

March 2018

Television



**Hulu:
Under
the
hood**

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From the CEO



It has been an exciting and illuminating end to the RTS's winter programme. Despite the "Beast from the East" bringing snow and ice to even London's Hyde Park Corner, this year's RTS Television Journalism Awards generated a lot of genuine warmth.

I'd like to thank everyone who made this such a very special evening. Reeta Chakrabarti was a brilliantly gracious and witty host. Her smile seemed to be particularly radiant on this coldest of nights.

Thanks also to Sue English who gave up so much of her time to chair the awards, and a big thank you to all the jury members. Huge congratulations to all the awards winners.

That so many female journalists of different ages and backgrounds were among the night's winners says a lot about the changing times that we are living in.

So, too, did our sold-out early-evening event "Sale or scale", when a high-powered panel analysed the rapidly consolidating entertainment sector. Many thanks to the wonderful panellists: Kate Bulkley, Mike Darcey, Tim Hincks and Mathew Horsman; and to the always incisive event chair, Matthew Garrahan. There is a full report in this issue of *Television*.

There are many wonderful female role models working in our industry and I am thrilled that this month's diarist is one of them. I know that our readers will enjoy All3Media CEO Jane Turton's diary. Also in this month's

Television, don't miss Mark Lawson's insightful profile of the great Mackenzie Crook. Meanwhile, our cover looks at the rise and rise of Hulu. I, for one, can't wait to watch the second season of *The Handmaid's Tale*, coming soon on Channel 4.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the RTS Programme Awards. This is undoubtedly the most glamorous night in the RTS calendar. Let's hope the weather has seriously warmed up by then – and good luck to all the nominees.

Theresa Wise

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Hosted by Reeta Chakrabarti and sponsored by GuestBooker, the awards were presented on 28 February at the London Hilton, Park Lane – the winners and nominees over six pages

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National events

RTS AWARDS

Tuesday 20 March

RTS Programme Awards 2018

In Partnership with Audio Network

Venue: Grosvenor House Hotel,
86-90 Park Lane, London W1K 7TN

RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

Monday 16 April

Mind the gap: Closing the gender pay gap in broadcasting

Panellists: Jane Corbin, BBC current affairs journalist; Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP, former Minister for Women and Equalities; Sian Kevill, former BBC executive and founder, Make Productions; and Charlotte Sweeney OBE, expert adviser on equality, diversity and inclusion. Chair: Jane Martinson, *Guardian* columnist and journalist

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

RTS AWARDS

Friday 22 June

RTS Student Television Awards 2018

Venue: BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XT

RTS CONFERENCE

Tuesday 18 September

RTS London Conference 2018

Sponsored by Viacom
Venue: Kings Place, 90 York Way, London N1 9AG

RTS MASTERCLASSES

Tuesday 13 November

RTS Student Programme Masterclasses

Venue: IET London, 2 Savoy Place, London WC2R0BL

Wednesday 14 November

RTS Craft Skills Masterclasses

Venue: IET London, 2 Savoy Place, London WC2R0BL

RTS AWARDS

Monday 26 November

RTS Craft & Design Awards 2018

London Hilton on Park Lane
22 Park Lane, London W1K 1BE

Local events

BRISTOL

■ Belinda Biggam
■ belindabiggam@hotmail.com

DEVON & CORNWALL

■ Jane Hudson
■ RTSDevonandCornwall@rts.org.uk

EAST

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

LONDON

Wednesday 21 March

Making media in a sustainable future

Speaker: Aaron Matthews, project manager, Albert (the collaborative indie- and broadcaster-backed project that provides the film and TV industries with the expertise to take practical action on environmental sustainability). 6:30pm for 7:00pm

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

Wednesday 2 May

Gaming and TV: What's the score?

Panellists: Steve McNeil, writer, comedian and streamer; Sam Pamphilon, actor, writer and comedian; Julia Hardy, presenter, journalist, YouTuber and broadcaster. Chair: Ellie Gibson, journalist, presenter, comedian and author. 6:30pm for 7:00pm

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

■ Daniel Cherowbrier
■ daniel@cherowbrier.co.uk

MIDLANDS

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

NORTH EAST & THE BORDER

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

NORTH WEST

■ Rachel Pinkney 07966 230639
■ RPinkney@rts.org.uk



Gaming and TV: What's the score?

2 May

ITV London Studios SE1 9LT

NORTHERN IRELAND

Tuesday 20 March

Student Television Awards

Venue: *The Black Box*, 18-22 Hill Street, Belfast BT1 2LA

■ John Mitchell
■ mitch.mvbroadcast@btinternet.com

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Tuesday 27 March

AGM 2018

8:00pm

Venue: AR4 RTÉ, Stillorgan Road, Montrose, Dublin 4

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

SCOTLAND

Wednesday 9 May

RTS Scotland Awards

Venue: TBC

■ Jane Muirhead
■ scotlandchair@rts.org.uk

SOUTHERN

■ Stephanie Farmer
■ SFarmer@bournemouth.ac.uk

THAMES VALLEY

■ Tony Orme
■ RTSThamesValley@rts.org.uk

WALES

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

YORKSHIRE

Wednesday 25 April

Masterclasses: How to get a job in TV

Teams from True North and Lime Pictures will hold two 75-minute, video-rich masterclasses, with lots of opportunities to ask questions.

Held in association with the Creative Cities Convention, which students will have the opportunity to participate in (and to attend the networking drinks on the opening evening, 25 April).

Places are free but you must book in advance with Victoria Griffin (07880231626/ victoriajgriffin@gmail.com). Group bookings from universities and colleges are preferred. 2.00pm start

Venue: *Leeds College of Music*, 3 Quarry Hill, Leeds LS2 7PD

Friday 6 July

Annual Awards

Venue: TBC

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

TV diary

In a week of bad weather and cancelled travel plans, **Jane Turton** is determined to attend her early-morning spin class



The temperature in London has plummeted to a 10-year low and the snow has arrived. Our top-floor office in Covent Garden has the most amazing views over Westminster and all the way round to the Gherkin and the Shard. It's very beautiful in the snow.

