

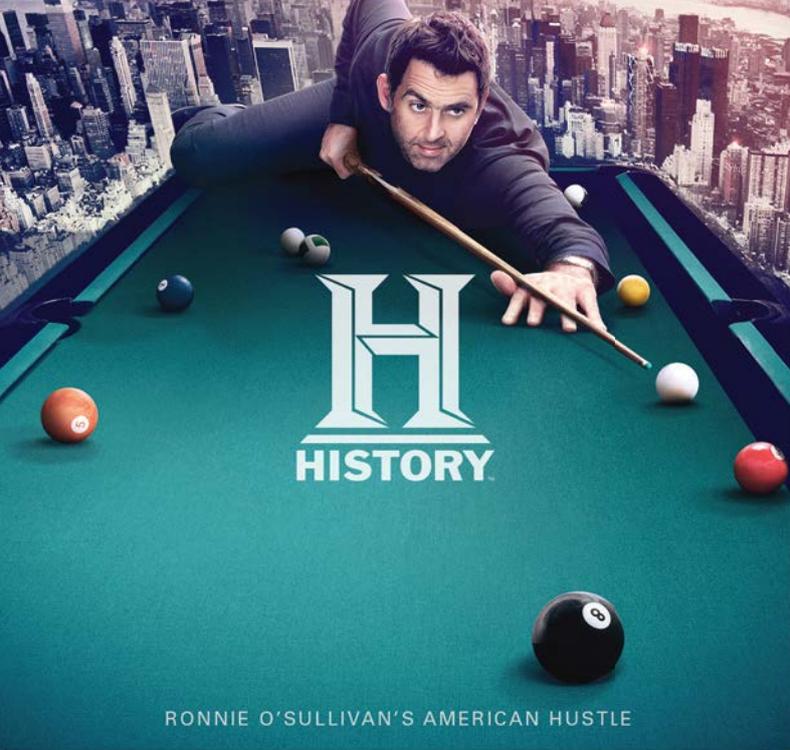
September 2017

Television



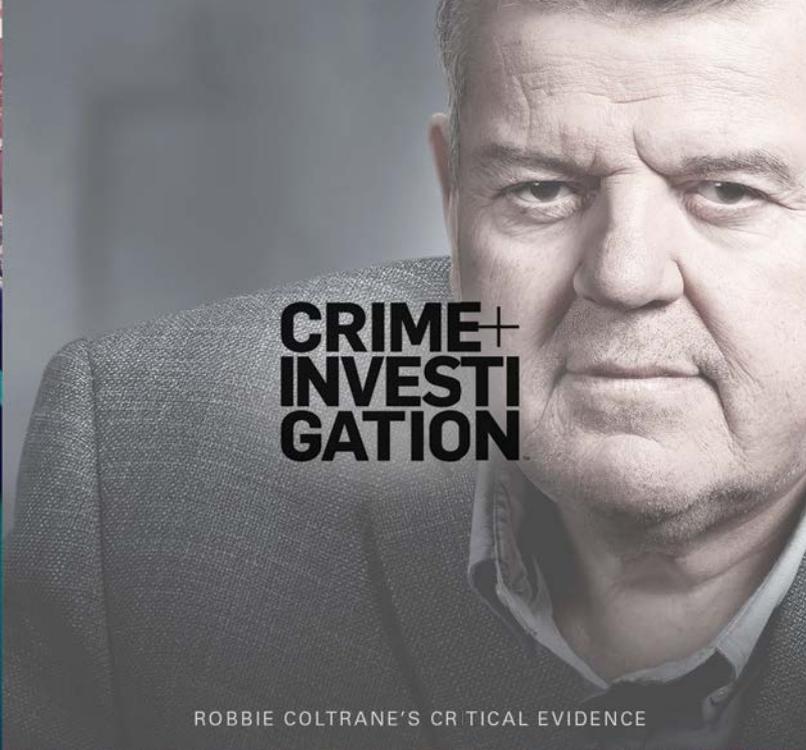
Sequels:
**Live long and
prosper**





H
HISTORY

RONNIE O'SULLIVAN'S AMERICAN HUSTLE



CRIME+
INVESTIGATION

ROBBIE COLTRANE'S CRITICAL EVIDENCE



H2

DEFENDERS OF THE SKY



LIFETIME

BRITAIN'S NEXT TOP MODEL



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SWAMP PEOPLE

A+E
NETWORKS
UK

LIFE, MAGNIFIED.



From the CEO



Our flagship RTS Cambridge Convention is fast approaching. With the help of our Principal Patron Sky, and our esteemed Cambridge Advisory

Committee, we have assembled a stellar line-up of speakers and contributors.

The emphasis will be on how the UK can forge new, wider relationships in the post-Brexit world, both at home and overseas. Global television leaders will also consider the ways in which policy-makers can help create the best policy environment to facilitate the kind of creative endeavour for which we are world renowned.

Talking of which, this month's cover story sees Mark Lawson analysing the ingredients for a successful sequel

series. Don't miss this hugely perceptive piece.

The RTS celebrates its 90th anniversary this month. How time flies! Steve Clarke looks back at what the Society has achieved since the pioneering days of John Logie Baird to the present, digital era.

It's been a challenging time for Londoners and Mancunians. The fallout from the tragedy of Grenfell Tower and the terrorist attacks earlier this year are still with us. Stewart Purvis examines how broadcasters have responded to these events. He asks if television news hasn't sometimes been too ready to put emotion before objective journalism.

It's fitting that, as we get ready for the Cambridge Convention, this month's Our Friend column is by the editor of *BBC Look East*, Nikki

O'Donnell, who is based in that other great East Anglian hub city, Norwich.

I am delighted that, in addition to Cambridge, the RTS is preparing a packed autumn events calendar. Peter Kosminsky will be in conversation with *Channel 4 News* presenter Fatima Manji on 30 August. He will be discussing his new Channel 4 drama, *The State*.

Other treats in store are the inaugural Steve Hewlett Memorial Lecture, given by Nick Robinson, an evening with Lord Puttnam and our latest Joint Public Lecture with the IET. Thrillingly, our speaker is astronaut Tim Peake.

Theresa Wise

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National events

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Wednesday 30 August
In conversation with Peter Kosminsky

Director Peter Kosminsky will be in conversation with *Channel 4 News* presenter Fatima Manji, talking about his new drama, *The State*. 6:30pm for 6:45pm
Venue: *Vue West End, 3 Cranbourn Street, Leicester Square, London WC2H 7AL*

RTS CONFERENCE

13-15 September
RTS Cambridge Convention 2017: 'A world of opportunity'

Please see the back page for the full list of confirmed speakers. 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*

RTS FUTURES

Tuesday 26 September
Breaking into broadcasting
6:45pm for 7:00pm start
Venue: *Channel 4, 124 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2TX*

JOINT EVENT

Thursday 28 September
First annual Steve Hewlett Memorial Lecture given by **Nick Robinson**
Jointly organised by the RTS and the Media Society. Free to full RTS members with advance booking. 6:30pm for 7:00pm
Venue: *University of Westminster, 4-12 Little Titchfield Street, London W1W 7BY*

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Wednesday 4 October
Lord Puttnam in conversation with Ed Vaizey MP

6:30pm for 6:45pm
Venue: *Channel 4, 124 Horseferry Road, London SW1P 2TX*

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*

RTS/IET JOINT PUBLIC LECTURE

Wednesday 25 October
Tim Peake, ESA astronaut
Venue: *IET London, 2 Savoy Place, London WC2R 0BL*

RTS MASTERCLASSES

Tuesday 14 November
RTS Student Programme Masterclasses
Venue: *IET London, 2 Savoy Place, London WC2R 0BL*

Wednesday 15 November
RTS Student Craft Skills Masterclasses

Venue: *IET London, 2 Savoy Place, London WC2R 0BL*

RTS AWARDS

Monday 27 November
RTS Craft & Design Awards 2017
Venue: *London Hilton on Park Lane, London W1K 1BE*

Local events

BRISTOL

Monday 11 September
The making of *Three Girls*
With director Philippa Lowthorpe, writer Nicole Taylor, executive producer Susan Hogg, editor Úna Ní Dhonghaile, and director of photography Matt Gray
Venue: *Cinema 3, Watershed, 1 Canon's Rd, Bristol BS1 5TX*

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*

■ Belinda Biggam
■ belindabiggam@hotmail.com

DEVON & CORNWALL

■ Jane Hudson
■ RTSDevonandCornwall@rts.org.uk

EAST

■ Nikki O'Donnell
■ nikki.odonnell@bbc.co.uk

LONDON

■ Daniel Cherowbrier
■ daniel@cherowbrier.co.uk

MIDLANDS

Thursday 30 November
Gala Dinner and Awards 2017
Venue: *National Motorcycle Museum, Solihull B92 0EJ*
■ Jayne Greene 07792 776585
■ jayne@ijmmedia.co.uk

NORTH EAST & THE BORDER

Friday 8 September
Awards launch and social
Venue: *TBC*

Thursday 12 October

An audience with Fiona Armstrong
Venue: *Cumbria, TBC*
■ Jill Graham
■ jill.graham@blueyonder.co.uk

NORTH WEST

Thursday 28 September
Awards launch party
6:30pm launch event; 8:30pm party at the Alchemist, MediaCity
Venue: *Compass Room, The Lowry, Salford Quays M50 3AZ*
Saturday 11 November
RTS North West Awards
Venue: *Hilton Deansgate, 303 Deansgate, Manchester M3 4LQ*
■ Rachel Pinkney 07966 230639
■ RPinkney@rts.org.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

Thursday 16 November
Programme Awards 2017
6:00pm
Venue: *The MAC, 10 Exchange Street West, Belfast BT1 2NJ*
■ John Mitchell
■ mitch.mvbroadcast@btinternet.com

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

■ Charles Byrne (353) 87251 3092
■ byrnecc@iol.ie

SCOTLAND

■ Jane Muirhead
■ scotlandchair@rts.org.uk

SOUTHERN

Wednesday 4 October
IBC review
Panel discussion. Joint Thames Valley and Southern centres event. 7:00pm for 7:30pm
Venue: *Central Studio, Queen Mary's College, Cliddesden Road, Basingstoke RG21 3HF*
■ Stephanie Farmer
■ SFarmer@bournemouth.ac.uk

THAMES VALLEY

Wednesday 4 October
IBC review
Venue: *Central Studio, Queen Mary's College, Cliddesden Road, Basingstoke RG21 3HF*
Friday 17 November
Annual Dinner Dance
7:00pm
Venue: *De Vere Wokefield Estate, Mortimer RG7 3AE*
■ Tony Orme
■ RTSThamesValley@rts.org.uk

WALES

■ Hywel Wiliam 07980 007841
■ hywel@aim.uk.com

YORKSHIRE

■ Lisa Holdsworth 07790 145280
■ lisa@allonewordproductions.co.uk

TV diary

Christmas comes early for **Daisy Goodwin** as she discovers that writing TV drama is anything but straightforward



The country is basking in a heatwave, and I am at the laptop trying to write the *Victoria* Christmas special. I put on some carols for atmosphere and wonder whether a mince pie would help.

It doesn't. For inspiration, I look at Victoria's own watercolours of Christmas at Windsor. Albert wanted to recreate the Christmases of his Coburg childhood and he put up a tree for each of their nine children, hanging them from the ceiling with tables, called altars, for presents underneath. For all their cosy, domestic image Victoria and Albert, weren't afraid of a little bling.

■ **An email from Mammoth, the company that makes *Victoria*, summoning me to a conference call. I have worked in factual TV for 30 years and can count the conference calls I have made on my fingers.**

But since I joined the esoteric cult that is TV drama, I find that the conference call where one party is inevitably on top of a mountain or is a really heavy breather has become an almost daily occurrence.

For the sake of my blood pressure, I have learnt to put the calls on speaker and to practise sun salutations while others talk.

This call is about the production implications of the Christmas Special. Can we really achieve a frozen lake in August? I am attempting, unsuccessfully, to hold a crow pose, when we decide that it is possible to erect a skating rink outside the aircraft hanger that we call Buckingham Palace.

