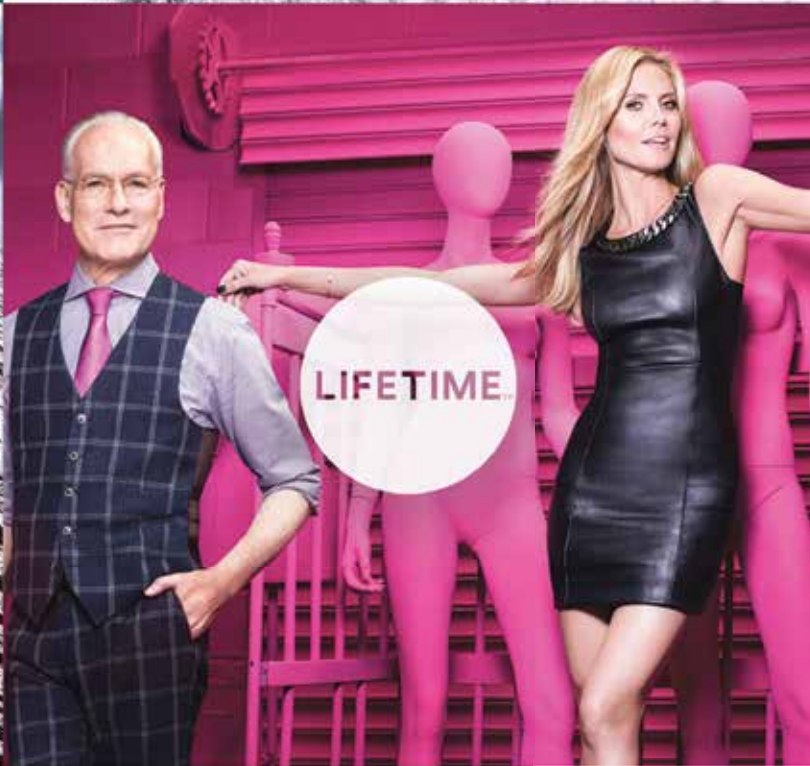
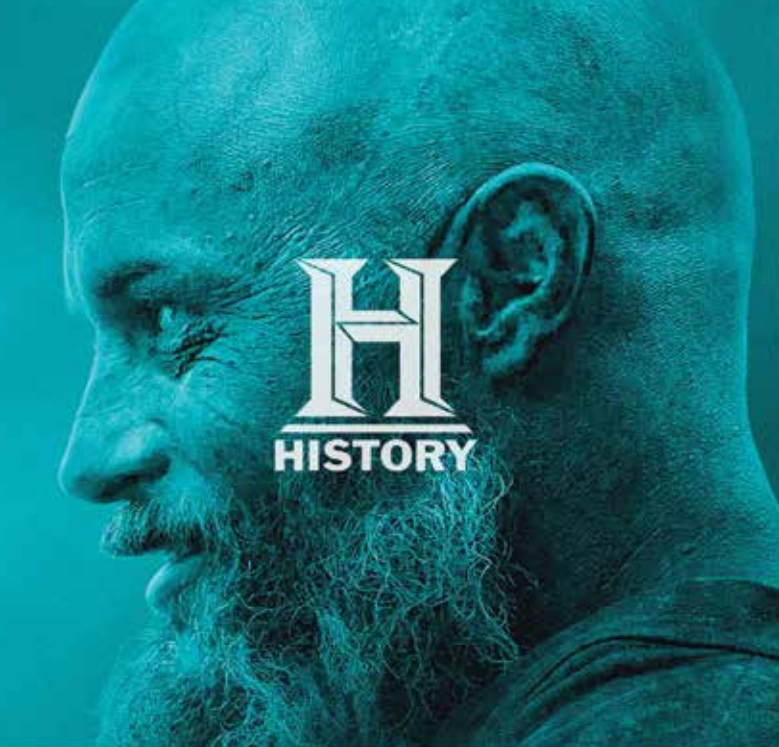


July/August 2017

Television



Sun, sex and
slaughter on
the Riviera



A + E
NETWORKS
UK

LIFE, MAGNIFIED.



From the CEO



I am thrilled that this edition of *Television* features some of the giants of British production. The CEO and co-founder of Left Bank Pictures, Andy

Harries, is interviewed as his company celebrates 10 years in business.

Andy and his colleagues at Left Bank have much to be proud of, not least *The Crown*, and I am so pleased that he will be speaking at Cambridge.

Earlier this month, a large crowd turned out on a hot, sticky night to hear Peter Salmon, Endemol Shine's chief creative officer, speak at an RTS early-evening event.

This is one of the few times Peter has spoken in public since joining Endemol Shine more than a year ago.

It was a genuine pleasure to hear

him talk so eloquently on the subject of making shows that can perform successfully in global markets – and keeping hit formats on form.

Peter also provided us with some interesting insights into his distinguished career at the BBC. I am grateful to him and to the event's chair, Kate Bulkley, for making this such an informative and entertaining evening.

We also have a profile of Alex Mahon, Channel 4's new Chief Executive, written by Maggie Brown. I have been privileged to work a little with Alex in her role as Chair of the RTS Programme Awards. During her tenure, she transformed the diversity of the RTS juries.

Everyone is looking forward to her starting work at Horseferry Road in the autumn, and I wish her every success there.

John Whiston, based in Leeds, is

responsible for two of ITV's most important and venerable shows, *Coronation Street* and *Emmerdale*. He reckons he's got the best job in television.

Nicknamed the "Pope of soap", John is a brilliantly funny writer, so don't miss his *Our Friend* column. Thank you, John, for finding the time to write this as *Corrie* gears up for a fifth weekly episode.

Finally, Cambridge is drawing near. More new speakers have been added to the line-up. Enjoy the summer break, but please don't forget to secure your place before you pack those suitcases.

Theresa Wise

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The new DaVinci Resolve 14 is now up to 10 times faster with new editing tools, full Fairlight audio post production and new multi user collaboration tools!

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13-15 September
RTS Cambridge Convention: 'A World of Opportunity'
Principal sponsor: Sky

National events

RTS CONFERENCE

13-15 September

RTS Cambridge Convention 2017: 'A world of opportunity'

Confirmed speakers include: David Abraham, Channel 4; Chris Banatvala, Independent media consultant; Sir David Clementi, BBC; Damian Collins MP; Gary Davey, Sky; Nancy Dubuc, A+E Networks; Philip Edgar-Jones, Sky Arts; Peter Fincham, Expectation; Cécile Frot-Coutaz, FremantleMedia Group; Siobhan Greene, ITV; Andrew Griffith, Sky; Michelle Guthrie, ABC; Tony Hall Director-General, BBC; James Harding, BBC; Andy Harries, Left Bank Pictures; Tim Hincks, Expectation; Jonathan Levy, Sky; David Lynn, Viacom; Anne Mensah, Sky; Stuart Miller, BuzzFeed; Tom Mockridge, Virgin Media; Alexi Mostrous, *The Times*; James Murdoch, 21st Century Fox; Richard Osman; Kate Phillips, BBC; James Purnell, BBC; Barbara Serra, Al Jazeera English; Sophie Turner Laing, Endemol Shine Group; Kirsty Wark, Broadcaster; Sharon White, Ofcom; Kelly Williams, ITV; Andy Wilman, *The Grand Tour*.

The convention is co-chaired by Andrew Griffith, Group Chief

Operating Officer, Sky, and Gary Davey, Managing Director, Content, Sky.

Venue: West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge CB3 9DP and King's College, Cambridge CB2 1ST

JOINT EVENT

Thursday 28 September

First annual Steve Hewlett

Memorial Lecture 2017 given by Nick Robinson

Jointly organised by the RTS and the Media Society. 6:30pm for 7:00pm

Venue: University of Westminster, 4-12 Little Titchfield Street, London W1W 7BY

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Tuesday 10 October

The great history debate

Speakers: Leanne Klein, CEO, Wall to Wall; Suzannah Lipscomb, historian and presenter; Tom McDonald, head of specialist factual commissioning, BBC TV; and David Olusoga, historian and presenter. Chair: Tony Robinson

Venue: Central London, TBC

■ Book online at www.rts.org.uk

Local events

BRISTOL

Tuesday 26 September

Meet the Controller: Ben Frow, Channel 5

Venue: TBC

Wednesday 25 October

'Have we got news for you?'

BBC Points West debate on the future of local news and community. Supported by RTS Bristol and the University of the West of England to celebrate 60 years of news in the West of England.

Venue: TBC

Thursday 9 November

Bristol RTS Futures Festival

Advice about production in the region and entering the industry.

Venue: Watershed, 1 Canon's Road, Bristol BS1 5TX



2016 winner
Guy Martin

Thursday 30 November
Midlands Centre Awards 2017 Gala Dinner
Venue: National Motorcycle Museum, Solihull B92 0ED

NORTH WEST

Saturday 11 November

RTS North West Awards

Venue: Hilton Deansgate, 303 Deansgate, Manchester M3 4LQ

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WALES

7-8 August

RTS Cymru Wales at the National Eisteddfod

The festival runs 4-12 August at Bodedern, Anglesey, LL65 3SS. The RTS is holding three events, two in Sinemaes (the cinema tent on the Eisteddfod Field). A Field entry ticket is required.

7 August

A look back at the iconic S4C agricultural series *Ffermio*

3:00pm

8 August

Visit to the set of S4C's youth drama series *Rownd a Rownd*

At Menai Bridge, Anglesey. No ticket required, but numbers are limited. Time TBC

8 August

Profile of *Rownd a Rownd*

2:30pm

Venue: National Eisteddfod, Bodedern, Anglesey LL65 3SS

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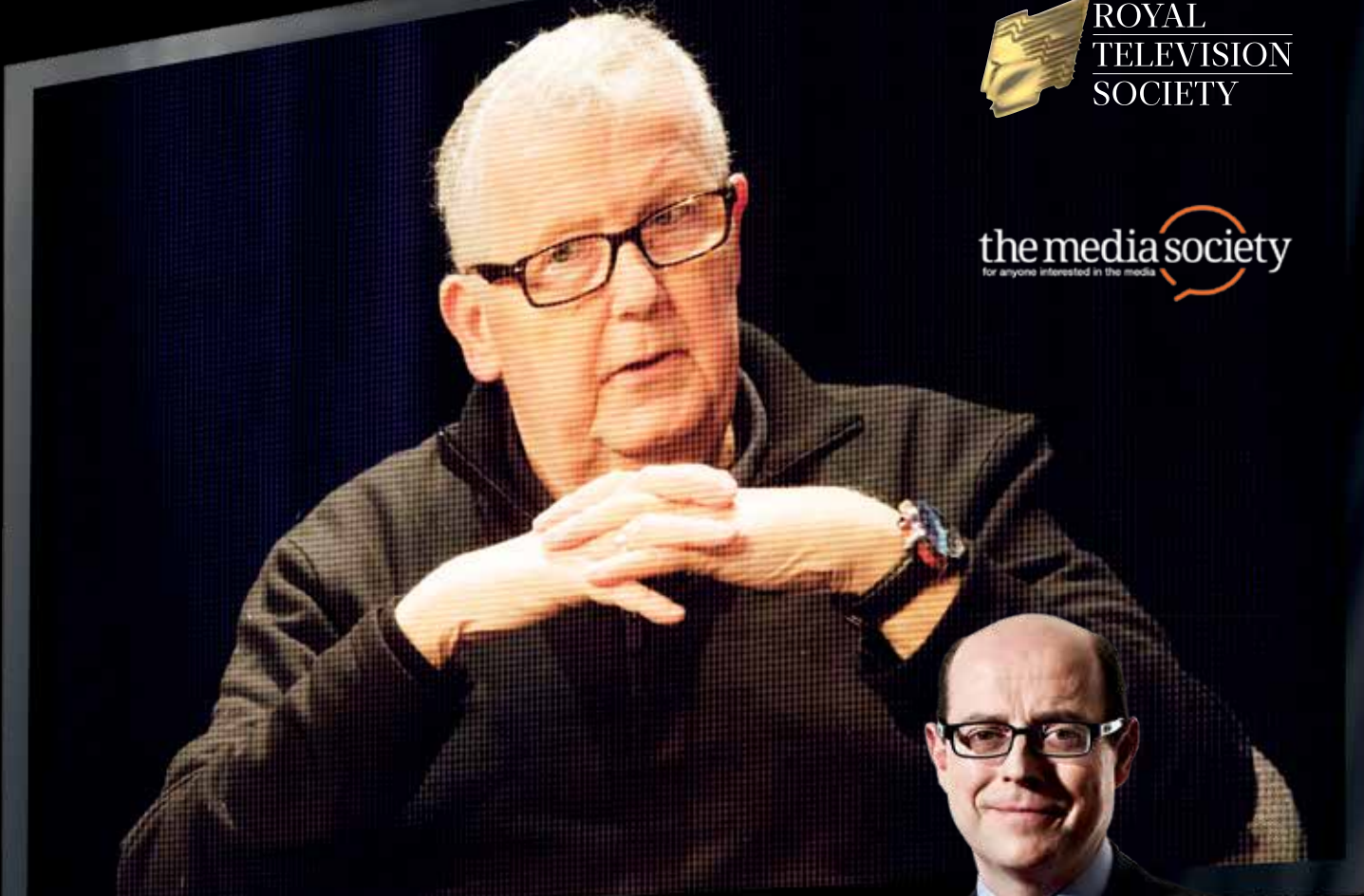
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The inaugural
**Steve Hewlett
Memorial Lecture**

Given by
Nick Robinson

28 September

Time: 6:30pm for 7:00pm
Venue: The University of Westminster
4-12 Little Titchfield Street, London W1W 7BY
Tickets: £10.00

Online booking: www.rts.org.uk

The RTS and Media Society would like to thank the University of Westminster for making the venue available at no cost and also Steve's family for their support.



The Steve Hewlett Memorial Fund

A bursary has been established in Steve's honour by the RTS and Media Society. Each year, a student from a low-income household will be given £2,000 per year, for the duration of their studies. To donate to the Steve Hewlett Memorial Fund: <https://rts.org.uk/stevehewlettfund>

TV diary

Sian Williams witnesses the Trump effect at London's US Embassy and survives another Autocue malfunction



It's the US Embassy Independence Day Garden Party at the Ambassador's house, which is going ahead despite there being no ambassador *in situ* yet. I haven't been before and I don't know what to expect. Probably a small gathering of journalists clustering around the press team, asking questions about the latest Trump tweet.

When I arrive, the lawn is swarming with hundreds of people. It's surreal. They're playing Beyoncé from loudspeakers while US snipers cover the joint from the rooftops. There's *ITV News's* Robert Peston over by the Starbucks tent, Sky's Adam Boulton by the Dunkin' Donuts. The canapés are mini hot dogs with American flags in them.

One of my ITN colleagues sidles up to me. "Very different to last year. Much more of a nod to Britain, then. They even had Duran Duran playing live," he says, wistfully.

■ **When I get home, I'm greeted by a dirty, sweaty, exhausted boy. My 10-year-old son has returned from a scout survival camp. He was allowed to take 20 items crucial for existence in the wilds of Kent (well, the Weald.)**

Top of most children's lists: water bottle, trainers, waterproof trousers. Top of his: *Beano*, his comforter, Ted, and a fidget spinner. When he comes home, still wearing the same clothes, pants and socks he left in, I ask him how it went.