To add to the chaos created by the weather, Prithi, my assistant, is in Costa Rica on a two-week holiday.

I start the week with a conference call to our German supervisory board. Germany is a strong growth market for All3, where we produce scripted reality, drama and entertainment shows.

I am due to fly to Cologne on Thursday to talk through the strategy with them – my flight is subsequently cancelled because of the weather.

■ **On Tuesday, it's tempting to pretend that the snow is too deep for me to get to my 6:30am spin class. However, the Calvinist Scot kicks in and I am soon in the saddle and peddling away.**

I am a big fan of SoulCycle in the US and go to classes in Santa Monica when in Los Angeles. As well as middle-aged British TV execs, apparently it's full of Hollywood celebrities, none of whom I ever recognise in the dark and in a state of complete physical exhaustion.

That evening, I leave the office in time to see my youngest child, Clare, before she returns to university.

■ **We announce a new start-up, Unstoppable, on Wednesday. It's a new drama company run by two very talented guys, Noel Clarke and Jason Maza, and the response has been fabulous.**

I love the strategy and development parts of my job. I work closely with Steven Brown, our director of corporate development, and we both enjoy taking an idea, turning it into a business plan and working with others to make it happen.

Creating and executing deals with people who are exceptionally talented and passionate is really exciting and I'm proud of the deals we have done with companies such as Two Brothers, New Pictures, Neal Street, Story Films, Raw and Betty.

Operating reviews with the businesses in the group are always a highlight and, this week, Sara Geater, Angela McMullen and I see the Lime Pictures team, Claire Poyser and Kate Little.

We talk about how they plan to build their scripted business after the success of *Free Rein* on Netflix.

■ **The US is a priority for us. In New York, we have strong production companies – Optomen, run by Maria Silver, and Lion, headed by Tony Tackaberry.**

From London, Raw has made a new CNN series, *The Kennedys*, and they send me photos of the marketing campaign running in Grand Central Station. It looks like every step of the escalator and every platform wall in the station is covered with marketing material. It's extraordinary.

■ **Later that day, we make a call to the management team in Los Angeles. We are looking for a new CEO to run our West Coast studio and, next week, we will meet the search company to discuss progress.**

The business there comprises creative teams from Studio Lambert, Objective, Main Event, Studio Ramsay, Maverick, Woodman Park and IDTV, plus the support and post-production they need to produce series for cable and broadcast networks.

That evening, I go for a drink with Neil Duncanson, who runs North One – it's always great to catch up with him.

■ **I start Thursday with a meeting with Louise Pedersen, CEO of All3media International. Seeing her is always a pleasure.**

She tells me all about the scripted upfronts they held last week for their buyers, showcasing dramas such as *The Widow*, *Kiri*, *Informer*, *Collateral*, *Requiem*, *Mystery Road* and *Blood*.

After a management meeting, I sit with Sara and Angela to go through our 2018 order book and the draft agenda for our board session with Discovery and Liberty Global at the end of the month.

■ **Friday, and it's back to spin for an end-of-week blast before preparing for Los Angeles next week. I have dinner that evening with my husband, Graham, in a nice restaurant near us in Barnes.**

Jane Turton is CEO of All3Media.

Streaming TV

Thanks to its reimagining of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the US streaming service is moving centre stage.

Stuart Kemp investigates

Sometimes, a single show can change the way a broadcaster or a platform is perceived. For the US streaming service Hulu, *The Handmaid's Tale* – based on Margaret Atwood's dystopian novel – has been one such show.

The 10-part series was made for Hulu by MGM Television (Hulu does not have in-house production capabilities) and quickly became water-cooler viewing on both sides of the Atlantic. It went on to win multiple awards, including a Primetime Emmy for Outstanding Drama Series and a brace of Golden Globes.

The series did for Hulu what *House of Cards* achieved for Netflix and any number of shows have been meant to do for Amazon: drive subscriber numbers and interest in the platform.

"Amazon would kill for a hit like *The Handmaid's Tale*," says one industry observer. "*The Man in the High Castle* didn't deliver that kind of marquee success."

In January, Hulu posted an eye-catching 40% advance in subscribers, to reach 17 million. While that may be dwarfed by the 54.8 million who pay to watch Netflix in the US, the growth is impressive and appears to be ongoing.

John De Simio, director of the Broadcast Television Journalists Association, host of the Critics' Choice Awards, describes Hulu's entry into original programming as a "real leap forward" in the world of television. "Hulu needs to appease its constituency with original programming to keep it fresh and attractive," he says.

Hulu was launched in 2008, when the competition for viewers and subscribers was a lot less fierce than it is today and before the rise of streaming services and cord cutting. Its shareholders were drawn from the top of the US entertainment business: Disney, 20th Century Fox and NBC. Each took a 30% stake in the service; Turner



Hulu ups the ante

The Looming Tower

AMAZON WOULD KILL FOR A HIT LIKE HULU'S 'THE HANDMAID'S TALE'

Broadcasting held the remaining 10% slice. Hulu CEO Randy Freer is a former COO of Fox Networks Group.

The platform began life as a linear-TV catch-up service for programming provided by its owners, before evolving into a service offering ad-free content packages and then complete series for subscribers.

Last year, Hulu added live news, entertainment and sports from 21st Century Fox, Disney, NBCUniversal, CBS, The CW, Turner Networks, A+E Networks and Scripps Networks Interactive.

The result is that Hulu now lays claim to being the only US television service that brings together live, on-demand, originals and library content all in one place, across living room and mobile devices. In other words, Hulu is well placed to take on Netflix, YouTube Red, Apple TV, Amazon Prime and the US cable operators.

Now, all eyes are on what Disney's proposed \$66bn takeover of Fox's entertainment's assets will mean for Hulu, once Disney owns 60% of it. Industry chin-wagging about friction between the shareholders is on hold until the deal is done.