There are times when I am in awe of the power of my words to cause mayhem. But then, a Christmas special wouldn't be special without a skating rink, a parrot and nine hanging trees covered in authentic Victorian gingerbread.

■ When I tell my teenage daughter about the show, she says: "It had better be good, Mum. There is nothing worse than a duff Christmas special."

My hairdresser sighs and says: "I don't envy you the responsibility."

The producer asks hopefully: "Will anybody die, as our cast budget is pretty much spent?"

I start looking at flights to places with no broadband for the festive period.

■ **I am flying to Los Angeles for the Television Critics Association's biannual bash, where shows are presented to the American press. At home, the writer just shows up, talks and then goes home on the Tube.**

In LA, even the writer has their own make-up artist. Mine is a Native American who loves *Victoria*; he is

disappointed that I haven't brought a tiara.

I pontificate for hours about my inspiration for *Victoria* (a mixture of her diaries, my teenage daughter and a lifetime's passion for queens) and then am accosted by an American journalist who asks me if Victoria is the mother of Elizabeth II.

I worry sometimes that there are no surprises in *Victoria*, that the plots are all there in Wikipedia, so I find this rather cheering.

■ Killing time at the airport, I have a look at my new favourite Facebook page, "For the love of Vicbourne", where viewers have created a parallel universe in which Victoria and Lord Melbourne confound history and consummate their relationship in some very steamy fan fic.

There isn't much sex in *Victoria*. I am a great believer in the erotic power of suggestion, but it is clear that my viewers have no trouble at all in filling in what happens next.

■ **My older daughter is now my writing partner and, after a dinner where we talk about the best way of dramatising the Charge of the Light Brigade with 10 extras and some iffy CGI, my husband groans: "Now I know how Prince Charles feels. Isn't it time that Victoria abdicated?"**

Daisy Goodwin is a writer and producer.

Content

As the producers of *Game of Thrones* develop spin-off shows, **Mark Lawson** assesses what makes a hit sequel

In the first episode of the seventh, and penultimate, season of *Game of Thrones*, a new character, played by Jim Broadbent, consoles those who are gloomy about the terrible freeze descending on Westeros: “Every winter that ever came has ended.”

This moral may also contain a message for fans melancholy at the impending end of the fantasy war drama itself, as it seems increasingly likely that the final wintry showdown will be followed by a creative spring.

The show’s maker, HBO, has confirmed that it has teams of writers working on four possible spin-offs from the franchise. These extension projects – at least two of which are expected to reach the screen – are reportedly either prequels or standalone narratives for featured characters. These, traditionally, have been the two most common ways of keeping alive a TV hit that has come to a natural end.

Game of Thrones also easily fulfills the two most common criteria for trying to prolong shows that have left the schedules – demand from viewers and supply of finance to the producers.

In any discussion of this subject, first among sequels is the stable started running by *Star Trek* (NBC, 1966–69), which has, so far, resulted in six spin-offs, the latest of which, *Star Trek Discovery*, premieres at the end of this month on CBS and Netflix. A new episode will be released for streaming each week starting on 25 September, the day after the first episode airs on CBS. In the US, CBS All Access will stream the show; in the rest of the world, it will be available on Netflix.

Four of the previous follow-up shows ran for longer than the original, including *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (1987–94), the title of which has become useful shorthand for one means of stretching an idea: a time-jump. Patrick Stewart was exploring space a century after William Shatner had.

First among sequels





Game of Thrones

Sky

In the wake of the Starship Enterprise, two series with a highly impressive record of reproduction are ITV hits of different eras. The sitcom *Man About the House* (Thames TV, 1973-76), in which Richard O'Sullivan shared a flat with Paula Wilcox and Sally Thomsett, lucratively expanded the situation twice.

The original trio's landlords, a bickering couple played by Yootha Joyce and Brian Murphy, moved upmarket to a modern house in *George and Mildred* (1976-79), followed by the O'Sullivan character's move into the restaurant business in *Robin's Nest* (1977-81).

Although none of the iterations is regarded as a classic, the franchise – created and largely written by Brian Cooke and Johnnie Mortimer – stands high in any spin-off batting average. The shows provided ITV with 17 high-rating, peak-time series over eight years.

That innings is eclipsed, though, by the broadcasting performance of the detective characters drawn from the novels of Colin Dexter. *Inspector Morse* (ITV, 1987-2000) spawned both a sequel – *Lewis* (2006-15), which promoted Kevin Whately, previously John Thaw's sidekick, to protagonist – and a prequel, *Endeavour*, that has been running since 2012, with Shaun Evans playing Morse earlier in his career.

Remarkably, this trilogy has so far provided 83 peak-time drama episodes (of 90-120 minutes in length) over a span of three decades.

In baseball terms, the *Man About the House* and *Morse* sequences are batting three for three. Two recent American series, though still early in the game, are two for two: *Breaking Bad/Better Call Saul* and *The Good Wife/The Good Fight*.

These examples become even more noteworthy when judged against the many hits whose spin-offs have fallen short. Television history is filled with examples of the risks of trying to turn a storytelling full-stop – whether for economic or sentimental reasons – into a semicolon.

The bar-based sitcom *Cheers* (NBC, 1982-93) instructively provides an example of both the best and the worst that can happen when expanding a programme.

Frasier (NBC, 1993-2004) is a very rare American example of the second generation matching the success of the first, perhaps because it cleverly explored the backstory of a character, the psychiatrist played by Kelsey Grammer, whose past in Seattle had been a tantalising aspect of the original.

And yet, as a terrible warning against drawing from the same well too often, *The Tortellis* (NBC, 1987), which filled out the home life of minor relatives of a major character, Rhea Perlman's Carla, received jeers rather than cheers before being cancelled after 13 episodes.

In retrospect, the poster advertising the series seems intriguingly defensive: the tagline, "not just another family comedy, not just another family", suggests a dawning realisation that the relatively novel setting of a bar had been replaced by a much more routine domestic scene.

*M*A*S*H* (CBS, 1972-83), despite competing with *Cheers* in polls of top-10 comedies, spawned unwanted twins, *AfterMASH* (1983-85) and *Trapper John, MD* (1979-86), which followed staff from the Korean War medical corps into civilian existence in the US.

Tellingly, these series were literally asked to fill the gap, occupying the mother show's peak-time slot. But, although the latter managed a healthy run, the spin-off projects raised the question that all continuations have to tackle: how far should the sequel repeat the original situation?

What had been, through the Korean conflict setting, an unusual doctors-and-nurses show became, when relocated to America, another standard example of the genre.

A further problem for *M*A*S*H* was that the most marketable actor from the show, Alan Alda, had moved on to movies.

Friends (NBC, 1994-2004) faced similar difficulties: Jennifer Aniston became a bona fide Hollywood superstar, following George Clooney in denoting the perception that small-screen stars lacked transferrable cinematic talents.

As Courteney Cox, Lisa Kudrow and David Schwimmer also made significant impacts in film, any *Friends* spin-offs were limited to those performers for whom TV continued to be an attractive option, such as Matt LeBlanc.

His thick but libidinous character, Joey Tribbiani, a struggling actor, was given his own show, *Joey*, in which the lovably dumb Italian-American pursued movie fame in LA, a plot line that may have been psychologically complex for LeBlanc, as he watched Aniston and other *Friends* alumni making the transition for real.

Joey prospered enough in its premiere season to win a second, which was then cancelled halfway through ▶



An expanding universe: the original *Star Trek*; *Star Trek: The Next Generation*; *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*; *Star Trek: Voyager*; and *Star Trek: Enterprise*

CBS

› when it came up against the ratings juggernaut of *American Idol*. The show, though, had an inbuilt design fault that is the reason many extension projects fail: what had been loved as an ensemble piece gave birth to a single-character sitcom.

In TV fiction, as in sport, there are performers who continue to flourish when transferred to another arena, and those who are revealed to have been carried by the original team.

So, what might the writers working on the *Game of Thrones* carry-ons learn from these past examples?

As *Lewis/Endeavour*, *George and Mildred/Robin's Nest* and *Frasier* show, it seems crucial to choose characters and actors who account for a major part of the audience's original investment in the show.

But this is complicated, in the *Game of Thrones* continuations, by the fact that George RR Martin, author of the source novels, plans to publish another two books in the series which, presumably, might one day become *Game of Thrones 2* for HBO.

And, unless contract negotiations or arrangements are already in place, the battles-and-dragons franchise also seems at risk of its core cast becoming unavailable or unaffordable: especially Kit Harington, Emilia Clarke and Peter Dinklage.

FOUR OF [STAR TREK'S SPIN-OFF] SHOWS RAN FOR LONGER THAN THE ORIGINAL

One solution to actor drop-out is to visit the figure when younger, an approach that delivers continuity despite recasting, as *Endeavour*, *Prime Suspect 1973* and *Rock & Chips* (a prequel to *Only Fools and Horses*) proved, in descending order of success.

John Sullivan's Del Boy sitcom also touted a second, slightly dodgy spin-off, *The Green Green Grass*, which followed two minor characters from Peckham to Shropshire.

The biggest lesson, though, is to stay close to what made the first show work.

Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads? (BBC One, 1973-74) succeeded equally with viewers who knew the central cast from the 1964 series, *The Likely Lads*, and a new audience that didn't even realise it was a sequel or spin-off.

Crucially, Rodney Bewes's Bob and James Bolam's Terry remained in the same north-eastern locations, even

though their prospects and relationship had been changed by time.

In contrast, even if it had not been hobbled by the sudden death of Ronnie Barker's co-star, Richard Beckinsale, *Going Straight* (BBC, 1978) would surely never have repeated the appeal of *Porridge* (1974-77), because the initial prison setting was inherently more compelling than the situation of old lags on the outside.

Game of Thrones has the advantage of having always been a multi-location show, moving between the various kingdoms and dynasties, which makes it possible to pitch new shows in gaps on the map or in family trees.

But no continuation project can solve the problem that what the audience really wants is more of *Game of Thrones* in its present form, which can only happen when the cast and more Martin novels are available.

Most fans of any series have fantasies about it somehow carrying on. Personally, I'd like to know what happened in the presidency of Matt Santos (Jimmy Smits), who is elected at the end of *The West Wing* (NBC, 1999-2006), my single favourite TV show.

But even a writer as talented as Aaron Sorkin probably can't make creative lightning strike twice in the same place. Sometimes, it's better for "The End" to mean what it says. ■



Sky

Standing start for Sky's action man

When, each morning at 7.30am, Andrew Griffith arrives at his office at Sky's impressive new central block in Osterley – the one in the background on Sky News – he does not slump in his chair. He does not have a chair.

This is not a case of fanatical hot-desking, although he is one of the few senior execs to have his own defined space in the new building. Sky's 45-year-old chief operating and chief financial officer prefers to stand: better energy levels, shorter conversations.

For a suit (actually, he is in an expensive but open-neck blue shirt when we talk), he strikes me as a man of action. On his left, by a 4K TV, lie a replica revolver and a baseball bat. I am sure there is nothing to be alarmed about.

I ask about the atmosphere at Sky

The Billen profile

Andrew Billen discovers that Sky COO **Andrew Griffith** boosts his energy levels at work by avoiding sitting down

as the planned, £11.7bn takeover by Fox grinds on. There is nothing new to say, aside from “business as usual”.

I move instead to the RTS Cambridge Convention, which Griffith and Gary Davey, Sky's managing director of content, are jointly chairing and which will star his ultimate boss, James Murdoch, who is giving the keynote address. I ask if Cambridge's

true purpose is networking. He says, no, it provides a place to talk, and, right now, there is much to talk about. “The retinue of the industry itself is changing, but the industry is also part of things like Brexit,” he says. “There's a lot of change in the world. It's a once-in-two-years chance to take stock and talk about the opportunities for our industry.”

The Sky story is remarkable, and I speak as one of the first people to buy a dish in 1989 and one of the first to upgrade to a digibox and then Sky+ and, most recently, Sky Q. It began as a joke in panto and ended as one of the gorillas in broadcasting's jungle, with 11.4 million Sky TV viewers in Britain and Ireland.

