the Factual award for *That's That: The Three Loves of Vala*, a moving account of life in a Latvian mental institution.

The Open category was won by Jordanne Richards and Katherine Sykes for the gruesome *An Unfortunate End: The Boy and the Fairy*, which exhibited "breadth, ambition and sheer originality".



Factual award winners

Aberystwyth University students Jonathan Eve, Destina Bartley and Naomi Sleet took the Entertainment prize for *Tea Break Murder*, which featured "stylish design and strong performances".

Victor Mawer from the University of Wales nabbed

the Drama award with his spooky, coming-of-age parable, *Needless Things*.

The awards were held at the Zoom Cymru International Youth Film Festival. Zoom Cymru is a youth film education charity, which has worked with 15,000 young

people in Wales over the past decade.

Recently, the charity announced that it would be closing due to a lack of funds. "Ironically, we close at a time when arts organisations like us, that nurture creative thinking and development for the next generation, are needed most," said Zoom Chair Miranda Ballin.

As part of the festival, RTS Wales organised a workshop aimed at students and new entrants, "What next? Breaking into film and TV".

Naz Mantoo, from the Edinburgh International Television Festival, discussed two of its schemes, The Network and Ones to Watch.

"The event was a fantastic way for Welsh students to ask all their big, small or embarrassing questions about how to break into the industry," she said.

Tessa Hughes, Production Manager at Modern Television, noted the diversity of the students' interests:

"There were many aspiring film directors, but also those interested in graphics, presenting, camera, sound, radio documentaries, script writing, sci-fi drama, media law and even pyrotechnics."

Independent producer John Mead emphasised the importance to new entrants of research and of developing their personal skills. "Students today need to be hungrier, smarter, more eloquent and crammed full of personality," he said.

Zoe Rushton, Talent Manager at BBC Cymru Wales, and Roger Burnell, MD of youth broadcast training scheme It's My Shout, completed the five-person panel.

Hywel Wiliam and Tim Hartley



An effect from Sherlock

■ 'I really love my job,' said Real SFX founder Danny Hargreaves as he fired what appeared to be a laser gun

Wales sees Real effects

at some Daleks lurking at the back of his company's premises in Cardiff.

RTS Wales members visited Real SFX at the end of February to learn how it creates realistic special effects for shows such as the BBC's *Doctor Who* and *Sherlock*, and new ITV Encore crime drama *Houdini & Doyle*.

Hargreaves, an effects supervisor, founded Real SFX in 2008 to meet the growth in drama production in South Wales. It has expanded and now has bases in Manchester and Glasgow.

He emphasised that, with

effects, the aim is to ensure safety and control, as well as realism. A car was set alight in the yard outside but the fire could, in fact, be turned on or off instantly. In another demonstration, two volunteers smashed pint glasses made of harmless sugar glass over their heads.

Hargreaves said that great care has to be taken on set: 'Actors are like children – they're very precious. If an actor has to fall to the floor, you make sure [the landing's] soft. You can't afford to lose a day's filming due to injury.'

Hywel Wiliam



Earthflight used a drone to film flamingos

BBC

Up close and very personal

Remarkable shots of animals and racing cars at the latest London Centre event showed how small cameras can revolutionise the TV-viewing experience.

Speaking in March at ITV London Studios, Mike Colyer offered his definition of a special camera, or rather, what it wasn't. "I want to make one thing absolutely clear – a GoPro is not a special camera. To me, it's

something that would need to be made uniquely," he said.

The current RTS Young Technologist of the Year develops and deploys special cameras for Formula 1, bringing viewers up close to the speeding cars. Cameras need to be made to meet the demands of circuits around the world, and can be fitted to kerbs, in the pits and even in the track itself.

Formula 1 is awash with money, but Colyer's kit is

cheap and cheerful: a camera plus lens comes to just £200. By contrast, trackside cameras, without a lens, cost £40,000 – these, though, are not so frequently hit and shattered by the cars.

"The special camera shot is certainly not a beauty shot," he explained. Instead, sequences of a few seconds are used to bring the viewers so close to the cars they can almost smell the burning rubber.

"You run the audience over with the car and then go back to the normal [coverage]," added Colyer.

In natural history, the key is "to apply technology and cameras to create stories to put the audience where it wouldn't naturally be able to go", explained John Downer, who worked at the BBC Natural History Unit before founding John Downer Productions.

The Bristol indie won last year's RTS Design & Craft Innovation award for *Pets: Wild at Heart*, which was directed by Downer and produced by Philip Dalton.

The BBC One series was shot using a huge variety of cameras and processes, including that of 150-year-old Schlieren photography, which was used to show air currents moving around a bird's wings and to visualise a dog's breath.

