

July/August 2016

Television

A woman with her hair styled in an updo, wearing a blue historical-style dress with a white lace sleeve, is shown in profile. Bright orange and yellow flames are rising from the shoulder of her dress. The background is a solid dark blue.

Versailles: French TV goes global
Brexit: Who benefits?

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From the CEO



It's not often that I can say this but, compared with what's happening in politics, the television sector looks relatively calm.

At the RTS, however, there have been a few changes.

I am very pleased to welcome Lynn Barlow to the Board of Trustees as the new English regions representative. She is taking over from the wonderful Graeme Thompson. Another change sees Rob Woodward, CEO of Scottish Television, taking over from Huw Jones as representative of the nations.

I look forward to working with Lynne and Rob. Jane Lighting is also standing down. A huge thanks to Jane,

Huw and Graeme for all their dedication and hard work.

Our energetic digital editor, Tim Dickens, is off to work in a new sector. Good luck and thank you for a massive contribution to the RTS. And congratulations to Tim's successor, Pippa Shawley, who started with us two years ago as one of our talented digital interns.

It may be high summer, but RTS Futures held a truly brilliant event in early July. The subject was how online short-form content is now a force to be reckoned with. The evening's chair, Pat Younge, did a peerless job. I am very grateful to Pat and to all five panellists. Thanks, too, to a wonderful audience.

We have a great line-up in *Television*

this month. Don't miss Tara Conlan's piece on the gender pay gap in TV or Raymond Snoddy's look at how Brexit is likely to affect the broadcasting and production sectors. Somehow, I've got a feeling that this won't be the last word on Brexit.

Advance bookings for September's RTS London Conference are ahead of our expectations. To secure your place please go to our website.

Finally, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers a happy and restorative summer break.

Theresa Wise

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A new wave of innovation in set-top boxes will see power shift from broadcasters to platforms, predicts Nigel Walley

Cover picture: Canal+

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National events

RTS CONFERENCE

Tuesday 27 September

RTS London Conference 2016

Full stream ahead:

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

Principal sponsor: NBCUniversal International
 Speakers include: David Abraham, Chief Executive, Channel 4; Sir Peter Bazalgette, Non-Executive Chairman, ITV, and President of the RTS; Tina Brown CBE, Journalist, magazine editor, talk-show host and author; Steve Burke, Chief Executive Officer, NBCUniversal; Andrew Griffith, Group Chief Operating Officer and Chief Financial Officer, Sky; Dido Harding, Chief Executive Officer, TalkTalk Telecom Group; Stephen Lambert, Chief Executive, Studio Lambert; Kevin MacLellan, Chairman, NBCUniversal International; Tom Mockridge, Chief Executive, Virgin Media; Cathy Newman, Presenter, Channel 4 News; Ted Sarandos, Chief Content Officer, Netflix; and Sharon White, Chief Executive, Ofcom.

With burgeoning new models of TV consumption, opportunities for content creators and distributors are both incredibly exciting and potentially hazardous.

How is the emergence of myriad new distribution platforms impacting on the commissioning and production landscape? With new, entrepreneurial approaches to production, access to global funding and emerging trends in consumer behaviour – what are the real opportunities and challenges of creating programming for multiple platforms?
 Venue: Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9AG

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Thursday 6 October

Anatomy of a hit: Sky Sports Premier League football

Details TBC
 Venue: TBC

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Tuesday 1 November

Virtual reality and television

Details TBC
 Venue: TBC

RTS MASTERCLASS DAY

Monday 14 November

RTS Student Programme Masterclasses

Venue: BFI Southbank, London SE1 8XT

RTS MASTERCLASS DAY

Tuesday 15 November

RTS Craft Skills Masterclasses

Venue: BFI Southbank, London SE1 8XT

Local events

BRISTOL

■ Belinda Biggam
 ■ belindabiggam@hotmail.com

DEVON & CORNWALL

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

EAST

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

LONDON

■ Daniel Cherowbrier
 ■ daniel@cherowbrier.co.uk

MIDLANDS

Thursday 3 November

RTS Midlands Awards 2016

Booking opens in early September.

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

■ Jayne Greene 07792 776585
 ■ jayne@ijmmedia.co.uk

NORTH EAST & THE BORDER

Thursday 28 July

Networking evenings

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

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

■ Jill Graham
 ■ jill.graham@blueyonder.co.uk

NORTH WEST

■ Rachel Pinkney 07966 230639
 ■ rachelpinkney@yahoo.co.uk

NORTHERN IRELAND

■ John Mitchell
 ■ mitch.mvbroadcast@btinternet.com

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

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

SCOTLAND

■ James Wilson 07899 761167
 ■ james.wilson@cityofglasgow-college.ac.uk

SOUTHERN

■ Gordon Cooper
 ■ gordonjcooper@gmail.com

THAMES VALLEY

Wednesday 16 November

Small camera systems

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

Venue: Pincents Manor, Calcot, Reading RG31 4UQ

Friday 25 November

Thames Valley Centre Annual Dinner Dance

This year, we are holding a masquerade ball

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

■ Penny Westlake
 ■ info@rtstvc.org.uk

WALES

Wednesday 3 August

Eisteddfod event: The directors of the future

Our annual Eisteddfod event is a screening of three short, Welsh-language films produced by young people from Dyfryn Nantlle, and a Q&A session with the film-makers. It will be held at Sinemaes (Cinema on the Maes tent). Please note that members will have to buy an entry ticket to the Eisteddfod field. It is a Welsh-language event but simultaneous translation will be available. 2:30pm-4:30pm

Venue: National Eisteddfod, Castle Meadows Park, Merthyr Road, Abergavenny NP7 5DG

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

YORKSHIRE

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

TV diary

Tony Jordan moves on from *Dickensian* to Dubrovnik, but still thinks the BBC allowed a special show to slip through its fingers



Start the week with a meeting in Dubrovnik about a new project we are working on. Although I can't say much about it yet, I can say that Dubrovnik is incredibly beautiful, despite people constantly pointing at places where scenes for *Game of Thrones* were shot.

■ **Returning to my desk in the London office, back-to-back meetings all day, including looking at Red Planet Pictures' slate of digital projects. It's an area I've had to learn about quickly, but it's stuff all my kids already know, so it's making me feel a bit old. End up with three new, very exciting ideas. Can't wait to get started.**

■ A quick sandwich, then a minor meltdown as I realise that I have to find time for a trip to LA to talk to potential co-producers and a trip to the set of the sixth series of *Death in Paradise* in Guadeloupe. Already starting to plan which movies I'll watch on the plane.

This afternoon, we're discussing potential directors and casting for *Babs*, an upcoming BBC film I am writing and exec producing about the life of Dame Barbara Windsor.

■ **Months after the BBC decided not to bring *Dickensian* back for a second**

run, I've still got 83 emails about it. They are a fairly equal mix of furious teachers and professionals at schools and colleges who had seen young people being driven back to the books.

They also include members of the public who don't understand why it's not coming back and are moaning about it. I do think the BBC had something very special with *Dickensian* and let it slip through their fingers.

■ Another afternoon of meetings alongside Red Planet's newly appointed joint MDs, Alex Jones and Belinda Campbell.

Also manage to squeeze in time late in the day to read finalists for our annual Red Planet Writing Prize competition. I am once again impressed by the talent that is out there. I know better than anyone that it can be hard to get into this industry.

I am very proud that we are committed to this competition and helping aspiring writers to gain a foothold in the industry.

■ **At last, a writing day. In my shed in the garden, ready to start writing a new script. Spend the first hour playing solitaire while I work out how to start my first scene. Write four different versions, hate all of them and start again. Realise I've spent almost an entire day writing three pages.**

Siobhan Finnigan, one of our brilliant development execs, comes up on the train to talk about a new proposal we are working on for ITV. I love talking about my new projects with smart people. She gives me loads of ideas.

Sib heads off and I'm back in the shed. I finally crawl into the house at the end of a very long day to watch rushes and answer emails. There are not enough hours in the day. Maybe I should cut out the solitaire.

■ Back in the office for more meetings this morning and to view the latest cuts of our new Sky 1 show, *Hooten & the Lady*. It is a big budget, fun action-adventure drama starring Michael Landes, Ophelia Lovibond, Jessica Hynes and Jane Seymour.

What more could you want? It's looking brilliant. We're all super excited and can't wait for it to air later this year.

■ **Hit the weekend and decide to work on Saturday. Back in the shed, I've got three pages under my belt, 62 to go. I intend to eat the biggest Sunday lunch known to man and play *Call of Duty*. I fall asleep on the sofa trying to watch all the new TV shows I've recorded through the week to catch up on at the weekend.**

Tony Jordan is a showrunner, who runs Red Planet Pictures.



The price of success for French TV drama

BBC

The tale of two multi-million-euro drama series speaks volumes about the tensions and turmoil shaking the French television industry.

One is *Versailles*, a quintessentially French historical topic, shot in France with a French crew but produced for Canal+ in English. The show, labelled “primetime porn” thanks to its racy portrayal of life at the court of the Sun King, was created by an English writing team and mainly starred British actors barely known in France.

The other is *Marseille*, and features French favourite Gérard Depardieu. It is a totally French production in every respect except one – it was commissioned and paid for by Netflix, as part of the US subscription service’s attempt to establish a firm foothold in the important French market.

Ironically, it was the French-language *Marseille* that was flayed by the critics; their reviews of *Versailles*, dubbed and subtitled for broadcast in France, were much kinder. Both are believed to have attracted good audiences in France despite their different linguistic and cultural origins; Netflix, of course, never divulges ratings information.

Canal+

The raunchy *Versailles* is more than a romp through history, finds **Raymond Snoddy**. It is a symptom of digital disruption

To Claire Tavernier, former head of Fremantle’s FMX digital division, the series provide a metaphor for the tumult in the French TV industry.

“It’s an example of how things are changing: big, US-style drama; new US players coming in; TF1 [the main commercial, free-to-air channel] acquiring a lot of producers, while local, French-language drama has also had a resurgence. It’s definitely a market that’s shifting,” says Tavernier, who runs Story-TechLife, a digital content consultancy.

Tavernier sees *Versailles* as a defensive move against the Netflix invasion. The project, however, had been around for years in different forms.

“On the one hand, Canal+ is very, very French but, on the other, it thinks it is HBO. At board meetings they ask, ‘Why can’t we do *Game of Thrones*?’, even though it costs \$10m an episode,” says Tavernier, who is French.

It is obvious why Netflix made *Marseille*, a mayoral succession story, in French, but why should Canal+ make *Versailles* in English?

The answer is all about budgets, creative ambition and international sales.

Cassandre Richard, strategic advisor to Maxime Saada, CEO of Canal+, says that the French pay-TV company has the same vision as other large TV operators – to achieve the highest drama production values, which viewers now expect.

Unlike HBO and Netflix, however, Canal+ does not have a large enough domestic market to cover the cost of big productions on its own. It has to find international partners, such as Sky or Mediaset in Italy, and add financing from international sales.

“If you have a French-speaking show today it’s not very difficult to sell outside France, but it is very difficult to sell it at a good price,” says Richard, a



former UK-based Viacom strategist. She cites zombie drama *The Returned*, which was sold to Channel 4 and many other broadcasters – but “the price that was paid was really low”.

Making *Versailles* in English was simply the only way to have any chance of recouping the cost of around €30m (£25m) for the 10-part series.

Canal+’s strategy, according to Richard, involves running “two strings” in parallel. One involves making shows aimed principally at a single market in the local language: Canal+ has had considerable success with *Gomorra*, a Sky Italia production, made in the Naples dialect. It worked because European audiences – though not American – are a lot more tolerant of subtitles today.

The other string involves big, international co-productions made in English.

“There’s an amazing show coming up in the autumn called *The Young Pope*, made by HBO, Sky and us. It stars Jude Law and is directed by Paolo Sorrentino. It’s set in Italy and it’s like a magnificent, 10-hour movie. We would never have been able to do it unless it was in English,” Richard argues.

Versailles could hardly have been a more appropriate project for David Wolstencroft, the American-born British writer involved in the creation of *Spooks* with co-writer Simon Mirren.

Wolstencroft and Mirren were looking for a TV project when along came the latest, unworkable, script for *Versailles*. Wolstencroft, a Cambridge history graduate who had chosen Louis XIV as his special topic, and Mirren, who left school at 16, together immediately saw the way forward.

“If you are doing *Versailles* you want to do it about the king and this crazy, fucked-up love triangle at the centre,”

WHEN WE ARRIVED IN FRANCE, WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE LIKE CLIMBING THE MATTERHORN IN FLIP-FLOPS

says Wolstencroft. For good measure, he stirred in a generous helping of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, which runs through the series “like a stick of rock”.

Wolstencroft and Mirren and Canal+ provided the creative input. But joining the French production company Capa and Canadian production partner Incendo was distributor Zodiak, which has sold the show to more than 136 territories. In the UK, the series was acquired by the BBC.

“When we arrived in France, we thought it would be like climbing the Matterhorn in flip-flops,” recalls Wolstencroft. “Nothing like this had ever been done before, but Canal+ was an absolute rock star with us and it was the biggest supporter of our show and our vision.” He thinks that he has the making of a business book on how *Versailles* was made and what it means for the current TV industry.