Disney is due to launch a branded, family-oriented streaming platform in the US in 2019. But a controlling stake in Hulu will give Disney a space on which to stream its R-rated and more adult content, including Fox movies.

Hulu also provides Disney with an established on-demand video streaming service in the US market, where cable TV is shrinking and streaming services are growing.

As of last month, Hulu claims that it offers the biggest collection of TV series: 1,267 titles – well ahead of Netflix's 1,042 and Amazon's 872. Hulu also says that it offers more TV episodes – a total of 75,000 – to subscribers. It spent \$2.5bn on acquired and original content for the US marketplace in 2017.

Netflix claims to spend around 25% of its \$8bn global content budget on original programming. However, Amazon Studios is reported to have put more than \$4.5bn aside for original content.

Enders Analysis senior researcher Tom Harrington predicts that Disney's purchase – provided that it is approved by regulators and not derailed by Comcast's bid for Sky – is likely to bring more clarity and stability to the

Hulu boardroom and the decision-making process.

"With a dominant owner in Disney, Hulu will have a more cohesive strategy," he says. "The question will be whether Hulu continues to look like a linear-schedule service offering series to subscribers."

Inspired by the success of *The Handmaid's Tale*, Hulu is betting up its original shows. A second, 13-episode, run of *The Handmaid's Tale* arrives on screens in April.

Created, executive produced and written by Bruce Miller, the new season will project the story beyond Atwood's source material.

The cast, however, remains the same with a few high-profile additions, including *Veep* star Clea DuVall and Oscar winner Marisa Tomei. Elisabeth Moss returns as the central character, Offred, as the storyline concentrates on her pregnancy and her fight to free her coming child from the horrors of Gilead.

Craig Erwich, senior vice-president of content at Hulu, accepts that "a service cannot be defined by just one series".

Hulu's new productions certainly look high-end. They include an adaptation of Joseph Heller's seminal novel, *Catch-22*, regarded by many film-makers as extraordinarily difficult to adapt. George Clooney and Grant Heslov's Smokehouse Pictures are producing the six-part Hulu Original with Paramount Television and Anonymous Content. Clooney will star as Colonel Cathcart, the commander of central character Yossarian, and will direct the series with Heslov.

Another one to watch out for is *The Looming Tower*, based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning non-fiction book that examines the run-up to the 9/11 attacks, and launched last month to ecstatic reviews. It is penned by Lawrence Wright and examines the alleged rivalry between the FBI and CIA that apparently hampered America's ability to counter the rising threat of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda.

The Hulu adaptation is co-written by a team that includes Dan Futterman,

Oscar-nominated for *Foxcatcher* and *Capote*. One of the series's directors is Alex Gibney, the Oscar-winning documentarian, and the others are Craig Zisk and Michael Slovis.

The muscular cast includes Jeff Daniels, Alec Baldwin, Peter Sarsgaard, Tahar Rahim and Michael Stuhlbarg.

"In terms of number of Hulu Originals, we don't have a set number in mind," says Erwich. "The important thing for us is to be home to the next generation of TV."

Also in the Hulu Original pipeline is *Castle Rock*, produced by JJ Abrams's Bad Robot. The series, created by Sam Shaw and Dustin Thomason, will blend characters from the fictional town of the same name created by Stephen King. The ensemble cast includes Sissy Spacek, Melanie Lynskey, Scott Glenn, and Bill Skarsgård.

"Since Hulu is an on-demand platform, we recognise the need to offer a comprehensive library of premium programming," says Erwich. "That includes strategically acquiring hit series and films, as well as producing our own content."

Erwich is also assembling a library of licensed content from various studios around the world, including ITV and the BBC (ITV's *Harlots*, originally shown in the UK on what was then a pay-channel, Encore, is one such title).

While Hulu has no plans to launch in the UK or, indeed, anywhere outside the US (it sold the Hulu name in Japan to Nippon TV in 2014), it will continue to act as a partner overseas for producing content.

"We strongly believe in working with international producing partners, because it is a great way to gain access to the large pool of international talent, both behind and in front of camera," says Erwich. "As both content providers and content developers, we are always looking to support the visions of the producers we work with, so tapping into the international community makes sense for us as a business."

Euston Films' *Hard Sun* is a co-production between the BBC and Hulu. Andrew Eaton, the producer of the first season of Netflix's *The Crown*, is one of those international film-makers who welcomes Hulu to the fray. "Hulu really set the bar high for itself with *The Handmaid's Tale*," he says. "I really hope it stays in that space." ■

The shy genius of Mackenzie Crook

For many actors, physique is destiny. If Brad Pitt and Danny DeVito had each other's bodies, they would probably have each other's careers.

Tall, thin, gaunt and with deep-set eyes, Mackenzie Crook was probably bound to be asked regularly to play men on the spectrum from ill-at-ease through weird to extremist.

The best-known of these malcontents are creepy army reservist Gareth Keenan in *The Office* and Ragetti in the *Pirates of the Caribbean* movie franchise.

When the actor's name was mentioned for a part in the BBC One drama *Ordinary Lies* in 2015, writer Danny Brocklehurst was enthusiastic but worried that "you never know with an actor who's done big films, and so on, whether he'd want to be part of a TV ensemble". But he accepted the role of car salesman Pete "straight away".

"I got the impression," says the screenwriter, "that he simply hadn't been offered that kind of role: playing a decent, ordinary guy. His look does lend itself to oddballs."

Andy, the part Mackenzie Crook has now played in three series of BBC Four's *Detectorists*, is not without oddness: the show's comedy comes from the fact that the majority of viewers do not spend most weekends and many evenings metal-detecting in fields, as do Andy and his friend Lance (played by Toby Jones).

With Andy, though, the actor is at least entirely in control of how weird the character will be: he also writes and directs the show, which is expected, in the 2018 TV awards season, to add to the Bafta for Situation Comedy that it has previously won.