Its investment in Britain has been remarkable and innovative, not only technologically, but in programming, particularly in sports and news, changing both for ever. Sky Atlantic >

Griffith's reach for the Sky



Sky

Andrew Griffith, group chief operating officer and chief financial officer at Sky

Married since 1997, to Barbara, volunteer charity worker; one son, 15, one daughter, 13

Lives Putney, south-west London

Born February 1972. Brought up in Bromley, south-east London

Parents Father, John, IT salesman; mother, Janet; two brothers

Education St Mary and St Joseph's School, Sidcup; Nottingham University (studied law)

1992 Trainee chartered accountant, Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte

1996 Rothschild investment bank

1999 Joins Sky

2001 and **2005** stands as Tory parliamentary candidate for Corby

2008 Chief financial officer, Sky

2016 Chief operating officer, Sky

Watching *House of Lies* (comedy about self-loathing management consultant); *8 out of 10 Cats Does Countdown*,

Hobbies Travel and his pet Labrador

First satellite dish 1999 (when he joined Sky)



Guerrilla

Sky

› is as essential to viewing life in my home as BBC Two. Increasingly, the channel provides not merely must-see American series via HBO but original British series of real quality and ambition.

Yet, it does cross my mind that, following a quarter of a century of unstoppable growth, we may be reaching, at least in the UK (it has expanded now into Italy and Germany), peak Sky. Churn (the rate at which subscribers stop subscribing) remains higher than Sky would like, although a new loyalty programme is expected to bring this down. There is a lot of talk about Netflix and Amazon. Satellite dishes are beginning to look old tech.

"No," he says. "First of all, Sky is not just a UK business any more. Sky is one of the, if not the leading, European pay-TV businesses, and we added 700,000 new customers last year, taking us to 22.5 million.

"But, second, it's a long, long time since Sky has been defined by the dish."

Towards the end of this year, or the beginning of the next, the full Sky Q interface will be capable of delivery purely over the web, rather than, as at present, as a net-dish combo.

"One of the successes of Sky is that

we've always been, I won't say technology agnostic, but we've embraced every form of new technology to deliver different services," says Griffith. "So, we were one of the first to stream our channels live, and, obviously, the iPad or the tablet took that to new audiences and expanded the market still further."

Last year, I traded up to the new Sky Q box. He is interested in the teething problems I experienced – including the first box's replacement – and we exchange condolences over the agony and ecstasy of early adoption. Customer satisfaction scores for Sky Q are "now off the charts". Once customers get Q, they consume more content.

Yet, a friend of mine, fallen temporarily on hard times, has given back his digibox in favour of Sky's fifteen-quid Now TV box, with which he can pay for what he wants to see without taking out a subscription.

Griffith says that Sky does not break out how many Now TV boxes – which, significantly, are marketed without the Sky badge – are in homes right now. But he says the number is significant and that Sky's growth will, in future, come from such "incremental customers" as my friend and from existing

customers taking more products, such as Ultra-HD, mobile or buying movies.

"We used the pretty simplistic analogy of the BMW brand family, within which you've got the Mini, you've got the core BMWs and you've got those luxury ones. So, you're going to have different products in a more mature market. You're going to have a more segmented approach," he explains. "The good news is that this grows the overall market."

Following a major rejig to the Sky Sports offer last month, a Premier League fan can now add a channel showing that sport alone to their Sky package for just £18 a month.

Should it be lowering prices on a premium product? "Well, premium is the function of the quality of the product, not the price," Griffith responds. "We don't take a fee and just quadruple the price and expect it to be perceived in any different way. As ever, as a business, we'd like more customers. The value of lowering price is just to make it easier for new customers to find what they want and, ultimately, give them more value."

Last year, Sky paid an extra £629m for Premier League football rights, yet only reported a drop in profit of £97m as revenues grew and costs were curtailed. (delivering a still not-to-be-sneezed-at £1.3bn). The paradox is, I say, that competition between Sky and BT has made football more expensive for viewers.

"To watch Premier League for just £18 a month, with the high-quality production values and the way we support the game, is, I think, good value," he replies.

The rights bidding process does not – as I had always assumed – happen in an airless hotel room, but by email, after months of analysis. Does that part of the job stress him? "There are a lot of things that I feel stressed about."

He says that non-sports subscribers do not subsidise the sports watchers – "Why would we do that?" – and points out that the growth in Sky's customer base is no longer driven by sports but by new, drama-heavy services, such as Sky Atlantic and Box Sets.

He mentions *Riviera* as a home-grown drama hit (downloaded 17 million times) and is clearly an admirer of *Guerrilla*, but I wonder if, overall, he thinks Sky drama is quite there yet. "Oh, you're never there. I've been here for 17 years and, while it would be tempting to declare victory, it never happens."

Of course, there will be disappointments, too, such as series 2 of *Fortitude*.

"We're in the business of taking creative risks," he says. "That is at the heart of the content business and so, you know, it's good to fail sometimes. If we weren't failing, I would be worried that we weren't taking enough risk."

He grew up in south-east London, the oldest of three brothers. His father, John, was a manager at an IT company. His late mother, Janet, stayed at home to look after the family. He went to a comprehensive in Sidcup.

IT'S GOOD
TO FAIL
SOMETIMES.
IF WE WERE
NOT FAILING,
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WORRIED THAT
WE WEREN'T
TAKING
ENOUGH RISK

"Growing up in the 1970s, I was still in an era that remembered the test card. TV was something that happened in the evening and was a deliberate activity."

Did he have ambitions to work in TV? "I'm sure that, when I was very young, train driver and pilot featured quite prominently among careers that I might have considered. It's certainly true to say that it was not my ambition to end up as chief operating officer of Sky."

He went to Nottingham University to study law because it was an "interesting degree", but he quickly realised that a solicitor's life would be very far from the intellectual study of law. More interested "in the general idea of business", he spent three years qualifying as a chartered accountant at Coopers & Lybrand Deloitte.

From there, he worked for three years at Rothschild investment bank, advising corporate clients in the media and telecoms sector. He joined Sky in 1999 on the same day as his flamboyant boss, Tony Ball, just as the switch to digital was happening.

It was, he says, a big cultural change from the City to the "environs of Brentford. It was not as nice as it is now. It wasn't quite the shed where we started, but it was much closer to that than we are now."

Did he – does he – mix with the creatives? "I like to think that we're all creative. We certainly don't ghettoise the idea of 'you're a creative/you're not a creative'. Our creative people are business savvy and our business people are creative savvy."

Did his city-slicker friends say, "What are you doing, Andrew?"

He smiles and says: "I'm sure many of them did. And Sky itself was much less a proven winner in those days. We had just over 3 million customers. People were still debating whether Sky would be a success, not debating to what extent it would be a success."

"But there was something about Sky's attitude that attracted me. It was a challenger. It wasn't an incumbent."

The question is whether Sky is still the challenger, or has become the incumbent, and one with a typically lavish corporate HQ.

"But we're still the disruptor," Griffith insists. "We just find new ways to disrupt. So, you know, mobile [phones]. If you talk to any of the big mobile operators in the UK and ask, 'Who do you fear?' Or, 'Who's disrupting your industry?' someone like Sky would come off their lips pretty quickly."

The more I talk to Griffith, the more I can see why shareholders might wish to pay the high salary he commands.

He knows how to generate profit, whether by (annoyingly) placing commercial breaks in *Game of Thrones* (HBO in the US doesn't), or by targeting commercials to each and every Sky TV screen individually through a system called AdSmart (for which he is too modest to take sole credit), or by adding new customers.

What is life like outside work?

"I work pretty long hours. I do attend a lot of industry functions, but that's because I love our industry. I love what I do. It's not about what I get paid."

Do his two teenage children complain they don't see enough of him? "I think everyone would like to see more of their kids. That's important. And mine are growing up fast."

Back in 2001, and again four years later, Griffith stood as a Conservative for Parliament.

He told the local press he would put the needs of his constituents before a ministerial career. Both times, he lost to Labour.

One wonders what would have happened had he won. Let's just say, Philip Hammond might have a serious rival for his job. ■



A hug too far?

Britain suffered a late spring and early summer of terrorist and other man-made tragedies: the attacks at Westminster Bridge, Manchester Arena, London Bridge and Finsbury Park, and the Grenfell Tower fire. There were moments of very raw emotion amid the days of live TV coverage and even during the later, more reflective, reporting.

An eye-witness told the BBC of a victim who had their throat cut by one of the London Bridge attackers. We watched live on ITV as an elderly man gazed helplessly out of his window in a blazing tower block wondering if he would be burned alive.

For the first time I can remember on live television news, a presenter reached out and hugged an interviewee. This was not just a supportive shoulder or arm, but a full wraparound hug by Victoria Derbyshire for Grenfell Tower

TV news

Is TV's emotional reporting of events such as the Grenfell fire undermining journalistic detachment, asks **Stewart Purvis**

eyewitness Mahad Egal as he became distressed recalling residents jumping from flats and trying to throw children to safety.

How very different from BBC reporter Ben Brown's encounter with a tsunami survivor in Indonesia in December 2004, who started to sob on his shoulder: "In my Home Counties, public-school sort of way, I was stiff

and uncertain how to respond. My awkward body language seemed to tell her: come on woman, don't invade my space, pull yourself together. Didn't she know she was breaking the grammar of television news, where the correspondent – especially the BBC correspondent – can never be seen to 'cross the line'?" Brown wrote in the *Observer* in 2005.

Back in December 2004, Facebook hadn't reached its first birthday and Twitter didn't exist. Now, millions across the world regularly use these platforms to express their feelings about dramatic news anywhere in the world.

The hashtags #prayforparis and #JeSuisCharlie were watershed moments. Has this phenomenon inspired a new populism in broadcast reporting? Is TV now in an arms race with social media to be seen to care? And, if it is, what are the implications for calm, considered reporting? Certainly, the relationship between TV

SOME BROADCAST EDITORS FEEL THEY HAVE HAD TO RECALIBRATE THEIR REPORTING TO RESPOND TO THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA

news and social media has become increasingly symbiotic. Social-media users send in what are often the first pictures of breaking news and send out video clips from news programmes.

Derbyshire's producers posted her grammar-breaking clip on Facebook, where it has now reached over 11 million people, a very large multiple of those who saw it live on TV.

The online response was mostly positive. "How heart-breaking. Thank you for being so compassionate during this interview. What a credit to the BBC," said one tweeter. "Nice to know there are some compassionate journalists out there," said another.

Louisa Compton, editor of the Bafta-winning *Victoria Derbyshire* show, says: "It's important to point out that it was Victoria who ended the interview when Mahad got upset. It was her who said: 'You don't need to carry on'. It may have felt exploitative to have carried on, which is why we ended it there."

But there were critics online: "If she hadn't kept pushing him in the first place, he wouldn't have been sobbing on live TV," was among the negative tweets. One tweeted that "there's a very thin line between reporting a tragedy and intruding on it. Which side of that line are you on?"

As a co-author of the book *When Reporters Cross the Line*, I'm something of a historian of line-crossing and, some might argue, an early practitioner in the black arts of using emotion in TV news.

Twenty years ago, the debate was not just about whether the old media had intruded into a tragedy, but whether it had whipped up bogus sentimentality in response to it.

Conventional wisdom has it that the death of Diana, Princess of Wales marked the moment when the UK loosened its collective stiff upper lip and the British started being comfortable about grieving in public.

On the first day of continuous live coverage after the Paris car crash, as the very first flowers were laid outside Kensington Palace, ITN's troyal correspondent Nicholas Owen adopted a more personal, more emotional style

than viewers were used to. My memory is of initially being uncomfortable about it. But, hesitating before I asked the studio team to tone it down, I checked the feedback from viewers. They were overwhelmingly positive, singling out Nick for special praise.

He had caught the public mood better and earlier than anybody else. The conclusion was clear, viewers wanted to move on from the traditional style of reporting major news events: they wanted to see their feelings reflected more on screen.

Twenty years on, the events of 2017 have taken us to a collective high tide in the reporting of immediate popular sentiment. Given how far we have come, how much further do we want to go?