The French crew, he explains, were 100% on board but production schedules were longer due to union rules, so “you can forget 15-hour shooting days”.

Versailles is an important show for Canal+, which has 5.9 million subscribers in mainland France – though the number is gently declining. The >



Versailles

BBC

› service is facing increasing competition for everything, from drama to sports rights, from OTT and free-to-air digital services.

The company recently lost English Premier League rights to Altice, which owns France's second-largest mobile operator, Numericable-SFR.

Earlier this year, in an attempt to get more regulatory flexibility on joint deals for sports rights, Canal+ Chairman, the Vivendi industrialist Vincent Bolloré, threatened to close Canal+'s loss-making pay-TV channels if losses continued to rise.

The manoeuvre failed but Bolloré is unlikely to carry out his threat because Canal+, which also owns movie arm Studio Canal, is profitable overall.

So, how unusual is it for a major French series, such as *Versailles*, to be made in English – and is it a harbinger of things to come?

The answer is that it's not that unusual – and, if it is a trend, it is a slow-moving one.

Jacques Peskine, who used to run USPA, the professional association of French TV producers, says that there has always been a small corridor for English-language productions in France. In the past, however, French broadcasters wanting English-language programmes tended to buy series from the US.

"French producers are learning to look at programmes in a different way, but it's an evolution not a revolution. I think that is very clear. The English language is no longer a horror,

and they want to export beyond the French-speaking world," Peskine explains.

A second reason that evolution is more likely lies with regulatory quotas. There is an overall 50% French-language quota. Canal+ has to spend a minimum of 3.6% of its revenues on scripted series or documentaries – at least 85% of that with independents and 85% in French.

Mo Hamza, a TV analyst with SNL Kagen, believes that co-productions in several languages "are a trend that is definitely on the up".

However, Bernard Villegas of The Wit (Worldwide Information Tracking) believes that *Versailles* is neither a one-off nor a trend.

"It's an experiment," he says. "If it works and earns money, which is not proven yet, then, yes, it could start a trend. The trend is that French drama, like drama from every country, is now trying to become international. That is where the trend is now."

In the battle between *Versailles* and *Marseille* history is in the lead. The second series of *Marseille* was commissioned last month. Shooting on the second, 10-part *Versailles* is due to finish around now (in mid-July).

Season 3, Wolstencroft says, is already "being talked about very strenuously".

And whether *Versailles* is a trend, a shift or an experiment, Mirren and Wolstencroft are also talking to Canal+ about something else – "something very big".

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IS NO LONGER A HORROR, AND THEY WANT TO EXPORT BEYOND THE FRENCH-SPEAKING WORLD



A vote for change

The “vote” of the UK’s independent television producers on the EU referendum could hardly have been more emphatic. The poll, conducted by

Pact, the independent producers’ group, showed 85% in favour of remaining in the EU and 15% against – rather different from the UK’s vote.

There was no political campaign by Pact: the results were published but vanished into the pre-referendum maelstrom of claim and counterclaim.

Despite the overwhelming indie preference to remain, Pact CEO John McVay has very strong views on what should happen now: “The people have voted. Ultimately, the Government, a government, has to deal with that. Our job in the industry is not to ridicule the will of the British people but to make sure that things work better for our industry and that there is no long-term damage to our leading position.”

Producers want to be able to access top talent wherever it comes from and receive financial support from the UK government once Britain is cut off from the creative and regional development funds of the EU.

Economics

Will Brexit liberate Britain’s TV sector or will international media giants now abandon London for mainland Europe?
Raymond Snoddy gauges opinion

Potential benefits of Brexit include leaving behind everything from the EU’s state-aid restrictions to the strictures of the Digital Single Market.

According to McVay, it would be “a complete own goal” if issues surrounding control of the UK’s borders were to damage the creative industries. The sector is one of the fastest-growing areas of the economy, accounting for 6% of GDP.

“It is beholden to those of us who think we do have one of the world’s leading audio-visual sectors to fight

in every way possible to ensure it remains so,” he adds.

John Newbigin, Chair of Creative England and a former Channel 4 executive, believes that the creative sector is the one most dependent on the free movement of labour and the EU’s financial support for innovation. He warns that the current instability is deeply damaging.

“No decisions are being made, contracts are being frozen or being lost. The Government has to act to reassure people, but, of course, it can’t – because we haven’t got a government, an opposition or a plan,” he laments.

The outlook among those who track the hard numbers and forecast the trends is bleaker still.

“It’s a disaster,” says Claire Enders, founder of research group Enders Analysis. She notes that the Brexit vote immediately knocked £18bn off the value of media stocks in the UK. ITV was badly hit because of its reliance on advertising.

Shares can rise as well as fall, but Enders fears that the loss of three years’ worth of stock-market growth in the media sector will not quickly be made good. >



Shutterstock

▶ A remain vote, she believes, would have added 10% to the value of media stocks and the pound. In other words, the downside is even greater that it first appears. Enders predicts other big changes: “A financially weak Government is going to have few places to look for increased income. We will have a greater risk of privatisation of Channel 4 and privatisation of BBC assets.”

Guy Bisson, research director of Ampere Analysis, expects an immediate impact on the advertising market and advertising-funded television, “assuming that the predictions of an economic downturn are correct – and they probably are”.

One of his main concerns is the future of London as the centre for international channel groups dependent on the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (and Ofcom licences) to broadcast from the UK into all EU countries.

These international players like the relatively liberal British regulatory regime. Brexit, when it finally happens, could cause them real problems.

“Discovery has had big operations in the UK for 20 years but it would have to move any channel aimed at the EU and that’s just one aspect of one tiny industry,” Bisson argues.

Perhaps not so tiny: the revenues of the digital multichannel television business in the UK alone passed £5bn a year in 2015.

Big broadcasters, such as the BBC, are still trying to assess what Brexit means for them and are saying little. But for a “super-indie” such as Endemol Shine Group, the worries are already clear.

“We see ourselves as a pan-European success story,” says Richard Johnston, CEO of Endemol Shine UK. “We are headquartered in the Netherlands and London. We have made a success of freedom of ideas and people, from predominantly around the EU. That has been the story of our growth, which has brought lots of revenue and jobs to the UK.”

London will remain a strong TV market but anything that makes the flow of people and ideas across Europe

more complicated would be unwelcome for programme-makers.

Following Brexit, Johnston believes that it is “certainly possible” that the Netherlands could become the sole HQ of the company. However, a reduced presence in London, rather than an exit, is more likely.

The Endemol Shine executive adds that tax credits for drama, an unqualified success, might be simplified in future because, at the moment, they have to navigate the EU’s state-aid restrictions.

On the other hand, Johnston notes that the UK’s audio-visual sector has received €44m from the EU’s Creative Europe programme, which started in 2014 – and €100m from its Culture programme, which ran 2007-13.

Stewart Purvis, a former ITN CEO and Ofcom partner for content and standards, points to the importance of the hundreds of international channels licensed by Ofcom in London.

He wonders what will happen to media competition policy and, indeed,

Analysis from vox SWOTs

the Audiovisual Media Services Directive itself, following Brexit.

The UK could gain the freedom to, for example, develop its own rules on how many advertising minutes are allowed in an hour. But he is surprised that new EU draft rules on the regulation of online content, which came out during the referendum campaign, were largely ignored.

Despite being a passionate remain supporter, Richard Williams, CEO of Northern Ireland Screen, believes that the inward-investment side of the UK screen industry can only gain from Brexit: he cites an improved exchange rate and freedom from state-aid rules.

The cultural test, in particular, says Williams, limits inward investment by “requiring projects attracting UK tax incentives to pass a test that they are sufficiently British or European to warrant support”.

But *Game of Thrones*, so important to the Northern Ireland television industry, is safe. In any case, the show no longer receives EU funding.

David Wolstencroft, co-author of *Versailles*, takes a very different, rather creative approach: “If Brexit was a storyline, it would be thrown out for being too implausible. Why would a country voluntarily hobble itself? First act is chaos; our second act will be a roller coaster of instability. What happens in the third is anyone’s guess. But there’s certainly a breathtaking array of antagonists.”

Fellow author Lord Dobbs, of *House of Cards* fame, could have a lively debate with Wolstencroft. “I happen to believe that [Brexit] will be creatively inspiring,” he says. “It’s a global world out there and, if we are to continue with the fabulous success of the British creative industry, we have to look not just across the channel but around the world.”

It is “bizarre”, Dobbs believes, that the UK creative sector should think it is dependent on contacts and payments from the bureaucracy of Brussels.

The *House of Cards* author is certain of one thing post referendum: “Political fiction is now dead. I’m going to attend the wake.

“I used to say that you take political reality and then you water it down to make it credible.”

Reality has now become just too extraordinary.

Lord Puttnam:

‘We are cutting ourselves off from our most important influence. The EU supports a huge amount of script development and European co-production. The independent film sector relies on this co-operation.’

‘It’s the smaller, more “British” movies that will suffer, because we will become increasingly reliant on American money.’

He adds: ‘The UK was pivotal for the creative industries operating in Europe – we attracted the best talent. Now, the best people will end up in Berlin or Paris; they will relocate to Ireland.’

‘The creative industries have been the biggest UK growth industries for the past 60 years and now they are going to be in serious decline.’

‘We don’t own the English language. A French studio could make an English-language movie in Paris.’



instability could affect client spend in some areas.

‘However, ITN’s diverse businesses, spanning sport, advertising and digital content, as well as TV programming, mean that we are confident that we are well placed to respond to any market changes.’

‘Expansion into the US is a core part of ITN’s 2020 vision and this focus remains unaffected by the Brexit vote.’



Sir Martin Sorrell, CEO, WPP: ‘Turmoil favours the brave. Opportunity knocks. However, Brexit will make things more difficult.’

Charlie Beckett, director of Polis, LSE:

‘The British TV industry is one of the most flexible, competitive and international in the world.’

It has already responded with both zeal and success to recent technological and market challenges.

‘So it is as well prepared as any for the uncertainty that Brexit brings, ranging from currency fluctuations to regulatory changes.’

‘But, right now, it is difficult to see what the opportunities are – such as new markets to exploit – that were not there before. I can’t think of anyone in the sector who was arguing for Brexit on the grounds of commercial or public service interest.’

‘At a time of great disruption in media sectors, this further instability is no help in the short term. But in the medium to long term, the difference it makes should be marginal, not fatal.’



Jane Turton, CEO, All3Media: ‘All3Media is a global business and we will continue to grow and develop the business by concentrating on producing and distributing the very best content for our buyers around the world.’

John Hardie, CEO, ITN:

‘The impact of Brexit upon the UK television and indie community is not yet clear.’

‘It is likely that ongoing



Time to close the pay gap



Why, 46 years after the Equal Pay Act, are women in television still being paid less than men? “A man at exactly the same grade as me, with far less education and experience, and who joined the BBC after I did, was paid £10,000 more than me,” says one female staffer.

“I am paid £5,000 less than a man on the same grade, despite having more responsibility and having worked more years on the team,” complains another.

Outside of the BBC, a similar picture emerges. “Until recently, I earned less than half the salary enjoyed by my male colleagues,” comments an employee from the commercial sector.

“I submitted an equal-pay review request because I was being paid substantially less than my male peers,” says yet another staffer. “I was given a raise but am still on less and this extra money was not backdated.”

The revelations were made to the National Union of Journalists in a survey which found that women were more likely to be judged on their looks, given “softer” stories to cover and that many were earning less than men.

Gender pay equity

More data and transparency are needed if TV companies are to stop discriminating against women. So why wait, asks **Tara Conlan**

The issue has been around for years. In 1997, it emerged that Sue MacGregor was paid £20,000 less than her BBC Radio 4 *Today* colleagues, John Humphrys and James Naughtie. Meanwhile, Sandi Toksvig missed out on fronting *Have I Got News For You* more than two decades ago because it was felt that a woman could not carry the show.

Catherine Riley, head of communications at the Women’s Equality Party, which was co-founded by Toksvig, says that, despite some progress, “there is a gender pay gap in broadcasting. According to [jobs website] Glassdoor, men in the media earn 6.6% more than women.”

She adds that there is also “a promotion gap because of a cultural difference. Women are often segregated in different areas of the broadcast industry. Hard news tends to be for men. Men commentate on women’s sport but, curiously, it does not happen as much the other way around.”

Riley continues: “The gender pay gap is exacerbated by the fact that men stay in the office longer, not because they are necessarily doing better work. We’re still so ingrained in that culture of long hours. This shows that you’re a better employee than someone who starts at 8:00am and clocks off at 4:00pm to get their kids.”

Last December, actor Joanna Lumley encapsulated the main problem behind the “evil” pay gap when she told me: “The difficulty is that practically no actors actually say what they get. This is either because it’s such a grossly huge amount of money that they know it’s miles more than the person they’re talking to – or it’s such a humble and desperately small thing that they daren’t say.”