Other techniques used in the series included: ultraviolet photography of the budgies' plumage; fluoroscopy to take the viewer inside a hamster hoarding food by way of real-time X-ray images; and thermal imaging to show how dogs keep cool.

Dalton holds a licence to operate drones and brought one to the event. "You can fly it in the wind and it can be jumping around but the shot is cinematic and smooth," he said. "It's a wonderful tool to have in your box of tricks."

He showed a clip from BBC One series *Earthflight*, in which he used a drone to film from above 2 million pink flamingoes on Kenya's Lake Bogoria. "The flamingos didn't react to the drone in any significant way and we flew very low. They didn't see it as a predator. Other animals are a little more nervous of it," explained Dalton.

Event chair David Thomas asked if there was a use for special cameras outside of sport and natural history.

Downer said it would need only imagination to harness some of these processes in drama: "*Sherlock* could use the Schlieren technique [to show] a scent. You could see how that could be integrated into its modern filming style."

Matthew Bell

ONLINE at the RTS

■ March saw the highest monthly traffic we've ever seen on the RTS website. Overall, we enjoyed over 50% more visitors than in March 2015.

I'm particularly proud of the short videos our team made at the Programme Awards (www.rts.org.uk/programmeawards), with winners

Ant and Dec hanging around for a chat with us backstage. Judges' Award winner Lenny Henry – and the Society's latest Fellow – gave us a lovely interview. Do I detect a hint of a tear as he talks of his pride at being given the gong? www.rts.org.uk/lenny

If you missed Channel 4 CCO Jay Hunt's performance

at the British Museum in March, but have read her speech in *Television* (page 18), head online to read the full-length Q&A with insightful chair John Hardie. www.rts.org.uk/jayhunt

Another RTS Bursary student has won a major award. Kyle Shiels picked up the Best Live prize at the

National Student Television Awards in Leeds. Our 2016 bursary scheme is now open for applications: www.rts.org.uk/bursaries

If you have any thoughts about what we should be covering online, please contact Digital Editor Tim Dickens (TDickens@rts.org.uk).

Carnival drama wins in the West



Jason Watkins starred in *The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies*

The *Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies* was the big winner at the RTS West of England

Awards in March, bagging five of seven drama prizes.

The awards, produced in association with Evolutions Bristol, were held at the Bristol Old Vic and hosted by Jason Watkins. The actor took home the On Screen Performance prize for his performance in the Carnival Films drama. Watkins played the retired schoolteacher wrongly

suspected of the murder of Joanna Yeates and subjected to a tabloid witch-hunt.

The ITV two-parter took Best TV Drama, as well as awards for Cinematography (Mike Eley), Editing (Kristina Hetherington) and Sound (Fraser Barber, Danny Sheehan, Paul Cotterell, Matt Davies and Gavin Rose).

To qualify for these awards, at least 60% of a drama had to be shot in the West of England.

BBC Two drama *Wolf Hall*

secured the other two drama prizes: Best Director (Peter Kosminsky) and Best Composer (Debbie Wiseman).

The Sir Ambrose Fleming Memorial Award, for an outstanding contribution to TV, went to Testimony Films MD Steve Humphries. The indie's docs include Channel 4's *9/11 Firehouse* and BBC Two's *Britain's Greatest Generation*.

"This is a purple patch for film, TV and animation in Bristol," said RTS Bristol Chair Lynn Barlow. "Not only did we recognise the extraordinary drama produced at Bristol's Bottle Yard Studios but also the impact of Testimony. Over 25 years, Steve and his team have been responsible for many memorable documentaries, all produced by an independent company in a world where global conglomerates dominate."

The Bristol Centre's Special Award went to BBC Features' *See Hear*, celebrating 35 years on TV. The magazine show for deaf people first aired on

BBC Two in 1981. BBC Features also won awards for *Fake or Fortune* (Factual), *DIY SOS: Homes for Veterans* (Factual Entertainment) and On Screen Talent (Anita Rani of *Countryfile*).

BBC Points West notched up two wins in news: reporter Fiona Lamdin for covering the murder of teenager Becky Watts; and the team behind the *Points West Abuse Special*.

Drummer TV scooped two awards for CBBC's *Ice Stars* (Children's) and BBC Three's programme about the young homeless, *Where Am I Sleeping Tonight?* (Documentary).

Best Natural History programme went to Silverback Films for BBC One series *The Hunt*, which was voiced by Sir David Attenborough.