It is interesting to compare and contrast the reporting of the terrorist attacks with that of the Grenfell Tower fire. On 4 June, the *New York Times* front page was headlined, "Terrorist attacks in the heart of London leave six dead in a nation still reeling".

Author Robert Harris tweeted in response: "This sort of hyped-up headline does the terrorists' job for them. UK isn't 'reeling'". #ThingsThatLeaveBritainReeling trended as tweeters listed what really stirs the British. My own favourite was: "That awkward moment after you say goodbye to someone and walk off in the same direction." The spirit of the hour was a unified response with touches of the so-called "Blitz spirit". After the Manchester bombing, the media was full of how local communities had come together.

The Grenfell Tower reaction began in that same spirit, with the reports of donors providing vast quantities of food and replacement household goods.

On that first morning, rightly, there were immediate questions – credit

here to Piers Morgan on ITV – about the specifics of the fire precautions. Then, when the local council leader, the hapless Nicholas Paget-Brown, failed to demonstrate the required emotional literacy and his staff couldn't cope with the enormity of the task, the narrative in some of the broadcast media changed.

It was now a story of how one local community (the rich of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea) had failed another (the poor of North Kensington). Somehow, the authorities were deliberately falsifying the number of people who had died. But the rationale for them doing this was never explained.

Not long before, we had been united; now we were apparently angry with anybody who represented privilege or authority. For my own taste, there were moments when there was too much emotion and not enough cool reporting.

Social media provides limitless capacity for strong and not necessarily considered views. There are no judgments about proportionality, about the need for facts as well as emotions. That is what editors do.

There have been the first warning signs – I put it no higher than this – that some broadcast editors feel they have had to recalibrate their reporting to respond to the impact of social media.

Now, we learn that the evil Royal Borough was just one of more than 50 councils that used the same cladding on their tower blocks. Eventually, I suspect that we will get a verdict from the official inquiry that is less about class war and heartless authorities and more about local government finance and the business culture summarised in astronaut John Glenn's memory of lift-off: "I felt exactly how you would feel if you were getting ready to launch and knew you were sitting on top of 2 million parts – all built by the lowest bidder on a government contract." ■

Stewart Purvis is a former editor-in-chief of ITN and Ofcom regulator. He is a non-executive director of Channel 4 and writes here in a personal capacity.

IS TV NOW IN AN ARMS RACE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA TO BE SEEN TO CARE?



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RTS public event 'The Night Manager: Anatomy of a hit'

Celebration

The rise and rise of the RTS

Steve Clarke salutes the Society on the eve of its 90th birthday



It was a perfect autumn day and the guests enjoyed the warm sunshine as they walked across St James's Park. Their destination was a celebration marking the 75th anniversary of the Royal Television Society, hosted by His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales, the Society's Patron, and his wife, Camilla, the Duchess of Cornwall.

Inside St James's Palace, canapés were being nibbled and wine sipped. Television luminaires, including Sir David Attenborough – no stranger to royal circles, having filmed the Queen's Christmas Day broadcast inside Buckingham Palace – and Jon Snow, mixed

with senior British TV executives. All listened as the Prince spoke in that familiar, lower-register, regal voice. He stressed the RTS's importance as "the leading forum for discussion and debate on all aspects of the television industry".

"The Television Society was, as you all know, founded 75 years ago, following a lecture at Leeds University by John Logie Baird," he said. "When the Society began, it was principally as a place for scientists and engineers to exchange ideas about the exciting new medium. I am sure that the small group of television enthusiasts who came together in 1927 could not have imagined what was to come."

How right the Prince was. Fifteen years later, as the RTS reaches its 90th birthday on 7 September, the Society remains firmly at the heart of Britain's dynamic TV sector.

It may be approaching its tenth decade, but the Society, which is an educational charity, exhibits none of the characteristics of a typical 90-year-old. (By the way, the Television Society became the Royal Television Society in 1966, a time when the British people still watched TV in black and white.) Rather than slowing down, the RTS today is an energetic, vibrant meeting place for all sections of television and related sectors, such as online video. >



› Membership is growing. Today the Society has more than 4,500 members drawn from the creative, technology and business communities that television embraces.

As TV becomes portable and personalised, the Society’s regular debates and discussions shed light on a fast-evolving and complex globalised industry.

The RTS could not exist without the generous support of its Principal Patrons, the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and Sky. It is telling, however, that others, including International Patrons Liberty Global and YouTube, are drawn from a wide spectrum of companies that operate across the world.

At the same time as some technology companies are evolving into content providers (did anyone mention Netflix and Amazon?), traditional broadcasters are diversifying. Consider how Adam Crozier’s ITV has bought into US production, and BBC Studios is attempting to create commercial value for the corporation.

Throughout the UK, the RTS plays host to a compelling and eclectic events programme that aims to reflect these and other important developments in TV and beyond.

The Society’s many awards, both national and regional, meanwhile, are

THE SMALL GROUP OF TELEVISION ENTHUSIASTS WHO CAME TOGETHER IN 1927 COULD NOT HAVE IMAGINED WHAT WAS TO COME

bywords for excellence across genres and disciplines. These awards are regarded as the gold-standard by TV practitioners and media commentators. Jury chairs for the RTS Programme Awards have made a point of broadening the range of jurors to include more from ethnic-minority backgrounds.

The RTS Student Television Awards showcases films that frequently give the professionals a run for their money by virtue of their sheer originality.

In the past decade, the Society has put much more emphasis on encouraging young people to involve themselves in Society activities. The inspirational RTS Futures strand was launched in 2007. Its events are a must

for anyone who wants to break into television and the wider content arena.

RTS Futures has established the UK’s premier entry-level training fair for the television sector – this year, the Ultimate TV Careers Fair attracted a capacity crowd of 900.

The RTS’s bursary scheme, launched at the end of 2013 by The Prince of Wales, offers financial help to undergraduate students from less well-off homes who intend to study on TV-related university courses. To date, the RTS has given 100 bursaries to talented youngsters and is welcoming additional funding and places for the scheme from All3Media.

The Society has also pushed outwards and created events, such as its hugely successful “Anatomy of a hit” strand, that are more accessible to the general public. ITV’s *Broadchurch* was the first show to receive this treatment in 2013. *Sherlock*, *Doctor Who*, *Poldark*, *Humans*, *The Night Manager* and *The Crown* are among other series discussed under the “Anatomy of a hit” banner. These evenings often go viral on social media.

In 2014, the RTS and IET introduced their Joint Public Lecture. Sir Paul Nurse was the most recent speaker. Chaired by RTS Trustee and CEO of BBC Worldwide Tim Davie, the talks focus on



RTS conference speaker:
Ofcom CEO
Sharon White

All pictures: Paul Hampartourmian

Sir Peter Bazalgette, Siân Phillips, Bettany Hughes, Dawn Airey, Owen Jones and Michael Dobbs.

There are too many other memorable moments from attending RTS events to mention them all, but here are some personal standouts:

- A rare public speech by Rupert Murdoch, albeit beamed via satellite, given to Cambridge delegates
- TV executives playing *Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?*, also at Cambridge, and overseen by the late, great Andrea Wonfor (who, sadly, died in 2004)
- Dawn Airey's "films, football and fucking" speech, given at an RTS London dinner
- Viacom founder Sumner Redstone addressing the RTS
- An intimate afternoon encounter with Sir David Attenborough at the House of Commons
- The whoops of triumph from the Sky News table at the RTS Television Journalism Awards as the news provider nails yet another win as News Channel of the Year
- James Purnell and Jay Hunt boiling over as they discuss Channel 4's snatch of *The Great British Bake Off* at last year's RTS London Conference
- NBCU CEO Steve Burke's cogent and informative keynote speech at the 2016 conference
- BBC DG Tony Hall and ex-RTS President Peter Bazalgette being VR guinea pigs onstage at Cambridge 2015.

This is not to ignore the RTS's cherished history or to underestimate the ingenuity of John Logie Baird (44th in a 2002 BBC poll of the "100 Greatest Britons"), or that of his colleagues. During the interwar years, these brilliant engineers created the foundations for British television to become the world-class programme provider that it is today.

In the late 1920s, in the early days of the Television Society, the medium was popularly regarded as "seeing by wireless", such was the level of astonishment at Baird's invention. Without the pioneering work of the Baird Company, it is hard to imagine TV as the 20th century's defining technology, or this century's moves into HD and 4K.

Baird and the early members of the Television Society lacked the opportunity to binge-watch on a box set using a Sky Q box. But Baird would have relished many of the innovations tracked by the Society over its nine-decade existence. And the RTS will continue with this mission well into the future.

Happy 90th, RTS. ■

those areas of scientific innovation that have major social impact. Subjects have included artificial intelligence and the role that technology played in the 2008 financial crash. These lectures reaffirm the importance the RTS places on technology, and explore the sweet spot where science and creativity collide to foster innovation.

The RTS is one of the six shareholders in IBC (International Broadcasting Convention), which celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

The Society's internationally renowned conferences are a benchmark for quality. They consistently attract speakers from the world's top media and entertainment companies.

The biennial Cambridge Convention, based at King's College, is widely regarded as the British television industry's premier talking shop, and has grown in stature since making its debut in 1970. The secretary of state's address is a keenly anticipated Cambridge RTS tradition: a valuable chance for ministers to engage with the concerns of media leaders.

The three-day gathering combines crystal-ball gazing and debate alongside networking with media stars, policy-makers and regulators. Occasionally, the after-hours entertainment grabs

more attention than the debates – who could forget Richard Desmond's band igniting the post-dinner crowd in 2013?

My own first taste of the platform that the RTS provides to industry leaders – and the headlines they generate – came in the early 1980s. HTV's HQ in Culverhouse Cross, Cardiff (since demolished), was the venue for a weekend RTS conference.

One of the speakers was Michael Grade, newly returned from running Embassy Entertainment in the US and a controversial choice as the new BBC One controller. Many regarded Grade as an ITV man, who, they said, would be too populist for the Beeb. The head of BBC Television, Bill Cotton, had hired Grade to stem BBC One's ratings decline. Grade proceeded to launch *EastEnders* – still a lynchpin of the BBC One schedule in the online era – and greenlit such signature shows as *The Singing Detective*, which he famously commissioned in the loo. Audience figures surged.

At the same conference, the great BBC broadcaster Huw Wheldon gave a stirring speech. After his death in 1986, the RTS initiated the Huw Wheldon Memorial Lecture. Over the years, Wheldon lecturers have included Sue Perkins, Lyse Doucet, Simon Schama,



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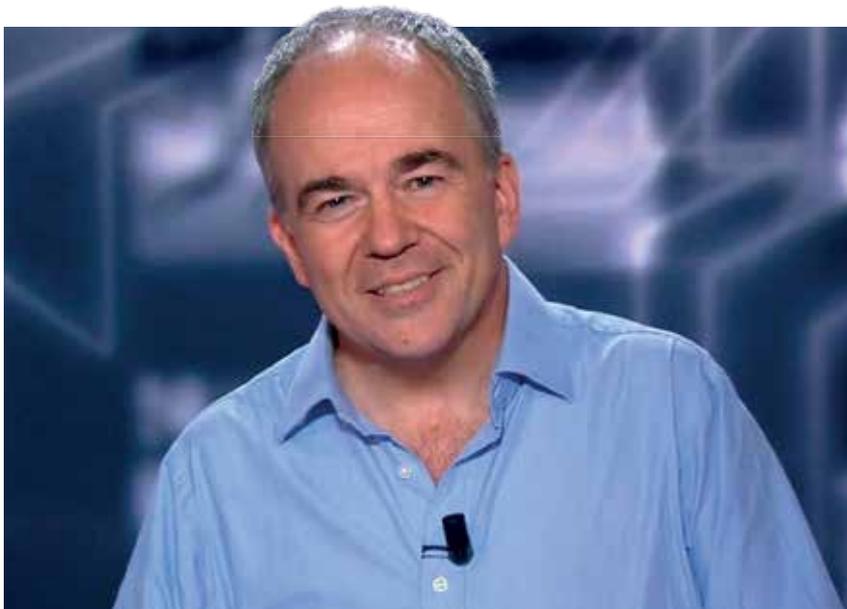
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From the Pennines to PyeongChang

TV sport

Owen Gibson interviews **Peter Hutton**, the head of Eurosport, whose Olympic-style ambitions are disrupting sports television



It's a long way from Pennine Radio to Eurosport's Paris HQ near the banks of the Seine. When Peter Hutton began his career as a 16-year-old sports presenter in Bradford, the explosion in rights fees and multi-channel revolution that transformed the sports media landscape was still to come.