One agent argues that transparency is vital and that it is only when agents have male and female clients doing the same job that any disparity is revealed. “It’s impossible to know unless you get



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Committee's inquiry into women in broadcasting reported last year that "discrimination against women, particularly older women, still exists in the industry", but that "there isn't enough data on the representation of women in the sector to fully understand the extent of the problem".

What there is makes for interesting reading. Of the 42 BBC presenters revealed by website Heat Street in May to be earning more than £149,000, only 12 were women.

And, according to the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism's report "Journalists in the UK", half of women in the sector earn less than £2,400 a month, compared with 34% of men.

The NUJ is sure this is consistent with the situation across broadcasting.

Its General Secretary, Michelle Stanistreet, says: "The Reuters report, and our own surveys of women working in broadcasting, show women getting paid less while doing the same job as male colleagues. Many also miss out on promotion.

"This is a depressing state of affairs and patently unfair for women. The industry is losing out on a huge pool of talent if most of the top, highly paid jobs are going to men."

The NUJ has also called for Ofcom to monitor "on- and off-screen equality levels in all the media organisations under its remit".

As women are more than three times as likely to be in part-time employment as men, it is no surprise that median part-time workers' hourly wages are far lower than full-timers' hourly pay. Across all industries, female part-timers do not, on average, earn less than male part-timers; the problem, rather, lies in why so many women are deterred from full-time employment.

Riley says the pay disparity emanates "from a complicated mix of things" including, "women taking time out for child rearing and caring... so we are advocating universal free childcare from the end of parental leave at nine months up to schooling age".

Perhaps if women invoiced for the childcare, cooking and cleaning they do, things might change. According to a 2010 Office for National Statistics (ONS) study, if parental childcare were paid at a commercial rate, it would be the equivalent of 23% of GDP. Household laundry would add a further 6% of GDP.

With the creative industries now worth £84bn per year to the UK

economy, there is clearly the money for equal pay.

Stanistreet says: "An overwhelming message from our members is the need for a more flexible workplace, where people who work part-time are taken seriously and given jobs with responsibility. As a union, we are working and campaigning within broadcasting organisations to bring this about."

ONS statistics highlight another effect of the unequal burden of child-care on women's careers and pay: younger women, on average, earn more than men between the ages of 22 and 29 but, by the time they are 41, men are paid 4.6% more.

The difference becomes more stark the further up the pay scale you go. TUC research into the top 5% of earners, published in November 2015, reveals that men are paid 45.9% more than women. "These figures show that the glass ceiling is barely cracked, let alone broken," says TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady.

According to City University head of journalism Professor Suzanne Franks, the issue is "something that employers don't particularly want to talk about. There's no pressure for them to talk about it until there's legislation.

"Naming and shaming and making it an issue is going to go a long way to making people realise that this is not acceptable. It's changing very slowly, but when you do dig down and find anecdotal evidence, it is quite shocking what the gaps are. People don't imagine that it still goes on but it absolutely does."

Under new legislation, companies with more than 250 employees will have to start disclosing the average pay (including bonuses) of their workforce by gender no later than April 2018. The Conservative Government's plan for a league table ranking large firms by gender pay gap was long resisted by business groups – and parts of the Tory party.

Riley thinks that the Government's pay reporting plans are good but comments: "There's no reason that couldn't start tomorrow. Pay data is already aggregated in companies."

She also wants the legislation to extend to companies with more than 50 employees: "We all need to be honest about what we're getting paid and what we're getting paid for. Secrecy and protection serve to prop up unfairness."

the facts and figures," points out the agent. "Women are short-changed. It does happen to people on screen as well, there's no doubt about that."

Even in situations where there has been a woman in charge, this has often not helped female presenters get paid more, adds the agent.

The BBC's 2014-15 Equality Report says that its "overall gender pay differential" is 8%, down from 8.4% in 2013. However, 11% of staff had an "unexplained pay differential" of more than 5%, up from 10% of staff the previous year. The BBC asks its managers to investigate any gender pay discrepancy greater than 5% that cannot be explained by things such as length of service.

The most recent figures, obtained by a freedom of information request, show that the mean salary of male and female full-time staff employed by the BBC in May 2011 was £41,816 for men and £36,827 for women.

A BBC spokesman says: "The BBC takes its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 very seriously and we conduct equal-pay reviews on an annual basis. Pay is determined individually, based on a range of factors including grade, role and responsibilities."

The House of Lords Communications

Brand power



Vice show *Gaycation*

Viceland

The youthfully cool Vice Media, famous for its guerrilla-style coverage of war zones and drug busts, has built its brand online. Yet it is about to launch a traditional TV channel in the UK and plans to make it available in 44 countries via different partnerships.

It's almost as if Apple had suddenly unveiled a record deck minus any kind of connectivity. Or is it?

Vice – reportedly a \$4bn business – is to roll out a 24-hour linear TV channel, programmed, developed and produced entirely in-house by the company's creative team. Named Viceland TV, it will arrive in September in the UK via a non-exclusive carriage deal with Sky. It also plans launches in Russia and France (with pay-TV operator Canal+) later this year.

In today's complex world of content consumption, where it is not always easy to identify whether channel brands or content brands are king, Vice's move suggests that there is still a lot to be gained from operating a channel, even when your intended audience are digital natives.

Multichannel TV

As Vice launches its first UK TV channel, **Stuart Kemp** investigates why having a strong identity is more important than ever

As a content studio producing huge quantities of premium video and original programming for a host of partners, Vice has already established itself as a non-linear, multi-platform brand.

With about 40% of all UK households subscribing to Sky, the highly sought after 18- to 35-year-old audiences, who might normally catch Vice on a night bus via their mobile phone or via the YouTube channel on a tablet, will be invited to tune in on television.

"Vice is a non-linear operator going to a linear-TV brand with a high

awareness," says Adrian Wills, general manager for Drama, Yesterday and Alibi at UKTV, the channel provider owned by BBC Worldwide and Scripps. "When we launch a new channel, we always start with the content first. We think of the product first and [then] how we make the [channel] brand fit with it."

Viceland is available in the US and Canada as a channel on A+E Networks. It boasts content such as: *Gaycation*, with Ellen Page and Ian Daniel; *Huang's World*, with Eddie Huang; *F*ck, That's Delicious*, with Action Bronson; and *Balls Deep*, with Thomas Morton. It also has *Vice* on HBO, a weekly news magazine show now in its fourth season.

While Vice Media is keeping its cards close to its chest ahead of September's launch, it is understood that its UK channel will mix its US shows with newly minted content aimed at British audiences made in the same vein as the videos available online.

An example of the flavour of what's to come is the documentary *UK's Scariest Debt Collector*, featuring a British former gangster who runs a gym and debt collection business in Warrington. Available via the online strand *Rule*

Britannia, it has scared more than 15 million viewers to date on YouTube.

Vice Media chief Shane Smith, the potty-mouthed founder and energetic driving force behind Vice, describes the TV channel as the banner's "biggest move yet in our long love affair with our British and Irish audience".

The deal with Sky gives Vice a swing at an audience that, hopefully, will be lured by the brand's reputation. There is also a tilt at generating cash from the lucrative UK television advertising market.

Sky's sales force, which enjoys an enviably steely reputation, is looking to boost Vice coffers – and its own – by selling Viceland's airtime. Vice could also receive a per-Sky-subscriber carriage fee for its channel, although the details of the deal remain under wraps. In return, Sky will get exclusive rights to some Viceland shows for its own on-demand services.

Where Vice might fall down is the EPG page number it appears on. Too far down the list and casual engagement grows ever more unlikely.

"The holy grail for any channel is to get the people surfing through the list to start watching often enough to begin to recognise the channel and then for them to remember and go by default to see what's on," says one industry analyst.

Rivals will be watching to see how Viceland performs in the ultra-competitive British TV sector, where channels remain central to how content is accessed.

Significantly, this year saw BBC Three closed and relaunched as an online-only service. Across town, Channel 4 and Global Series Network partnered to launch Walter Presents, a branded, ad-supported online and on-demand free service.

But how does a channel brand generate loyalty among a promiscuous and fickle audience of channel-hoppers in a multichannel, on-demand age? Collective industry wisdom suggests that pushing a brand with unsuitable content is a recipe for failure.

Wills says candidly: "We've made

mistakes in the past at UKTV, where we've come up with content and wrapped a brand around it that doesn't quite fit."

When UKTV decided to brand every channel in its portfolio as a standalone brand, it renamed UKTV People Blighty. It staggered on for years before the axe fell. There was simply not enough content to live up to the channel brand's promise of celebrating being British and all the quirks and foibles that this encompasses.

"The brand was more exciting than the content, so there was a bit of a misalignment there," Wills admits.



WE THINK OF THE PRODUCT FIRST AND [THEN] HOW WE MAKE THE [CHANNEL] BRAND FIT WITH IT

Steve North, fellow UKTV general manager for Dave, Gold and W (UKTV rebranded Watch to W earlier this year), says that building a brand can create audience loyalty and trust – provided that the content is up to scratch.

"If you've given audiences great programming in the past they will believe that you'll deliver great shows in the future. But you have to keep delivering great shows to keep that brand trust up and keep them coming back," says North.

One of the most successful rebrands

in recent times was the launch of Dave in late 2007, which North was responsible for. G2 was reborn as lad-friendly Dave and made available for the first time on Freeview. The shows, most notably *Top Gear*, and the scheduling remained the same, but the audience and awareness of the channel soared.

"Nothing had changed from a viewing standpoint apart from the brand," notes North. He adds: "Everyone talks about the internet taking over and it being all about on-demand. All of those big players that have made themselves successful in the online environment,

however, continue to move into linear television.

"Vice is another example of an on-demand, non-linear service moving into that linear world – because it is in very good health and not dying."

The total UK television audience (defined by Barb as anyone aged four or over in a household with a TV) reached 58.7 million this spring, compared with 58 million a year earlier.

The TV advertising market also remains buoyant: revenue in the UK totalled £5.27bn in 2015, up 7.4% on 2014, according to Thinkbox, which represents UK commercial TV broadcasters. The figure represents all the money invested by advertisers in commercial TV across linear spots and sponsorship, broadcaster VoD, and product placement.

Viceland seems like a no brainer for Smith, and his modest ambition for Vice to become "the biggest fucking media company in the world" should naturally include television.

While insiders insist that Vice has no intention of becoming a TV company – that's way too old school – it does intend to build audiences for programmes that embrace the company's reputation for edgy, sassy, youth-friendly content.

Time will tell whether young people turn on in large enough numbers to the latest eye-widening move by the one-time punk-culture magazine publisher. Certainly, having such a coveted brand ought to give Vice a leg up in the evolving landscape of TV channels.

International

Steve Clarke meets polyglot Turner executive **Giorgio Stock**, whose division is back on top

For a case study in how legacy brands can adapt to a changing media environment, look no further than what Giorgio Stock is achieving at Turner Broadcasting System.

“This is going to be the best year ever for Turner. The company is enjoying a fantastic moment,” says the President of Turner EMEA, speaking from his spacious sixth-floor Soho eyrie.

His office overlooks a remarkable roof terrace straight from the pages of a high-end style magazine, an image at odds with the quietly spoken Stock.

He looks dapper, dressed in a grey Italian woollen suit. “I feel very good about this year, despite the referendum,” adds the Rome-born executive. Stock holds both Italian and German passports. “I have two passports but I could probably ask for more,” he laughs.

Ah, the referendum that his side narrowly lost. “I was a little puzzled by the referendum,” Stock says with calculated understatement.

Fluent in seven European languages (Italian, German, French, English, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch), the former Disney executive is a committed European down to the soles of his highly polished black loafers.

Let’s not dwell on the result too much, but here’s what he says about the future prospects of the UK television sector as it braces itself for Brexit: “The UK has benefited from a world that is open, not closed. My hope is that whatever is decided in the next two years will keep the UK as the kind of place that attracts the best talent the world has to offer and where IP and content can travel freely.

“When it comes to the creative industries, I hope things don’t change much, because people might not realise how good it was.”

When Stock arrived at the London HQ of TBS three years ago, he found a company failing to fully exploit and protect its assets across Europe, the



Middle East and Africa. Today, he is in charge of a much improved business. His region appears to be outpacing TBS on its home turf in the US, where cord cutting has hurt the business. CNN, however, boosted by the US presidential primaries, has just enjoyed its most-watched quarter in seven years.

Earlier this year, Turner’s new US-based Chief Creative Officer, Kevin Reilly, told *Variety* that it would take up to three years to transform the TBS and TNT cable channels in the US.

In the face of fierce digital competition, Reilly, formerly of Fox, hopes to attract a younger and more passionate audience. Investment in content is being ramped up.

In Europe, the picture looks upbeat

across the business. CNN (in 200 million EMEA homes) has defied sceptics who thought that rolling-news channels were sitting ducks in the age of Facebook. And another vulnerable area, kids’ TV, is also back on the front foot.

Across 276 million homes in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, the Cartoon Network and Boomerang channels have raised their game online as they embrace new modes of connecting with youngsters.

An example of this is that Turner – in common with the BBC and Viacom – has negotiated a presence on the newly launched Sky Kids app.