"We had to pluck, gut and roast a pheasant," he said. "So I had an uncooked potato instead. Glad I took Ted, though, for moral support." I guess that's what you'd expect with a vegetarian psychologist for a mum.

■ **ITV has recommissioned a health series with me and a lovely A&E doctor called Ranj Singh. Last year, it took seven months to do seven programmes. This time, the channel wants more episodes and two specials ready for the autumn schedule and I haven't shot a single frame.**

I have absolute faith in the production company, TwoFour, but, as we chat through logistics and editorials, they use a phrase guaranteed to drive fear into any presenter: "ITV focus-grouped the last series and..." Thankfully, it was OK.

I'm told that viewers really enjoyed the "immersive" items. "Immersive" means "humiliate yourself on camera because it's fun to watch a journalist and doctor doing uncomfortable things in the name of science".

Last series, that meant Dr Ranj having his semen tested for fertility, his hair follicles examined for premature baldness and seeing how much weight he could lose on low-cal ready meals.

I supplied samples of blood and urine to prove I was wasting money on vitamins, was filmed in my brushed-cotton pyjamas, tried snoring products and went through children's hair for nits. I shudder to think what's next.

■ **It's 20 years next month since I moved from radio production to TV presenting and more than 30 since I joined the BBC. The gig may be different – I'm *5 News's* anchor at ITN now – but many things remain the same.**

When a big story breaks – and we've had a lot of them recently – everyone pulls together, works longer and survives on adrenaline.

This newsroom does not have the resources of the BBC, but it is fleet of foot, knows its viewers and uses their voices to illustrate stories relevant to them, which is why more and more of them are watching.

What they see doesn't always go to plan, though, as is the case in all live broadcasting.

When I started on BBC News 24, the Autocue would often freeze mid-sentence. "Ad-lib! Ad-lib!" came the scream from the gallery.

This week, the Autocue went down before we'd even begun the 5:00pm bulletin. I'd forgotten my glasses, so couldn't read the paper scripts I'd carefully crafted earlier.

Eight minutes into the news, after some frantic ad-libbing, the Autocue returned.

"I thought that's what you always do," a friend remarked afterwards, "just chat about the news. Do you actually write that stuff down?"
The liberty.

Sian Williams is Presenter, 5 News.

Sun, sex and slaughter



What would *Dallas* look like made by Sky Atlantic? This was the question pondered during a brainstorming session for new drama ideas back in 2015, attended by Zai Bennett, director of Sky Atlantic, Sky's head of drama, Anne Mensah, and commissioning editor Cameron Roach.

"We were worried that our overall tone and style were a bit too visceral, with a lot of shows that were violent and grown-up," explains Bennett. He highlights *Game of Thrones*, *Banshee* and *Fortitude* – "quite an extreme horror show," as he cheerfully puts it.

The team wanted to find a show possessing all the hallmarks of cinematic event TV with which Sky Atlantic is identified that was, simply, more fun.

"We were looking for something that could be smart and serialised and all the things that Sky Atlantic is," Bennett says. "It had to have those [Sky Atlantic] values of being engaging, challenging and interesting – but be a bit sexier and pacy."

The answer is *Riviera*, a 10-part original drama series that started airing on

Content

Stuart Kemp digs behind the glitz to discover the genesis of Sky Atlantic's Côte d'Azur saga, *Riviera*

Sky Atlantic in mid-June. Set in the opulent playground of the sun-drenched South of France, *Riviera* stars US actor Julia Stiles as an intelligent, resourceful billionaire's wife.

Her immaculate life is blown apart when her art-collector husband is killed in an explosion aboard the yacht of an arms-dealing Russian oligarch. As Stiles's character navigates the fallout from his death, the drama reveals seedy, often criminal, activities occurring beneath the glossy surface of her, apparently perfect, Côte d'Azur life.

Adrian Lester, Lena Olin and Iwan Rheon co-star. The *Riviera* on screen now is very different to the show's beginnings. It started life when former U2 manager Paul McGuinness brought

Oscar-winning writer and director Neil Jordan an outline idea and introduced him to Liza Marshall and Kris Thykier of Archery Pictures.

Jordan told McGuinness and Archery that he'd get involved if he could come up with his own original narrative for a show set on the French Riviera.

Jordan, whose film credits include *The Crying Game*, *Interview With the Vampire* and *Byzantium*, had previously created the historical drama *The Borgias* for Showtime Networks. He directed six episodes and either wrote or co-wrote all the episodes.

"I wrote the story and, subsequently, the 'bible' of [*Riviera's* central] Clios family and estate, and the two wives, one new, who has to uncover her husband's financial secrets after his death," Jordan says.

He then wrote several scripts with his friend the Booker prize-winning author John Banville (*The Sea*), for what was meant to be the first two episodes.

Their efforts elicited the interest of Sky Atlantic. Very close to the beginning of production, Jordan was presented with shooting scripts for the pilot and second episode. Jordan opted not to direct any episodes, including the pilot.

This was for various reasons, but “mainly differences with the producers over the tone and content of the scripts”, he explains.

His original scripts were darker in tone, “more Patricia Highsmith, less sunny soap opera”.

Instead, Jordan chose German filmmaker Philipp Kadelbach, who had recently made the English-language *SS-GB*, to direct the pilot before taking a back seat. And, thereby, distanced himself from what was now a very different *Riviera* to the show that he co-created.

Jordan emphasises that Sky had “behaved very well throughout” and brokered peace during those days of heated arguments over the show’s creative direction. Hans Herbots, Paul Walker and Damon Thomas directed the later episodes.

Sky Atlantic brought in Foz Allan of Canterbury-based Bryncoed Productions – best known for the RTS award-winning children’s series *The Dumping Ground* and big-budget drama *Jekyll and Hyde* – to produce the show.

Allan provided an established and safe pair of hands for *Riviera* as the production assembled with Kadelbach as lead director and the Bafta-winning Laurie Rose as director of photography.

During the summer of 2016, the show filmed for 128 days across 14 months on location on the French Riviera at some of the most exclusive and expensive places on earth.

The budget is reportedly over £2m per hour. “It’s a very expensive show, a very expensive place to film and it’s a fixed market,” says Allan. “No amount of cash is going to persuade a Saudi prince or a Russian oligarch to move out of the way for the filming.”

Shooting in France with a majority French crew and 35-hour working-week regulations, coupled with Screen Actors Guild regulations such as portal-to-portal travel-time contracts for some of the cast, added to the show’s cost and production time.

One of the most challenging (and expensive) parts of the shoot came when the script called for a blow-out, dusk-till-dawn party on a Russian oligarch’s super yacht in the Bay of Monaco.

The film-makers hired a €25m boat from a friendly Glaswegian multi-millionaire for a shoot lasting two days and nights. “That involved safety boats, divers in the water and a large-scale crew and cast,” Allan says. “Feeding 75 on the boat plus 30 support staff and

crew out on the water was logistically challenging.”

There were also plenty of scantily clad extras playing partygoers being urged to keep their energy up and strut their stuff at 3:00am, despite being freezing cold and tired.

“You can’t blame anyone for being tired, grumpy and cross at that stage,” Allan laughs. “My skill is that I understand the narrative drive and where the money has to go to make the story work.” As with other Sky Atlantic original commissions, including the second seasons of *Fortitude* and *The Tunnel*, the subscription channel has opted to make the entire series available to its customers all at once.

“Sky Atlantic is all about delivering value to customers, it is not about filling a slot or hitting a rating,” explains Bennett. “It’s about customers thinking, ‘I really like that channel or that show, I’m going to keep subscribing to Sky’. Any show that has a moreish quality, you’re going to want to burn through.

“On-demand has completely changed how people consume things. If people are subscribing all year round you have to give them value all year round.

“The traditional terrestrial TV rules about looking at scheduling just don’t really apply to Sky Atlantic. Those ways are applying less and less to [terrestrial broadcasters] as well, but they really don’t apply to us.”

With *Riviera*, Sky Atlantic is firmly putting down a marker in its contest with Amazon and Netflix for kudos and profile in the highly competitive original drama field.

“It’s not just the money we spend, it’s the editorial ambition, it’s the creative idea,” insists Bennett. “The difference between us and Netflix and Amazon is that we are far more publicly set up – so our successes and our failures are more public.

“Netflix only bangs on about things that have worked, likewise Amazon.”

Riviera premiered at Mip-TV in April to positive reviews. Ahead of the broadcast date, Bennett couldn’t confirm whether it would be recommissioned.

“I think the show stands up brilliantly and I’d like there to be a second season but I’m not able to confirm that just yet,” he says.

The skyscrapers may have been replaced by super yachts, and the oil by Kalashnikovs, but Sky Atlantic is confident that *Riviera* offers the same compelling mix of glitzy fun and intrigue that *Dallas* did so well 40 years ago. ■

NO AMOUNT OF CASH IS GOING TO PERSUADE A SAUDI PRINCE OR A RUSSIAN OLIGARCH TO MOVE OUT OF THE WAY FOR THE FILMING



Channel 4

Alex Mahon's appointment as Channel 4's new CEO is a harbinger of change at the broadcaster, predicts **Maggie Brown**

A woman for uncertain times

On 5 June, Channel 4's Chairman, Charles Gurassa, announced that Alex Mahon, best known for her business deals alongside Elisabeth Murdoch at Shine, was to be the broadcaster's seventh chief executive. When she arrives in the autumn, she will have to take a number of critical decisions that will require every bit of her famously big brain.

The decision to hire Mahon, backed unanimously by the board, conforms to Channel 4's steely tradition of looking outside for a new CEO, rather than internally. If the past is anything to go by, a major shake-up is on the cards, during what are challenging times for all legacy TV companies.

Not only is Mahon, at 43, the first woman in the post, she is also the first from the programme-supply sector. In other words, she is accustomed to negotiating with the broadcaster's

tough commercial executives on programmes, from *One Born Every Minute* to *Humans*.

Ahead of the announcement, on 2 June, the spurned creative director, Jay Hunt, said that she would be leaving in September.

This clears the way for Mahon to appoint a successor, and to amend the current management structure, especially in programme commissioning, which is judged by some to have concentrated too much decision-making power at the top of the pyramid. This may have contributed to flagging ratings and an exodus of talented staffers.

Mahon is expected to review the crucial advertiser-funded All 4 platform, which evolved from the 4oD portal established in 2006 and which was relaunched last year. This has been transformed by David Abraham's data policy of registering users, but there has been a debate about what bespoke programming it should commission.

One area where Mahon lacks experience is advertising sales, which account for 95% of Channel 4's revenue. The innovative sales director Jonathan Allan may be given an enhanced role in the new regime.

A few hours after Gurassa's announcement, the straight-talking Mahon sent an excited internal message to the broadcaster's 830 staff. She said it would be an "utter privilege" to work there and struck a decidedly warm note: "Every time I walk over the glass bridge into the Channel 4 building, I feel a shiver of excitement; the visceral feeling of a place where people exist to make positive change happen, where the very point is to innovate, to challenge, and where distinctiveness is so apparent."

For good measure, she linked the two words – risk and failure – that accompany the search for fresh content: "Channel 4 continues to have an incredible ability to build brands out of

programmes and films, strands, talent... For me, to generate that innovation means taking risks, pursuing creative excellence relentlessly, and it means accepting that failures are an inevitable by-product of the process of birthing fresh, outstanding ideas”.

Key to Mahon’s appointment it that she met virtually all the five testing criteria the board had set, at a time of “numerous challenges”.

The criteria ranged from having “a demonstrable understanding of the Channel 4 remit and a track record of innovation and risk-taking” to “a deep understanding of international markets”.

Then, as the head hunters delved deeper into her background, “extensive references” from within the television industry showed that Mahon was “an outstanding leader, both greatly respected and liked”, Gurassa told the *Guardian*.

“In a creative organisation such as Channel 4, that leadership is very important and significant,” he said.

These personable qualities will help in the political sphere. Mahon served on the DCMS’s BBC Charter advisory committee. This brought her into contact with returning culture secretary Karen Bradley.

For two years, Abraham – joined by Gurassa – conducted a noisy campaign against privatisation. But the relationship with government now needs to be reset.

The Channel 4 board is still working out its position on the less inflammatory issue of relocation.

Equally significantly, it is also thinking about: increasing the quota of shows commissioned from the nations and regions; the overall scale of investment in the production sector; running down its cash surpluses; and looking at ways to diversify income.

Bradley’s consultation formally ended on 5 July. Mahon did not nail her colours to the mast and expects to work with the board on its response to the DCMS evidence.

As with Abraham and his predecessor, Andy Duncan, Mahon is not a programme-maker. But much of her career has been spent in the wider television industry. She will join Channel 4 after nearly two years running Foundry, a visual-effects software firm, whose credits include the films *Gravity* and *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

Mahon has dual nationality. Her father is American. Her Scottish mother and stepfather ran a pharmacy, and >



Channel 4

The challenges facing Channel 4

The specific issues facing Channel 4 include the tricky task of hitting its advertising revenue targets in a slowing economy. This, naturally, impacts on its programme budget, which has to finance remit shows such as *Channel 4 News*.

In this context, the costly *Great British Bake Off*, bought for £75m in a three-series deal, could be a mixed blessing, since it was justified as a show that could subsidise less-popular programmes.

It was bought partly to prevent ITV getting it. The hope is that *Bake Off* will attract more light viewers to Channel 4 and be a commercial success. There is speculation, however, that landing a big sponsorship deal is proving difficult.

This could put the broadcaster under pressure to reduce its overhead costs at a time when its audience is eroding.

Not only is total viewership for the core channel and its digital offshoots down, but the make-up of those audiences is changing. For instance, the commercially important, but fickle, demographic of 16- to 34-year-olds is down by around 10% compared with last year as channel loyalty fades.

The core channel relies on a combination of the Channel 4+1 channel and 4seven’s popular repeats to get close to a 6% overall audience share.

Ofcom is concerned about whether Channel 4 can maintain its impact, as the broadcaster is assailed from

all sides. Channel 5’s much smaller commissioning team is encroaching on Channel 4’s factual-programming turf. Netflix has poached the distinctive *Black Mirror* and even denied Channel 4 a terrestrial window. ITV outbid it for *Family Guy*, and there is increasing competition for acquired series.

So far, with the exception of *Humans*, Channel 4 has been disappointed in its efforts to find several returning drama series to replace *Shameless*.

The channel has been criticised for its reliance on long-running – possibly overfamiliar – fixed-rig series at 9:00pm as tent poles of the evening schedule.

A tendency to overdose or binge on hits, from *Gogglebox* to *First Dates* and *The Last Leg*, can make Channel 4 seem like an ill-disciplined teenager.

The malaise extends to sport: ITV now has the lucrative racing slate. This had allowed Channel 4 to create a bidding war among bookies between 2013 and 2016. And, from 2019, Formula One will go exclusively to Sky.

Sky also has an advantage over Channel 4 online: Sky’s AdSmart system permits users to block adverts – which the All 4 platform, for all its treasure trove of big data on registered users, does not support.

Mahon needs to decide whether to allow ad blocking on All 4, for a fee, as the ITV Hub does. Some commissioners support this.