Mackenzie Crook's triple level of involvement in *Detectorists* is a surprise to many of his collaborators, given that his diffidence is mentioned by all those who have met him.

"He was very quiet and shy," recalls Danny Brocklehurst. But this reserved

Profile

Mark Lawson learns how one of TV's brightest but unlikeliest stars turned reticence into an art form

personality had advantages: "Because *Ordinary Lies* is a multi-narrative show, a lot of the time we were just asking him to be a glorified extra, really, walking across in the back of other story-lines. And you never know how actors are going to be about that. But Mackenzie was totally fine with it."

The show's director, Ian Rickson, who cast the actor in a 2007 production of Chekhov's *The Seagull* at London's Royal Court Theatre, remembers: "In our casting meeting, he probably said four sentences in an hour."

Despite this, Mackenzie Crook was chosen to play Konstantin, a doomed would-be dramatist. The cast also included a young actress called Carey Mulligan, who, the director recalls, initially seemed to be in a reticence contest with Crook: "In rehearsals, Mackenzie and Carey would sometimes be so shy that they'd ask me to look away while they were acting." They got over it. "Months later," he remembers, "they were playing a 900-seat theatre on

MACKENZIE MOST REMINDS ME OF A HERON. THERE'S A DELICACY THERE, A SENSITIVITY, BUT ALSO REAL STRENGTH

Broadway with incredible depth, range and confidence."

In a starry cast led by Kristin Scott Thomas, *Guardian* critic Michael Billington singled out the "lean, hungry" presence of Konstantin – although the actor would probably have struggled to come across as gross and sated.

The director now admits that he had thought of Crook for the classic Russian role while watching a scene in *The Office* in which Gareth, self-declared hard man of the Wernham Hogg Paper Company, unexpectedly cries at the departure of his boss and hero, Ricky Gervais's David Brent.

Rickson subsequently directed Crook on stage again, in 2009-10, in the Royal Court, West End and Broadway runs of Jez Butterworth's *Jerusalem*. The role is another in his collection of eccentrics: Ginger, a would-be DJ who has wasted his life as one of the disciples of a drug-dealing bullshitter played by Mark Rylance.

"Mackenzie most reminds me of a heron," says Rickson. "There's a delicacy there, a sensitivity, but also real strength."

As is often the case with actors, the name under which Mackenzie Crook has become known is not what appears on his passport.

He was born Paul Mackenzie Crook in 1971 in Kent, to parents who worked for British Airways and the NHS. In common with many performers, he started by impersonating teachers, and has said that various disliked masters were the basis for a series of characters he played in the 1998 Channel 4 sketch-show, *Barking*, which first brought him to attention.

Despite his low-key nature, he seems to be a natural performer. Danny Brocklehurst notes: "I watch all the rushes [unedited film] every day when I'm having something made. And what interested me, on *Ordinary Lies*, was that there was never really a bad take with Mackenzie. Everything he would try just seemed right and



Mackenzie Crook as Andy in *The Detectorists*

BBC/Disney/Joan Marcus/Sky

truthful. Which really isn't always the case. Sometimes, you have to work very hard with actors."

Certainly, the outward modesty and timidity do not seem to extend to a lack of creative ambition. Mackenzie Crook is also a painter (a skill he developed on childhood holidays in South Africa) and has written and illustrated children's books. Such diversification seems to have given him confidence for the multi-skilling of *Detectorists*.

Danny Brocklehurst remembers that Crook was "really nervous" about the series, "especially the writing of it". But, he was open to advice (perhaps another positive consequence of his self-effacing nature), talking to the screenwriter of *Ordinary Lies* "a lot about writing – how much you change, how much you keep the same as a series develops".

What strikes Ian Rickson, though, about the directing of *Detectorists* is that its creator has not been too affected by example or precedent, but has dared to go his own way. Although not a "mockumentary" in the style of *The Office*, the treasure-hunters show has a different sense of real life being watched.

"It has a very subtle, meditative aesthetic," says the director. "It has no laughter track, or standard visual set-ups and pay-offs. It just allows the characterisation and detail of its world to organically create drama. Bliss."

The shyness of which everyone speaks sometimes seems to extend almost to a wish not to be noticed at all. When I was writing this piece, a number of colleagues or friends of the actor declined to speak (or initially agreed, but then withdrew) after discovering that the profile was "not authorised" by him.

By journalistic convention, it is not usual to seek the permission of the subject of a profile featuring third-party impressions, for the obvious reason that, if vetoes were allowed, politicians and celebrities could decide when they wanted to be discussed by the media.

Mackenzie Crook, though, seems to have little to fear from the testimony of others.

"Every company of actors I know who have worked with 'Mac' end up loving him," says Ian Rickson, "because of his unadorned, authentic sensibility. He's a joy to direct because there is no ego in the way; and, underneath that introverted exterior, run such deep currents. I hope I get to work with him on so many things." ■

Sale or scale



Panellist Kate Bulkley

A year ago, not even the wisest media-industry sage foresaw that Rupert Murdoch would agree to sell the bulk of his empire to Disney for \$66bn. The landmark deal, which was announced in December and needs to be approved by regulators in the US and Europe, was interpreted as an admission that even the mighty 21st Century Fox lacked the scale to thrive in an era dominated by tech giants.

A high-powered panel at a sold-out RTS early-evening event at the end of February confronted this and related issues in “Sale or scale”.

Recall 21st Century Fox boss James Murdoch’s comments at last September’s RTS Cambridge Convention: “Scale buys confidence to invest strategically and take risks, and supports the development of new technologies and innovation.”

Fox’s sale to Disney, Fox’s bid to own Sky outright and AT&T’s bid for Time Warner are three business moves that can be seen in the context of the

Media consolidation

A stellar RTS panel confronted the threats posed by the tech giants to legacy media. **Matthew Bell** took notes

advance of Apple, Amazon, Google and Facebook. Days after this event, Comcast launched a rival \$22bn bid for Sky.