“I look at my own kids, aged nine and 12. They are clearly consuming a lot of their content outside traditional

television, but TV is by far the most prominent access point," observes Stock. "In some markets, such as the UK, there is a migration away from linear TV. To protect our ratings, we have gained market share. We have displaced other players in the marketplace to maintain our lead."

Cartoon Network and Disney Junior are the top two kids' channels in the UK for children aged four or over, ahead of Nickelodeon and Disney, according to Barb.

Another development is wider distribution of TBS's Adult Swim network, including a deal with Spotify. The aim is to turn Adult Swim, very popular with millennials in the US, into a global success.

Even Turner's general-entertainment stations TNT and TCM appear to be weathering the storm. Despite digital competition, they are adding audiences across the EMEA region, claims Stock.

Back in 2013, Turner's London-based operation was in a state of flux. Turner International's new President, Gerhard Zeiler, announced that a third of its staff would lose their jobs. Costs were cut at the same time as regional operating power across EMEA was enhanced.

"My first year at Turner was not fun but it was necessary... We were spending a lot of money on stuff that was not appreciated by our audiences," Stock recalls. "There were moments, three years ago, when I looked at Gerhard and said, 'You could have told me the full picture.'"

Overall, a more coherent approach to producing, marketing and distributing content is now in place. "Our ad sales have doubled and our margins have increased dramatically," says Stock. More money has been ploughed into content and marketing budgets. For the past two years, Turner has boosted what it spends on original shows by 24%.

In Britain, Turner commissions the Bafta- and Emmy-winning *The Amazing World of Gumball* (recently green-lit for a sixth season), virtual-reality games and a lot of content for CNN. Technology has been another priority for investment.

Stock's reinvention of Turner's child-oriented businesses inevitably owes much to Disney, where he once worked. Disney wrote the rulebook on how to monetise the full length of the value chain. This involved commissioning and making shows, securing rights, distributing content via its own TV channels and third-party platforms,

through to marketing and selling merchandise in Disney stores. And, on top of all that, there were the theme parks.

Cartoon Network is part of what Stock claims is "the world's biggest indoor theme park"; opening soon in Dubai. The city was chosen because of the millions of tourists who fly into its two international airports.

There will be a dedicated Cartoon Network zone within IMG's Worlds of Adventure, which opens for business on 15 August. Shows such as *Ben 10*, *Adventure Time*, *The Powerpuff Girls* and *The Amazing World of Gumball* will all have attractions in the park. On top of these, there will be branded restaurants and stores.

What about retail in the UK? "We are not actively looking at physical, bricks-and-mortar retail stores in the UK and the 'old world', rather the emphasis is on e-commerce, a major growth driver that was neglected in the past," says Stock.

He spent 15 years at the Mouse House, much of it as Executive VP and General Manager of Disney Consumer Products, Publishing & Retail EMEA.

"It was very hard to leave Disney," he says. "It was a fantastic company. Everything I know about television and brands, I learnt at Disney. I was stimulated by the idea of being able to use that across not just kids, but a broader spectrum. Turner has a desire to surprise. At Cartoon Network, we say, 'Expect the unexpected!'"

So how does he regard the threat from Netflix? "We want to be a consumer-centric company. Netflix has looked at consumers and seen things that weren't being offered to them and made it happen.

"To some extent, Netflix has taken advantage of inertia... The user experience has been rather poor compared with what Netflix is offering them... It has provided flexibility in terms of pricing and consumption, which other companies weren't providing..."

"I think we need to learn from Netflix... and not necessarily suffer the consequences."

Finally, Brexit aside, what does Stock regard as the biggest threat to his business? His big fear is the consequences that would flow from failing to "stay on the cutting edge of creating the kind of products that our audiences care about. We must not take our success for granted. Many companies do. We have to be innovative in terms of how we distribute our content."

MY FIRST YEAR AT TURNER WAS NOT FUN BUT IT WAS NECESSARY... WE WERE SPENDING A LOT OF MONEY ON STUFF THAT WAS NOT APPRECIATED BY OUR AUDIENCES

NETFLIX HAS LOOKED AT CONSUMERS AND SEEN THINGS THAT WEREN'T BEING OFFERED TO THEM AND MADE IT HAPPEN

Size matters

Short-form online content is booming. YouTube depends on it. Channel 4 and BBC Three are showcasing short films unsuited to conventional linear-TV schedules. Brands, wary of ad blocking, are in the market for short-form content, too.

These were some of the conclusions of a wide-ranging and packed RTS Futures panel discussion, "Size matters: A provocative look at short-form content". The session was chaired with erudition and flair by Pat Younge, co-founder and Managing Director of Sugar Films.

For wannabe film-makers immersed in digital culture, there was positive news from the experts. "What's new at BBC Three is short-form. We see that as a massive opportunity to work with new talent," said BBC Three content editor Max Gogarty.

"Since we launched in February, we've tried out some 10 new, on-screen faces.... Our door has never been more open for both on-screen and off-screen talent."

Adam Gee, multi-platform and online video commissioning editor at Channel 4, also offered encouragement to the Futures audience.

"The commissioning editors have very direct relationships with all sorts of people, not necessarily people who are massively experienced. They're very easy to find," he said. "I spend a lot of time going out to find film-makers all around the UK and beyond, and to develop relationships with them."

"Different commissioners have different balances. My colleague who covers entertainment and comedy tends to work more with traditional indies."

"I hardly work with traditional indies at all. I work with weird and wonderful talent, fresh talent that's emerging."

Gee pointed out that, due of the glut

RTS Futures

Short-form video is booming – the challenge is getting your content noticed, says **Steve Clarke**

of online short films, it was important to consider carefully how audiences discover and watch online content.

"From the beginning of the development process, we think about how we're going to sell them," he said.

"Think about a title

that works on the platform. Think about what kind of imagery will represent the series. On all platforms, most of the audience switches off in the first 15 to 20 seconds. You've got to hook people in.

"The statistic that I am most proud of is our completed viewing rate for the short-form video that I've been commissioning over the past two years. It is above 90%. On YouTube, it is south of 25%."

Randel Bryan, director of content and strategy at Endemol Shine's Beyond UK, agreed that aspiring film-makers needed to work out how audiences would locate the videos they've produced.

"You are much more than a film-maker now. You have to be a one-stop shop. You need to understand how to market, how to use social media to get people to find you," he said.

Andy Taylor, CEO of digital specialist Little Dot Studios,





From left: Kelly Sweeney, Andy Taylor, Randel Bryan, Pat Younge, Adam Gee and Max Gogarty

Paul Hampartsoumian

revealed that much of his staff's time is spent persuading websites to embed clients' videos.

"The biggest challenge is getting your content seen. Something like 400 hours of content is uploaded to YouTube every minute," he said. "People expect celebs such as Gordon Ramsay and Graham Norton to get millions of views. It's not so.

"You've got to get yourself into the head of the person who is going to find that piece of content. For an entertainment show, it is all about embedding."

For factual content, such as recipes or parenting advice, Little Dot's job is to slowly build up the numbers via social media and to get people to share the content.

The majority of all short-form video is consumed on mobile and aimed at digital-savvy millennials.

The newbies were shown a selection of short-form content. This demonstrated the variety of content available at the swipe of a screen. The range encompassed sombre material such as BBC Three's *Drugs Map of Britain* and comedy items such as Maker Studios' James Bond parody in the *Epic Rap Battles of History* strand. There was also the brilliant *Nude in Newington Green* from All 4's *Naked & Invisible* series.

"At BBC Three, we're no longer wedded to a linear-TV schedule, which is

THERE'S NO FORMULA FOR GETTING VIDEO TO GO VIRAL... SOMETIMES THE THING YOU REALLY BELIEVED IN DOESN'T TAKE OFF

massively exciting," stressed Gogarty. "We don't have to fill an hour or a half-hour [in the schedule]. It's hugely liberating for producers. I've spoken to a lot of directors who've been working for BBC Three for a long time. [In the past] They've told me that they can't cut down a film to the required length, but now I say, 'That's absolutely fine'"

At Channel 4, Gee's commissions include *Drones in Forbidden Zones*, *The Black Lesbian Handbook*, *Oh Shit I'm 30!* and the previously mentioned *Naked & Invisible*.

He said: "I think we've helped refine a certain kind of film-making and found an audience for it... I love making it. It makes regular TV extremely difficult to watch afterwards, because it's so flabby."

Kelly Sweeney started out in conventional TV production. In 2007, she was employed by social network Bebo. There, she worked on its ground-breaking drama *Kate Modern*. She is now director of production at Disney-owned Maker Studios.

Younge asked her whether working in a more corporate environment was reining in her creativity. "If anything, it has enabled it," she replied. "We have a fund to create our own IP, so we can create content for our channels without someone having to commission it. That is the direct result of being part of a big organisation."

What were the most common mistakes people made when they approached producers with their content, Younge asked the panel.

With 2,000 people applying to Maker each day, Sweeney said that wannabes needed to show that their videos were achieving at least 1,000 subscribers.

"Avoid copycatting," she recommended. "The model is still very new. There isn't that tried-and-tested way of going for it."

Gogarty advised potential BBC Three short-film makers to familiarise themselves with the network.

"The most common mistake," he said, "is being ignorant of what we're about and where BBC Three is heading, and not following us on social >

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q Should you do one thing really well – YouTube or Instagram – and build from there?

A **Kelly Sweeney:** Do one thing really well, find your platform and, as your brand evolves, you can look at all the other social space. Find the place where what you are doing is resonating.

A **Andy Taylor:** You have to decide whether you are on social because you want to develop a significant following and channel because it is your business – or whether are you creating short-form with a view to creating opportunity for yourself.

The truth is, the economics of distributing short-form on YouTube do not stack up yet.... If you're on social to be a presenter, you need to be doing it across a range of platforms to demonstrate you've got an underlying skill.

Q I'm a presenter and producer of online content. I feel that if it was on a bigger platform it could have a bigger reach. But how do commissioners see it? Sometimes, a film I've spent a lot of time on doesn't get anything like as many hits as a video I've quickly uploaded to YouTube.

A **Max Gogarty:** That's the nature of the internet. I share your pain.

A **Pat Younge:** Maybe, when something that you haven't spent a lot of time crafting takes off on YouTube, it's because it's topical and is zeitgeist. Maybe, you should position yourself there.

A **Kelly Sweeney:** It's not mutually exclusive. You could use the stuff that gets the eyeballs to take people to the other content.

A **Andy Taylor:** There's no formula for getting video to go viral. We did a comedy series, which we thought was a great idea; 48 hours later, it had about 300 viewers. But, suddenly, someone embeds it and it's gone.... Sometimes the thing that you really believed in doesn't take off.

Q Are UK broadcasters spending enough on short-form content?

A **Andy Taylor:** My hope is that in two years' time budgets at Channel 4 and BBC Three will be significantly higher.... We're making short-form video for Scripps in the US and the budget is 10 times bigger.

Scripps is funding it because it knows that it can go and talk to Unilever. It will pay 10 times what broadcasters in the UK will pay. Our time is coming here.

A **Adam Gee:** With an insider's view, I'd say that is absolutely bang on. If anything, it'll happen before two years' time.

Q How important is authenticity?

A **Kelly Sweeney:** It is key; you need to have a body of work.

A **Randel Bryan:** What I always say about YouTube is that it's a platform for people to go and find relationships they might not have in everyday life.

A **Adam Gee:** I worry that we have a default YouTube vision. The world is bigger than that.

A **Max Gogarty:** I totally agree. There are amazing new platforms emerging, which are much more geared towards the film-maker. We should credit that. It's not all about staying in your bedroom or monetising it. It's about having an outlet for film-makers and new talent to get seen and have a break. We shouldn't lose sight of that.

A **Adam Gee:** Look at *Notes on Blindness*. It started as a short-form film, became a feature and now it's a VR project.

A **Andy Taylor:** TV is expensive to make and then you talk about short form.... There is a massive space in the middle that no one has really grabbed. We've got to be careful that, in five years' time, people aren't watching US-commissioned, US-produced shows on most platforms. That could well happen.

Someone needs to get in and grab that middle ground. That is less about being seen on YouTube and more about the BBC and Channel 4 getting behind short-form storytelling.

MY HOPE IS THAT IN TWO YEARS' TIME BUDGETS AT CHANNEL 4 AND BBC THREE WILL BE SIGNIFICANTLY HIGHER.... OUR TIME IS COMING

› platforms. If you genuinely want to make content in this space, the best thing to do is to know what we're commissioning, what we're making and the tone of voice."

However brilliant your film is, don't expect 5 million views overnight, warned Bryan. He stressed the importance of knowing the correct way to market content.

But where do newbies learn this skill, asked Younge. "There is a YouTube playbook, which is a great start," replied the Endemol executive.

As for the type of content that attracts eyeballs, Gee suggested avoiding "stuff that's too quiet" and "too talkie". He added: "It's a very noisy world out there. It's better to see material that is driven by action and actuality."

What about quality? probed Younge. Would it matter if the microphone was in shot or if it was framed properly?

"All creatives are not made equal," said Sweeney. "A lot of people in the UK are making really beautiful films.