Further off still were the shifting sands of today's global sports broadcasting industry, where the swirl of new technology and changing viewing habits mingle with the still potent pull of live sport.

In his teenage years, Hutton could scarcely have imagined that he would oversee one of the most ambitious recent interventions in the European sports broadcasting landscape.

When the US broadcasting giant Discovery bought the well-regarded but sleepy pan-continental broadcaster Eurosport, in a €491m deal at the beginning of 2015, it was little remarked upon.

But five months later, when it signed a €1.3bn deal with the International Olympic Committee for exclusive pan-European rights to the Olympic Games between 2018 and 2024, the world took notice.

Since then, the rationale behind the complex deal has paid off. Despite uncertainty in the pay-TV and sports broadcasting markets, Eurosport has tied up a flurry of deals across the continent. Rights have been sub-licensed to other broadcasters. Meanwhile, Eurosport has carved out other rights for itself and developed new

cross-platform propositions ahead of the PyeongChang Winter Olympics early next year.

Hutton says the Olympics deal was a transformative moment, both externally and internally: "It was the amazement that dawned on people when they realised we weren't just buying a highlights deal but we were buying the Olympics for the whole of Europe.

"That took a while to sink in and was brilliant to see. People have seen a level of change that they didn't believe was possible. The biggest value of the Olympics deal was the sense that everyone looked at it and realised we were a different company to the one they thought they knew."

Another priority for Hutton and Eurosport has been to invest in local production and talent to give the channel more personality. "Buying the Giro D'Italia exclusively for most of Europe was a great way to build on our cycling heritage. The same with Wimbledon. We were always known for a volume of tennis, but we now have Wimbledon in 36 markets, whereas we had none when Discovery took over," he says.

In July, Eurosport announced that it had extended its deal for the Tour de France until 2023. In 38 markets it has exclusivity for the first time.

Eurosport is known for its Tour coverage but Hutton believes that there is an opportunity to improve it and keep pace with its rival ITV4.

"For the first time, we pushed the Tour organisers to televise every minute of the Tour. It used to be just the last three hours [of each day] but there is a demand for the whole day," he says. "You look at the time people have spent with us on the Tour and it's gone up dramatically," he adds.

While the coverage of football, for example, has developed hugely over the past two decades, cycling coverage has, arguably, remained conservative.

"Cycling production is at quite a >

Picture redacted

› frustrating level,” he says. “You watch the sprint finishes, and you’re watching them head on. If you were a horse-racing viewer, you wouldn’t watch a race head on. It’s about putting a rail camera alongside and following them through – it would be much more dramatic.”

It’s a simple but compelling example of where he hopes investment in production and talent will shift perceptions of what Eurosport stands for.

A similar thought process has driven alliances with some of the most mercurial and talented athletes of each generation. Signing up Eric Cantona as a tongue-in-cheek commissioner of football during Euro 2016 was a particularly astute, if high-risk, move.

“It’s a learning experience,” says Hutton. “Talent is often a bit of a

gamble. The association with McEnroe, Cantona, Lindsey Vonn and the local stars in each market has paid off in terms of changing the expectations of who we are.

“There’s a halo effect connected to being involved with the biggest sporting names, and that has helped change people’s perceptions. It takes time. The research is positive and moving in the right direction, but we’ve also got a long way to go.”

Hutton is right not to get carried away. The jury is still out on Discovery’s grand gamble. Eurosport’s strategy depends on a complex assemblage of moving cogs. These parts include selling content to mobile networks to carving out free-to-air rights for Discovery’s other channels and establishing online subscription services. It

remains to be seen if this is a smart response to a changing landscape or whether it creates issues of its own.

Meanwhile, the big bet on the Olympics comes at a time when many feel they are increasingly tarnished. Successive summer Games in Paris and Los Angeles – almost certain to be confirmed as the hosts for 2024 and 2028, respectively – will help reinvigorate the brand.

But there is a risk that those who once saw the Olympics as the ultimate in pure sporting achievement may be turned off by corruption, doping scandals and ennui.

Yet Hutton is optimistic, believing that the thrill of the sport will ultimately win out: “For me, as a teenage runner in Yorkshire, watching Seb Coe at the 1980 Moscow Olympics was an

daytime shows fragment, sport still brings people together in a way that very little else does.

“One of the great things about sport is that, the more you immerse yourself in it, the richer your experience is. So, Tour de France obsessives can go to the website, get the map, get the data and supplement what they’re seeing on broadcast.

“All those things feed into the idea that you can get much more out of the big events.”

Part of the trick, therefore, is to amplify that noise through digital channels and social media.

“It’s brilliant that our ratings have been consistently up – 14% up in the first six months of this year – and that has been driven by live events,” he argues. “Even though TV ratings might be down for a lot of channels, our big events are getting bigger and our audiences are getting bigger – not only on TV but [through] the different feeds you create around them and the social media you create around them.”

Eurosport remains in a “growth acquisition phase”, says Hutton. As is traditional for any sports broadcasting executive, he is coy when it comes to rights targets but doesn’t rule out a tilt at the Premier League next time around.

Eurosport has invested in football elsewhere, including Germany and Norway, but Hutton, a lifelong Derby County fan, stresses that value must also be the watchword: “There are five territories in Europe where we’ve

bought into the local league. You can’t ignore football if you want to be a big sporting competitor. When you see the right opportunity, it’s right to do it.”

Hutton gives the impression of a man thoroughly enjoying the challenge of transforming a respected but staid

fixture of EPGs across Europe into a more thrusting, multi-platform beast.

“Living and working in Paris, and being part of what happens here, is a pretty interesting experience,” he says.

“Sports deals come and go but changing an old brand, and seeing the evidence across Europe of that, it’s pretty special.”

Doing so against a backdrop of Brexit at home must be an odd experience, I suggest.

“We’re living proof of the strength of being part of that wider community and seeing that wider range of experiences,” Hutton responds. “We don’t see our future as being a pan-European, one-size-fits-all broadcaster, but we do benefit from taking content from multiple countries.”

His most pressing concern is the looming Winter Olympics in South Korea, the first big test of Eurosport’s IOC deal.

“I’m both excited and slightly nervous about PyeongChang,” he confesses. “People will rightly judge us on it. We need to move our production up a notch to deal with that expectation.

“It’s going to be challenging,” he laughs. “I’m looking forward to the holiday in March.” ■

YOU CAN'T IGNORE FOOTBALL IF YOU WANT TO BE A BIG SPORTING COMPETITOR

iconic moment. That wasn’t tarnished by the fact that lots of countries were not there. It was still my great Olympic moment. Yes, you get a lot of background noise around sporting events sometimes, but, when it comes to the moment, you immerse yourself in it.”

Hutton has seen the sports industry from all sides. His career has taken in stints at the BBC, the early days of the Sky Sports revolution, senior international roles at ESPN and Star Sports and a period on the rights side, at agency MP & Silva.

Unsurprisingly, he is convinced that sport will remain a key driver of TV audiences: “If you look at the stats across Europe, if you look at the top 100 shows of the year, sport takes up more and more of that space.

“As audiences for soap operas and

Picture redacted

Interview

Deborah Turness is back in London after her achievements running NBC News in New York. She tells **Tara Conlan** what's next

The return of the native

Deborah Turness greets me in the top-floor café of NBCUniversal's UK HQ, which looks out over London's rooftops. This is appropriate as NBC News took a 25% stake in Euronews in February in order to “change the landscape of international news”, as Turness's boss, Andrew Lack, put it.

He said that, for years, NBC News had “wanted to establish a global reach”, and Turness was moving from being President of NBC News to do just that – to become the first President of NBC News International and oversee content for the new Euronews NBC.

The channel, founded in 1993 by the European Broadcasting Union, will use NBC's resources (an undisclosed financial investment plus all its network) alongside those of its major stakeholder, Egyptian billionaire Naguib Sawiris, to expand. Based in Lyon, Euronews broadcasts in 12 languages to around 3.3 million European viewers daily and reaches more than 160 countries. A new network of correspondents is being built up, to be followed by the station's first anchored “global feed”.

But why Euronews? And how has Turness fared since she stepped down as editor of ITV News in 2013 to cross the Atlantic?

She is happy to be back in the UK, but sad to leave the US, where her husband and their two girls had put down roots. Her time as President of NBC News was no bed of roses. She reflects that she was chosen “because I was an outsider... not only to NBC News but also to the US broadcast diaspora”.

“It was a moment when NBC News had been a dominant first for many years and its corporate psyche [considered it to be] number one. But the figures showed that story was changing.”

She had to learn fast: “You do see things more clearly if you come from the outside. But it does present you with a challenge. You need to be humble and go in and take the time to understand the organisation... to act quickly to stem the flow and take action, but also to demonstrate that you are listening and understanding. That's a challenge for any leader. I let others judge how successful I was at doing that.”

Not long after she joined, *Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams was suspended after falsely claiming that he had come under fire in a military helicopter.

The woman who hired Turness, Pat Fili-Krushel, became a casualty of the fallout and was replaced by Lack.

Nightly News's audience dropped off. Meanwhile, ratings for other key shows, such as *Today* and *Meet the Press*, had been in decline since Comcast's takeover of NBC Universal in 2011.

Turness set to work. By the end of 2016, all four of NBC News's big shows were number one in both of their key demographics – for the first time since 2011. While she agrees that the Williams issue was not easy, she insists: “How NBC ultimately came through this was a test that it passed with flying colours. [His replacement,] Lester Holt, is now doing brilliantly.

“Was it tough at times? Absolutely. But much more than that, it was the greatest fun. I look back now at what we built and rebuilt and am immensely proud of having done that.”



And so to Euronews. She says she is “grateful” for the “new opportunity”, adding: “I think I've come to the conclusion that I'm better at renovation than maintenance. I love nothing better than building something new, or taking something that has real value and a legacy, but rediscovering its new life.”

Turness knows Euronews, having been an avid viewer at university and from working as a journalist in France. Also, her former employer ITN once held a 49% stake in the service.

She and Lack looked at other news companies – which she declines to name – as potential investments, but Euronews won.

The channel had already begun to evolve before the deal with NBC News, and there is further change in store. The old Euronews style of airing one video feed and having 12 language options over it, has changed to 12 separate video feeds, one for each language.

Turness argues this is important, “because never has Europe's story been more complex.... Different countries see it from different points of view and perspectives.”

She is also appointing a team of



WS NBC

IT'S CRITICAL THAT EVERYONE UNDERSTANDS THAT WE ARE NOT HERE TO AMERICANISE EURONEWS



NBC News International President Deborah Turness

Getty Images

correspondents – based in major European cities and charged with breaking stories. Coincidentally, the London reporter will be located in NBC News's bureau at Gray's Inn Road, where Turness worked when she was at ITV News.

The next phase will be for Euronews's English-language feed to become what Turness dubs "our global feed". The idea is to have an anchored news channel "[with] live anchors in studios and locations responding to breaking news events", alongside some "built shows".

Renowned for her innovations (she was partly responsible for perching Kirsty Young on the *Channel 5 News* desk), the fast-talking Turness wants to use technology to create a news channel with "a slightly different voice".

Adapting social-media techniques means that some Euronews NBC journalists could "be slightly less perfect and packaged and tethered, and say: 'Come with me, I'm going to take you to the story. I've just landed, I'm in an Uber on my way to the press conference. Direct tweet me any questions.'"

She wants to "break down the barriers to maybe create" what she describes as "a new relationship of authenticity".

Regarding the fake news debate, Turness believes unreliable sources have always existed but "the problem is that people believe it... Maybe they believe it because trust has eroded in mainstream media organisations. Why has that happened? Maybe because we could have done better at listening to people who perhaps feel they weren't listened to."