Financial Times global media editor Matthew Garrahan, who chaired the RTS event, suggested that, for traditional media companies, this “deal frenzy” could be interpreted in one of two ways. It was either the case that “they have lost their bottle – or is it the only realistic response to the challenges posed by this new era?”

The huge tech companies dwarf TV’s traditional players, explained Mathew Horsman, Joint Managing Director of media consultancy Mediatique:

“Apple’s revenues are three times those of BT, Sky, Liberty Global, the BBC, ITV and Channel 4 put together.

“Even Netflix is an absolute minnow compared with Apple, Amazon and Google,” he added (see chart opposite).

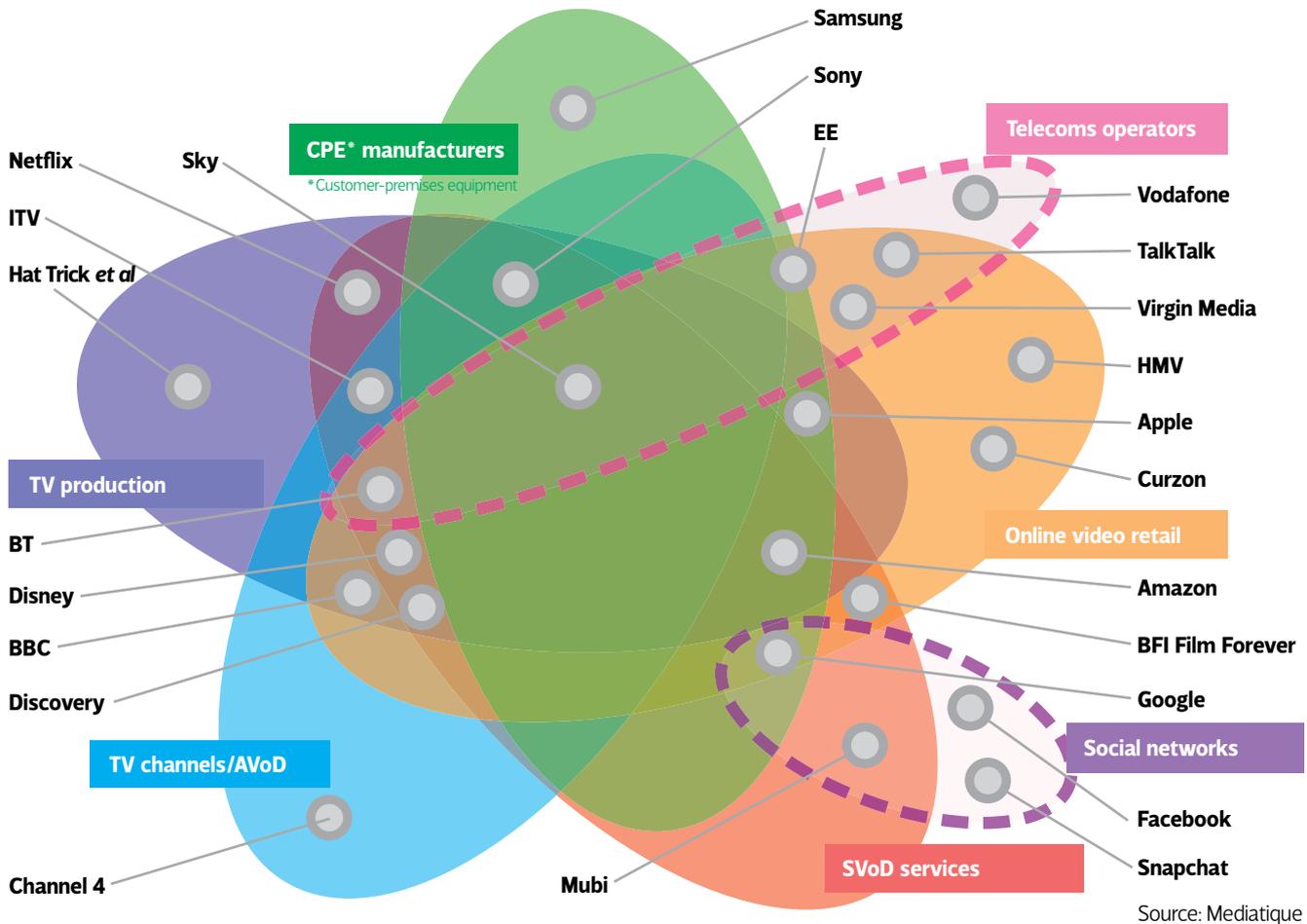
Mike Darcey, the former chief operating officer of Sky and CEO of News UK, agreed with James Murdoch on the necessity of scale in the modern media landscape – not least to mitigate risk.

“You need scale of investment across a [broad] portfolio of ideas to be able to cope with the risk of putting that much money on the table behind a particular idea,” he said. “Otherwise, you are betting a lot of money on red.”

But the ex-Sky man added that “vertical integration” – operating as both a media platform and a creator of content – was as important as achieving “scale”. He noted that many of the current big media deals and consolidations, such as AT&T and Time Warner, were “between a platform and a content provider”.

He added: “You could take James Murdoch’s quote from last year, take

Video content and adjacent markets in the UK



out the word 'scale' and write 'vertical integration' and the rest of it would still hold, in the sense that vertical integration can help you to manage the risk.

"If you have scale in distribution, you have more confidence to invest in content. Your platform won't be denied content and your content won't be denied distribution."

There was a consensus on the panel that smaller British broadcasters are finding it increasingly hard to compete with the US behemoths. Garrahan pointed out that Channel 4 "took the risk on *Black Mirror*", only to see a bigger beast, Netflix, snatch the Charlie Brooker-penned satirical series from its hands.

"The broadcasters are under pressure, but it doesn't mean that Channel 4 is out of the running," argued media journalist Kate Bulkley. Nor, she said, was ITV.