"In South-east Asia, we see a big trend towards writers, comedians and satirists. Young people don't have a platform for self-expression in Singapore due to government censorship. They use YouTube for self-expression."

At the end of the 90-minute session, Younge offered some advice to the Futures audience: "I think a common theme has emerged this evening. It is: go and do it. Find a way of making it happen, even if it's only a scene. It's a great way to show that you can write, act or direct."

'Size matters: A provocative look at short-form content' was an RTS Futures event held at The Hospital Club in London on 4 July. The producer was Danielle Lauren, a producer at Sugar Films.

OUR FRIEND IN BRUSSELS

So we are where we are and no one is quite sure where we go next. But when – if – we ever get our bearings, there is going to have to be an inquest into how we got here.

When looked at from continental Europe, the referendum result was less of a mystery than it was to many people in the UK.

In Brussels, Paris and Berlin, they have watched with polite bemusement the way they are caricatured in the British media; the ignorance, the misapprehensions and sheer indifference of the UK's press and public to the politics of Europe.

Every newsroom in the land must take a share of the blame for that. It's almost a rite of passage for foreign correspondents and desk editors to know every detail of the US political system, but Europe has always seemed just a bit too foreign.

And yet, as we are discovering, it's getting Europe wrong that can really muck you up.

Lord Puttnam, a Fellow of this parish, has spoken out about the damage done by excessive impartiality during the campaign. He described the BBC coverage, in particular, as "constipated", for giving an ill-deserved credibility to the promises of the Leave campaign in the name of balance.

He has a point, but – as the US media is discovering with Donald Trump – it is very hard to be both balanced and sceptical when politicians repeatedly say things they know to be untrue. "He claims the sky is

James Mates
blames wilful
British ignorance
of the European
project for Brexit



maroon, while she claims it is blue," is perfectly balanced, but deeply unsatisfactory journalism.

But the world didn't become "post-factual" overnight. Press and politicians have been complicit in portraying "Brussels" as an undemocratic monster for decades.

If you tell people for long enough that something is out to get them, perhaps you shouldn't be surprised when, in the end, they believe you.

I am not talking about bent bananas or the "threat" posed by Brussels to British delicacies such as the prawn-cocktail crisp. That's just froth.

Much more debilitating has been

the wilful ignorance of the way that the institutions of the EU work. It is that which has allowed politicians to claim they are being dictated to by "unelected bureaucrats" and to blame "Brussels" when the fault is often entirely theirs.

A lot of this stems from the press and TV journalists simply not knowing enough about the workings of the EU and about political opinion on the continent to be able paint an accurate picture. Caricature is much easier.

Many even struggle with the difference between the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg, which is the final arbiter of EU law, and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). This sits in Strasbourg and has nothing to do with the EU.

When the ECHR ruled that British prisoners must have the vote, in British minds that was just another outrage imposed on us by "Brussels".

How ironic it would be if we started concentrating on the politics of the EU only after we had left it. Already, we are finding we need to pay attention.

Article 50, anyone? We're suddenly all experts on that little-known clause of the Lisbon Treaty.

We now know that it's a brutal and uncompromising conveyor belt to the exit door that puts any member state wanting to leave in an extremely weak negotiating position. How clearly was that reported before we voted?

It would have been better, surely, to have known about this – and a whole lot more – before we cast the biggest vote of our lives.

James Mates is Europe editor, ITV News.



The Wednesday Play:
Up the Junction

BBC

The lifelong radical

Tony Garnett, now 80 and still a republican socialist, arrived with a bang as a standout producer of television and film drama in the 1960s. He made his mark with powerful, campaigning programmes such as *The Wednesday Play's Up the Junction* and *Cathy Come Home*, which exposed the horrors of backstreet abortions and family homelessness.

He reinvented himself in the 1990s as an independent producer, running World Productions. There, he backed new talent with the edgy *Between the Lines*, *The Cops* and, most famously, *This Life*. The latter was a frank drama about the personal lives of young lawyers. Written by the then-unknown Amy Jenkins, it made a star of Daniela Nardini. Jenkins landed the role after she told him that she hated the Beatles and the 1960s.

Garnett formed a lasting friendship and professional rapport with director Ken Loach. Their most famous collaboration was *Kes*, which, in common with a lot of Garnett's work, mixed well-known actors alongside unfamiliar faces and gritty location shooting.

Kes, released in 1969, was shot in Barnsley and was a spectacular success. The American studio boss Eric Pleskow, who backed it, hated the regional accents, and asked for subtitles. He remarked at a preview: "I would have preferred it in Hungarian."

The Day the Music Died: A Life Lived Behind the Lens, by Tony Garnett, is published by Constable, priced £20. ISBN: 978-1472122735



Book review

Tony Garnett made some of TV's greatest drama. **Maggie Brown** discovers some painful sources of inspiration

Garnett sold his house to help make *Kes*. At the premiere in Doncaster, he attacked Roy Mason, MP for Barnsley, whom he didn't want to see there: "He was an ex-miner, a right-wing Labour turncoat who became Northern Ireland secretary. I despised his politics, his betrayal of his own people. I was out of order. Not for the first time."

In an interview (with me) in 2013, he revealed how, aged five, his life had been upturned when his mother died of a botched abortion over Christmas in 1941, during a night-time bombing raid on Birmingham. His heartbroken father, who had been at work, committed suicide 19 days later.

This book is the fuller story, about

how his painful childhood subsequently inspired his work and creative decisions. *Up the Junction* was broadcast in 1965 as a bill to legalise abortion was going through Parliament. It was accompanied by Garnett's GP listing the avoidable deaths caused by criminalisation.

Back then, Garnett told no one, not even Loach, about his childhood. "I wanted no more unnecessary deaths or orphaned children," he says in this memoir. "Those shocked by my ruthless deception at the BBC had no idea of its roots. I would have cut off my arm to get that in front of the public."

After being orphaned, Garnett and his brother were taken in by separate branches of the family. He lived thereafter in a state of frozen watchfulness. He says that he survived by immersing himself in books. He won a grammar school place and discovered an ability to act.

The memoir also doubles up as an act of homage to the lost culture that shaped him, the great strengths of the matriarchs and verbally laconic Brummie "mechanicals". These were skilled toolmakers, men who loved the quiet escape of fishing at the weekend, Aston Villa and, by the 1950s, their motor cars.

Garnett took a degree in psychology at University College London, a cover for a burgeoning career as a jobbing actor: a part in *Dixon of Dock Green* went down best with his family.

Yet, just when his life was on the crest of a wave, further tragedy struck.

The actress Topsy Legge, who became his first wife, was on the verge of stardom in the film version of *Billy Liar* when she became mentally ill. Her treatment was a barbaric regime of electric-shock therapy and drugs; her experience inspired his 1971 film, *Family Life*. He says: “Topsy had brought me back to life, so I shut down again.”

After suffering from depression, Garnett was picked up by the BBC and there he embarked on the career as a drama producer that made his name. The searing brand of screen realism that he stood for was backed up by steeliness and determination to ensure that his plays reached their intended audience.

Although he had dealings with the Trotskyist Gerry Healy – who “threw me when he said I was important because I was the Goebbels of the movement” – he never fell for the Workers Revolutionary Party, as some of his acquaintances did.

He writes of his “suspicion of grand, all-encompassing, continental theory and a liking for the tradition of English scepticism. It was not that I rejected theories or ideologies, but I wanted them tested against evidence.”

He goes on to say: “I felt that the reality was that Gerry and the cabal decided everything. I’ve seen this in many organisations, from the Labour Party to the BFI, but it seemed suffocatingly tight under Gerry.”

Garnett describes his approach to his work in the following passage: “The only interesting landscape is the human face. I’m fascinated by three sets of connections: conflicts within an individual; face-to-face negotiations, that is, the personal politics of small groups; and the major forces in society, which affect everyone. Complex stories are made from the relationship between all three”.

Unsurprisingly, this pragmatic realist writes that he finds conventional screen drama traditions of special effects and fantasy boring. Ironically, he sat out Thatcherism in Hollywood. Garnett didn’t thrive there – a second marriage broke down – but the experience was an education: “Alan Parker joked that I was the only person he knew who could produce four movies in Hollywood and make no money.”

There is much to savour about his television career. He recounts his friendship, a meeting of minds, with Sydney Newman, the Canadian head of BBC Drama, who acted as a father figure to him in the 1960s.

Garnett casts a cool eye over his BBC bosses: “I worked in secret, never telling management what I intended to produce, or I lied about it.”

He was no fan of Dennis Potter: “The more I got to know him, the less I liked him. He was laughably arrogant, literally asserting he could walk on water. He would deliver a slipshod first draft then defend every word as if he was a barrister for the defence.”

Garnett sums up Potter’s ability to wring a final, posthumous, two-play deal from the BBC and Channel 4: “He was a controlling, manipulative, egotistical self-publicist to the end.”

His book gives an insight into how scenes were obtained from child actors. The boys who are caned in *Kes* really were. “Ken felt that, if we cheated in the caning scene, it would be phoney, so we negotiated,” says Garnett. “We

used the local rate for a week’s paper round and paid that for each stroke. The boys loved the money, the scene was authentic, and their hands stung. I had mixed feelings. How far can one legitimately go?”

“Had upsetting Carol [White’s] children at the end of *Cathy Come Home* – by tearing them from her arms – been justifiable? I defend these scenes, but I know I am on thin ice. Would we commit torture for realism?” It all comes down to knowing where to draw the line, he concludes.

His late-flowering mellowness comes through in the final paragraph of what is by any reckoning an absorbing memoir. “I have had an interesting life, full of privilege and chances, family and good friends. Sure, it’s been a painful journey. Everyone’s passage through life is. I remain 51% to 49% an optimist.”



The Wednesday Play:
Cathy Come Home

BBC

Why working in comedy is no joke

From left: Rick Edwards, Daniell Morrisey, Lucy Armitage, James Farrell, Carol Baffour-Awuah and Gavin O'Grady



Paul Hampartsoumian

Good, bad and bizarre CVs

James Farrell: 'If it's more than one page I'm bored – two pages at the most.... To the point and personal is good.'

Daniell Morrisey: 'If you want to work in comedy, say that you like comedy on your CV – [too many] people simply copy and paste emails about how they are hard-working, vibrant, blah, blah blah.'

Rick Edwards: 'I interviewed someone the other day who runs a digital marketing agency. He got one CV delivered by an owl... but he didn't give the person the job.'

Daniell Morrisey: 'The weirdest CV I've had was printed on a cushion – I sat on it for a few weeks.'

RTS Futures

An RTS event wrung some laughs from a weighty subject – how to make it in TV comedy. **Matthew Bell** reports

Funny ha ha? The serious business of working in TV comedy” offered invaluable advice to an audience of wannabe comedy producers and writers. The panellists, expertly chaired by Rick Edwards, the writer and presenter of ITV2 panel show *Safeword*, demonstrated that there are many routes into the genre.

BBC Comedy head of talent Daniell Morrisey started out in TV as a trainee floor manager on BBC One drama *Casualty*. He recalled this being “a massive baptism of fire at the age of 20”.

Lucy Armitage, producer of ITV hit *Benidorm*, began at BBC Radio 1, before being made redundant. It could have

marked the end of Armitage's broadcasting career, but losing her job proved fortuitous.

“I became a marriage, births and deaths registrar and got a call from someone who was writing a comedy set in a registry office – that's how I got my first job in telly,” she recalled.

Comedy entertainment producer Carol Baffour-Awuah had her own radio show at university. After graduating, she secured a one-year placement at Princess Productions on the Creative Skillset trainee scheme.

Edwards was part of the same Skillset initiative. Having left university, with no plan for the future, he found himself tutoring broadcaster Ruby Wax's children in maths and science.



SAY YES TO THINGS... HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELF AND YOUR IDEAS

Carol Baffour-Awuah

Wax “sat me down and asked, ‘What are you doing with your life?’ She said I should apply for this scheme.”

Gavin O’Grady wanted to be a director so he “hounded the first assistant director of the Harry Potter films”. His persistence paid off and he worked on a Potter film, before moving into music videos and commercials.

Work experience on T4’s *Popworld* followed, which gave him hands-on experience of filming.

The panel offered a mix of sage advice and one liners to the RTS Futures audience. BBC Comedy producer James Farrell, who joined the corporation after graduating, advised: “Surround yourself with brilliant people and make best friends with Jack Whitehall.”

But there were sobering words among the laughs. Farrell, who boasts *Mrs Brown’s Boys* among his credits, warned that “comedy is the most difficult genre by a mile to get into and make”. However, “the flip side is that there are very few people who are good at it, so, if you’re talented and tenacious, then you will make it”.

O’Grady, whose recent directing credits include Sky 1 panel show *Duck Quacks Don’t Echo* and Channel 4’s *Alternative Election Night*, advised: “Make your own stuff – don’t wait to get a job.”

If the work is good, O’Grady added, it will find an audience: “The great thing about comedy is that it’s much easier for it to go viral.

“People much prefer watching >



Lucy Armitage

All pictures: Paul Hampartsoumian

Top tips from the experts

Daniell Morrissey: ‘Develop [your own] taste by watching lots of comedy.’