One Born Every Minute

Channel 4

▶ she was raised from the age of five in Edinburgh in an environment of ringing tills.

She took a degree in physics and Italian at Imperial College London, and then a doctorate in medical physics.

Highly numerate, she became a management consultant with the select Mitchell Madison Group, formed by former McKinsey people.

One of the clients she worked for was RTL, owned by Bertelsmann, when it was briefly run by former Capital Radio executive Richard Eyre. She subsequently joined RTL's strategy team.

The group was assimilating Pearson Television, which included the Thames Television production arm and US and Australian acquisitions including Grundy, maker of *Neighbours*. She switched her focus from group strategy to the resulting FremantleMedia conglomerate. There, she was tasked with sorting out its structure. She honed her acquisition skills by purchasing companies in Australia, Germany and Japan under the eye of her boss, Tony Cohen.

"I thought she was brilliant, she's so very quick, probably one of the best minds I ever came across in television," says Cohen.

On the Fremantle board she met Peter Fincham, then running

TalkbackThames and a master at schmoozing talent. Impressed, he invited her across to become commercial director.

Her next job was chief operating officer at TalkbackThames. At the time, the company was enjoying huge success with *The X Factor* and producing *The Bill* for ITV. Additionally, Talkback supplied a range of Channel 4 programmes, from *Grand Designs* and *Property Ladder* to *How Clean Is Your House?*

In 2006, out of the blue, Mahon was emailed by Elisabeth Murdoch, who had founded Shine TV on the back of sweetheart commissions from Sky in 2001. She had access to capital and a vision of building a big international production company, but needed a partner.

Mahon was pregnant with her first (of four) when she joined Shine in November 2006. Her decision to leave a well-paid job was greeted with surprise, and RTL Chief Executive Gerhard Zeiler said she was welcome back any time.

Mahon frequently rises at 5:00am to spend an hour in the gym before her children wake up. Those who have worked with her recount how she would go for a 5km run following an 11-hour flight to Los Angeles. Once she had showered, Mahon would then join colleagues in the bar.

Murdoch and Mahon made a

formidable team and the move to Shine demonstrated Mahon's need to be challenged.

There, she proceeded to strike deals fast. The two important ones in the UK were, arguably, *Dragonfly*, an expert in fixed-rig shows such as the pioneering *One Born Every Minute*, and *Kudos*, maker of *Spooks* and *Broadchurch*.

When Shine was acquired by 21st Century Fox in 2011 for £415m, it was the UK's largest independent producer. However, the deal saw Murdoch exit with a £130m or so profit and there was shareholder controversy over the significant debts built up by Shine.

Mahon became group president. Fox then made Shine part of a global powerhouse by creating a joint venture with private equity Apollo Global Management, which controlled Endemol and Core Media (producer of *American Idol*).

When Shine and Endemol merged in 2014, the top job, which involved significant rationalisation, was taken by former Sky executive Sophie Turner-Laing.

Channel 4's board is betting that Mahon, after 17 years in the broadcasting sector, has seen enough of the global TV industry to cherish what public service Channel 4 stands for, while applying her extensive knowledge to strengthen it. ■



AP/Jason Redmond

Interview

Lisa Campbell talks to one of the most successful showrunners in TV history

An audience with Chuck Lorre

A bit like gravity, *The Big Bang Theory* is an unstoppable force in global TV. The CBS series about socially awkward physicists is in its 10th season – that’s 232 episodes under its belt – and yet it remains the most-watched and highest-rated scripted series on US television.

Factor in its use as a launch pad for new shows and the eye-watering \$1bn of syndication revenue for Warner Bros TV, and it’s little wonder that it has just been renewed for a further two seasons. A spin-off series, *Young Sheldon*, is also on the way.

Chuck Lorre, the man behind this stellar show, is something of a TV god in Hollywood. He has another global

mega hit under his belt, *Two and a Half Men*, co-created with Lee Aronsohn. The series, fronted first by Charlie Sheen, then Ashton Kutcher, ran for 12 years. For six of those, it was America’s most-watched comedy, attracting audiences of around 15 million.

Comedy is a famously tough genre, so it is no surprise that Lorre, who is also responsible for CBS’s *Mom* and upcoming Netflix series *Disjointed*, is classed as one of the most successful showrunners in history.

Given that most US shows fail to get beyond their pilot, how does he do it? “To be fair, I’ve had a lot of chances. I probably don’t know when to quit,” he jokes.

Lorre, with his curly dark hair and beard, has an affable air and is chatty

and engaging, despite a long day of interviews with journalists from all over the world.

It wasn’t all plain sailing: he was fired after just 12 episodes of *Roseanne*. But his work impressed producers Tom Werner and Marcy Carsey enough for them to allow him to run his first show, *Frannie’s Turn*.

This was soon billed a “noble failure”. But the legendary duo must have seen something in the young Lorre, because he was given a third chance, with *Grace Under Fire*. Unlike *Frannie’s Turn*, it lasted not five weeks but five seasons.

What is this knack for overcoming failure? “First of all, failure is not something you overcome, it’s not an obstacle to climb over, it’s something >

› you incorporate into your thinking,” he argues. “If you work with someone who is difficult and toxic, and who makes you miserable and hate getting up in the morning, don’t do that.

“If you work with someone else who brings out the best in you, work with them. When you write a certain way and you see the audience respond, you have to ask yourself: why did that work, what’s different about that?”

Even *The Big Bang Theory* experienced teething problems, but the failings were quickly identified and utilised to create what many describe as the key to the show’s success: its clever, awkward-yet-relatable characters.

Indeed, it is rare to come across an ensemble cast that works so well on and off screen. So much so that, earlier this year, its five leads each took a \$100,000-per-episode pay cut to help two co-stars in their bid for salary parity. They remain on a not insignificant \$900,000 each, taking them close to *Friends*-level pay.

“I didn’t understand *The Big Bang Theory* when we did it the first time,” says Lorre. “I didn’t understand the characters and we had to fail with them to understand how naive and vulnerable they were.

“Their brilliance hid the fact that, in many ways, they were children and they were very easily hurt. So, when we did it a second time, we incorporated that information.

“We knew that the audience was going to be protective towards them, and rightly so. Even towards Sheldon, who, despite his arrogance, was very childish and so vulnerable in the world.”

It was Sheldon whom Lorre singled out for a show of his own, and the series, which features him aged nine, was popular among buyers attending the recent LA Screenings. *Young Sheldon* is being described as *The Wonder Years* meets *Malcolm in the Middle*. It is also the first time that Lorre has moved away from the multi-camera sitcom loved by US audiences to the single-camera comedy generally more popular with critics and awards juries.

The 65-year-old Lorre, who, remarkably, has never received an Emmy, asserts that the comedy is tonally very different to the original series, and hence is a risk. Yet, given its 8:30pm timeslot on CBS, the ambition is clearly another mainstream hit.

“It’s a fish-out-of-water story, really,” explains Lorre. “It’s about a brilliant, beautiful mind at nine years old in a



The early *Two and a Half Men*

CBS

family that doesn’t understand him. We’ve always avoided labelling Sheldon in the past. The motivation behind the new series is very much about accepting him as he is because he’s not going to change.”

Sheldon’s mother, played by Zoe Perry, will have a central role as a “fierce protector” of her son.

Lorre’s female characters in *The Big Bang Theory* have evolved considerably since the series began. *Grace Under Fire*’s central character is a recovering alcoholic divorced from an abusive husband. And *Mom* stars Allison Janney and Anna Faris as a mother and daughter both recovering from alcohol and drug abuse.

Is Lorre trying to address the calls for gender equality on screen and the desire for more interesting parts for women with these roles?

He refutes the idea of a dearth of female talent in comedy by citing *Girls*, *Orange is the New Black* and Tina Fey, adding: “I’ve always thought women are more interesting than men. They are more challenging, more articulate, more in touch with their feelings.

“Ask a man how he feels and the honest response is, ‘I have no idea, I don’t know. I feel hungry,’ he laughs. “Whereas women are much more articulate and emotive. From a writing perspective, that’s much more interesting.”

Not that he watches much comedy



The forthcoming *Young Sheldon*

CBS

working for Netflix after years of working for US network TV? Is there truth in the claim of greater creative freedom?

"It is true," says Lorre, who expresses sympathy for the networks, which, unlike the streaming services, are restricted by advertising and regulation.

"It's also fun," he adds. "There are no time or language restrictions. You quickly realise that, when you do 10 episodes and they're all available at once, the shows have a continuity. For show four, you have to assume the audience has seen shows one to three and they may have seen them a few minutes ago, so show four simply continues.

"So, it's 10 chapters of a book, as opposed to 10 different episodes. And that's a different way of writing that assumes the audience is with you for the whole ride. Instead of writing haiku, you're writing an epic poem."

Lorre's series *Disjointed*, co-written with David Javerbaum and starring Kathy Bates, is the story of a woman fulfilling her dream of opening a cannabis factory with her son, a security guard. It launches on Netflix in August.

This means that Lorre has been splitting himself across four big shows. How does he maintain quality across such a huge output?

"I've watched people try and run a show and be a one-man band and do everything. And they fail. It doesn't work. TV is too difficult to be anything other than a collaborative medium – there's just too much to do doing 22 or 24 episodes in eight months.

"If you don't collaborate, you'll burn out. The people I admired didn't care who had the good idea, they just said, 'It's a good idea, write it down.' You have to put your ego aside and ask if it's working, because it's really hard to make stuff work."

He says that he looks for enthusiasm more than anything else in the writers room and defines one of his key roles as "protecting the characters at all costs.... It's to know the big picture and say, 'Let's not do it because, in the long run, it hurts the characters and they're more important than any one joke.'"

There's one particular ego that Lorre has tackled – albeit in the closing credits or "vanity card" at the end of his shows – and that is Donald Trump's.

Are there plans to develop that into a series or make a move into political satire, given the current climate?

Lorre can only joke about this idea: "I fear that would be like a guy attacking a tank with a banana." ■

after spending the day immersed in it, preferring to go home and enjoy drama such as *Luke Cage* and *Narcos*.

However, he cites *Monty Python* as a major influence: "You can't grow up in America and fall in love with comedy without having been moulded by *Monty Python*. It became part of our DNA... it remains really important."

He says that he was asked to return to *Roseanne* for its comeback series but emphasises that his busy schedule was a factor in his decision to say no.

It's one of several comebacks (*Will & Grace* is another notable example) and echoes a trend in the UK. Here, we've seen the return of such shows as *Porridge* and *Cold Feet*.

Is the fad for rebooting classic comedy evidence of a lack of ideas or risk-taking among executives?

Lorre, who acknowledges his past reputation for challenging executives over creative issues – "I fought against the boundaries of network television a lot in the past" – suggests that comebacks are not without risk.

"I think it's a great thing," he says. "What a challenge to pick up a series decades later. How much have the characters changed? They have to change, but how much? There's a lot of questions to ask before you start writing the show. It's a challenge; I'm just glad it's not mine."

How much of a challenge was it

Amazon bets big on TV à la carte

Image redacted

Kate Bulkley asks if the online giant's latest UK initiative threatens incumbents such as Sky and Virgin

The launch of Amazon Channels in May may not have generated big headlines, but it could turn out to be a defining moment in the history of television in the UK.

A big, trusted online consumer brand is now saying to consumers: "We can sell you anything from toilet rolls to TV channels and you can pick 'n' mix whatever you want."

Some broadcasters and digital giants have been nibbling at similar ideas for a few years, but Amazon's move is telling – buying your TV channels can now take place in the same one-stop shop as purchasing your groceries.

The move throws down the gauntlet to the big pay-TV companies such as Sky and Virgin: there is a huge, new competitor in town, one eschewing the traditional pay-TV strategy of bundling channels into tiered packages.

Customers who subscribe to Amazon's Prime service at £79 a year (or £7.99 a month) will be able to pay extra monthly subscriptions for live and on-demand video services.

On offer in the à la carte TV menu (see box, opposite) are Discovery, Eurosport, ITV Hub and dozens of more niche services such as Daily Burn, which delivers live and on-demand keep-fit workouts.

For customers, Amazon Channels is the ultimate in pay-TV choice: you can choose only one channel if that's all you need rather than, for example, a bundle from Sky or the "skinny bundle" of Now TV, or a monthly subscription to Netflix.

"Amazon is smelling the opportunity to retail TV content and make money out of it," says one industry observer. "It is commissioning content such as *The Grand Tour* and *American Gods* to act as billboards to get people into its shop to see all its sweetsies.

"Now it is offering channels on a pay-by-channel basis. It is an evolving threat to the pay-TV platform channel packaging that consumers have been forced to buy through for the past 25 years."

For the big players, such as Discovery and ITV, Amazon Channels offers another distribution platform beyond the traditional pay-TV platforms of Virgin Media and Sky. And one that comes minus commercial breaks.

"Ad-free is very prevalent on our service, as it is on a number of other SVoD services. For good or bad, customers are becoming very used to an ad-free experience.

"So I think it's right that all sorts of broadcasters explore the various alternatives in the pay-TV world, and they are doing so," says Alex Green, MD of Amazon Video. "Given the explosion in choice, we think that we are one easy point of aggregation for consumers

and for the content industry. We think we can play a helpful role to make finding and paying for content easier.”

Because the deals are revenue shares between Amazon and the services, each benefits from a growth in subscriptions.

One potential drawback, according to Enders Analysis, is putting your channel or content on a platform that you do not control and giving Amazon access to the payment and usage data – which could be a problem if you want to grow a direct-to-consumer offer.

At a time when many content owners, including Disney, NBCU and Discovery, have their own apps, joining another aggregator, especially one as big and as powerful as Amazon, may cause some to pause for thought.

ITV's ad-free ITV Hub+ service has already been available via Apple's iTunes and on some smart TVs and, more recently, direct on the web.

For ITV, launching on Amazon Channels is simply another route to consumers; its service provides catch-up programmes to stream or download for £3.99 a month.

ITV plans to begin a marketing push of ITV Hub+ in the next few months as part of its wider pay-TV ambitions. These include pay-per-view boxing on the new ITV Box Office channel. This was due to show its second live bout on 15 July, with Chris Eubanks Jr taking on Arthur Abraham at Wembley.

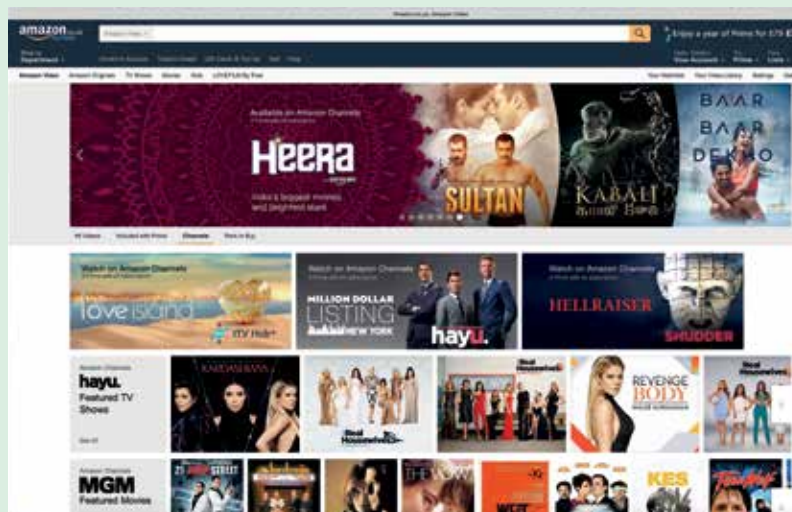
So why hasn't Channel 4 joined Amazon Channels? The broadcaster has not yet created an ad-free version of its catch-up service, All 4, so it would have to acquire pay-TV rights to shows. The “numbers didn't add up”, says a Channel 4 spokesman.