Does Donald Trump, then, have a point about mainstream media? "Some of what he says reflects how his supporters feel," she says, choosing her words carefully. "Some of what he says is also deeply unfair and exaggerated."

Although *The Apprentice* aired on NBC, she had no greater insight into Trump than others, and thinks that, "if things such as his election or the Brexit vote are a giant surprise to us, then it's probably telling us that we weren't doing our jobs to the extent that we should have".

She did not see enough of the UK general election to judge it, but she ensured that NBC News visited the rust belt during the US election and is determined that Euronews should stay true to its history of representing all views, "even those that, to some, might be

unpalatable. We've gone back to a period of extremes and that must be reflected."

Turness adds: "Euronews sits at the crossroads of Europe.... If any organisation has the DNA to reflect that, it's Euronews, but it has not had the resources to express it."

She stresses: "It's critical that everyone understands that we are not here to Americanise Euronews."

With other channels, such as the BBC and CNN, "expressing a very defined national view, Euronews has the opportunity to actually put all the pieces of the jigsaw together and be Europe's town square".

But she sees a need to "humanise that", as she thinks "the views of the people of Europe are not currently adequately represented.... I look at coverage of Brexit or the US coverage of the election – I think we were all found a little wanting, if we are honest with ourselves.

"Did we filter it out using our own subconscious bias? This in an old debate. Our job is to capture the moment we are here to cover and report upon." ■

Christian and Syed marry in *EastEnders*, 2012



Soap's power to fight prejudice

BBC

British soaps have made huge strides in portraying the lives and loves of gay characters since the genre's first on-screen kiss in *EastEnders* three decades ago. But the fight against prejudice is not yet won, argued a panel of experts at an RTS early-evening event earlier this summer. The panel – which brought together actors, writers and producers from *Coronation Street*, *EastEnders*, *Emmerdale* and *Hollyoaks* – was chaired by TV presenter June Sarpong. Recently, she has appeared on the weekly Sky News discussion show *The Pledge*.

“Soaps are incredibly powerful in terms of being able to get a message out and in changing people's perceptions,” said Daniel Brocklebank, who plays gay vicar Billy Mayhew in *Coronation Street*.

Brocklebank recalled being one half of the first gay snog in another ITV soap, *Emmerdale*, 12 years ago. “Now, as I'm playing a vicar, the reaction predominantly comes from very religious

Diversity

Matthew Bell hears how shows such as *Coronation Street* and *EastEnders* are leading the way in depicting LGBTQ characters

people who don't believe the clergy can be gay – whereas the reaction before was about the fact that it was two boys kissing.

“So we've definitely moved [forward] in that time – but not far enough, [going by] the negative responses that we've had about *Corrie*.”

A scene last year, involving Mayhew and Todd Grimshaw kissing on a bed, provoked a “huge homophobic response” after the show aired, said Brocklebank. “Michael Cashman, who gave the first gay kiss [in a British soap,

in 1987, as Colin in *EastEnders*] messaged me that night and said, ‘I can't believe you're having to put up with the same shit that I was putting up with 30 years ago.’”

Pete Lawson, a writer on *EastEnders* since 2008, discussed the storylines he has created for the BBC One soap. “I'm always looking for what hasn't been shown and what hasn't been told,” he said. “We don't set out to shock; we set out to entertain, because, ultimately, we are a soap and we want to be good TV. But we want to show the reality of the world that we all live in.”

Oliver Kent, head of continuing drama series at BBC Studios, agreed, adding: “It's hugely important that we tell stories about contemporary Britain as it really looks, and that includes characters of every sexual persuasion.

“If we set out to shock, we'd fall on our arse,” he went on. The stories had to “come from character first. We're on telly four, five nights a week all year round, and we can tell stories slowly in a way that seeps into people's consciousness. >



Annie Wallace plays Sally St Claire in *Hollyoaks*

Wallace: life as a transgender actor

Before she landed the role of Sally St Claire in Channel 4 soap *Hollyoaks*, Annie Wallace worked on ITV's *Coronation Street* as a consultant on the storyline featuring Roy and Hayley Cropper, the first transgender character in a British soap.

Her advice, Wallace said at the RTS event, involved 'giving [the producers] my own life. I told them things that had happened to me; things I had come up against that had affected me emotionally'.

In 2015, Wallace became the first

transgender actor to play a regular transgender character in a British soap. 'It was a closing of the circle – I was there helping with the first trans character, and then to be the first [trans actor] in soap was an honour and a privilege,' she said.

'As a trans person, to play this role is very important to me because it's reality within fiction. There are young people who have approached or messaged me who are getting a lot from Sally and are seeing her as a role model, not just as a trans role model, but as a teacher.'

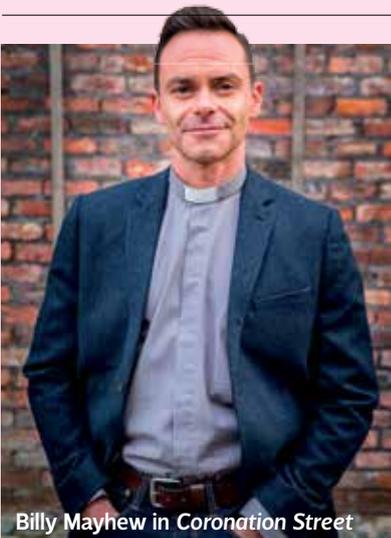
Wallace discussed whether transgender roles should be reserved for trans actors. 'There's a big argument for that,' she said, but conceded that it was also a 'grey area'.

One example was Eddie Redmayne's portrayal of the trans artist Lili Elbe in the film *The Danish Girl*. 'For most of the film, he played the character of Einar Wegener, who became Lili. I think there is a case for non-trans actors to play the story of transition – that's valid,' said Wallace. 'If you were to ask a trans person to play their pre-transition self, that would be difficult and a bit odd, although I'm not saying it would be impossible.'

'But if you are writing a post-transition trans character, I think there's a duty now for casting directors to cast their net [widely].'

'Until a few years ago, we weren't visible, either because nobody was interested in talking to us or because, like myself, we kept our heads down and didn't come out.'

'More and more trans performers are coming out of the woodwork,' she continued, 'and are having the confidence to say, "I am a trans actor."'



Billy Mayhew in *Coronation Street*

Brocklebank on playing gay roles

Actor Daniel Brocklebank has featured in *Emmerdale* and *Coronation Street*. From 2005, he played bisexual dustman Ivan Jones in the rural soap; currently, he is *Corrie*'s gay vicar, Billy Mayhew.

'I came out publicly in 1998,' he recalled. 'I was advised not to by my management because I was working a lot in the States.'

'They basically said: "If you come out, you're not going to work." So I said: "I don't want to work here. I'll go back to the UK."'

Discussing the risk of being typecast

as a gay actor, Brocklebank said: 'I play all sorts of characters but there's something wonderful about being able to represent [my community].'

'I've had experiences where I've met a mum in tears, thanking me for being so visible, because it's helped her son come out. [At times like that] you realise it's worth putting yourself up on a platform and potentially risking your future casting.'

'I was once a terrified 12-year-old with nobody to talk to or for me to look at [on TV] and think, "That's me."'

› “If it ever feels like we’re pushing an agenda, it will feel bogus and the audience can tell straight away. It’s about authenticity and truth.”

Bryan Kirkwood, executive producer of Channel 4’s *Hollyoaks*, noted that it was part of his channel’s remit “to deliver shows for a minority audience”, adding: “I think it is our responsibility to deliver storylines for a young LGBT audience [so they can] see themselves reflected [on TV] for the first time.”

Hollyoaks is well known for tackling difficult and sensitive issues. “The reason we get away with so much is because nobody has ever told us to stop,” he said to audience laughter.

“We’ve got a broad diversity of LGBT characters,” continued Kirkwood, “but with every character [in the soap] their sexuality should be the fifth- or sixth-most interesting thing about them.” This was true of *Hollyoaks* character Sally St Claire, played by Annie Wallace. “She’s a headmistress, who nurtures her kids and really cares about her job,” said the

WE DON’T SET OUT TO SHOCK; WE SET OUT TO ENTERTAIN, BECAUSE, ULTIMATELY, WE ARE A SOAP AND WE WANT TO BE GOOD TV



Ben and Paul’s first public kiss in *EastEnders*, 2016

BBC

actor. “Most of my storylines are school-based, and I like it that she is destigmatised. It’s really important that she’s [seen on the soap] being a success.”

Emmerdale series producer Iain MacLeod discussed his soap’s gay couple, Aaron Dingle and Robert Sugden, arguing that they “entirely transcend people’s conceptions of sexuality. The way they’ve been taken to the audience’s heart is like nothing I’ve ever encountered before. It’s purely down to it being a love story.”

Nevertheless, he added, gay storylines still lead “an unpleasantly large minority of viewers” to complain.

Are there any limits to the types of stories soaps can portray? “Most things that occur in the world can be played in soap,” concluded MacLeod, “albeit it with some delicacy.” ■

‘LGBTQ in soap: job done?’ was held in partnership with ITV and *Pride in the City* at The Hospital Club in central London on 12 July. The event was produced by Angela Ferreira and Jonathan Simon.

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q How do you represent homophobia in your storylines without playing into the hands of bigots in the audience?

A **Bryan Kirkwood:** We’ve got a new villain coming [into *Hollyoaks*] who is a homophobe.... What you don’t want to do is to portray a voice that is appealing to an audience – [this new character] is a bad bastard.

A **Pete Lawson:** You bring the argument on to the screen and make that your drama; you don’t pretend homophobia doesn’t exist.

Q How can we ensure that soaps also cater for black and minority ethnic LGBTQ audiences?

A **Iain MacLeod:** Cast the net wider in looking for new characters. The challenge that soaps face all the time in representing any kind of minority community is making sure that it doesn’t look like tokenism.... It’s a

very writer-driven process. So, if a writer brings you a good story you, as a producer, rubber stamp it and put it on the television.

The moment you take a sub-standard story on the basis that you’re trying to push a particular diversity angle, and put that on the TV, the audience can smell it as bogus. [You have] to find the right stories to bring these characters naturally into the show.

Q Are you ever told by your channel that you can’t run a particular storyline?

A **Oliver Kent:** [The BBC] would never do that.

A **Iain MacLeod:** In fact, [ITV] actively encourages us to look for broader and more diverse characters with which to tell our stories – it’s quite the opposite. We rarely get told, “No”.

A **June Sarpong:** Soap is way ahead of traditional drama – it leads the way, where diversity is concerned.

Q Do you fear a backlash against LGBTQ rights?

A **Iain MacLeod:** The terrible irony for homophobes is that,

the louder they shout, the more of the stuff they don’t like they will get. Generally, when you read complaints made to Ofcom or emails to the duty log that are in that vein... it makes you want to stick up two big dramatic fingers at them and keep on doing what you’re doing.

A **Annie Wallace:** In terms of the trans character experience, the public acceptance [of it] has been wonderful... but there’s a very small minority who are very vocal and they are all over the internet [claiming] that [being] trans is a phoney experience. A lot of it, unfortunately, is coming from within the LGBT community... but does that stop what we do? Of course not, we keep on.

A **Pete Lawson:** We always have to be aware that, just because some voices are loudest, it doesn’t mean that they’re the majority. On social media, it’s very easy for a small number of people to be really vocal and antagonistic... and there are some papers that will treat that as a news story... [about] the British people being up in arms. No, they’re not – it’s just [a few] angry people.

OUR FRIEND IN THE EAST

Welcome to Norwich – a Fine City. Whoever came up with that,

emblazoned on signs on the way into Norwich, was spot on. It really is.

Not just one but two beautiful cathedrals, a thriving marketplace, nice-looking castle, lots of pretty, olde world pubs and plenty of cobblestones. Add to that, lovely countryside and the fabulous north Norfolk coast.

So far, so idyllic – but perhaps it's no surprise that, the other day, I found myself talking with a group of creative media people, all worrying that there are too many young, talented people making their way out of Norfolk.