Lucy Armitage: ‘Or read or listen to comedy... [eventually] you will find your niche. If everyone does the same thing it gets a bit boring.’

Rick Edwards: ‘Getting your foot in the door is the most important thing, and then showing what you can do when you get the opportunity.’

James Farrell: ‘Finding someone to support and mentor you is [helpful] – it’s certainly been good for me... You have to find someone who’s willing to take a chance on you.’

Carol Baffour-Awuah: ‘Say yes to things... it can lead to something [better] happening.... Have confidence in yourself and your ideas. If you think it’s funny, the chances are that other people will, too.’

Gavin O’Grady: ‘If you pitch [an idea] confidently, people will take you more seriously... Build relationships with the people you work with – if you’re nice and you’re good, people want to work with you again.’

Rick Edwards: ‘Preface every pitch with [the words]: “This is fucking funny.”’

Lucy Armitage: ‘Don’t be a cunt... and don’t wing things – don’t be afraid not to know something.’

QUESTION & ANSWER

Q Is there a lack of risk-taking in modern British comedy?

A James Farrell: The idea that commissioners don't take risks is a myth perpetuated by people who don't get their stuff on television.

Q How can you best self-critique a script?

A Lucy Armitage: If you've got three or four friends whose judgement you trust – and I've done this, so I know how hard it is – get them to read it out loud. Nothing else ever makes you realise how unfunny words can be.

A James Farrell: It is how we make a real TV show, as well – we do a read-through.

Q I'm 28 and work in education – is it too late to work in comedy?

A James Farrell: Just do it – nobody's stopping you apart from yourself.

A Lucy Armitage: It's the other way around – you're in the perfect place to start.

A Daniell Morrissey: Jo Brand was a nurse...

A Rick Edwards: And Greg Davies was a teacher. There are countless examples.

Q I work in entertainment – how can I switch to scripted comedy?

A Lucy Armitage: Don't be afraid of starting as a runner in comedy, even if you are further up the ladder at the moment. It often makes sense to go downwards when crossing over to another department.

A James Farrell: Script-reading is something you could do at the same time as having a normal job.



Paul Hampartsoumian

► five-minute funny things at their desk at work than depressing things. If you can make people laugh, it has a much greater chance of being seen.

"There are so many comics out there who are dying for some upcoming director/producer to offer to direct a short film with them."

"The job of a TV comedy producer is to find and nurture talent, whether they are performers or writers," argued Morrissey.

"See lots of live comedy to spot the people that you may be producing in a few years' time. Comedians such as Miranda Hart and Brendan O'Carroll took years to get from A to B but they did it with the help of producers on that journey."

Armitage admitted that comedy was a highly competitive genre, but added that "you will know in your heart if you've got what it takes" to succeed.

However, the panel agreed that desire is not enough. Research, especially before an interview, doesn't go amiss. "I interviewed about 30 radio producers last week and hardly any of them could tell me what radio shows we make," said Morrissey.

"Throughout my entire career, from the most junior to the most senior jobs, in every genre, the biggest problem is that people are incapable of telling me about the shows we make, or they name shows from other channels," he said. "[If they] do mention a list of shows they like, they [often] haven't got any critical analysis of it."

And, having broken into TV, comedy is not always a barrel of laughs. "It's a fantastic job," said Armitage,

"but, if you're not careful, it eats up your entire life."

She added: "What I love about comedy is that it is so pointless – nobody needs to be doing it."

Baffour-Awuah has a number of hits under her belt, including BBC Two's *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* and BBC One's *Michael McIntyre's Big Show*.

She reinforced Armitage's warning about the demands of the job: "There are times when I've been working on a script at 4am and then filming it a few hours later. If you're on a freelance contract, then [the production company] has bought you for that time."

Aspiring comedy writers should fire off scripts – people will look at them, said the panellists. "I read everything I get sent", claimed Farrell, although, he admitted, "not all of everything I get sent".

By and large, unsolicited scripts are not pounced upon and made into comedy series but, if they contain a few laughs, they can get a new writer noticed and taken under the wing of a producer.

And, sometimes, persistence can pay off. "Lots of people got pissed off with Ricky Gervais coming into the BBC, because he was a real nuisance," recalled Armitage. "Only one person ran with it and, all credit to him, it made *The Office* happen."

The RTS Futures event 'Funny ha ha? The serious business of working in TV comedy' was held at the Hallam Conference Centre in central London on 28 June. The producers were Carrie Britton and Iestyn Barker.



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see RTS website for details

The winners were announced at a ceremony on 3 June at the BFI Southbank

RTS Student Television Awards 2016

UNDERGRADUATE AWARDS

Undergraduate Animation

Dresslocked

Domareen Fox, Teesside University
“Successfully deals with the issue of body dysmorphia in a visually interesting and rewarding way.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Blueberry**, Tommy Vad Flaaten and Markus Vad Flaaten, Kingston University
- ▶ **The Armadillo and the Earwig**, Ben Cresswell, Edinburgh College of Art

Undergraduate Comedy & Entertainment

Valentines Park

Leah Revivo, Joseph Mills, Bradley Kiel and Oliver McMillan, University for the Creative Arts
“Truly charming... this used real voices to tell a moving love story.... Variety and pace, lip-synching and the way disagreements in the dialogue were all amusingly incorporated into the visuals.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **ICT**, James Webb, Reece Ronan, Lauren Griggs and Curtis Mahony, Sheffield Hallam University
- ▶ **The Switch**, Olly Philpott-Smith, Lauren Brown, Sam Okell and Faisal Muhammed, The Manchester Film School at The Manchester College

Undergraduate Drama

Tehzeeb

Myriam Raja and Eloise Rudd, Arts University Bournemouth
“Strong writing, great performances, stunning visuals and lingering shots left you wanting more. A very strong film with a beautiful simplicity and a very evocative ending.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Gnomes**, Josh Mullins, Mike Priest, Colin Donaldson and Shani Vizma, Liverpool John Moores University
- ▶ **Starfish**, Louise Dawson, Dayna Baptie and Fergus Thom, The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland



Host: Mark Dolan

Undergraduate Factual

Eat, Then Wait for the Night

Jing Zhao, Teesside University
“An accomplished piece of filmmaking that stays with you... brilliant casting.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Dipper from the Water of Leith**, Kris Kubik, University of Edinburgh
- ▶ **La Deriva Dei Continenti**, Pietro Novello and Alexander G Simpson, Arts University Bournemouth

Undergraduate News

Sexabled

Kin Hang Lee, University of Sheffield
“A very moving and powerful film about an under-reported issue. With high production values, this film tackled a challenging subject in a sensitive and accomplished way.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Wars on the Moors**, Alexander James Nicol, Plymouth University

Undergraduate Open

An Unfortunate End: The Boy & the Fairy

Jordanne Richards, University of South Wales
“A dark fairy tale, written with originality and enhanced through excellent production design.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Fridge Wars**, Rebecca Daniel, University of Leeds
- ▶ **Insert FILM TITLE here, I guess**, Urmas Salu, University for the Creative Arts

UNDERGRADUATE CRAFT SKILLS

Camerawork

The Switch

Olly Philpott-Smith, Lauren Brown, Sam Okell and Faisal Muhammed, The Manchester Film School at The Manchester College
“With very good lighting and design, this ambitious and technically accomplished film used a succession of clever shots to set the mood.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **An Unfortunate End: The Boy & the Fairy**, Jordanne Richards, University of South Wales
- ▶ **Tehzeeb**, Myriam Raja and Eloise Rudd, Arts University Bournemouth

Editing

Blueberry

Tommy Vad Flaaten and Markus Vad Flaaten, Kingston University
“Great timing, fantastic pacing and consistent throughout. Timing in comedy is a very difficult skill to master but the editing in *Blueberry* definitely showcased this skill.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Eat, Then Wait for the Night**, Jing Zhao, Teesside University
- ▶ **Starfish**, Louise Dawson, Dayna Baptie and Fergus Thom, The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Sound

Blueberry

Tommy Vad Flaaten and Markus Vad Flaaten, Kingston University
“A very funny and playful soundtrack enhanced the film, which was brought to life by the humour displayed within the soundscape.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Eat, then Wait for the Night**, Jing Zhao, Teesside University
- ▶ **The Switch**, Olly Philpott-Smith, Lauren Brown, Sam Okell and Faisal Muhammed, The Manchester Film School at The Manchester College



1 Dresslocked
Undergraduate Animation
Domareen Fox,
Teesside University

4 Valentines Park
Undergraduate Comedy & Entertainment
Leah Revivo, Joseph Mills, Bradley Kiel
and Oliver McMillan, UCA

7 Tehzeeb
Undergraduate Drama
Myriam Raja and Eloise Rudd,
Arts University Bournemouth

2 Eat, Then Wait for the Night
Undergraduate Factual
Jing Zhao,
Teesside University

5 Sexabled
Undergraduate News
Kin Hang Lee,
University of Sheffield

8 An Unfortunate End: The Boy & the Fairy
Undergraduate Open
Jordanne Richards, University
of South Wales

3 The Switch
Undergraduate Camerawork
Olly Philpott-Smith, Lauren Brown, Sam
Okell and Faisal Muhammed, MFS

6 Blueberry
Undergraduate Editing and Sound
Tommy Vad Flaaten and Markus Vad
Flaaten, Kingston University

9 Chair of Judges
RTS Student Television Awards
Phil Edgar-Jones,
Director of Sky Arts

All pictures: Richard Kendal



Richard Kendal

The RTS Student Television Awards 2016 reward outstanding work produced during the 2014/2015 academic year. Undergraduate entries were first judged at a regional level by their local RTS Centre in the winter of 2015. The winning films from each RTS Centre, along with all postgraduate entries, were then judged nationally in April 2016.

POSTGRADUATE AWARDS

Postgraduate Animation

Mr Madila

Rory Waudby-Tolley, Royal College of Art
 “A confident, well executed piece that is both funny and feasible all at once. A very assured animation and rewarding use of sound and visuals.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Edmond**, Nina Gantz and Emilie Jouffroy, National Film and Television School
- ▶ **Fulfilament**, Rhiannon Evans, Joe Murtagh and Alexandra Breede, National Film and Television School

Postgraduate Comedy & Entertainment

Monster Hunters

Brigitta Szaszfai and Jonathan Dakin, National Film and Television School
 “This has the most potential to turn into a long-running TV hit... fresh, funny and supremely confident.”

Nominee:

- ▶ **The Life of a Sober Man**, The Team, Bournemouth University

Postgraduate Drama

Group B

Nick Rowland, Alexandra Breede and Joe Murtagh, National Film and Television School
 “A very well executed film with great performances.... The film-makers showed great energy and commitment to this truly gripping drama.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Fractured City**, Sean Murray, Queen’s University, Belfast
- ▶ **Sick**, David Winstone and Josh Lowe, National Film and Television School

Postgraduate Factual

The Heart’s Scar

Thuy Le and Tiago Espirito Santo, Bournemouth University
 “Poetic style, sensitivity and an epic story... it’s many compelling moments were held together with expertise.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Chasing Dad**, Philip Wood, Goldsmiths, University of London
- ▶ **Esta Vida (This Life)**, Lyttanya Shannon, National Film and Television School

Postgraduate News

Brits in Poland

Anna Senkara, Goldsmiths, University of London
 “A very unusual take on the story... a great range of voices and original reporting. A very punchy and enjoyable news piece that was professional, humane and a joy to watch.”

Nominee:

- ▶ **Cloning: Tailored for Success**, Anna Lidster, Goldsmiths, University of London

Postgraduate Open

Crunchy

Simon Cartwright and Jacob Thomas, National Film and Television School
 “An excellent collaboration between all departments to create a wry, clever piece. It gets across its message effectively through excellent attention to detail, strong visuals and well-conceived subversion of the setting, drawing in the viewers and then shocking them.”

Nominee:

- ▶ **Office Romance**, Rebecca Gibson and Katherine Pearl, National Film and Television School

POSTGRADUATE CRAFT SKILLS

Camerawork

Fractured City

Sean Murray, Queen’s University, Belfast
 A very strong film with beautiful camera work. The boldness of some of the shots really helped the audience feel connected to the story and characters. The use of natural light also enhanced the atmosphere of the piece, with tremendous performances captured brilliantly.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Edmond**, Nina Gantz and Emilie Jouffroy, National Film and Television School
- ▶ **Group B**, Nick Rowland, Alexandra Breede and Joe Murtagh, National Film and Television School

Editing

Chasing Dad

Philip Wood, Goldsmiths, University of London
 “The material was used exceptionally well to tell this incredibly powerful and personal story. The editing choices were bold and unconventional at times and only enhanced this excellent film.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Esta Vida (This Life)**, Lyttanya Shannon, National Film and Television School
- ▶ **Fractured City**, Sean Murray, Queen’s University, Belfast

Sound

Fulfilament

Rhiannon Evans, Joe Murtagh and Alexandra Breede, National Film and Television School
 “The incredible detail of sound design and score involved to create the world and characters was wonderfully handled.”