For smaller content owners, such as Horse and Country TV and preschool kids' content app Hopster, Amazon Channels provides opportunities to attract subscribers without investing in expensive infrastructure.

There is also a marketing opportunity: Amazon offers personalised recommendations across all of the content on its platform, from the “free” Prime video content to pay-per-view and Channels content.

For example, someone who watches an Amazon original production on Prime will be offered similar types of content, including content from third-party suppliers on Amazon Channels.

“The metadata is totally integrated and that allows us to drive recommendations across the board, not just inside of Channels,” says Green. “We >



Amazon

Pick 'n' mix from Amazon Channels

- ▶ **Acacia TV** Fitness service for £5.99/month
- ▶ **Alchemiya** Films about Muslim culture and life for £3.99/month
- ▶ **Arrow Video** On-demand cult classics and horror from Arrow Films for £4.99/month
- ▶ **BFI Player+** On-Demand classic British and critically acclaimed movies for £4.99/month
- ▶ **BeFit UK** Get fit with unlimited streaming of hundreds of workouts for £5.99/month
- ▶ **Cheddar** Live and on-demand news about innovative technologies for £2.79/month
- ▶ **Comic Con HQ** Fan-favourite films, original programming, exclusive access for £4.99/month
- ▶ **Curiosity Stream** Exclusive HD documentaries for £5.49/month
- ▶ **Daily Burn** On-Demand and live workouts fitness for £9.99/month
- ▶ **Discovery** £4.99/month
- ▶ **Eurosport Player** £6.99/month
- ▶ **Fandor** Indie, foreign and classic films for £3.49/month
- ▶ **Filmbox** Hollywood movies and TV series for £3.99/month
- ▶ **Full Moon Features** Full Moon classics and new releases on-demand for £3.99/month
- ▶ **Gaia** Yoga, nutrition, meditation for £7.99/month
- ▶ **Horse & Country Play** Equestrianism and British country lifestyle for £3.99/month
- ▶ **ITV Hub+** £3.99/month
- ▶ **Hayu** Reality TV for £3.99/month
- ▶ **Heera** Bollywood, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil and Telegu movies, £3.99/month
- ▶ **Hopster** Kids' TV for £3.99/month
- ▶ **Ketchup TV** Kids' TV for £2.29/month
- ▶ **Love Nature** Nature docs for £3.99/month
- ▶ **MGM** Hollywood movies for £4.49/month
- ▶ **Motorvision TV** On-demand TV for petrolheads for £2.99/month
- ▶ **MUBI** Movies for £5.99/month
- ▶ **Nautical Channel** Sailing for £3.99/month
- ▶ **Nordic Noir & Beyond** Scandi drama for £4.99/month
- ▶ **Panna** Cookery for £1.49/month
- ▶ **Pinoy Box Office** Filipino movies for £1.99/month
- ▶ **Planet Knowledge** HD docs, nature, history and culture for £2.29/month
- ▶ **Pongalo Next** Latin American movies and series for £2.99/month
- ▶ **Qello Concerts** Rock shows for £5.99/month
- ▶ **Realeyz** Indie films for £4.99/month
- ▶ **Rooster Teeth** Sci-fi, gaming and comedy for £3.99/month
- ▶ **Shudder** Thrillers, suspense, and horror for £4.99/month
- ▶ **Studio Universal Classics** Movies for £3.99/month
- ▶ **Sweatflix** Fitness for £9.49/month
- ▶ **Tastemade Plus** Food and travel for £1.99/month
- ▶ **The Great Courses Signature Collection** Education for £5.49/month
- ▶ **UP Faith & Family** Family entertainment for £3.49/month
- ▶ **Viewster Anime** Movies for £2.99/month
- ▶ **YogaAnytime Channel** Yoga for £6.99/month

Amazon Channels UK as of June 2017.

› share data copiously with our partners, both financial and subscription data and also usage data as well.

“This is all about working in partnership to understand what content works, how deep the library should be, what the refresh rate should be.

“We look at all these factors to improve their service and that has to be data-driven.”

Amazon Channels is also available on a growing number of smart TV and connected devices.

“Amazon is important because it brings together so many pieces of the picture in one place,” says Nick Walters, founder and CEO of Hopster.

“Amazon has existing payment solutions to plug into and a huge search platform, so organic discovery should be strong,” he adds. “And it has its own portfolio of consumer devices, as well. Not many others can put all those pieces together.”

Research from the US, where Amazon Channels was launched at the end of 2015, has shown that the

smaller, more niche channels do better on the service. They have a higher uptake than some of the bigger pay-TV brands such as Showtime, Starz and HBO, says Ampere Analysis’s Richard Broughton.

“At the moment, Amazon Channels doesn’t really impact on the pay-TV players but, longer term, it will if it effectively replicates the pay-TV offer,” he explains.

Basic TV channels are being squeezed by the traditional pay-TV platforms over the price they are willing to pay to carry these channels. Witness the latest dispute between Discovery and Sky over the carriage fees that Sky pays Discovery for its channels.

It is, therefore, no wonder that pay channels will be looking for other ways to reach potential subscribers.

However, Broughton says that Sky is “reasonably well protected” in the near term because it has exclusive deals with HBO, Starz and Showtime for the next three to five years, as well as premium sport rights.

“It’s been shown that it is very difficult to compete with Sky unless you buy up the rights for high-profile content,” he says.

But more content is coming from Amazon. “It’s very much day one for Amazon Channels in the UK,” says Green. “For us, it was important to have a good spread across genres. In terms of the more high-profile channels, I am sure there are more to come.”

According to Amazon, customers say that after free shipping, having access to unlimited streaming of “tens of thousands” of movies and TV episodes is the best part of paying for an Amazon Prime subscription.

Analysts at Morgan Stanley say that Amazon Prime subscribers spend 4.6 times more on Amazon than non-Prime customers. Therefore, increasing Prime subscriptions increases overall Amazon revenues. “We want to build engagement with a wide range of video content, and the more time people spend on Amazon is a good thing,” says Green.

Amazon got serious about commissioning original programming

in 2014 when it took the BBC’s cancelled *Ripper Street* and made three new series. *The Grand Tour*, with Jeremy Clarkson and co, followed last year. Analysts at JP Morgan say that Amazon will spend a staggering \$4.5bn on video content this year.

The oft-quoted quip from Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos is: “When we win a Golden Globe, it helps us sell more shoes.”

Amazon’s ambitions are big across the board. The recent announcement that it will pay \$13.7bn in cash to purchase premium US grocer Whole Foods extends the giant company into bricks and mortar retailing as well as giving it access to vast troves of customer data.

Amazon’s Green prickles a bit when asked if video is really a loss-leader for selling more shoes and groceries: “We are investing enormous amounts in video. So it’s really not a question of doing something in order to serve something else.”

With Eurosport’s arrival on Amazon Channels in the UK, this is the first time that Amazon has live-streamed premium sport, starting with the French Open tennis tournament.

In the US, Amazon has paid \$50m to screen 10 live NFL football matches this autumn. Some analysts believe this signals that Amazon is set to become a bigger player in live-sports rights auctions.

Would Amazon bid against Sky for Premier League football? Amazon’s Green declines to comment.

So is Amazon’s move into offering à la carte TV the “thin edge of the wedge”? Will it, one day, start to bundle channels into packages, as Sky and Virgin do?

Perhaps, but, for the moment, Amazon Channels is a way for content owners to take advantage of Amazon’s reach and its ability to target all manner of screens with a simple and clear, channel-by-channel offer.

As Amazon Channels gets bigger, content owners will undoubtedly question how prominent their channels and brands are in the Amazon ecosystem and how the spoils are shared between them.

Which is not a million miles away from the situation today with the big pay-TV platforms such as Sky.

One thing is clear: if Amazon Channels gets this right, then the UK television industry can welcome a big new player to the table. ■

Arne Dahl
on Nordic
Noir &
Beyond



Nordic Noir & Beyond

OUR FRIEND IN THE NORTH

I'm a past master at the rictus smile of the polite award loser. I've worn more rictus smiles than you've had hot dinners. Certainly more than I've had hot dinners at awards dos where the vegetarian main course has a microwaved outer crust but still-frozen heart – just like the awards judges who overlooked my... OK, don't get bitter.

You develop some coping strategies when you've sat through 17 years of *Emmerdale* not winning what it objectively should at awards ceremonies. By objectively, I mean, of course, in my opinion and the opinion of all right-minded people. I will pass on some of that wisdom.

Rule 1: Never ever believe someone who says you've definitely won. Well-intentioned press people will shimmy up to you beforehand and tell you that they know for sure you've nailed the big one. Don't fall for it.

The International Emmy for Documentary Series was a personal nadir. The BBC's person in New York assured me that *Naked Hollywood* had won, so much so that she made me rehearse an acceptance speech in front of her in case I was "overcome by the emotion of winning".

And very helpfully on the night, she pulled my chair out from under me as the award was being announced. As the Emmy slipped from my grasp and went elsewhere, I was left frozen in a crouching position, grimace straining across my face.

I think there's now a statue on the sidewalk outside that hotel entitled "TV Executive at Stool". If there isn't,

Awards ceremonies can be hell when you're on a losing streak. **John Whiston** shares his coping strategies



Paul Hampartsoumian

there should be. In retrospect, the idea that a series which intercut Michael Ovitz – at the time, the most powerful and feared agent in Hollywood – with wildlife footage of stags rutting, might win an award voted for by his industry colleagues was insane. But all awards are a work of insanity. Even when you win.

I once won Jet Petroleum's Motoring Correspondent of the Year at a lavish ceremony in the Savoy. I called up my editor at *Vogue* to tell them about my incredible success.

I was met with a sharp intake of horror: "Jet Petroleum?" The disdain was palpable. "Just don't mention it to anyone. We can make this go away,"

she hissed. I'd been thinking a banner across Christy Turlington's face on the front cover. Rule 2: Be careful what you wish for.

Rule 3: You really don't want to know anyway. I once lobbied the producers of an awards show very hard to know whether it was worth me getting on a ferry to come down from a Scottish island or not.

I was rewarded with the most depressing phrase in TV. I was "not show critical".

It took me a good year to stop mumbling the phrase in my sleep. I would dream of everyone whom I had ever disappointed in life queuing up to tell me I was "not show critical". Ending with *St Peter*.

So, what does a year in which *Emmerdale* has just won all four major TV awards (including the hyper-prestigious RTS award for Soap and Continuing Drama) feel like? Well, it feels rare, to be honest. It's an amazing achievement by the team and truly great for Leeds.

But, whenever I start smug-ing up, I think of Rule 4: Every dog has its day. As, indeed, did Batley, the *Emmerdale* dog, at the British Soap Awards in 2002. Batley beat all the human soap stars, much to their delightfully visible chagrin, to win the coveted Best Exit award, by dying pitifully in the arms of his owner after a lethal injection from Paddy the vet.

He died for *Emmerdale*. He died for us. That's how important awards are, right there. ■

John Whiston is ITV Studios' creative director, serial dramas.

Election 2017:

Why TV needs to change

At 10:00pm on 8 June, I was in a studio watching a live election-night show produced by two media companies that are going to be a big part of the future of political broadcasting. Neither of them were TV brands.

As the shock exit poll result came out, the two presenters, with a combined age about half that of David Dimbleby, reacted with squeals of surprise. This was all very un-Reithian.

BuzzFeed's political team had moved into Facebook's Euston headquarters to create their own election-night live feed of commentary and results headed by their admirable political editor, Jim Waterson. He was sitting in front of a pink coffee table with a multicoloured hardboard cut-out set.

It was all a little chaotic and didn't deliver the heavyweight insights of the big broadcasting beasts. But, for a

Politics

Charlie Beckett says broadcasters have to learn from social media or risk losing their pre-eminence in the political narrative

certain demographic, it was lively, engaging and accurate.

The BuzzFeed/Facebook show was something of an experiment but, as we look back at the end of "strong and stable", it is just one sign that election television is on the cusp of change, too.

We have been told that this was the election when the power of the newspapers ended. Social media, not print,

is now the kingmaker. It is not quite that simple. While Jeremy Corbyn's online campaign may have fuelled his late surge, it was also the right-wing newspapers turning on Theresa May over the so-called dementia tax that started her slide.

Certainly, though, the papers seemed less able to dictate the agenda. Their late assault on Corbyn, for example, felt patronising and was much rebuffed on social media.

Yet, as digital natives such as BuzzFeed and social networks like Facebook grow in influence, is the bigger story one in which broadcasting is also losing its political pre-eminence?

Voters tell researchers that they get most of their information about politics from TV news. In an age of presidential-style politics, the power of the image is persuasive. That didn't change in 2017. But its impact was diluted.

In 2010, the novelty of the TV debates

meant that, in a short campaign, they threatened to take over the election agenda. The drama of Nick Clegg popping up between Gordon Brown and David Cameron filled the bulletins and attracted big audiences.

In 2015, the set-piece programmes were less dominant but, as part of the overall on-screen campaign, they helped ensure that broadcast was the most important medium.

While Cameron avoided direct debate, the leaders of the minor parties, such as Nicola Sturgeon and Nigel Farage, added fresh characters to the political drama of what we (mistakenly) thought was a close race.

But, in 2017, television election coverage was emasculated.

This was the most stage-managed campaign ever. May refused to engage in open public debate with journalists, the public or rival politicians. Her appearances were confined to warehouses or factories filled with party supporters.

Journalists complained that, even when they were allowed to ask a question, they were prevented from follow-ups by aides who kept hold of the microphone. Other ministers, including key figures such as the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, barely made it on air.

Labour grew to welcome the attention of the broadcasters because they were not as relentlessly hostile as the right-wing newspapers.

But the party also stage-managed Corbyn's appearances. It kept taking its leader to safe seats to speak before invited party members, while the right-wing press was excluded.

The TV set-piece programmes were largely incident-free. Perhaps the only thing you might recall is Ukip leader Paul Nuttall getting Leanne "Natalie" Wood's name wrong.

In itself, the flatness of the broadcast election was not everything. Election broadcasting is about more than catching out politicians or filming a fist fight. It is about allowing the public to hear and see democracy being done.

TV is supposed to give a voice to a range of parties and policies that are out of sight the rest of the time and to show what kinds of leadership character are on offer.

Broadcast journalists took to Twitter to rage at the failure of the leaders to engage. The BBC's Jeremy Vine pointed out that it was the first time in 40 years that the Prime Minister had not appeared on Radio 2's flagship show.

IN 2017, TELEVISION ELECTION COVERAGE WAS EMASCULATED

But no one was able or prepared to protest at this empty theatre of news. No one pulled the plug on those preposterous photo opportunities. What could the broadcasters do? Go on strike?