Other winners included John Downer Productions for BBC One's *Pets: Wild at Heart*. Goldfrapp's Will Gregory won for the series' music, alongside its editors, Stuart Napier and Imogen Pollard. **Matthew Bell**

Newsnight anchor shares tactical tips

■ After 23 years presenting *Newsnight*, Kirsty Wark knows the standards expected. "We should be forensic but irreverent," she told an RTS North West event at the Lowry Theatre, Salford. "If [the viewer] is not surprised, then we've failed."

"An evening with Kirsty Wark" in March featured a pre-*Newsnight* clip, when her thorough research led Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to stumble. "I love the prep – it's so important," she said. Wark said she went too far

only once, interviewing then-First Minister of Scotland Alex Salmond in 2007 about the release of Lockerbie bomber Abdelbaset Ali al-Megrahi. "The BBC apologised and said I'd been rude and abusive. I was probably too forceful," she said. "But, if I'd been a man, they wouldn't have said that."

Noting that her hair had turned grey while presenting *Newsnight*, she added: "A man is a 'silver-haired fox', yet a woman is viewed as some medieval witch. It's totally unfair."



Kirsty Wark

Claire Harrison

turned down a permanent role at Radio 4's *World at One* because she didn't want to leave Scotland and move to London full time.

Wark has worked on lighter fare, appearing on BBC One's *Celebrity MasterChef* in 2011, which she was determined to win. "I was distracted because I kept thinking how Benghazi was under attack and here I was working on a baked Alaska," she said.

She also recalled shouting at Pete Doherty when the musician appeared ready to walk out of an interview. "Come back here. The BBC has paid for three cameramen for this," she said. Doherty did the interview.

Kevin Fitzpatrick



Fred Dinenage and Sally Taylor presenting the awards

Jon Craig

Southern honours its local TV talent

Two hundred guests celebrated the work of BBC South East, ITV Meridian, BBC South and eight indies, as well as student productions from four universities, at the RTS Southern Professional and Student Awards at Winchester Guildhall in early March.

The awards were presented by Sally Taylor, from regional BBC TV news programme *South Today*, and ITV News Meridian's Fred Dinenage.

ITV Meridian picked up three prizes: Best News Magazine Programme, the

Newcomer On-screen award for Emma Wilkinson and Best VJ, Christine Alford.

BBC South's Emma Vardy was named Best Regional Journalist. Her colleague, Victoria Cook, took the award for Best Feature Within a News Programme.

Best Single Documentary was awarded to Ricochet Productions for Channel 4's *Sex in Class*. The Brighton indie also nabbed the Best Factual Series award with BBC Three's *Wanted: A Very Personal Assistant*.

Bournemouth University's Red Balloon Productions took the Best Non-Broadcast award for its video work, *Magna Carta: Spirit of Justice*, for an exhibition at Salisbury Cathedral.

The Student Awards attracted 65 entries, impressing the judges with their inventiveness, technical prowess and production values.

Tehzeeb by Myriam Raja at the Arts University Bournemouth won the Drama prize. It was "one of those rare projects where everything is right – production design, cinematography, acting and a mature and skilful script", said the judges.

The college picked up two more student awards: Factual (for *La Deriva Dei Continenti* by Pietro Novello) and Animation (for *Riflesso* by Alice Guzzo).

The Farnham Film School at University for the Creative Arts took home the Entertainment award (for *Valentines Park* by Leah Revivo) and the Open category for Urmas Salu's Lego stop-motion comedy, *Insert Film Title Here, I Guess*.

Gordon Cooper

Ultra-HDTV hitches need solutions

Mark Horton of Ericsson's Encoding Division offered the Thames Valley Centre an enlightening, and sometimes controversial, insight into Ultra-HDTV in mid-March.

Conducting an interactive investigation into the human visual system, Horton demonstrated the concept of saccadic eye movement.

He showed how the images we "see" are only partly based on the light received by our eyes. Instead, the viewer's perception of detail is a construct of pixel count, frame rate, colour, contrast and, importantly, their own memories and experiences.

He suggested that down-conversion from Ultra-HDTV pictures to HD for simulcast may not be straightforward, as the transformation from images with high dynamic range and wide colour gamut to HD is not necessarily linear.

Zoom lenses also give rise to potential additive diffraction and diffusion. So, complex computer-controlled systems are used to grind the lens to reach the optimum compromise of control, distortion and clarity. Horton showed that a lens adequate for HD could not be assumed to give the same level of detail for Ultra-HDTV.

Backwards compatibility has always proved problematic for broadcasters, and Ultra-HDTV is no different.

At the Thames Valley event, co-hosted by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers, the most popular view was that backwards compatibility had to be kept simple, using existing infrastructures in TV stations if Ultra-HDTV was to become a mainstream broadcast format.

Tony Orme

Myrie makes the news

BC News presenter Clive Myrie was the star guest at RTS Midlands' "In conversation" evening at The Mailbox, BBC Birmingham.