Nominees:

- ▶ **Group B**, Nick Rowland, Alexandra Breede and Joe Murtagh, National Film and Television School
- ▶ **Mr Madila**, Rory Waudby-Tolley, Royal College of Art



1 Mr Madila
Postgraduate Animation
 Rory Waudby-Tolley, Royal College of Art

4 Monster Hunters
Postgraduate Comedy & Entertainment
 Brigitta Szaszfai and Jonathan Dakin, National Film and Television School

7 Group B
Postgraduate Drama
 Nick Rowland, Alexandra Breede and Joe Murtagh, NFTS

2 The Heart's Scar
Postgraduate Factual
 Thuy Le and Tiago Espirito Santo, Bournemouth University

5 Brits in Poland
Postgraduate News
 Anna Senkara, Goldsmiths, University of London

8 Crunchy
Postgraduate Open
 Simon Cartwright and Jacob Thomas, National Film and Television School

3 Fractured City
Postgraduate Camerawork
 Sean Murray, Queen's University, Belfast

6 Chasing Dad
Postgraduate Editing
 Philip Wood, Goldsmiths, University of London

9 Fulfilment
Postgraduate Sound
 Rhiannon Evans, Joe Murtagh and Alexandra Breede, NFTS

All pictures: Richard Kendal

The humble set-top box is poised to become the first of a new generation of domestic media servers at the heart of the next stage of the home entertainment revolution. Many in our industry persist in seeing STBs – originally introduced more than 20 years ago as simple devices for decoding broadcast signals – as a mere “techy” sideshow.

They have, however, emerged as one of the most important device classes in the consumer media landscape and, once again, they are driving disruption and strategic change.

In the early years, viewers used them to complement their “normal” TV viewing, turning on the box when they wanted to access their pay-channels. But, over two decades, they have morphed several times.

The first big change was when they moved from decoding analogue to digital signals. New software enabled on-screen menus, and the electronic programme guide (EPG) was born. This drove a massive change in viewer behaviour. For the first time, a majority of users stayed in the STB to watch the free-to-air public service broadcasters.

What seemed a small shift had two consequences that still affect the TV market today. The first was that the “platforms” benefited from the perception that they deliver and manage the free-to-air channels (which, technically, they do not) – to the chagrin to the broadcasters ever since.

Second, by delivering improved user functionality (in this first case, via an EPG) the platforms could affect viewer behaviour around content. This put the platforms in the driving seat in delivering TV innovation.

The second major STB evolution was the introduction, around 15 years ago, of the personal video recorder – the PVR.

Despite predictions that they would kill off television, people came to realise that PVRs could be symbiotic with broadcast, if only we could solve the commercial issues. PVR functionality quickly spread from the pay-TV world to free boxes, such as those for Freeview and Freesat.

Their wider impact was felt in the world of TV measurement and



Technology

A new wave of innovation in set-top boxes will see power shift from broadcasters to platforms, predicts Nigel Walley

audience evaluation. A new science dissected the “how” and “when” of the way that people watched recorded shows, and the acronym Vosdal (viewed on same day as live) was dumped on the industry. Taking their destiny into their own hands, the broadcasters began to build on-demand players accessible via PCs and laptops – and away from the platforms’ control. The audience measurement industry had to add a “where” to its reporting.

In response, the platforms built on-demand capabilities and launched catch-up services within their systems. In the UK, we have ended up with two distinct types. On Sky and Virgin, these are closed systems where the platform controls the software and the functionality (with a couple of exceptions).

On the free boxes, browser-based open systems accommodate the broadcasters’ own players.

Neither has reached an ideal state. Until the most recent generation of boxes, it was fair to say that on-demand



on the pay-boxes looked terrible but worked well, while it looked better on the free boxes but didn't work as well.

During this period, a misguided consensus emerged that on-demand capability meant that we would no longer need PVRs. This has proved incorrect for a couple of reasons.

First, consumers continue to prefer their PVR to on-demand when both are available. Research shows that this is about control and selection. Consumers say that they see PVR content as "theirs".

The debate about PVR obsolescence was fuelled by the arrival of Silicon Valley-funded on-demand operators. Over the top (OTT) services, with a vested interest in talking down the role of the set-top box, have pressed the case for a Cloud-based TV future in which there is no need for consumer recording in the home.

The problem with this network-based vision of the future has been its currently inadequate delivery capability. Companies offering sporadic use of

on-demand assets have been able to build businesses because they don't need to support concurrent use by large numbers of people.

However good *Breaking Bad* on Netflix might be, the viewing numbers have only ever been in the low tens of thousands for any particular show at one time. Those companies still focused on building large, concurrent audiences for nationally important TV have stayed with broadcast.

All the while, PVR innovation has been proceeding slowly in the background. The most important trends have involved memory and capacity.

The early Sky+ boxes, which launched 15 years ago, could record 10 to 20 standard-definition programmes. The latest generation of boxes can record 400 HD movies as well as offering an increasingly interesting array of options and functions.

Recording functionality has consistently improved. Series linking has become ubiquitous, and operators such as Tivo offer auto-recording based on recommendation. New boxes, such as Netgem's device for the EE service, take this further and record every programme from your favourite channels on a rolling, 24-hour basis.

This is allowing platforms to think constructively about offering full catch-up services via their PVRs, rather than having to depend on the broadcasters to deliver on-demand services.

The problem for the broadcasters is that catch-up delivered from the PVR works better and quicker than catch-up delivered via on-demand services. You press "play" on a programme and it starts.

Looking into the future, the only thing we can say for certain is that hard-drive capacities will continue to expand and functionality will become ever more sophisticated.

Within this mix, we will see increasing pressure on broadcasters to allow networked PVRs (nPVRs), where the hard drive sits in the Cloud.

Consumers are being educated to use Dropbox and iCloud. They will come to realise how useful a TV version of those could be. Real power over catch-up content is shifting from the broadcasters to the platforms.

Home networks are the other area in which PVR manufacturers have quietly been evolving their boxes' capabilities. Over the past decade, the number of homes with broadband and wi-fi has rocketed by more than 80%.

Increasingly, these services are supplied by the same companies that deliver our TV and set-top box. For the first time, we can envisage TV services that connect from the main box to every screen – fixed or mobile – in the home.

The idea is that, whichever screen you are using, you will be running software on it from the company that provides the box in your lounge. The consequence is that all these networked devices can access every type of content available on your STB.

Sky Q is the first attempt at introducing this system. The set-top box is, in effect, morphing again into a new device class – this time, the first in a new generation of home media servers.

For consumers, this is bringing new functionality, new access to content and improved ease of use. For broadcasters, it signals another round in the turf war with the platforms. Each functional innovation will push viewers to use the platform's software to access content, rather than a broadcaster's app.

These developments raise significant questions about the long-term viability of the broadcaster-owned players and apps for pay-TV customers. They also raise difficult questions about whether the broadcasters' shareholders will allow the free platforms they own to innovate in these areas just to stay competitive.

We are entering another period of creative disruption in the TV market. Far from becoming irrelevant, the set-top box is at the centre of the revolution.

Nigel Walley is MD of digital media consultancy Decipher.

Denmark hosts talent summit

Sustaining talent was the theme of a two-day workshop in the Danish port of Aarhus, the country's second city and the location of Film Village, which houses more than 60 production companies.

The June workshop, the third in a series of events exploring the challenges faced by the TV industries of small nations, was organised by the universities of Aarhus and South Wales. It featured contributions from RTS Wales, Glasgow Caledonian University, Copenhagen University, Irish-language broadcaster TG4 and Welsh-language S4C.

Talent, agreed the participants, should be broadly defined, taking in content creation, production, craft skills and commissioning, as well as on-screen performers.

TG4 Deputy Chief Execu-



Danish drama *Norskov*

TV2 Denmark

tive Pádhraic Ó Ciardha said that commissioners "need vision and mentoring ability – they have to be tough but also engender trust".

S4C factual commissioner Llion Iwan emphasised the importance of diversity in recruiting and managing on-screen talent. "It makes

the output more distinctive," he argued.

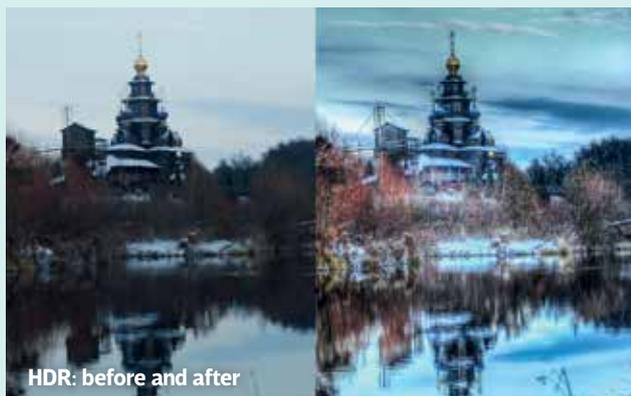
Danish TV has tried to develop regional talent outside Copenhagen, where the country's broadcasters are based. Comparisons were made with initiatives elsewhere, such as Glasgow's Pacific Quay and Salford's

MediaCity. However, Danish television's first big attempt at a regional series, *Norskov*, had poor ratings and was recently axed.

University of South Wales lecturer Ruth McElroy suggested that TV had a vital role in defining the cultural identity of small nations. Referring to a quote by former ITV Director of Television Peter Fincham on foreign travel, she said: "You only have to turn on your hotel-room TV to realise that you are truly abroad. TV is one part local and one part global."

Some of the workshop participants had taken part in an RTS Wales event in November, held in conjunction with the first small-nations workshop in Cardiff, which examined the success of "Nordic noir".

Hywel Wiliam



HDR: before and after

Montague

Thames Valley tunes in to high dynamic range

■ Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers fellow Peter Wilson offered a compelling presentation on high

dynamic range (HDR) to RTS Thames Valley in mid-June.

HDR is the next major development in Ultra-HD/4K

television, vastly improving contrast and detail to enhance the viewer experience.

Wilson dismissed some of the myths that have built up about the new technology: namely, that tube cameras and cathode ray tube televisions did not have HDR; and that the first innovators of this technology provided charge-coupled devices (CCDs) for post-tube cameras.

In fact, it was transfer knees and slope processors that compressed highlights and stopped bright detail from blowing out, providing better peak definition for standard television sets.

More controversially, Wilson told the audience that, although 2K, 4K and 8K systems had higher pixel counts and gave greater resolution, the resolu-

tion was not as high as their marketing suggested. HDR, however, improved contrast and hence the viewer's perception of detail and resolution.

The two emerging HDR technologies of perceptual quantisation and hybrid log gamma, said Wilson, were simply modifications of the curves and compression knees used in the first charge-coupled device (CCD) cameras, albeit greatly refined and significantly more efficient.

The challenge in using these technologies, he added, was in mapping between these curves and transposing the underlying metadata types that describe the two systems, especially in live transmission programmes such as news and sport.

Tony Orme

The teams behind the BBC One dramas *Happy Valley* and *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell* returned home well rewarded from the RTS Yorkshire Awards, which were held in Leeds at the end of June.

Red Production Company's *Happy Valley* won the Filmed in Yorkshire Award, while Sally Wainwright took home the Writer Award. Sarah Lancashire was named Best Actor for her performance as a no-nonsense police sergeant in the second series of the hard-hitting drama.

"This was pure, unadulterated Yorkshire, warts and all," said the judges. "The budget was used to great effect and the series showed exceptional storytelling."

Historical fantasy drama *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, made by Cuba Pictures and Feel Films and supported by Screen Yorkshire, also won three prizes: Director – Fiction (for Toby Haynes); Professional Excellence (for production designer David Roger); and Animation and/or Visual Effects (Milk VFX).

Praising Haynes's direction as "a tour de force", the judges said that he "made sense of [Susanna Clarke's] challenging novel and transformed it into a visual spectacle with beautiful, intimate moments".

The Drama Award went to *This Is England '90*, the latest instalment of Shane Meadows' Channel 4 series. The Warp Films/Big Arty production had "stories and characters that stayed with the judges, [with] never an inauthentic moment".

The Yorkshire Centre Award was made to sound engineer Terry Ricketts, whose credits include *Whicker's World* and *Emmerdale*. "For more than half a century, Terry Ricketts has brightened



The winners from BBC One drama *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*

All pictures: Paul Harness Photography

Yorkshire hat trick for Jonathan Strange

the broadcast business with his personality and his professionalism," said the judges.

The awards took place at the Royal Armouries in Leeds and were presented by Mark Charnock and Laura Norton from the ITV soap *Emmerdale*.

RTS Yorkshire also celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Emley Moor transmitting station. In 1956 a tower was erected to provide ITV broadcasts to the region.

"I think we did Yorkshire proud and celebrated our incredibly diverse and successful TV industry, which has a great future. But we also celebrated our proud past by honouring two national treasures, Emley Moor and Terry Ricketts," said Lisa Holdsworth, RTS Yorkshire secretary and chair of the Awards Committee.

The factual prizes went to: *Peter Kay: 20 Years of Funny*, Best Programme (Shiver for BBC One); *Body Donors*, Best Series (Daisybeck Studios/GroupM Entertainment for

Channel 5); and Tarun Bhartiya who travelled from India to Yorkshire to pick up the Best Director – Factual Award for *India's Frontier*



Tarun Bhartiya

Railways: The Last Train in Nepal (3Di-TV for BBC Four).