Referring to the title of the RTS event, she pointed out that ITV had "tried the 'scale' bit. It had bought a lot of production companies – and had grown pretty big. It is the biggest >

Selected players, by revenue

Apple*	\$229bn	New entrants
Samsung	\$223bn	New entrants
Amazon	\$178bn	New entrants
Alphabet	\$111bn	New entrants
Verizon	\$107bn	New entrants
Comcast	\$85bn	Legacy companies
Disney	\$56bn	Legacy companies
Vodafone	\$52bn	Legacy companies
Facebook	\$41bn	New entrants
BT	\$33bn	Legacy companies
Time Warner	\$31bn	Legacy companies
21st Century Fox	\$29bn	Legacy companies
CBS*	\$13bn	Legacy companies
Sky	\$12bn	Legacy companies
Netflix	\$12bn	New entrants
Liberty Global*	\$11bn	Legacy companies
BBC*	\$8bn	Legacy companies
Discovery	\$7bn	Legacy companies
ITV*	\$4bn	Legacy companies
Channel 4	\$1bn	Legacy companies

Revenues for 2017 calendar year, except * = revenue for last available four quarters

The true value of viewer data

Kate Bulkley: 'Data is very important, but it's not everything – commissioning by algorithm is probably not the way to go – but certainly [it is important] for the advertising business and scheduling [decisions].'

Mathew Horsman: 'Where it really works is giving a consumer experience that is so much better... search and navigation, deep curation. Personalisation is strong stuff if it's done well.'

Tim Hincks: 'I'm not as sceptical about [deals driven by] the algorithm from a creative point of view.'

Mike Darcey: '[Data] is second... to the judgement that people make about what makes a great idea.'



From left: Mike Darcey, Kate Bulkley, Matthew Garrahan, Mathew Horsman and Tim Hincks

Paul Hampartsoumian

Welcome to the new media landscape

A clash of business models

Kate Bulkley: ‘These [technology] companies aren’t in the same kind of business [as] traditional legacy media companies. Studios want to make money by making and selling

programmes; Amazon doesn’t care about making money on the programmes that it commissions – it wants to sell more loot roll. It’s a very different business model.’

Global vs local content

Tim Hincks: ‘We talk about demand for global content [such as] *House of Cards* – and that’s what we’re seeing with these new entrants, the notion of big global pieces.

‘But... they’ve also spotted that people in Britain also like British, local content.... If I was the BBC or Channel 4, that’s the thing I would be getting concerned about right now.’

The end of the co-production era

Mathew Horsman: ‘We’ve seen this trend where the networks [have worked] with the new entrants... [UK broadcasters] put in a bit of money – the [new entrants] put in a lot of money – and [broadcasters] retain the UK rights and have the first window. That was a trend that built and built to

a crescendo, but I think that it’s already over. I think these big, new entrants are saying, “How come we’re giving you a budget of £6m an hour, you’re spending £1m and you’re getting all the UK rights so we can’t show this stuff on Netflix during the same window. We’re not going to do that again.”’

21st Century Fox’s bid for Sky

Mike Darcey: ‘The 21st Century Fox proposal to buy the remaining [Sky] shares that it doesn’t own is well advanced through the Competition

and Markets Authority... I think that the betting has to be that it’s more likely than not to go through, but it’s not a done deal.’

A challenging outlook for UK broadcasters

Mathew Horsman: ‘There are three revenue streams for network television: subscription, licence fee and advertising. All three of those are under significant pressure.

‘Advertising is absolutely under pressure. The licence fee – it will be up to us, but it doesn’t look good. And subscription is not growing for full-fat pay-TV.’

Cost per episode of key shows

<i>The Get Down</i> (Netflix)	\$16m
<i>Game of Thrones</i> (HBO)	\$10m
<i>Philip K Dick</i> (Amazon, C4, Sony)	\$9m
<i>The Defenders</i> (Netflix)	\$8m
<i>Friends</i> (NBC – final season)	\$7m
<i>The Crown</i> (Netflix)	\$6m
<i>The Big Bang Theory</i> (NBC)	\$6m
<i>House of Cards</i> (Netflix)	\$5m
<i>The Night Manager</i> (BBC/AMC)	\$5m
<i>Orange is the New Black</i> (Amazon)	\$4m
<i>Breaking Bad</i> (AMC)	\$4m
<i>The Walking Dead</i> (AMC)	\$3m
<i>Sherlock</i> (BBC)	\$3m
Netflix (average per hour)	\$2m
<i>Downton Abbey</i> (ITV)	\$2m
ITV (average per hour)	\$2m
<i>Vera</i> (ITV)	\$1m

Source: Mediatique

› factual producer in the US, now. But where does it go from here?”

One route forward, she suggested, was to concentrate on local markets, by “serving their local customers much better than these big guys” and offering services that are “different to all the stuff that is coming out of America. The question is: does that make it distinct enough so that it can somehow survive?”

Mathew Horsman was blunter in his assessment: “It either [becomes] a much smaller company or someone buys it.”

Not all UK television outfits are under the cosh. “As a content creator,” said Tim Hincks, joint boss of the independent producer Expectation Entertainment, “this is a genuinely exciting [time]. We... [are] seeing more customers and demand for our content.”

In the UK, said Mathew Horsman, the new entrants had not, as yet, stepped up to the plate, although they had had an effect on the global TV market, most notably by pushing up prices. “It wasn’t many years ago when £1m was a very big number for an hour of UK content.” Famously, Netflix drama *The Crown* costs five times that figure per episode.



THE 'CURRENT STELLA ARTOIS APPROACH' OF MAKING 'REASSURINGLY EXPENSIVE' PROGRAMMING IS UNSUSTAINABLE

The Get Down

Netflix

“The inflation we’re seeing now for talent is extraordinary,” agreed Tim Hincks. “It can’t be sustainable. There are BBC dramas that are effectively 80%-funded elsewhere. There are multiple examples. That’s a very happy relationship now, but it will not last.”