Of course, UK broadcasters are regulated for impartiality, especially at elections. They have a duty to cover even the most tedious of contests in detail. They can't imitate the US cable news networks, who turn electoral politics into soap opera and high drama by injecting a huge dose of bias and exaggeration.

Social media suffers from no such restriction. The role of Labour's supporters on social media and the extraordinary success of several "alt-left" news sites, such as *The Canary*, was the most intriguing media story of this campaign.

Hugely partisan, highly active and very effective in terms of online impact, these helped to mobilise Corbyn's support. They also took on "mainstream media" but not just the newspapers. They turned on the broadcasters and, especially, the BBC.

This was manifested in its most ugly form in appalling, misogynistic and violent personal abuse against BBC political editor Laura Kuenssberg. The accusations of BBC bias came especially from the highly active digital Corbynite left, although Brexiteers and Scottish Nationalists also chimed in.

A lot of this was the usual "why are you not reporting this from my point of view?". In a mirror image of

BROADCASTERS NEED TO CONTINUE THE BRIDGE-BUILDING WITH THE MORE GROWN-UP NEW KIDS ON THE DIGITAL BLOCK

President Trump, it became routine for social-media critics to describe the BBC's coverage as "fake".

Sometimes, they may have had a point. For example, was it really the job of BBC political correspondents to routinely undermine Corbyn by referring to his unelectability whenever referring to Labour policy proposals?

As the final result showed, perhaps he was more electable than conventional wisdom thought. At least the BBC was talking about his policies.

Cardiff University's Stephen Cushion's research has shown that the BBC gave more airtime proportionately to Labour's manifesto promises than any other broadcaster.

In a world where TV is still the main source of information for voters at election time, that matters. Members of the Labour Party's campaign team were clever enough to realise it. As their party's fortunes improved and a destabilised May hid from the limelight, they decided to put Corbyn forward more, including at the BBC-hosted encounter where Amber Rudd replaced the PM.

Who "won" that encounter mattered much less than the fact that May was seen to be absent and Corbyn was seen to be a lot less scary than the press had warned. The BBC was simultaneously being pilloried by Corbyn supporters, while lending their man's campaign a lift. That's BBC balance for you.

The usual newspaper criticism and competition is now compounded by a social-media sphere whose attacks usually have more to do with rallying troops than fighting for truth.

There was a lot of great TV in the 2017 general election. A few highlights for me include: the BBC's Andrew Neil; ITV's Tom Bradby on election night; and Sophy Ridge's bright evening show on Sky. But talent, balance and high production values are not enough.

The broadcasters need to continue the bridge-building with the more grown-up new kids on the digital block, such as the BBC's tie-up with Twitter. There is much that the broadcasters can and are doing to use social media to make their political coverage reach further and engage more deeply.

As the spin increases, it might be the only way to make broadcast election campaigns less of a two-dimensional experience. ■

A former TV journalist, Professor Charlie Beckett is director of Polis, the journalism think tank at the LSE.

Production

As the drama specialist marks its tenth birthday, CEO **Andy Harries** tells **Steve Clarke** how *The Crown* transformed his company

When Andy Harries was planning what became drama specialist Left Bank Pictures, around a decade ago, experienced TV executives told him that he was backing the wrong horse. They said that drama – expensive, time-consuming and hard to get right – was in decline. Reality shows were the future.

Today, drama is booming as never before and, by some reckonings, Left Bank is responsible for a fifth of all the TV drama produced in the UK.

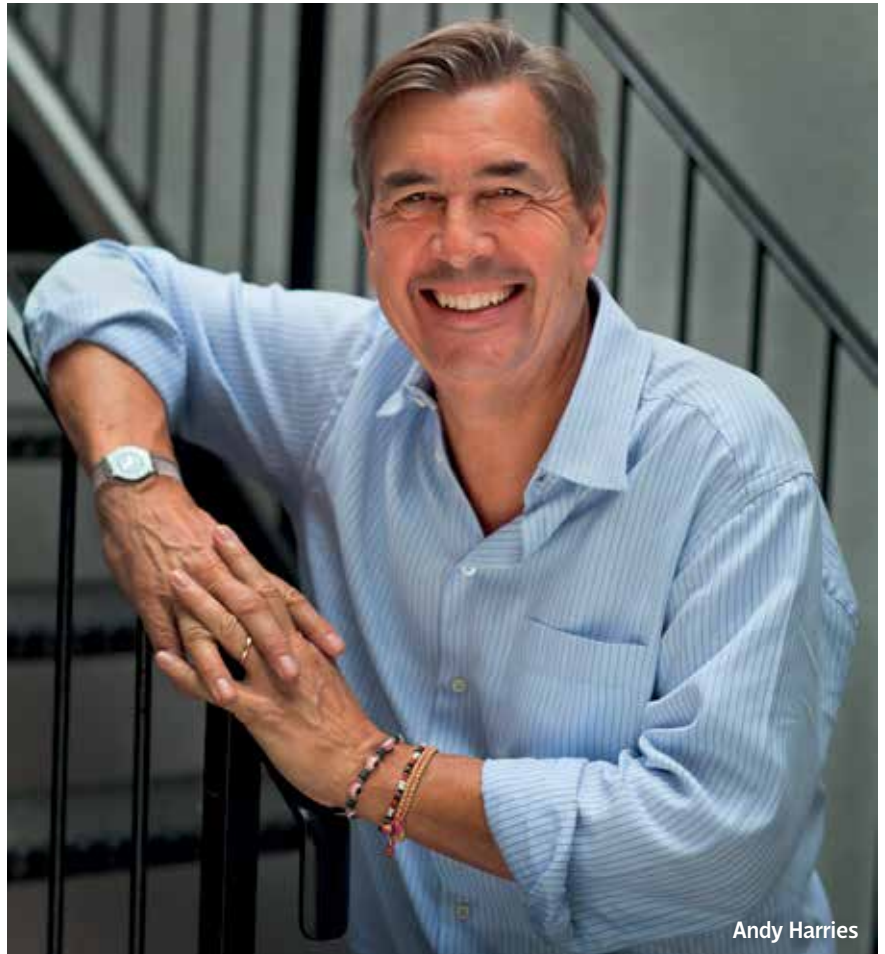
With the prospect of having at least seven 10-part series on air next year, Left Bank is looking strong. This total includes season 2 of *The Crown*, the epic series that aims to tell the full story of the reign of Elizabeth II. Season 1 debuted on Netflix last autumn.

Unusually for a British entertainment company, most of Left Bank's work is being done for US entities. Harries says: "Right now, we're working for Netflix, Starz, HBO/Cinemax, Amazon and another big US company that I can't tell you about... plus maybe a little bit of stuff for the BBC and *Strike Back* for Sky."

We're talking in the blue boardroom at Left Bank's air-conditioned High Holborn HQ. The room commands an eye-catching view of west London, looking south towards the river.

But peer straight down and ignore that skyline. Focus, instead, on the swimmers and sunbathers relaxing at the Oasis pool below on this sweltering July lunchtime and you might imagine yourself in Hollywood.

Hanging on the opposite wall is a full-length picture that parodies Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. Seated behind the long table in place of the disciples are the stars of the original *Cold Feet* alongside those of *The Royle Family*, two of Harries' biggest shows in



Andy Harries

Crowning glory

his previous life. The picture once graced the walls of ITV's offices on the South Bank. It is a reminder of Harries' time at Granada, where he ran comedy and, later and somewhat reluctantly, the drama department.

"I loved comedy," Harries recalls. "It was only when I got into comedy that I started doing scripted. My background was in journalism. I'd have been very happy staying in comedy. I only went into drama because they offered me the job."

As a Granada executive, *The Royle Family* was an important show for Harries, who worked closely with its creator and star, the late Caroline Aherne. "She was very, very clever and also incredibly funny... We had huge rows. She kept sending me to Coventry and once tried to stop me attending *The Royle Family* set. It was a very, very volatile relationship."

Yet, Harries has a reputation for being

good, if not brilliant, with talent. His relationship with screenwriter Peter Morgan, who writes *The Crown* and scripted the Oscar-winning film *The Queen* (which Harries produced), goes back some 30 years. The pair's other collaborations include *The Deal*, depicting the Blair-Brown feud, and *Longford*, a portrait of Lord Longford's association with Moors murderer Myra Hindley.

"Any relationship that lasts more than 30 years has its emotional ups and downs. We have grown up together and achieved amazing things," says Harries. "We don't always see eye to eye – that's not surprising – but our relationship is underpinned by deep love and respect for each other. He was the best godfather to my twin boys."

Harries has worked with the star of *The Queen*, Helen Mirren, since reprising *Prime Suspect* at Granada in 2003 after a seven-year hiatus; the series went on to win an Emmy. Has he ever fallen



The Crown

for Left Bank

out with her? “No. She is private and very professional, very warm and focused. If she is concerned about something she always makes her points very clearly.”

Harries is attempting to sell a four-part drama, penned by Guy Hibbert, in which Mirren plays a retired detective training police personnel at a refugee camp in Jordan. “Helen was sick of receiving terrible scripts that either had her character suffering from dementia or dying in a cancer ward. She wanted something that reflected her own life as an active, 70-year-old woman.”

The chances are that, by the time you read this, he will have sold the show. Ask Harries what he most likes about his job and he says: “I love selling shows, it gives me huge satisfaction.” He suppresses a laugh before adding: “I don’t mean that arrogantly. I love the challenge of trying to convince someone to part with a lot

of money for something I passionately believe in. I love the making of it, too, but it’s the actual moment of selling that I find satisfying.”

Of course, without his skill at deal-making, there would be no Left Bank. Neither would Harries be as well-heeled as he is. He claims that money was not a motivating factor in the formation of Left Bank: “I never did it for the money.... I formed Left Bank because, at the time, Granada was unfocused on production and didn’t appreciate what it had in terms of production.”

Later on, he explains: “Getting money later in life is rather interesting. I could have done with some money earlier. There were times in the early years of Left Bank when I was broke.... Money gives you security, which is nice, but I haven’t moved house.”

He lives with his wife, the writer and film-maker Rebecca Frayn, the

daughter of novelist Michael Frayn, in a home in Chiswick bought 20 years ago for £400,000. More recently, he bought a new bolt-hole in Ibiza, where he likes to practice yoga.

Whether it’s the yoga or his genes, Harries looks surprisingly boyish for a man who is 63. “At least Andy’s not still dying his hair,” joked his friend Wayne Garvie, during a speech he gave at Left Bank’s 10th anniversary party earlier this month.

It was Garvie, while at BBC Worldwide, who helped with Left Bank’s initial finance, when the BBC’s commercial arm invested in the firm; Worldwide initially took a 25% stake, later reduced to 12.5%. Today, Sony owns 51% of Left Bank, and Harries a quarter. Coincidentally, Garvie now runs Sony’s London-based international production business.

Sony reportedly paid £40m for its stake in Left Bank in 2012. What, with full knowledge of *The Crown*’s success, now looks like a very canny investment appeared much less compelling five years ago, explains Harries. Then, Left Bank was experiencing a bit of >

› a blip. The company had established itself on the back of shows such as *Wallander*, made for the BBC, and *Strike Back*. He sold the latter to Sky almost on a whim – at the time, he hadn't read the book or bought the rights. The show was recently revived for a fifth series.

"Left Bank built quite quickly. By year three to four, we'd built up a lot of commissions and the offers [to take a stake] were coming in. We didn't court them," he says.

Sony's bid was the highest but, once the deal was sealed, Left Bank experienced a tough patch. Perhaps there was resentment that the

producer had got such a good price, but doors weren't opening as quickly as they once had. "I felt a bit frozen out by the BBC and ITV," Harries remembers.

The way he tells it, the axing of two shows did Harries' head in – the BBC jettisoned crime series *Zen* after one series and ITV cancelled relationship drama *Married, Single, Other*, also after one series.

"I felt suicidal," he says. Seriously? "Well, suicidal is a bit strong. I've got three lovely kids. I felt so depressed. That was very difficult. I took it very personally. It ripped me up for weeks."

Furthermore, the initial relationship with Sony was far from easy. "Sony didn't understand what we did and they didn't know how to work with us. No one reached out from the States at all, so we carried on with what we were doing.

"Every time we went over to the States to sell, there was quite a lot of suspicion. They weren't supporting us, they were suspicious of us.

"Basically, they were saying: 'Why the fuck are you going round our town selling?' I said: 'I'm doing what I've always done.' They said: 'You're part of Sony now, you have to tell us what you're doing.' I said: 'Why?'"

Things started to improve when *Outlander* became part of Left Bank's slate; Starz commissioned the show from Sony but Starz CEO Chris Albrecht insisted that Harries' company was the producer. Winning the order from Netflix for *The Crown* was the icing on the cake. "We'd never had that kind of financial stability before. It's given us a new confidence."

Much has been written about how Netflix bought the show, in part to help the roll-out of its services in English-speaking countries around the world. There is no doubt that Left Bank found itself in the right place at the right time when Harries, Morgan and Stephen Daldry (who directed *The Crown*'s first

two episodes) found themselves sitting in a Hollywood office with Netflix's top people.

But hearing it from, as it were, the horse's mouth, reminds us once more of British TV drama's remarkable pre-eminence in global markets in recent years.

"The two key things in selling are: always try and get in on any new channels being set up; and always make sure the decision-makers are in the room," says Harries. "In the room at Netflix, we had Ted Sarandos and Cindy Holland. They bought 20 hours of *The Crown*... We'd pitched it to both ITV and the BBC. They'd each expressed huge interest. In a sense, I had them in the bag if I needed them."

He adds: "Before we saw Netflix, we'd had meetings with HBO, Showtime and Fox. They were all good meetings. Netflix was the last meeting and we were feeling a little gung-ho....

"I think they'd already decided to buy it before we went into the room. They'd read the script and knew the talent we had on board."

It is believed that Netflix has greenlit two further 10-part series of *The Crown*. Series 3 begins in the early 1960s, while series 4 takes the story through to the age of Thatcher and the era of Diana, Princess of Wales. Recasting the entire show has begun and filming will commence next summer.