The Last Train in Nepal also won the Professional Excellence: Post-Production Award, while Daisybeck

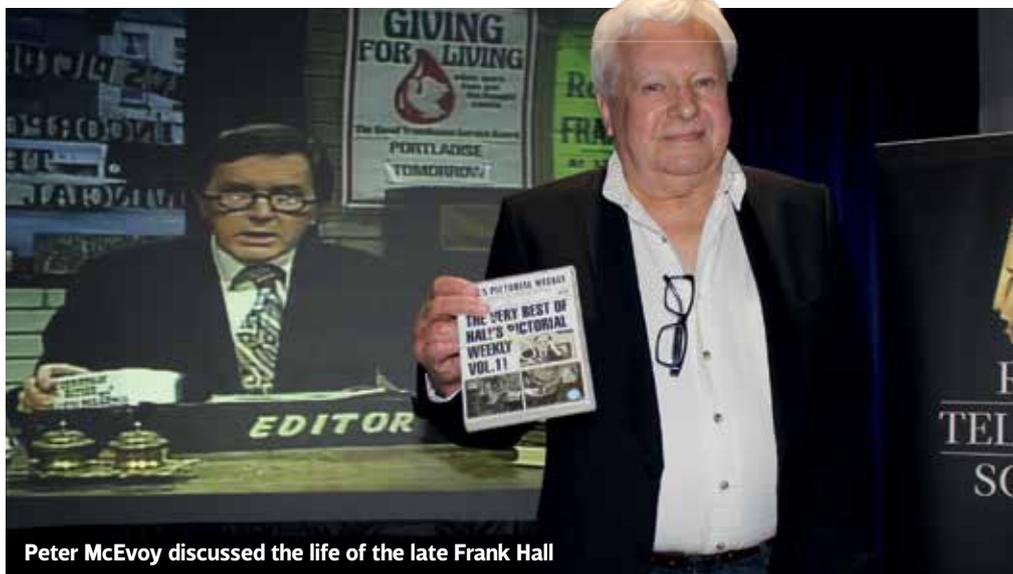
Studios collected the Independent Spirit Award for its contribution to the production industry in Yorkshire.

James Martin picked up the Presenter Award for *Home Comforts at Christmas* (BBC Bristol for BBC One) and Christine Talbot was named Best Reporter for her work on *Calendar*. The ITV regional news programme also won the Best News Programme Award for *The Closure of Kellingley Colliery*.

Mark O'Brien from *Made in Leeds* was named the One to Watch. The local TV channel also won the News Report Award for *Christmas Flooding: On the Air*.

The other winners on the night were: *Forced Marriage Cops* (True Vision for Channel 4), which took the Made in Yorkshire Award; *E Stings 2016* (Rocket/4creative/Spreadfast for E4), the Second Screen Award; and *Welcome to the Northern Powerhouse* (Motiv Productions), Best Promotion or Commercial Production. **Matthew Bell**

Ireland recalls a great satirist



Peter McEvoy discussed the life of the late Frank Hall

Throughout the 1970s in Ireland, the distinctive theme tune of *Hall's Pictorial Weekly* was played by the Cork Butter Exchange Band, introducing another episode of RTÉ Television's much-loved, weekly satirical programme.

The life and work of the late Frank Hall – presenter, scriptwriter and editor of

Hall's Pictorial Weekly – was the subject of producer and director Peter McEvoy's presentation to June's Republic of Ireland Centre event, "Frank Hall: a timely reminiscence", which was held at RTÉ in Dublin.

Hall's Pictorial Weekly cast actors and comics, in various guises and disguises, to mimic and satirise the politicians of

the day. The actors included Frank Kelly, who went on to play the foul-mouthed priest Father Jack in the Channel 4 sitcom *Father Ted*, which aired on RTÉ Two in Ireland. Kelly died earlier this year.

McEvoy, who directed many editions of the show, believed it was the embodiment of BBC founder Lord Reith's belief that television's

purpose was to inform, educate and entertain. "*Hall's Pictorial Weekly* had all this in spades," he said.

The programme ran for more than 250 episodes from 1971 to 1980. It is fondly remembered to this day as an irreverent show that was unafraid to poke fun at Irish politicians. It featured satirical sketches on current affairs, politics and popular culture, song parodies, cartoons and spoof TV formats.

Hall, who was born in Newry, Northern Ireland, in 1921 and died in 1995, was a journalist, broadcaster and, in later life, a film censor.

He joined Teilifís Éireann at its inception in 1961 as a reporter in the newsroom. After interviewing the Beatles before their 1963 Dublin gig, he famously predicted that the group would not last.

Hall presented *The Late Late Show* in 1964 and then *Newsbeat* until 1971. From 1978 to 1986, Hall was Ireland's national film censor.

Charles Byrne

ONLINE at the RTS

■ If you couldn't make it to this year's RTS Student Television Awards, you missed out on a fantastic display of new talent from across the UK and Ireland. Comedian and broadcaster Mark Dolan was a brilliant host for the day. Luckily, you can catch up on all the highlights from the awards and hear from the winners themselves at www.rts.org.uk/studentawards2016.

■ As well as hearing from industry newcomers, we've been on the road gathering advice from those who have already made it, for the latest in our *Tips in 60 Seconds* videos. ITV News



Alok Jha

science correspondent Alok Jha, who recently presented BBC Four's *Storm Troupers: The Fight to Forecast the Weather*, explained how to source a

science news story. Having a strong book of contacts is key to finding out about new developments, he says. See the rest of his tips at www.rts.org.uk/alok.

■ We also interviewed digital content producer Candace Moses, whose clients have included Sky, the BBC and Kew Gardens, to find out how to make digital content that dazzles. Find her tips on creating content for digital at www.rts.org.uk/candace.

■ Elsewhere, Pippa Shawley caught up with Sir Tony Robinson to discuss his Discovery Channel documentary marking the centenary of the Battle of the Somme, his return to comedy in Greg Davies' hit sitcom *Man Down*, and his upcoming autobiography. Read the full interview at www.rts.org.uk/tonyrobinson.

The distinguished and painstaking producer and documentary-maker Peter Morley has died, aged 91. He was best known for directing ITV's acclaimed coverage of the state funeral of Sir Winston Churchill in 1965 and for conducting the only interview with Hitler's younger sister, Paula Wolf.

Morley was one of the pioneers and innovators of Britain's nascent television industry. The son of Jewish refugees from Nazi Germany, in 1956 he joined Associated Rediffusion as a director. Over three years at the new ITV company, he produced more than 80 plays.

As a programme-maker working in an exciting new medium, he was able, from the beginning, to adopt his own approach. "There was nobody to tell you what to do or how to do it," he recalled. "Everything was live... video, let alone video-recording, hadn't been invented."

Jeremy Isaacs, in his autobiography, *Look Me in the Eye: A Life in Television*, described Morley as a "tall, thoughtful, calm" man "with dark eyes, a long face and bony jaw".

The pair worked together at Rediffusion. Morley was a producer on its influential current-affairs series, *This Week*, which was launched in 1956. As Isaacs relates, Morley wanted to direct "proper films, longer documentaries".

Morley was born in Berlin in 1924. His father exported women's clothes and spent a lot of time in London, where he had an office. His parents, fearful of Hitler's ascent to power, arranged for Peter and his brother and sister to move to England.

There, they were educated at Bunce Court, a progressive boarding school in Kent,



Rex Features

Peter Morley

1924 – 2016

Steve Clarke explores the achievements and struggles of a pioneering documentarist

founded in 1933 by Anna Essinger. She had relocated her school – and her mostly Jewish students – from southern Germany as the Nazis consolidated power.

Morley's first documentary, *Once Upon a Time*, focused on Essinger and her school. Parts of it would subsequently form important components of later films about the Kindertransport efforts to rescue Jewish children before the Second World War.

From an early age, Morley wanted to work in film. After leaving school, he secured a job as a "rewind boy" at the

Dominion Theatre in London's Tottenham Court Road. The job involved carrying weighty cans of celluloid to an outside projector.

Following military service in France and Germany with the 8th (Irish) Hussars tank regiment, Morley attempted to find work in the British film industry. Eventually, he was employed as a projectionist, earning £5 a week.

He found it very hard to establish a career, and had to work as a tea boy before finally securing a job as a film editor.

Working for Rediffusion in

ITV's formative years, Morley achieved a reputation for his meticulous and perceptive documentaries. In 1959, he interviewed Paula Wolf and others who knew Hitler.

"They came in one by one and I did these interviews," he said. "You could see that all of them revered [Hitler] without embarrassment. It seemed perfectly natural to them to be still very much under his spell.

"What they said wasn't earth-shattering but... they gave enough to get a little insight into the Führer. Hitler's sister was very shy. It was quite difficult to get things out of her."

The programme *Tyranny: The Years of Adolf Hitler* was ITV's first one-hour documentary and was seen by 10 million viewers. Its success enabled Morley to persuade ITV to transmit a studio production of Benjamin Britten's opera *The Turn of the Screw*. The programme was shown without any commercials.

Masterminding ITV's coverage of Churchill's funeral – a live, five-hour transmission – won Morley a Bafta and the 1965 Cannes Grand Prix.

In 1978, he made the four-part *Women of Courage* and multi-award-winning *Kitty: Return To Auschwitz* for Yorkshire Television.

He was appointed OBE in 1969. In the same year, the RTS presented him its Silver Medal in recognition of his 13-hour documentary series, *The Life and Times of Lord Mountbatten*, which he produced and directed for Rediffusion Television. It was broadcast by Thames Television.

In 1979, he was made a Fellow of the RTS, and was a valued member of the RTS History and Archive Group from 1999 to 2011.

OFF MESSAGE

The Silly Season is now officially dead and buried. As if the news agenda wasn't already overheated, thanks to Brexit and the leadership crises

at Westminster, media hacks had to pick the bones from the changes at Broadcasting House.

It's an open secret that Tony Hall's latest shuffling of the pack was delayed repeatedly to ensure that not too many noses were put out of joint.

Well, he got there in the end: cutting the number of top jobs from 16 to 11.

There appears to be disquiet in the nations and regions. As you will have read, the directors of Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are all losing their seats on the Executive Board.

How heartening to have the BBC's first female Deputy Director-General in Anne Bulford. Not before time. Readers will recall that the Beeb has been minus a deputy DG since Mark Byford exited in 2011.

It's intriguing that Charlotte Moore's empire keeps on growing. Under the new restructuring, she takes on "oversight of BBC Sport".

Off Message hopes that the revolving doors at New Broadcasting House stop rotating at least until the summer is over and execs return from their Tuscan retreats.

■ Spare a thought for Pact's tireless leader, John McVay. On the eve of his summer trip to Portugal, Whitehall policymakers asked Pact to write a paper for John Whittingdale.

The subject? Yes, you guessed correctly – how Pact thinks the leave vote will affect the UK production sector. There's nothing like a deadline to concentrate the mind. The DCMS wants the report delivered by August.

■ Belated congratulations to the eternally youthful Roger Graef, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday with a party at Bafta's London headquarters.

The drink flowed, as numerous dignitaries dropped by to salute one of British TV's greats. Jon Snow and David Abraham were spotted at the soirée.

Across London, the mood at ITV's summer party was a good deal more sombre. The damp weather added to the post-Brexit gloom. The remain MPs who attended could at least drown their sorrows.

■ **It's that man again – that man being Peter Bazalgette, the newish ITV Chairman.**

More than 15 years ago, when Baz was creative director at Endemol, he had the foresight to sense which way the digital wind was blowing.

Andy Taylor, erstwhile head of digital at Channel 4, revealed how, back in 2000, there was anxiety over putting *Big Brother* online.

Some feared that audiences would stop watching *Big Brother* on TV if the show was available on the internet.

"It was Baz at Endemol who said, 'I think we should let everyone watch it online,'" recalled Taylor at the recent RTS Futures event on short-form content. The rest, as they say, is history.

■ Several influential voices have argued that the BBC's coverage of the EU referendum was not the corporation's finest hour.

Did the BBC apply its own impartiality rules too strictly and therefore let the politicians off the hook?

In trenchant terms, David Puttnam and Peter Preston have said that this is what happened.

Off Message recommends a blog on openDemocracy by Attentional's David Graham, who once worked as a *Panorama* producer.

Graham repeats the charge that the impartiality rules allowed the politicians to set the TV agenda. He advocates more passionate television journalism undertaken by seriously rigorous, probing reporters of the Paxman-Day school.

Expect this one to run and run.

By the way, one of the TV jewels of the campaign was Channel 4's scabrous political satire *Power Monkeys*. More please.

■ **And, finally, we all know that elements of Fleet Street like nothing better than finding evidence of wasteful practice at the BBC.**

So how's this for recycling at Auntie? It might be some distance from Suffolk to Somerset but it's all in a day's work for a BBC outside broadcast crew.

The power cables used to transmit this year's live broadcasts from *Springwatch* were the same ones put into action subsequently at Glastonbury.

Well, Adele is a songbird!



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