Hosted by the Norwich University of the Arts, which has a track record of getting its students into employment, we were in a creative space. But when you look at the population figures, Norfolk is a bit “top-heavy”, as the demographers would say. A buxom population graph is dominated by a larger-than-average older population.

I have nothing against that, of course: some of my favourite people fit into that top segment of the graph. But I do worry for the future of our creative industries when it feels like the new talent is relentlessly heading out for the bright lights.

It's a well-trodden life path: grow up here, disappear when you need your first break, look for someone to take a chance on a newbie, then come back to your roots when you've earned your stripes. That's great, in lots of ways – well done, the talented youngsters who go out there and grab

Norwich may look idyllic, but it must work harder to retain its young media talent, says **Nikki O'Donnell**



Nikki O'Donnell

everything that London has to offer. (For it is London that's still the big draw. No wonder – it vibrates with life, energy and diversity.) But I think we're all missing a trick.

We have just relaunched the RTS in the East and hosted our first regional RTS awards for more than a decade. Things had dwindled a bit here and it had begun to feel dominated by the regional news programmes and not a lot else.

But, wonderfully, there are signs of a transformation! Our awards night was jam-packed with every creative media type you could imagine. And all looking for a way to connect, to say: “We're here, we can do this creative thing outside London.”

I want that to continue. I want this

place to grab that youthful, vibrant, full-of-opportunity feeling and keep it going.

Apart from anything else, a healthy and truly representative media industry should surely be made up of the whole of the UK, not just those who make their way to a big city.

Think how many great talents might have been lost because we weren't broad-minded enough to be anything other than metropolitan.

So, to everyone seeking and offering opportunities – let's work a bit harder. Look at all those media businesses trying to grow outside the London bubble. There are opportunities in Norwich, not just cobblestones and pretty scenes.

Our business correspondent always says that you can drive down a country road around here and suddenly find you're outside a global technology company. There's far more than oil seed rape growing in our beautiful countryside. So, I guess our job is to make that clearer and to work harder to foster, support and grow the talent we already have.

We can all be a bit lazy. It's so easy to tell the story of the UK via the big cities, the court cases, the crime and the politics, throwing in something gritty up North and off we go to East Anglia for some green fields and rural stuff.

Before you know it, no one realises there's more to it than that. If we're not careful, we will cement those old stereotypes before the next generation has a chance to redefine what's really going on. ■

Nikki O'Donnell is editor of BBC Look East.

Picture redacted

Out of step with public opinion

‘I know nothing. We the media, the pundits and experts, know nothing.’ These were Jon Snow’s opening words on *Channel 4 News* the day this June that the UK produced the election result which conventional wisdom had ruled out and that summed up an awkward two years for broadcasters and other media.

Consider these prevailing narratives in the TV coverage that didn’t quite turn out the way that was expected:

■ 2015 UK general election: “There will be another hung parliament.” There wasn’t.

■ 2016 UK Brexit referendum: “In the end, voters will stick with the EU.” They didn’t.

■ 2016 US presidential election: “Trump can’t be elected.” He was.

■ 2017 UK general election: “There won’t be another hung parliament.” There was.

Book review

Stewart Purvis combs through an ambitious attempt to work out why the media keeps getting it wrong

Brexit, Trump and the Media, edited by John Mair, Tor Clark Neil Fowler, Raymond Snoddy and Richard Tait, is published by Abrams, priced £19.95. ISBN 978-1845497095



So, perhaps we shouldn’t be surprised to find that, in the first book which attempts to analyse the 2016 and 2017 votes, Snow and other leading broadcast journalists, including the BBC’s Nick Robinson, admit to what amounts to one of the biggest *mea culpa* of recent times.

Robinson says: “We didn’t get it right on Brexit. We didn’t see it coming. We must try harder.” Snow goes as far as offering to take some of the blame for not spotting the populism that would take Trump to power, after witnessing him in action in a sports hall in North Carolina. We will let you off on that one, Jon.

Brexit, Trump and the Media has chapters on various topics from campaign managers, journalists, academics and plenty of other pundits and experts.

Professor John Curtice lays the blame for the wayward pre-vote Brexit polls on the “decisions made by the pollsters

as to what to do about the don't-knows and how to estimate who would make it to the polls". He is too modest to mention how accurate his exit polls for the broadcasters have been in recent general elections.

But, for some of the other contributors, the failure of the Brexit and Trump coverage was not so much that they didn't forecast the outcome, rather, the failure was the outcome itself. That they didn't get the result they wanted.

I wonder if it wasn't so much that they didn't know enough about the voters, but that they thought they knew better than the voters.

A common conclusion on Brexit among journalists across the media is: "We didn't get out enough." A regional newspaperman writes: "With hindsight, I should have spoken to more of our readers about Brexit and fewer politicians." An American editor talks of the US coverage of the Trump campaign as "an epic fail" and a German TV reporter offers powerful evidence of the impact of the so-called London media bubble.

Diana Zimmermann of ZDF says that, outside London, she found "very often not a single person had anything positive to say about the EU and [they] believed it was responsible for all [the] problems facing the UK".

Back in the capital, she would "soak up the predominantly pro-European sentiment" and the analyses by political economists that "people will always vote for economic security". But at least Diana Zimmermann can say: "Whenever I returned to London from these trips I gave a truthful report of how it seemed increasingly unlikely that the UK would remain in the EU."

How many British television and radio reporters can say the same? Judged by the evidence in this book, very few.

At the heart of this is the confusion about the implications of the UK's statutory requirement for broadcasters to observe "due impartiality", especially during the debate about the Brexiteers' "£350m" claim. Professor Jay Blumler believes that the broadcasters' news coverage sometimes "seemed to have been governed less by 'due impartiality' than by 'impartiality carried to an extreme'".

Fellow academic Professor Ivor Gaber accuses the BBC of allowing its preferred "balance between the

I WONDER IF [BROADCASTERS] THOUGHT THEY KNEW BETTER THAN THE VOTERS

arguments" to quickly become an attempted "balance between the facts" which, he says, "led the BBC ship of state to head widely off compass. There cannot be a 'balance of facts' because it is a tautological nonsense."

For the BBC, Nick Robinson says that its Reality Check team provided "regular robust analysis of the claims and counter-claims", while executives David Jordan and Ric Bailey argue that, "contrary to received wisdom, there is no general set of onerous rules corsetting the broadcasters into a 'false balance', thus enforcing perfect equality of time, inhibiting the exposure of untruths and generally failing to inform the electorate of what it needs to know".

Yet, during the campaign the then-editor of the *Today* programme, Jamie Angus, told Steve Hewlett that "the BBC has signed up, rightly, to provide both sides in the referendum with equal airtime".

Two self-styled "bad boys of Brexit" set out in chilling detail how they manipulated this situation, using what they call "the Trump approach".

Andy Wigmore and Jack Montgomery of Leave.EU are understandably keen to suggest that it was their tactics, and not those of the rival and officially recognised and funded Vote Leave campaign, that won the day.

They offer four lessons in "how you manipulate the media as an outsider", citing their widely condemned "Breaking point" poster, which showed a queue of refugees and migrants. This poster was, they say, an example of

BROADCASTERS' NEWS COVERAGE SOMETIMES SEEMED TO HAVE BEEN... 'IMPARTIALITY CARRIED TO AN EXTREME'

how they appealed to the media's "eagerness to find a 'gotcha!' moment here... by making calculated mistakes that drew public attention to us". Under an equal-airtime guarantee, their voice and their message would have to be heard in such controversies.

Of course, claiming after the event that a mistake was deliberate is a very handy way out of a hole.

The other issue arising from the big votes of 2016 and 2017 was analysed in last month's edition of *Television* by Professor Charlie Beckett. It is the proposition that the rise of social media and political campaigners' "data mining" opportunities on Facebook mean that broadcasting is losing its pre-eminence at election time. Has the "air war" lost ground to the "data war"?

Gary Gibbon, political editor of *Channel 4 News*, writes in his chapter: "The EU referendum was a contest like no other – conducted in unique times by unconventional political forces and driven by data not used to the same extent before. The broadcast media coverage, I think it's true to say, didn't keep up."

He quotes Dominic Cummings of Vote Leave saying that broadcast journalists, in particular, didn't have a clue what his campaign was up to. It mined data on voters.

Cummings argues that, to this day, broadcasters don't have the newsroom skills to keep up with modern campaign methods. Gibbon reflects: "He may have a point."

Brexit, Trump and the Media is an ambitious and largely successful attempt to pull together at great pace multiple strands from three separate but overlapping major events. Its format does not allow for a single definitive chronology. For that, turn to the best book on Brexit, Tim Shipman's *All Out War*.

And it does not resolve remaining mysteries, such as what exactly was the role in Leave.EU of the data analytics firm Cambridge Analytica and its US billionaire funder, Robert Mercer, a key Trump supporter.

But within the book's 56 chapters, 70 contributors and 408 pages are a host of revelations, insights and occasionally unsettling thoughts. ■

Stewart Purvis is a former CEO of ITN and Ofcom regulator. He is currently a non-executive director of Channel 4 and writes here in a personal capacity.

All eyes on the next breakthrough

Will virtual reality (VR) finally make goggles cool – despite their rejection by 3DTV

viewers? VR, AR (augmented reality) and AI (artificial intelligence) will be at the forefront of this September's IBC, the international broadcasting exhibition and conference at Amsterdam's RAI centre.

"I am really pleased we are covering AI, VR and AR across IBC this year. They are the relevant and topical subjects of the moment," explains Jaisica Lapsiwala, head of content at IBC, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary under the title "Truth, trust and transformation".

"We will absolutely be celebrating the last 50 years but very much focusing on fast-forwarding to the next 50 years and the new disruptive forces in our industry," the IBC executive adds.

Speakers at the IBC conference include Daniel Danker, Facebook's product director, and Jørgen Madsen Lindemann, CEO of Modern Times Group (MTG), the Scandinavian digital entertainment company; MTG is increasingly moving on from conventional broadcasting towards digital video networks and online gaming.

The conference's opening session, "Fans, friends and the future of broadcasting", will look at how "fan and friend" power is driving new approaches to broadcasting.

BBC political interviewer Andrew Neil will chair a discussion on the future of news: how it is produced, distributed and consumed in the wake of fake news, alternative facts, President Trump and Brexit.

Tony Maddox, head of CNN International, will join Will Lewis, CEO of Dow Jones, publisher of the *Wall Street*

IBC preview

As IBC celebrates its 50th anniversary, **Raymond Snoddy** asks what is likely to be TV's next big disruptor



Journal, and Claudia Palmer, chief business officer of Thomson Reuters, to explore how major news providers will survive in a world of online news.

Eurosport CEO Peter Hutton will give a presentation on the latest in sports broadcasting. And later, Billy Zane, the actor, digital entrepreneur and co-founder of the Convergence

Group, will speak on radical developments coming out of academia.

IBC, which is owned by six not-for-profit bodies in the communications sector, including the RTS, has responded to comments that its insights should be available across the year, rather than concentrated in a five-day annual burst in Amsterdam. The *IBC365* website was launched in April, the week of NAB in the US, to create a more permanent presence.

"Everyone in the market knows IBC and most of the industry attends so, really, it was to capitalise on the reach that IBC has, and the data it has on the market, and to use these all year round," explains George Bevir, *IBC365* editor.

The new website is seen as a place for longer-form articles concentrating on industry trends and analysis, and not a fast-turnaround hub featuring breaking news and press releases. So far, Bevir says the reaction has been "very good".

There has also been a reorganisation of one of the more popular features of IBC, the Future Zone. Here, visitors can see where the broadcast industries are likely to be in five years' time.

The aim is to move away from a scattergun approach and to focus on emerging trends – such as the latest immersive VR experiences, 360° video, 3D sound and even holographic experiences.

"Whether or not in 10 years we will all be donning VR goggles, I don't know, but I am sure that the lessons we have learned from this stage of immersive technology will be applied to what we are looking at in 10 years," Bevir believes.