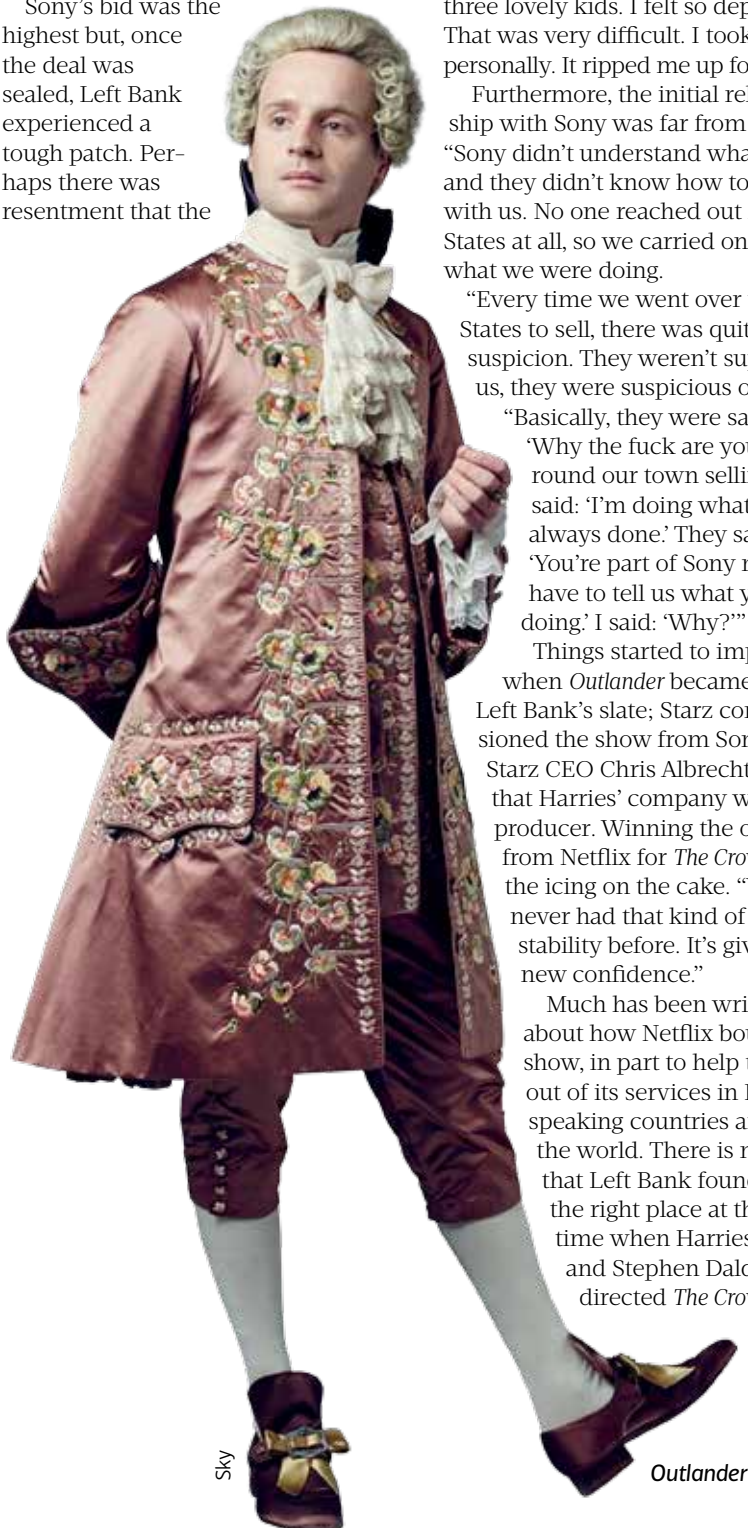
The Crown triumphed at the Golden Globes, secured a Broadcasting Press Guild award, but was conspicuous by its failure to win a Bafta this year and didn't receive an RTS nomination.

Was Harries disappointed by these apparent snubs? "Not at all. I've been on far too many juries to be troubled by whether you win or not.... Broadly, I think that Netflix is perceived by many people who work in TV as a threat to their livelihoods. I don't think that is correct, but they perceive it as a threat."

I put it to Harries that it might prove difficult for Left Bank to top *The Crown*, creatively and in terms of its financial importance to the company. Harries, of course, gives his answer before I've finished the question.

"*The Crown* has got to top itself. It is your key show. You've got to look after it and nurture and love it. The best people are on it and we work 24/7 to make it."

Andy Harries is speaking at the RTS Cambridge Convention in September.





Paul Hampartsoumian

Salmon swims in global waters

Over three decades at the BBC, Peter Salmon worked in almost every nook and cranny of the corporation. He ran BBC Sport, was a BBC One controller during difficult times, and master-minded the successful move to Salford. Then, in March 2016, he surprised colleagues and commentators by moving to global producer and distributor Endemol Shine as chief creative officer.

At an RTS event in early July, Salmon discussed his career with journalist Kate Bulkley. He talked about steering the recently merged Endemol Shine safely through TV's choppy waters, but also cast an eye back to the highs and lows of his time at the BBC.

The Endemol Shine Group is huge.

Production

Matthew Bell listens as Peter Salmon explains to the RTS the challenges facing him at Endemol Shine

It brings together 120 production companies, which make 700 titles in 50 languages. Its roster ranges from *MasterChef* and *Big Brother* through to hit dramas *Broadchurch* and *Black Mirror*. "It's pretty lively at times – there are some big voices and big reputations," said Salmon. "There's a lot of outstanding talent."

Importantly for him, before joining Endemol Shine, Salmon was promised by its boss, Sophie Turner Laing – the pair had once worked together at the BBC – that the company operated a "no arseholes policy".

Salmon defined his role as one of "trying to safeguard the investment in, and the room for, creativity at a board level – to make sure that, when the discussions are had in that room about what matters, that there is a loud enough creative voice".

With shows such as *MasterChef* and *Big Brother*, Salmon oversees some of TV's biggest international formats. "In a world where everything's changing, the super brands and formats matter more than ever. They're a calling card to viewers," he argued.

Spin-offs, such as *Junior MasterChef*, which has been sold to some >

Salmon on life at the BBC



Sports Relief 2016 contributor Jamie Laing

BBC

At the RTS early-evening event, Peter Salmon reflected on his long career at the BBC, which he joined as a trainee in 1981. Shows that he worked on in his early years included *Crimewatch* and *Newsnight*, as well as Aardman animation *The Wrong Trousers*.

After spells at Channel 4 and Granada in the mid-1990s, Salmon returned to become controller of BBC One – at a time when the channel’s budget was being squeezed.

In 1997, Katrina and the Waves won the Eurovision Song Contest for the UK, which meant Britain – and the BBC – had to host the following year’s event.

‘We went to Birmingham and it stripped £7m out of the BBC One schedule money – I had to play *Blankety Blank* on a loop that summer,’ he recalled. ‘It was a time when the cupboards were a bit bare in terms of finances.’

It was also a period when ITV was performing well thanks to a certain quiz show: ‘*Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*’ came in and I think it was the show that changed television.’

Salmon left BBC One to take charge of BBC Sport in 2000. ‘It was a bit of a relegation team,’ he recalled. ‘The BBC didn’t have the money to compete for the big sports rights.’ Nevertheless, under Salmon, the BBC won the rights to the FA Cup and launched interactive TV coverage of Wimbledon.

But it was the launch of the TV charity Sports Relief that Salmon recalls most fondly: ‘It was wonderful public service entertainment and now it’s raised £200m. It was a brilliant thing to have been involved in.’

Salmon argued that public service broadcasters still had a part to play in covering sport. ‘There’s so much sport and so many different ways of filleting

and packaging sport,’ he said. Last month, the BBC won the rights to broadcast live Twenty20 internationals and domestic matches from 2020 – the first live cricket on the BBC since 1999.

‘The big issue will be when the big OTT (over-the-top) platforms start to play seriously in sport – that will completely change the dynamics of that arena,’ he said. ‘But, hopefully, as long as the list [of protected sporting events] is in place, then certain key properties will be protected for free-to-air telly.’

In the latter stages of his time at the BBC, Salmon was responsible for the corporation’s new MediaCity base in Salford. ‘The BBC’s role in shifting the cultural and financial balance across the UK is crucially important,’ he insisted, and drew attention to the BBC’s investment in production in Bristol and South Wales, as well as Salford.

Briefly, Salmon ran the corporation’s new commercial production, BBC Studios. ‘It will be successful but it won’t happen overnight,’ he said. ‘The people who produce *Strictly*, *Watchdog*, *East-Enders* or *Glastonbury* – they’ve got some shit-hot programme-makers – and they ought to be able to do a bit of damage to the broadcast production ecology, get a bit of business and hold on to a lot of their own business.’

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q How do you react when other production companies copy *Endemol Shine* formats?

A Peter Salmon: There’s not a week goes by that you don’t spot something.... Now and then, you’ve got to step up to the mark, take people on and contest some of this stuff because, otherwise, you end up being ripped off... but it’s tough to prove it.

Q With *Big Brother* haemorrhaging viewers on Channel 5, is it time to rest the show in the UK?

A Peter Salmon: It’s playing in 29 territories; it’s working in lots of different places all over the world.... It’s got a few challenges... [but] I’m really positive about the future of *Big Brother*. It’s only turning 18 now – I

see it as having a pretty long life.... We try and make it as original as we possibly can and, if it’s not on its top form, we need to keep on changing it.

Q Wouldn’t it be better to make more sitcoms and fewer reality shows?

A Peter Salmon: When you get the likes of *Catastrophe* or *Fleabag*, it’s such a glorious thing.... As a group, I’d love us to have more hit sitcoms. It would make me very proud, as it’s such a tough thing to do.

Q Are there too many indies in the UK competing for the same slots?

A Peter Salmon: The landscape is incredibly competitive – [I don’t know] how all the scripted companies are paying their overheads and getting by.

I would lose sleep if I were about 50 of those scripted companies, right now. But I also think that the UK scripted sector is particularly brilliant and it keeps reimagining itself

and the models it uses – and the tax breaks help.

Moving out of London and looking for talent and facilities elsewhere is interesting.... It’s easier being inside [an indie and] under that distribution shield right now, having... group support and distribution, and using a bit of group intelligence or muscle to get the best deals.

It’s tougher being out there on your own now, paying Hollywood prices to make UK drama.

Q Is TV a good place to work at the moment?

A Peter Salmon: If you’re passionate and you really want to be in this sector, there isn’t a better time to get into it.... [But] we’re not going to get people to commit to working in our sector unless we treat them properly....

We’ve got to create an environment that’s fun, that values and develops [people].... Go for it, because it’s a brilliant time to be making content [in] the UK.



Tin Star

Sky

› 27 territories, can build on the success of the original format.

Salmon highlighted the growing trend for co-productions between broadcasters and the big US streaming platforms, which is benefiting Endemol Shine.

The super-indie is making the ambitious Trojan War drama *Troy: Fall of a City* for BBC One in the UK and Netflix in the rest of the world. “Could we have [made it] just on conventional BBC budgets without Netflix?” he mused. “Probably not.”

Salmon outlined the importance of attracting the best creative talent to his company: “We’ve got to find the right balance between being big and strong; and feeling local, particular, customised and bespoke.

“If you do that, I think it’s a pretty good model for attracting talent. But, God, it’s so competitive, particularly in the scripted space.”

He described the cost of buying talent as “prohibitive”, adding: “It’s pretty difficult in the UK to justify. We try really hard to hold on to talent that we’ve nurtured – like Charlie Brooker from researcher/scriptwriter to global brand.”

Endemol Shine is still in the market for acquisitions but, said Salmon, “there aren’t that many companies of scale left that are still independent in the UK”.

“We would prefer to grow and

develop,” he added, “unless it was an absolute game-changer. I’m not even sure it’s going to be television production – potentially, it’s going to be something associated with it. Data, artificial intelligence and that kind of intuitive technology is going to absolutely revolutionise a lot of our [production].

“I’ve seen some of the experiments with new cameras, the Cloud and what you can do with data. But what I love is that it’s not just about production margins, it’s also – potentially – really creative.”

In the digital arena, Endemol Shine has enjoyed unlikely success with *Mr Bean*. “He’s the biggest entertainment brand on Facebook – *Bean* is bigger than *The Simpsons*,” said Salmon. “A lot of it is driven by Asia, where they’re mad for *Bean*.”

Other schedule-defining shows, including *Big Brother*, *MasterChef* and *Wipeout*, also play well online. Salmon estimated that 75% of the company’s YouTube plays were for television content. “It doesn’t make the money we would like, given the money we make elsewhere in television,” he conceded. “It’s currently only 5% of our business; we want to grow it to 20% in the short term.

“It will happen, I think, around our key areas of expertise and key brands,” he continued. “But we’ve also got to grow a few things that might [become] the brands of the

future – we’ve got to place those bets, too. We’ve probably got to do it as a loss leader for a few years.”

One new online series, the animation *Simon’s Cat*, said Salmon, had already built a huge online audience. “By the end of the decade,” he predicted, “*Simon’s Cat* is going to be a household name.”

Bulkley asked Salmon whether, after more than 35 years in TV, there was “another job in you?”

“The one thing I know is that I love being in production, and I love the blend of UK and global [content],” he replied. “It would take a lot to prise me out of the Endemol Shine gang, but who knows? Saga, Stannah Stairlifts or football management if my team, Burnley FC, called.” ■

The RTS early-evening event ‘In conversation with Peter Salmon’ was held at Picturehouse Central in London on 4 July. It was chaired and produced by Kate Bulkley.

Simon’s Cat



Simon’s Cat Ltd

From YouTube to TV



Paul HampartSoumian

Television executives are scouting for the latest, hottest online sensations. They hope that some of these new YouTubers on the block will bring their huge fan base over to traditional TV.

But, as an RTS Futures event in mid-June discovered, the talent doesn't necessarily need television.

"YouTube is an amazing platform – you can build an audience and you know that they're there to see you," said football freestyler Daniel Cutting. "I don't think my audience – kids between eight and 13 or 14 – watch TV."

Cutting has more than 260,000 YouTube subscribers. Over half a million Instagram followers have watched his football tricks, which have won him five Guinness world records.

YouTube, he argued, allows greater engagement between the content-maker and the viewer. "On TV, you don't get to know the person; they're kind of distant. [Online, viewers] can

RTS Futures

When it comes to audience engagement, the online space is more effective than television, hears **Matthew Bell**

engage, comment and like, and, potentially, get a response from someone. YouTubers are becoming the new celebrities," he claimed.

Cutting was one of a four-strong panel at the event, "From YouTube to TV", which was chaired by Alex Lawrence, the founder of content creator Clearhead Digital.

Matt Campion, also on the panel, is the founder and creative director of Spirit, a multi-platform content and

audience-building company, which he describes as a "next-generation producer".

The digital exec has experienced TV from all sides. "I started off as an actor in television, at 10," he recalled. "At the age of 19, I completely lost my bottle – I decided I didn't want to audition for Pot Noodle adverts any more."

He moved behind the scenes, working at ITV, directing shows such as Channel 4's *Big Brother* and then doing stints at Sky and Endemol. He launched Spirit with his Endemol colleague Peter Cowley.

Campion argued that the distinction between traditional TV and digital content had become blurred, adding that, eventually, "it will all become one".

Spirit's output includes branded content such as *Alex Brooker's Home Tech Over* for Samsung and Channel 4; Jamie Oliver's Food Tube channel; and All 4's *Trigger Happy*, a revival of Dom Joly's hidden-camera show *Trigger Happy TV*.

"Content is really easy to make these

Panellists (from left): Daniel Cutting, Georgia Moseley, Alex Lawrence, Matt Campion and Janine Smith

days,” said Campion. “Look at [fitness guru] Joe Wicks – he built his social media audience off a mobile phone.” Wicks now stars in his own Channel 4 show, *The Body Coach*.

But Campion warned that a successful transition from YouTube stardom to TV was far from guaranteed. “I’ve seen lots of YouTube stars who have been commissioned because of their audience and they fell completely flat on television – it doesn’t always cross over well,” he said.

Campion added that there was too much emphasis put on YouTube as the main online platform: “Content creators are also on Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook.”