Myrie, who was interviewed by media consultant and ex-BBC correspondent Bernie Choudhury, said that he had been inspired as a Bolton schoolboy by watching Trevor MacDonald reading the news on ITV. "I saw someone who looked like me," he said.

Myrie became a BBC foreign correspondent in 1996, reporting from Tokyo and,



Clive Myrie

Paul Hampartsoumian

later, from around the world. He said that he had "agitated" to be involved in foreign reporting.

He shared advice with the audience that he was given early in his career: "When

you first get to work in a newsroom, see everything and say nowt."

Addressing the need to improve diversity in TV, Myrie argued that, while ethnic diversity was important, there was also a need to increase white, working-class representation in the BBC and other media organisations.

The March event, jointly hosted with BBC Academy and Digital Cities Birmingham, also saw Andy Bocking, BBC Head of News Technology, discussing the digital tools used by journalists.

Dorothy Hobson

OFF MESSAGE

There are hard-working actors and there is Olivia Colman. Does this highly versatile thespian ever stop working? Following her stand-out performance as the dogged and dishevelled spook Angela Burr in BBC One's brilliant version of John Le Carré's *The Night Manager*, Colman stars in a new Channel 4 comedy.

In *Flowers*, she plays Deborah, wife of the chronically depressed Maurice, a children's author she suspects of having a homosexual affair with his Japanese illustrator, Shun.

To say that *Flowers* is dark is an understatement. Colman is no stranger to performing in edgy Channel 4 comedy: she played Sophie in *Peep Show*.

It is anyone's guess how the emotionally charged *Flowers*, due on air in early May, will be received. Perhaps it is destined to become a cult hit.

But it's encouraging to see American money supporting such an original British show. *Flowers* is co-produced by Kudos and NBCU's online comedy SVoD service, Seeso.

■ **Can the BBC ever get it right when it comes to providing hospitality to hungry hacks?**

If the Beeb puts on too much of a spread, the corporation is criticised by *The Daily Mail* tendency for chucking licence-fee payers' money down the drain.

On the other hand, if it's salt and vinegar crisps washed down by mineral water, Fleet Street's finest complain that Auntie is being a skinflint.

At last month's star-studded BBC bash at the Serpentine Sackler Gallery, where Charlotte Moore unveiled her latest schedules, peckish journos tucked into upmarket canapés.

Odd, then, that at least one scribe turned up thinking he'd be given a full, sit-down meal.

He'd been emailed beforehand by the BBC asking if he had any "dietary preferences".

Food for thought...

■ UKTV, on the other hand, is at the other extreme of the catering spectrum. Scribes invited to a meal to mark the channel's latest results were all sent a menu to ponder in advance.

The choice of a trio of first courses, mains and deserts put Off Message's taste buds into a tizzy.

With joint owner, Scripps, operating several international food stations – and UKTV running the Good Food Channel – the company evidently knows where its bread is buttered, so to speak.

■ **The TV community can boast its fair number of mavericks. Few, though, possess the chutzpah of erstwhile Channel 5 owner and amateur drummer Richard Desmond.**

Remember, he once got the *FT* to

fork out £580 for a bottle of lunch-time Château Palmer.

With the news that Desmond has sold his last, remaining TV assets (let's just say you'll find them under the "adult" section of the EPG) *The Daily Express* owner has officially left television.

To think, there was once speculation that Desmond might lead a private equity bid for ITV.

■ The timing of ex-drama head Steve November's exit from ITV did not go unnoticed by the TV drama community.

Coincidentally, November's departure – which means that Kevin Lygo is head of a totally revamped commissioning team – came as ITV launched two of its best-received dramas in months.

The Times gave Simon Nye's take on Gerald Durrell's *My Family and Other Animals*, the six-part *The Durrells*, four stars.

Meanwhile, *The Daily Telegraph* opined that the show was "almost a case study in how returning for a second stab at a project can vastly improve it".

ITV's latest detective drama, *Marcella*, secured good ratings.

Lygo craves another *Downton Abbey* (preferably made in-house), but he knows better than most people that returning, channel-defining hits are harder than ever to commission in the age of Netflix and Amazon.



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Joint Public Lecture



Sir Paul Nurse 'Science as revolution'

11 May

6:30pm for 7:00pm

Venue:
British Museum,
London WC1B 3DG

Sir Paul Nurse is the Chief Executive and Director of the Francis Crick Institute and former President of the Royal Society. He was awarded the 2001 Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine with Leland Hartwell and Tim Hunt

Chaired by Tim Davie,
CEO, BBC Worldwide

Tickets: £10

Booking:

www.rts.org.uk

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