The indie boss added that the “current Stella Artois approach” of making “reassuringly expensive” programming was unsustainable. On the positive side, however, escalating costs meant that now “is the best time in a while for new talent”. For broadcasters – such as the BBC and Channel 4 – with remits “that are partly about the discovery and promotion of new talent, this is a great time. There’s a lot of talent scouting at theatres, more than there has been for some time. People are going to see the new writers and performers.”

Even so, he said, UK broadcasters “ultimately cannot compete, show for show, against the [new entrants]”.

Apple’s signing of former Channel 4 and BBC executive Jay Hunt to run the creative side of its European video operation (based in London) sends a clear message to broadcasters that it has serious ambitions here. “They’ve hired a really serious player in this territory,” said the Expectation boss.

“These guys have very deep pockets. Why did [Left Bank’s] Andy Harries do *The Crown* with Netflix? There was a huge cheque,” said Kate Bulkley.

While Mathew Horseman agreed that Apple, Amazon and Google had huge amounts of money to spend on programming, he was “not so sure that Netflix does have the sustainable cash funds”.

Mike Darcey agreed. “The question is, does Netflix have the business model? You can splash some cash for a while but, in the end, [because] you’ve got shareholders – it’s got to work. Do these new guys have a new model, which allows them systematically to spend more on content? I think the jury’s still out on that.”

Tim Hincks suggested that, “ultimately, it’s not about scale. Scale isn’t what creates hits and tells stories – people do.” But talent would look for “a home where they feel most comfortable” and where “they can get their idea in front of as many eyeballs as possible”. ■

The RTS early-evening event ‘Sale or scale’ was held on 22 February at The Hospital Club, central London. It was produced by Sue Robertson, Jonathan Simon and Martin Stott.

Premier rights: Why did the giants not bid?



Many media commentators argue that UK sports rights, particularly football, are ripe for picking by the US tech giants – but it hasn’t happened yet.

In February, Sky and BT Sport paid £4.464bn for the five main packages of English Premier League matches for 2019–22 – an outcome that suggests that the days of hyper inflation are over.

There are two more EPL packages available, which will permit all 10 matches in a round of fixtures to be broadcast simultaneously, four times during a season.

‘There was so much coverage claiming that Amazon, Netflix and Google were going to bid for [EPL rights], and you look at the results of the first bit of the tender and Sky and BT [won],’ said Mathew Horsman.

Kate Bulkley had expected Amazon to bid for these rights but was unsure whether it would bid for the last two packages: ‘They’re not great packages – it seems to me that probably BT or Sky will end up with them.’

‘They’re pretty poor packages,’ agreed Mike Darcey, adding: “There are probably cheaper and more targeted ways to try to grow the subscriptions of Amazon Prime than spending £5bn on football rights.”

‘The [Premier League] is struggling to sell the last two packages. It would appear that it ran an auction and, to the extent that it has received bids for those packages, it is not happy with the level of the bids, so they remain unsold.’

One of the most significant changes of Theresa May's January Cabinet reshuffle was the elevation of Matt Hancock to Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. He became the second – and most obviously technologically literate minister – to lead the department under the Prime Minister's reign.

The former minister for new technology within the DCMS – a post he had held for the previous 18 months – is already well known to many within television and related sectors.

He was Theresa May's choice for the DCMS job "largely on the grounds that he understands technology and its impact on the future of telecoms and the digital economy," says one senior civil servant.

The new culture secretary reaffirmed his devotion to tech when, shortly after taking office, he launched his own app, creating an "online community" who could keep up to date with his work as a constituency MP and minister. This provoked the kind of teasing that could have been written by Armando Iannucci in *The Thick Of It*, but it did set people talking about the new Secretary of State.

There is no shortage of hot policy issues that need grappling with at DCMS. During his first day in office he had to make a parliamentary statement on the BBC gender pay-gap row.

On press regulation, he has already rejected the idea of a second Leveson Inquiry, telling the House of Commons last month: "We do not believe that opening this costly and time-consuming public inquiry is the right way forward."

One of the biggest issues that he has to deal with are the freedoms and responsibilities that tech companies have regarding the material they host – a topic on which he and his colleague Damian Collins, Chair of the Media Select Committee, are very articulate.

The re-homing of Channel 4 outside London is prominent in his inbox. Hancock has refused to say whether Birmingham is the main contender, but is adamant that he does want the broadcaster to move in order to better reflect its audience outside London.

Aside from the thorny question of pay, the BBC is always capable of producing upsets to test his department. He is largely supportive of Lord Hall's leadership.

The culture secretary insists that



Anne McElvoy profiles **Matt Hancock**, the new Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Politics

Tech-savvy minister for testing times

Britain's standing as a hub of digital industries (with regulation light enough to attract investors, yet responsive enough to fend off the big tech platforms' desire to wield an unhealthy degree of interest) amounts to a vital asset post-Brexit.

Hancock cites some successes in curtailing the ability of porn sites to push their product at under-18s and in reaching an agreement with internet platforms to demote pirated material on search returns.

"Optimistic, forward-looking, modern conservatism is a natural home for the tech-savvy," he claims. He says that, on technology, he is "liberal, not libertarian" – a defender of digital worlds but not of one without constraints. How far he will, in practice, challenge the mighty tech companies for insight into their algorithms, and what degree of pressure he is prepared to apply to curtail the less-benign aspects of social media's power, will be the test of his vision.

On the roll-out of superfast broadband, as digital minister, the new Secretary of State was something of an evangelist. In January, he claimed that the Government had delivered on its manifesto commitment to extend superfast broadband to 95% of the UK by the end of 2017. A review of digital infrastructure conducted by the DMCS is due to report in the summer. "We want the UK to be a global leader in 5G, so that we can take early advantage of the benefits that this new technology offers," he has said.