JUST BECAUSE IT'S ON A SCREEN THAT ISN'T IN THE CORNER OF YOUR LIVING ROOM, IT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S NOT TV

Georgia Moseley, creative lead at the digital arm of BBC Studios, develops and produces interactive content across the BBC. She began her career in traditional TV production at the BBC but has worked in the digital arena for the past three years.

“There was a huge opportunity that not many of the people I knew within TV production were tapping into to create new stuff, stretch the content we were making and tell stories in different ways,” she said.

Nevertheless, Moseley maintained that traditional and digital TV still “have more in common”.

The digital world, however, was now a “noisy and crowded” place, she said. “The key for me is curation.

“The most difficult thing is to stand out – it’s not enough to be brilliant, you have to be found. That is going to be the biggest challenge for everyone, from BBC content-makers through to some kid sitting in his bedroom.”

Campion agreed that the market was

“saturated”, which, he argued, put the onus on producers to think more scientifically, and use audience data to build and retain an audience.

“Throwing stuff [online] and seeing what sticks”, he said, wastes both time and money. Content creators needed a “social media skill set” and to work with “analytics to understand how people respond to content”.

Campion added: “At the point, which will come eventually, when scheduled TV turns off and TV is delivered by an app, as a producer you will have to know how to market your own shows.”

“The talent can come from anywhere,” claimed Janine Smith, head of digital entertainment, comedy and drama at ITV. “We invest a lot in developing YouTube content.”

Smith creates digital spin-off shows, apps and social media campaigns for ITV flagships such as *The Voice UK*, *Coronation Street* and *Ant & Dec’s Saturday Night Takeaway*.

She first worked in television in 1999 and has spent time at Channel 4 as well as ITV, but “always on the digital side”.

“You still need strong stories, but the way people consume them needs to be taken into account when you make them,” said Smith.

The boundaries between online and traditional TV may be blurring, Smith continued, but “just because it’s on a screen that isn’t in the corner of your living room, it doesn’t mean it’s not television”.

Campion predicted that branded content would be “massively important”, but warned that brands must not become too loud. Authenticity was key, he stressed, and if a YouTuber lost his or her independence by pushing a brand overtly, viewers might leave.

“You’re going to be seeing a lot more branded stuff,” said Cutting. “I can still make the content I want to make, but having a brand on board helps to pay the bills.

“If it’s heavily branded and obvious, the comments will start to [come in]. Do branded stuff, but drop it in subtly.” ■

The RTS Futures event ‘From YouTube to TV’ was held at the Curzon Soho in central London on 19 June. It was produced by Ethel Mercedes, Alex Lawrence and Lyle Ashun.

How to get on online

Matt Campion, Spirit: ‘Paper doesn’t sell any more – you’ve got to make stuff.’

Georgia Moseley, BBC Studios: ‘If you’re in a hurry, you probably wouldn’t want to start in a giant broadcaster. On the other hand, you’ll learn things there that you wouldn’t learn anywhere else.’

Daniel Cutting, performer: ‘Be yourself and authentic – if you’re not, you’ll be found out quickly.’

Matt Campion: ‘You’ve got to have talent and you’ve got to be good at storytelling. If the idea is really good, people will [watch it].’

Daniel Cutting: ‘Watch YouTube to find ideas. There are only so many ideas you can [generate] yourself – you need to look further afield.’

Janine Smith, ITV: ‘Surround yourself with people who are cleverer than you – learn from the people who have done it.’

Georgia Moseley: ‘Most of the stuff I’ve learnt, I’ve learnt from the people I’ve worked with.... Telling a complex story well in a shorter form is deceptively complicated. Spend your time working with really smart people and pick their brains.’

Matt Campion: ‘As a creator, you don’t need to go to a broadcaster any more to build a brand.... If the content is good, it should work wherever it goes.’

Janine Smith: ‘If you are a content-maker in front of camera, you need to be seeing what else is out there.’

Daniel Cutting: ‘The more you know about your area of expertise, the easier it is to find the gaps in the market.’

THE GREAT HISTORY DEBATE



10 October

Speakers

Leanne Klein

CEO, Wall to Wall

Suzannah Lipscomb

Historian/Presenter

Tom McDonald

Head of Natural History
and Specialist Factual
Commissioning, BBC

David Olusoga

Historian/Presenter

Chaired by

Tony Robinson

Book at
www.rts.org.uk
[#rtsevents](https://twitter.com/rtsevents)

RTS Student Television Awards 2017

The winners were announced at a ceremony on 16 June at BFI Southbank, hosted by **Katherine Ryan**



Undergraduate Drama: *Bleach*

Richard Kendal

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

Undergraduate Animation

Tough

Jennifer Zheng, Kingston University
'A personal story that explores the bigger issues of the disconnect in culture between mother and child. This mature, thoughtful film embraces a subject with no easy answers.'

Nominees:

- ▶ **Heist**, Edward Leicester, University of the West of England
- ▶ **I Am Dyslexic**, Mads Ogaard and Katie Wyman, Falmouth University

Undergraduate Comedy and Entertainment

Headless: The Ed Shales Story

Yusef Thami, Liberty Shaw, Jake River Parker and Heather Davenport, University of Central Lancashire
'An original and funny film, with an unexpected twist at the end. Very well produced, with a relentless rate of puns that certainly made it a memorable contender.'

Nominees:

- ▶ **Native Immigration**, Eric Romero, Edinburgh Napier University
- ▶ **Pyre for Hire**, Simon James and Daniel Tempel-Merzougui, Middlesex University

Undergraduate Drama

Bleach

Jesse Lewis-Reece, Ike Newman and Ania Polewiak, Arts University Bournemouth

'Grounded realist film-making, tackling an important issue in an ambitious and unexpected way, with a refreshing lightness of touch and some very raw, authentic performances.'

Nominees:

- ▶ **Adolf and Eva**, Ciarán McNamara, Ashley Turbett, Phil Davin and Pierce McDonagh, Dublin Institute of Technology
- ▶ **Lethe**, Eric Romero, Edinburgh Napier University ▶



Host Katherine Ryan

The RTS Student Television Awards 2017 reward outstanding work produced during the 2015/16 academic year.

Undergraduate entries were first judged at a regional level by their local RTS Centre in the winter of 2016.

The winning films from each RTS Centre, along with all postgraduate entries, were then judged nationally in April 2017.

No nominations are accepted for the Judges' Award.

Richard Kendal

Undergraduate Factual

The Wall

Christy Tattershall, Matt Pidala, Alex Handschuh, Edd Roberts and Patrick Royall, University of the West of England

'A sensitively crafted and beautifully paced film, which revealed a world seldom covered, with stunning visuals and excellent casting. A stark and compelling work.'

Nominees:

- ▶ **Harvest in New Life**, Antonis Kitsikis, University of the Creative Arts
- ▶ **Wild Swimmers**, Sean Valentine, Plymouth University

Undergraduate News

Life as a Refugee

Jennifer Henry, University of Salford

'This explained in a simple and understandable way a range of issues involved in one of the most important and complicated topics of our time – migration. Not only that, but the target audience was children. The film combined compelling case studies, illuminating and entertaining vox pops from school kids and creative "fuzzy felt"-style explainers to produce an informative and entertaining watch.'

Nominees:

- ▶ **Corbridge Floods Aftermath**, Alice Winney, University of Sunderland
- ▶ **Portuguese Bullfighting: A Dying Tradition?** Catarina Beija, University of Sheffield

Undergraduate Short Feature

Nymphs

Tudor Massaci, University of the Creative Arts

'Filled with amazing imagery and a great sense of humour. A very touching and thoughtful film, with a great start, that was beautifully shot.'

Nominees:

- ▶ **Felix**, Ashley Collier, University of Central Lancashire
- ▶ **Si**, Steve George, Ryan Sibanda, Joshua Baggott and LJ Greenwood, University of Wolverhampton

Undergraduate Craft Skills – Camerawork

Jacob Gerrard – Bleach

Arts University Bournemouth

'The camerawork was cinematic, adding production value to the film, yet also complementing the grittiness and tone of the subject. Long, roaming, handheld shots combined with beautifully composed wide shots elegantly depicted this dramatic story.'

Nominees:

- ▶ **Joshua Baggott – Si**, University of Wolverhampton
- ▶ **Sean Valentine – Wild Swimmers**, Plymouth University

Undergraduate Craft Skills – Editing

Tudor Massaci – Nymphs

University for the Creative Arts

'This film's success is derived from its editing. The contrast cutting between sometimes stark images delivers a challenging and rewarding experience. The efficiency and speed of the cut is never at the expense of clarity, and provides a very lean piece of storytelling.'

Nominees

- ▶ **Jordan Elson – Bleach**, Arts University Bournemouth
- ▶ **Steve George – Si**, University of Wolverhampton

Undergraduate Craft Skills – Production Design

Mads Ogaard and Katie Wyman – I Am Dyslexic

Falmouth University

'A powerful and emotional film, delivered through its breathtaking design. A single, yet complicated, message, targeted at children, yet effective for all ages; and told beautifully and empathetically with clever visual design ideas and set pieces.'

Nominees:

- ▶ **Yousef Thami – Headless: The Ed Shales Story**, University of Central Lancashire
- ▶ **Eric Romero – Native Immigration**, Edinburgh Napier University



All pictures: Richard Kendal

1 Undergraduate Comedy and Entertainment: *Headless: The Ed Shales Story*

2 Undergraduate Factual: *The Wall*

3 Undergraduate Craft Skills – Production Design: *I Am Dyslexic*

4 Undergraduate Short Feature: *Nymphs*

5 Undergraduate Craft Skills – Camerawork: *Bleach*

6 Undergraduate Craft Skills – Sound: *Heist*

7 Undergraduate News: *Life as a Refugee* >

Undergraduate Craft Skills – Sound

Oliver Roberts – Heist

University of Bristol

‘The jury was hugely impressed with the soundtrack in this short film. The strident music and bold spot effects are as potent as the visuals in conveying this engaging romp that contains no dialogue. The sound has personality and character, verve and wit, inventiveness and style.’

Nominees:

▶ **Oliver Mapp – Bleach**, Arts University Bournemouth

▶ **Sean Valentine – Wild Swimmers**, Plymouth University

POSTGRADUATE AWARDS

Postgraduate Animation

The Grey Hound

Josh Saunders, Royal College of Art

‘Occasionally, animation can deliver an idea, or feeling, or emotion in a way that no other medium can. This film is a prime example of this, exploring mental illness with a fluidity of thought and imagery that only animation can achieve.’

Nominees:

▶ **A Love Story**, Anushka Kishani Naanayakkara, Khaled Gad and Elena Ruscombe-King, National Film and Television School

▶ **The Alan Dimension**, Jac Clinch, Millie Marsh and Jonathan Harbottle, National Film and Television School

Postgraduate Comedy & Entertainment

The Love Gym

Raphael Beaulieu and Marika Santala, National Film and Television School

‘A great concept, brilliantly executed. Being character-led rather than overtly scripted meant the right balance of charm, naughtiness and naturalism. The jury wanted to watch more!’

Nominees:

▶ **Flirt**, Alex West, Cameron Stott, Giuseppe Mineo, Dan Tonkin and Samuel James Klein, Bournemouth University

▶ **The Great British Butler**, Ian Packard and Tom Day, National Film and Television School

Postgraduate Drama

Ferris and the Fancy Pigeon

James Gardner and Helene Sifre, National Film and Television School

‘An uplifting, heart-warming coming-of-age comedy; mixing grounded, kitchen-sink-style drama with heightened moments and flights of fancy.’

Nominees:

▶ **Mia**, Maria Martinez Bayona and Marie-Elena Dyché, National Film and Television School

▶ **Stains**, Sara Koozehchian, University of Sunderland

Postgraduate Factual

Uprooted

Ross Domoney, Joseph Comar, Tom Jenkins, Marina Elderton and Tim Parris, National Film and Television School

‘A beautifully crafted film that demonstrated a real understanding of how personal stories, powerfully told, can be used to shine a light on a wider political issue.’

Nominees:

▶ **Forest Gate Girls**, Tariq Elmeri and Khaled Gad, National Film and Television School

▶ **The Sunflower Inn**, Miriam Ernst, National Film and Television School

Postgraduate News

The Naked Truth: Britain’s Cyber Sperm Donors

Kit Bradshaw and Rosalind Church, City, University of London

‘Confidently produced and well reported, it took us into a new and terrifying world none of us knew about. The murky world of online sperm donation was dealt with in a compassionate and brave way by the team who had managed to persuade some fantastic characters to tell their very personal stories. A really well-told piece that could be broadcast on any channel.’

Nominees:

▶ **Palmyra: How I Escaped Daesh**, Areej Zayat, Goldsmiths, University of London

▶ **The Green and White Army**, Gregor Aiken, University of Central Lancashire

Postgraduate Craft Skills – Camerawork

Krzysztof Trojnar – Mia

National Film and Television School

‘The jury admired the beauty of composition and how every shot seemed to have been carefully considered.’

Nominees:

▶ **Adeyinka Edward and Alville Naterstad – A Love Story**, National Film and Television School

▶ **Arman Fayaz – Stains**, University of Sunderland

Postgraduate Craft Skills – Editing

Dennis Mabry – The Sunflower Inn

National Film and Television School

‘With no resorting to voiceover, the edit managed to deliver great clarity of storytelling and hugely contributed to the joy and warmth of the film.’

Nominees:

▶ **Joseph Comar – Mia**, National Film and Television School

▶ **Xanna Ward Dixon – The Alan Dimension**, National Film and Television School

Postgraduate Craft Skills – Production Design

Joelle Aoun – Mia

National Film and Television School

‘The production design was quietly effective in creating a distinct and clear vision for the film and was integral to its success.’

Nominees:

▶ **Solrun Osk Jónsdóttir – A Love Story**, National Film and Television School

▶ **Declan O’Brien – The Alan Dimension**, National Film and Television School

Postgraduate Craft Skills – Sound

Eleanor Nicholls – Mia

National Film and Television School

‘Sound was used very effectively in bringing to life the world of the film. Bold choices such as the use of silence at times, were greatly admired by the jury.’