While the question mark remains over the business case for virtual reality, there is absolutely no sign of interest in it fading at IBC 2017. ■

Wales renews Eisteddfod success

Following its achievements last year, RTS Wales again hosted several events with Wales-based film and TV organisations at Sinemaes, a pop-up cinema erected at August's National Eisteddfod, held in Bodedern, Anglesey.

The RTS Centre screened a special edition of the iconic S4C agricultural series *Ffermio*, produced by Swansea indie Telesgop, which had been edited by Ffion Rees, a post-graduate student at the University of South Wales.

Rees studied with USW lecturer and RTS Wales committee member Heledd Hardy, who chaired a discussion following the screening. This reflected on how the series had reported on agricultural life in Wales over its 20-year run.

"The archive footage shows how effectively the series covered some major stories,

including the 2001 foot and mouth crisis, the severe weather in 2010 and the current heated debates over Brexit," said Hardy.

RTS members were given a tour of a group of shops on the main street in Menai Bridge, Anglesey, which form part of the set of S4C youth soap *Rownd a Rownd*.

They also attended a discussion, held at Sinemaes, which was chaired by Iestyn Garlick, one of the longest-running cast members of the soap. He is currently Chair of the Welsh Independent Producers Association, TAC.

Rownd a Rownd, which celebrated its 21st anniversary last year and is produced by Rondo Media, is screened twice a week on S4C.

Later in the week, a short documentary was shown at Sinemaes to honour drama producer Peter Edwards, who died last year. The film was



S4C

followed by a screening of Second World War drama *Pum Cynnig i Gymro*, which was produced and directed by Edwards.

Rounding off a busy week, a review of S4C by the

Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport was announced on the Eisteddfod field by Guto Bebb MP, parliamentary under secretary of state at the Wales Office. **Hywel Wiliam**

ONLINE at the RTS

■ With 31 fights, including 28 wins under his belt, former world heavyweight and cruiser-weight champion David Haye is looking for his next challenge.

The boxer has paired up with leading promoter Richard Schaefer to launch the careers of four potential future boxing champions. Over the next three years, UKTV channel Dave will be showing off the pair's new signings in a series of boxing fight nights.

'The focus was to get the very best talent,' Haye explains, speaking to the RTS from his gym in south London.

The four new signings are



Getty Images/Ian Walton

not yet household names, but the boxer believes that, in time, they will be. 'The whole country will get behind these fighters,' he says.

Haye was keen to work with free-to-air channel Dave to allow as many people as possible to tune in to the fights.

'That is the one thing that I was really adamant on: that it was just accessible to everybody,' he says. 'We're going to give you guys some real good entertaining evenings of boxing for nothing.'

Read the full interview online at (www.rts.org.uk/DavidHaye).

Ed Gove

Night at the museum

■ RTS members were treated to an evening of exploration at the Manchester Museum at a North West event in July.

Museum director Nick Merriman and Egyptologist Campbell Price shared the wealth of history held beyond the public eye. Ancient Egyptian mummies, and jewellery and artefacts from across the globe were on display as members were given exclusive access to the vast archives.

Steve Henderson

Yorkshire crowns ITV's *Victoria*

Emmerdale actor John Middleton nabbed two prizes at the RTS Yorkshire Programme Awards, which were held in Leeds in early July.

Middleton, who has played Ashley Thomas in the ITV soap for the past two decades, took the Actor award.

The judges commended the actor for his “heart-breaking, powerful and dignified performance” in the wake of his character’s diagnosis with vascular dementia. Middleton received one of two RTS Yorkshire Outstanding Contribution awards presented on the night. *Emmerdale* also won a second award, with Maxine Alderton taking home the prize in the Writer category.

The second Outstanding Contribution award went to Carol McKenzie, head of production and facilities at factual indie True North Productions. “There are many shows that would never have made it to the screen without Carol’s drive and passion. She is truly an unsung hero,” said the judges.

Double awards were the trend of the night at the Royal Armouries Museum, in a ceremony hosted by Grierson Trust Chair Lorraine Heggeseey.

Paul Whittington took home the Director – Fiction award for his work on BBC One’s *The Moorside* (made by ITV Studios), while the drama’s editor, Ben Yeates, won the Professional Excellence: Drama and Comedy Post-production award. The two-part series told the disturbing story of the disappearance of nine-year-old Shannon Matthews in Dewsbury.

ITV hit *Victoria* (made by Mammoth Screen) also won two gongs: the period



Victoria

drama’s production and design team took home the Professional Excellence: Drama and Comedy Production award; and Martin Phipps and Ruth Barrett triumphed in the Music and Use of Music category.

The Moorside and *Emmerdale* faced strong competition for the Drama award, and were pipped at the post by Channel 4 drama *National Treasure* (made by The Forge). The four-parter starred Robbie Coltrane as a much-loved TV comedian accused of rape. “*National Treasure* was

beautiful, film-like and intimate, with a fantastic cast and script portraying a difficult and incredibly important story,” said the judges.

ITV Yorkshire’s regional news and current affairs programme, *Calendar*, performed even better than the double winners, picking up three prizes: the *Jo Cox Murder* (News or Current Affairs Story); the *Hillsborough Inquest Verdict* (News Programme); and Duncan Wood (Presenter).

The News or Current Affairs Reporter award went to Made Television reporter

Mark Kielesz-Levine (local channel Made in Leeds TV); while shooting researcher Joe Foley, from Air Television, was named the One to Watch.

In the factual genre, *Hillsborough* (made by Very Much So Productions for BBC Two) took home the Single Documentary award; *The Last Miners* (Keo Films for BBC One) secured the Documentary Series prize; *Our Dancing Town* (Twenty Television for BBC Two) won the Factual Entertainment and Features award; and *Helicopter ER* (Air Television for UKTV channel Really) received the Low Cost Factual award.

The Independent Spirit prize was awarded to Leeds indie Daisybeck Studios for the second year in a row. Arqiva was presented with the RTS Yorkshire Centre Award for its successful stewardship of the Emley Moor Transmitting Station.

In the other Professional Excellence categories, BBC Four’s *Flying Scotsman from the Footplate* (made by Roger Keech Productions) won the Factual Post-production award, while *The Lie Detective* (True North Productions for Channel 4) collected the Factual Production award.

The Animation award went to Leeds-based Works for the title sequence on *Basketball Champions League* (Canal+ and Live Basketball.TV). Otley’s Ink Films’ work on the *BAFTA Film Awards Trailer 2017* secured it the Promotion or Commercial Production award.

The Second Screen Award was presented to Sheffield digital outfit Joi Polloi for the BBC interactive test *What’s My Real Age?*

Matthew Bell

Roger Keech 1953-2017

Television production in Yorkshire has lost one of its true heroes. Roger Keech was an accomplished producer and director who crafted some of the most beautiful images of the county ever televised.

Roger began his career at the BBC in Leeds as a studio assistant on *Look North* and other regional shows.

He soon moved on from floor management and graphics duties to directing, making stylish, creative films for the network with writers including Alan Ayckbourn and Peter Tinniswood.

Roger formed his own production company, making films about varied subjects, from brass bands to the Battle of Towton during the Wars of the Roses.

Ultimately, he was responsible for more than 200 productions, including *Flying Scotsman from the Footplate*, for which he was awarded an RTS Yorkshire Programme Award for



Professional Excellence, a few days before his death in July.

Roger was credited with helping to bring the Tour de France to Yorkshire.

It was his vision of the television coverage showcasing the county in all its glory that helped convince the tour organisers to award Le Grand Départ to Yorkshire in 2014.

He was an active RTS Yorkshire member and for the past few years had been involved in producing the Centre's Programme Awards, including personally designing all the on-screen graphics.

It was Roger's meticulous attention to detail and impeccable taste that gave the awards in Yorkshire their unique style and elegance.

His work with the University of Leeds also helped to secure future skills and talent in the region.

A modest perfectionist, Roger's perfectly composed images always captured beauty and natural spectacle.

He will be deeply missed by his friends and colleagues in Yorkshire.

Lisa Holdsworth

Gray named RTS Young Technologist

Broadcast engineer Kathleen Gray is the RTS's Young Technologist of the Year 2017. Gray, who graduated from Southampton Solent University with a BSc in live and studio sound, works for NEP UK Broadcast Services.

At NEP, she has worked on shows such as ITV's *Love Island*, and recently managed the deployment of host broadcasting facilities at the Wimbledon tennis tournament on behalf of the BBC.

"It is an exciting time to work in the broadcast

engineering sector – the ever-changing and constant flow of new technologies means there is always something to learn and understand," said Gray.

"Kathleen impressed the jury with her swift career trajectory and her total commitment and dedication to delivering quality to production teams," said digital media consultant Terry Marsh, who chaired the RTS Young Technologist Award jury.

The award was established by the RTS with funding



from the family of AM Beresford-Cooke, a distinguished engineer who contributed much to the development of British broadcasting technology.

As part of her prize, Gray receives an all-expenses-paid trip to the technology show IBC, in Amsterdam this September.

The runner-up prize, the Coffey Award for Excellence in Technology, was awarded to Matthew Carroll, a trainee broadcast engineer at the BBC.

Matthew Bell



Fair Isle: Living on the Edge

BBC

Filming on the edge

At the RTS Scotland Awards earlier this year, Louise Lockwood bagged two prizes – Director of the Year and the Professional Excellence (Craft) Camera Award – for her work on *Fair Isle: Living on the Edge*.

The RTS judges described the BBC One Scotland/BBC Four documentary as a “beautifully directed” and “searingly honest portrayal” of the lives of the 50 or so people who live on the remote Shetland island.

Fair Isle’s tiny population was swollen by the arrival of Lockwood’s young family and, for some of the shoot, sound recordist Stewart Houston. “It was a real family adventure,” recalls Lockwood, who was joined by her partner and their twins, who were just eight months old when filming started.

Lockwood had the luxury of shooting over an 18-month period. “It takes time for people to trust you and to get an understanding of a place.

Having my family there made a big difference – the islanders got to know me as a whole, rather than as a TV director,” she says.

The director believes that the film has boosted Fair Isle’s chances of attracting new settlers, who are vital to its survival. “After the programme went out, there was a lot of interest from people who wanted to live on remote islands,” says Lockwood. “My worst nightmare as a documentary-maker is that I’ll have a negative effect on my subjects, not that my job is to do a puff piece. I wanted to be truthful but sensitive.”

Over two decades since graduating from Glasgow School of Art, Lockwood has built an award-winning career in TV. She began at Ideal World Productions, moving from runner to director within a couple of years, working on late-night Channel 4 review shows *Vids* and *Bits* at the turn of the millennium.

“They were edgy, experimental and a bit rude,” recalls Lockwood, “but they were a great training ground.”

The director moved to BBC Scotland in 2001, initially in arts and entertainment. “Things really started to shift for me when I did *Parallel Worlds, Parallel Lives*,” she says. The 2007 documentary – which followed the quest of Mark Everett (of US indie band, Eels) to learn more about his quantum physicist father – earned Lockwood a clutch of Grierson, RTS and Bafta awards.

Lockwood is grateful for the support she received early in her career from the late Scottish film-maker David Peat: “He was my mentor when I first started at the BBC. I’d always loved his work – it makes a massive difference having someone to chat to who’s been there and done it.” In 2012, she directed the tribute

programme *A Life Through the Lens: David Peat* for BBC Two Scotland.

Lockwood works mostly alone, which she believes allows her to build closer relationships with contributors. “I love the intimacy of doing the filming myself – my goal is always to make the camera almost disappear.”

“I have the camera on my shoulder with mics strapped on and am completely self-contained. I don’t carry a tripod so I can run up a hill or sit in someone’s front room,” she continues. “I’d rather have a wobbly shot than not get it at all!”

Lockwood left BBC Scotland in April to set up a “collective” with Martyn McLaughlin, a journalist at *The Scotsman*, who came up with the idea for *Fair Isle: Living on the Edge*. They were joined by the Fair Isle production’s editor, Jonathan Seal, and producer/director Tim Neil, who was the script editor. She promises “human stories, with no compromises” from the new outfit.

“I had some great projects to work on at BBC Scotland, but you were still governed by certain rules,” says Lockwood. “This is almost like a new beginning.”

Matthew Bell



Louise Lockwood



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