Nominees:

▶ **Justin Dolby – The Alan Dimension**, National Film and Television School

▶ **Josh Saunders – The Grey Hound**, Royal College of Art

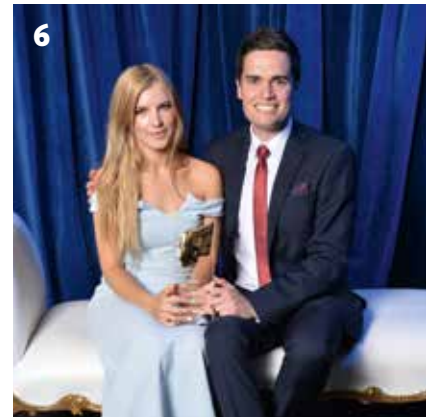
Judges’ Award

Bleach

Jesse Lewis-Reece, Ike Newman and Ania Polewiak, Arts University Bournemouth ■



Postgraduate Animation: *The Grey Hound*



1 Postgraduate Comedy & Entertainment: *The Love Gym*

2 Postgraduate Drama: *Ferris and the Fancy Pigeon*

3 Postgraduate Factual: *Uprooted*

4 Postgraduate Craft Skills – Camerawork: *Mia*

5 Postgraduate Craft Skills – Editing: *The Sunflower Inn*

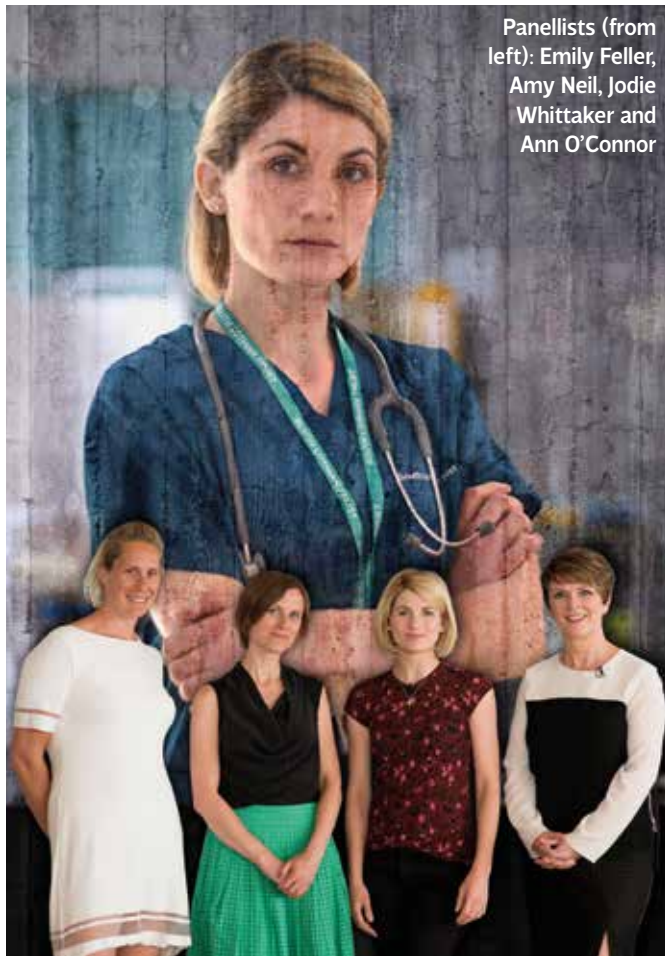
6 Postgraduate News: *The Naked Truth: Britain's Cyber Sperm Donors*

7 Postgraduate Craft Skills – Sound: *Mia*

8 Judges' Award: *Bleach*

All pictures: Richard Kendal

BBC thriller gets Salford premiere



Panellists (from left): Emily Feller, Amy Neil, Jodie Whittaker and Ann O'Connor

Claire Harrison/BBC

A screening of the opening episode of BBC One thriller *Trust Me* was followed by a hard-hitting discussion about the discrimination women face in the television industry.

Trust Me was made by Nicola Shindler's Red Production Company and stars Jodie Whittaker as a nurse, who, out of desperation, steals the identity of her friend, a former hospital doctor, and starts afresh, working in Edinburgh. But she lives with the constant threat of being discovered not only by her colleagues but by someone else hot on her trail.

Although *Trust Me* scriptwriter Dan Sefton is male, women outnumber men at Red by 24 to three. This sets it apart from most production companies. The producer of *Trust Me*, Emily Feller, and one of the directors, Amy Neil, were on hand, with *Broadchurch* star Whittaker, to discuss how to get more women into the television sector.

The RTS event in June at the Lowry Theatre, Salford, was chaired by ITV *Granada Reports* presenter Ann O'Connor, who asked, "Why don't female directors get the jobs?"

Although half the students at film school are female, only 13% of directors currently

working in TV are women. For writers, the percentage of women drops to 10%.

Whittaker said that, while it was the norm to "work with people you've already worked with", this vicious cycle needed breaking. "There is a perception that there is no one [female] at the right level," she said.

Neil agreed, adding that the language used in the TV industry was revealing: male directors were spoken of as "new, up-and-coming", while a female director at the same stage of her career was often referred to as "inexperienced" or even "a risk".

Feller argued that role models were important. "When I was starting out, apart from Nicola [Shindler], there were no young women with children," she said, adding that young women need to "see it to be it".

She said that female job hunters were routinely asked, "How do you work the childcare?", but men weren't.

Whittaker said: "We must take the gender out of the role." Neil suggested that quotas could encourage hirers to bring women into the industry, as long as they "deserve to be there; not be there to tick a box".

Carole Solazzo

ONLINE at the RTS

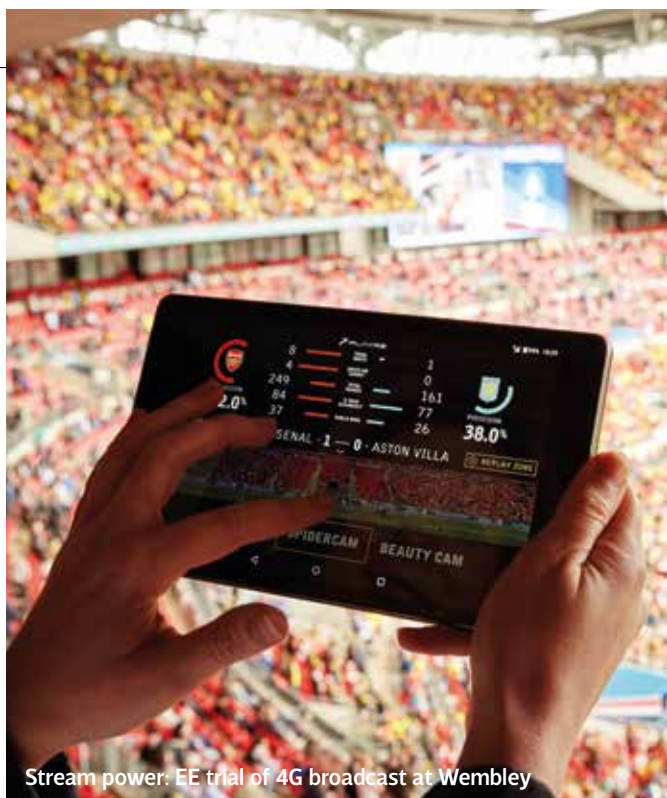
■ If your experience of the RTS website is limited to booking events, you're missing out. It is a hub for TV news and features – from finding out who's who in Sky Atlantic thriller *Riviera* to in-depth interviews, we've got something for everyone.

■ We're also working hard to help people break into TV, showcasing the huge range of jobs

on offer, from set decorator to stand-up comic. Our revamped RTS Futures website (www.rtsfutures.org.uk) offers a range of resources to those starting out in the industry, including handbooks on freelancing and how to be the best researcher. We're keen to hear from RTS members and telly fans about what they'd like to see on the website, so please get in touch: (pippa@rts.org.uk).

■ On the website this month you can watch highlights from the RTS Student Television Awards, which were hosted by comedian Katherine Ryan. 'I appreciate that you're making things when Kylie Jenner's Snapchat is so compelling on its own,' Ryan told the nominees as they gathered at the BFI in central London (www.rts.org.uk/StudentWinners2017).

■ In the final part of our series *Inside Sky's Election Campaign*, Sky News' senior political correspondent Beth Rigby looks back at June's general election. She reflects on the political campaigns, and asks whether journalists, politicians and the public could have foreseen the surprising result (www.rts.org.uk/BethRigby).
Pippa Shawley



Stream power: EE trial of 4G broadcast at Wembley

Rex/Oliver Rudkin

Thames Valley is upwardly mobile

Fabio Murra shared his wide knowledge of the latest developments in mobile TV technology with a Thames Valley Centre audience at the end of June. Drawing on industry reports, Murra –

who is senior vice-president for product and marketing at video compression outfit V-Nova – illustrated the massive expansion in streaming.

Netflix has increased the number of its subscribers from 22 million in 2005 to

100 million in 2017, he revealed. Even more impressively, gaming platform Twitch, which is only six years old, has built a monthly user base of 100 million.

High demand at peak times put increased strain on content delivery networks, said Murra. To keep up with this growth, internet companies have been investing in these networks, with unicast and multicast IP delivery systems fighting for supremacy.

Viewers expect the same quality of video and audio that traditional broadcasting offers, but mobile broadcasters struggle to cope with the impact of buffering, contented data circuits and image compression artefacts.

The Streaming Video Alliance, which was established in November 2014, represents companies from across the streaming industry, and aims to promote best practice in online video and to tackle quality issues.

Murra's company, V-Nova, is committed to supporting these efforts. At the end of the evening, he demonstrated some of the internet compression methods that V-Nova uses to improve the mobile viewing experience.

Tony Orme

Legal eagle swoops into Dublin



Michael Hinkson

Charles Byrne

■ Solicitor Michael Hinkson brought the Republic of Ireland Centre up to date on the latest developments in media copyright law at an event in mid-June.

In his talk at RTÉ, Dublin, "The right stuff", Hinkson discussed the copyright challenges facing TV in the digital age. He argued that rights owners need, as never before, to protect their assets.

In the past, copyright infringement generally concerned the illegal copying of DVDs and videos; now it is streamed content where copyright is being breached.

Hinkson outlined the impact on the television industry of several key legal cases in Ireland, the UK and Europe. He also explained to RTS members how website blocking orders are used to tackle online infringement of rights, and the progress being made to control illegal media players and video streaming services.

Hinkson is a copyright solicitor at Gandon Law in Clonskeagh, Dublin. He currently represents TV channels Racing UK and Turf TV.

Charles Byrne

Derry welcomes RTS Futures

■ RTS Futures Northern Ireland held its first event outside Belfast – "Get your foot in the door" – at Magee College, Derry/Londonderry, at the end of May.

The panel assembled for the event brought together some of the most influential members of the local media industry: John McDaid (from

children's indie Dog Ears); Shauna Shivers (Cinemagic film festival); Keith O'Grady (Brassneck Productions); Niamh O'Donnell (factual indie Alleycats); and BBC Radio Foyle presenter Dean McLaughlin.

Phillip McGonigle, a past RTS Futures NI member who is now working his way up

the production ladder, chaired the event.

The panel discussed the health of the media industry in and around Derry, gave tips on how to network, talked about the best ways to get into the industry and offered advice on how to structure a CV.

Laurence Doherty

OFF MESSAGE

Everyone knows that the days are long gone when the summer TV schedules were stuffed full of repeats. Even so, how strange it was to see a two-hour marathon, *Melvyn Bragg on TV: The Box That Changed the World*, slapped into the middle of BBC Two's Saturday-night schedule earlier this month.

For culture watchers and devotees of British TV history, the programme was essential viewing.

The show's timing marked what many people believe to be the dying embers of the broadcast era and the beginnings of a new, online TV era.

News, entertainment, reality, satire and TV's coverage of the arts were all discussed at some length by different groups of talking heads.

But, surely, *The Box That Changed the World* would have worked even better as a fully fledged series, ideally on BBC Four?

■ **How does Andy Harries (interviewed on page 22) do it? It must be all that hot yoga.**

The night before hosting Left Bank's 10th anniversary party, Harries was spotted at Notting Hill's famed watering hole The Elgin, chilling out alongside surviving members of The Clash, the Sex Pistols and The Blockheads.

He was there to toast former Malcolm McLaren associate, designer and director Nick Egan, who was celebrating his 60th birthday. The

two had once collaborated on a film documenting the heyday of the Sex Pistols.

Twenty-four hours later, a bright-eyed and bushy-tailed Harries was greeting guests on the magnificent roof terrace of London's hippest hotel, The Ned. Yes, there's even an infinity pool.

And what a do it was. Cannes-style glamour laced with British self-deprecation, recreated in EC2 on one of the hottest nights of the year.

Off Message was delighted to be there. The vodka cocktails were sublime and the Peking duck wasn't bad, either.

It was cheering to hear Harries singling out two of the women who have contributed so much to Left Bank's success, co-founder and Managing Director Marigo Kehoe and creative director Suzanne Mackie.

■ Many of you will have noticed that Chris Patten has just published his memoirs. It's no great surprise that he doesn't dwell on his experience as BBC Chairman, an unhappy period of his life.

It was, unfortunately, he who gave the top job to the luckless George Entwistle. As Patten acknowledges in the book, he should have gone straight away for Tony Hall. But hindsight, as they say, is a wonderful thing.

The erstwhile Hong Kong governor reveals that he found the BBC job 10 times more difficult than he expected it to be.

Let's hope that David Clementi's experience will be a lot less trying than Patten's.

■ **Intriguing that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has tweaked its name. In case you hadn't noticed, the new title is the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport. And do pay close attention to the punctuation. The mandarins at DCMS – as it is still called – thought long and hard over where to put the comma after the word Culture. Weeks, we're told.**

In the logo, the comma is missing but, when it is written in full, the comma appears. As if the digital world isn't already confusing enough.

Off Message rather liked it when this part of Whitehall was known simply as the Ministry of Fun.

■ And finally, congratulations to all involved in TV's big summer hit, *Celebrity Love Island* on ITV2.

Everyone's hooked on it, from Liam Gallagher to rugby star James Haskell. Off Message wonders if tennis's new British ace, Johanna Konta, is a fan?

The show's success proves that, despite *Big Brother*'s problems, the right reality format, carefully cast, can still cut it. Back in 2006, *Love Island*, originally on ITV's main channel, was axed after two series. Then, in 2015, the show was revived.

And, who knows, Channel 5 might yet be able to successfully revive *Big Brother*.



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A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITY

RTS CAMBRIDGE CONVENTION 2017



13-15 SEPTEMBER

King's College, Cambridge

Co-chaired by Andrew Griffith, Group Chief Operating Officer at Sky and Gary Davey, Managing Director, Content at Sky

Confirmed speakers include:

David Abraham
CEO, Channel 4

Chris Banatvala
Independent Media Consultant

Sir David Clementi
Chairman, BBC

Damian Collins MP

Gary Davey
Managing Director, Content, Sky

Nancy Dubuc
CEO, A+E Networks

Philip Edgar-Jones
Director, Sky Arts

Peter Fincham
Co-CEO, Expectation

Cécile Frot-Coutaz
CEO, FremantleMedia Group

Siobhan Greene
Head of Entertainment, ITV

Andrew Griffith
Group Chief Operating Officer, Sky

Michelle Guthrie
Managing Director, ABC

Tony Hall
Director-General, BBC

James Harding
Director, News & Current Affairs, BBC

Andy Harries
CEO, Left Bank Pictures

Tim Hincks
Co-CEO, Expectation

Jonathan Levy
Director of Newsgathering and Operations, Sky

David Lynn
President & CEO, Viacom International Media

Anne Mensah
Head of Drama, Sky

Stuart Miller
Head of News, BuzzFeed

Tom Mockridge
CEO, Virgin Media

Alexi Mostrous
Head of Investigations, The Times

James Murdoch
CEO, 21st Century Fox

Richard Osman
Producer/Presenter

Kate Phillips
Controller, Entertainment Commissioning, BBC

James Purnell
Director, Radio & Education, BBC

Barbara Serra
Presenter/Correspondent, Al Jazeera English

Sophie Turner Laing
CEO, Endemol Shine Group

Kirsty Wark
Broadcaster

Sharon White
CEO, Ofcom

Kelly Williams
Commercial Director, ITV

Andy Wilman
Executive Producer, The Grand Tour

Registration:
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