Matt Hancock entered politics after reading PPE at Oxford and gaining a master's in economics at Cambridge, followed by brief stints at his parents' IT company and the Bank of England.

People like his open, can-do style. Broadcasters and other media people are impressed that he is so obviously on top of his brief and is an enthusiastic TV watcher. He watches a lot of shows on Netflix and starts his day with Radio 2's Chris Evans show, listening with his three small children.

Among his favourite shows are *Game of Thrones*. "We suddenly got into it and went through all seven series in a two- or three-month period," he told a BBC interviewer. "I can't wait for series 8."

He has enjoyed a dizzying rise from chief of staff to George Osborne, then Chancellor, to minister of state level – first for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and then at the DCMS from mid-2016. As Chancellor, Osborne acquired a penumbra of talented,

HE IS KEEN TO SHOW BROADCASTERS THAT HE TAKES THEIR ANXIETIES ABOUT THE EU'S COUNTRY OF ORIGIN REGULATIONS SERIOUSLY

ambitious assistants and Matt Hancock became *primus inter pares*.

Many thought he would be out on his ear in the bitter harvest of the post-Referendum clear-out because he had campaigned for Remain. But, in the short, messy scrap for power after David Cameron's resignation in 2015, he quickly threw his weight behind May.

Brutally put, that saved his political bacon. Few would say he is a natural May acolyte, but he is one of the ministers who provide a useful buffer zone in abrasive times. Members of this group have been dubbed the BBBs – "Bored By Brexit" – those who avoid direct confrontation and focus on life after Article 50.

However, the creative industries are in a state of permanent outrage about the impact of leaving the EU and Hancock potentially faces trouble over restrictions on artistic visas. Exacting a quick win from the Prime Minister on this issue would save him a lot of heat from this constituency.

In more granular terms, he is keen to show broadcasters that he takes their anxieties about the EU's country-of-origin regulations seriously. Foreign companies with offices in the UK, which are currently allowed to broadcast to mainland Europe, want to maintain this privilege.

Some choices will not be easily fudged. He must rule soon on Rupert Murdoch's planned purchase of the 61% of Sky shares he does not already own. A lengthy regulatory process should conclude in May, when the Competition and Markets Authority reports to the Secretary of State on its investigation of the Murdoch tribe's record as bosses, both as broadcasters and as newspaper owners (an area where the phone-hacking scandal remains front of mind).

He has only a month to decide if the

deal should go through – it will be the first major indication of how he approaches a testing subject, guaranteed to provoke uproar.

Yet, the situation could prove symbolic of the limited influence of UK regulators, campaigners and ministers alike. If the planned 21st Century Fox/Disney merger gets regulatory assent in the US, the CMA's deliberations may be moot. This would also be the case if it turned out to be the rival Comcast bid that netted Sky. In the end, it is likely that Sky News's fate will be in the hands of a US company. Globalisation, it turns out, is hard to fend off.

Closer to home, those who fear that successive governments have taken an unhealthy interest in curbing the BBC might be relieved to find that Hancock is not especially interested in debates regarding its alleged bias.

He has joked that the previous Tory government "deployed the full Whitto" – a reference to John Whittingdale, the Thatcherite culture secretary who had long campaigned to clip the BBC's wings – only to end up with an inflation-proofed licence fee and a 10-year guarantee of its position as the dominant UK public service broadcaster.

Beyond TV, the minister is an active sportsman. He is believed to be the only modern MP to have won a professional horse race, coming in first at Newmarket in August 2012.

And, an ardent cricketer, he was part of the team that played on an Arctic pitch, in what is claimed as the most northerly cricket match ever played.

Inevitably, he is prone to political metaphors such as, "It's easier to score runs when the bowling is hard". In other words, he's happiest in the thick of things and doesn't mind a scrap. The big difference between his new job and those that provided his springboard to the front line is the level of scrutiny.

He discovered this during a night out at the Brit Awards, when he was treated to Stormzy, the award-winning grime star, acidly rapping, "Theresa May, where's the money for Grenfell?" Hancock had to shift his expression from cheery-night-out to solemnity in a trice.

Ed Sheeran's *Galway Girl* is his declared favourite song, but he cites an interest in grime music, too. At the Brits, he sat next to Ronnie Wood and found that the two have the same app designer. ■

Anne McElvoy is a senior editor at the Economist and a political columnist at the Evening Standard.

The reinvention of Channel 5



British public service broadcasters proved relatively resilient in 2017, despite strong competition from SVoD and other digital distractions.

The best performer was the smallest of the PSBs, Channel 5. The channel's audience share rose by 2.2% – comfortably ahead of ITV, up 1.2%, and Channel 4, down 0.2%. The audience for Channel 5's portfolio of channels grew by 5%, led by 5Spike, which jumped by an extraordinary 27%.

The broadcaster's ratings growth comes at a time when its reputation with producers, critics and viewers is rising, too. Producers, for example, say the channel's programmes are more cheerful and of better quality than was once the case. They think it feels bright and contemporary, boosted by a colourful rebrand in 2016.

"Channel 5 has got witty, clear and seductive titles – programmes that do

Channel 5

The broadcaster is gaining viewers and winning new admirers, says **Tim Dams**. What is it doing right?

what they say on the tin," says Simon Andreae, CEO of Naked Entertainment, which makes dating show *Secret Admirer* for the broadcaster. "You know you are going to be told a contemporary story that is pacy and digestible."

The service's reputational and ratings growth has been fuelled by increased spending on content since Channel 5 was acquired by Viacom in 2014. This hit £213m in 2016, up from £189m a year earlier, according to Ofcom.

The additional money has allowed

the broadcaster to broaden the range of shows it airs while remaining predominantly a factual channel. It has, for example, successfully pushed into upscale BBC Two and Channel 4 territory with natural history (*Yorkshire: A Year in the Wild*), history (*Henry VIII and His Six Wives*) and acclaimed docs (*The Accused* and *Slum Britain: 50 Years On*).

Additionally, has targeted older audiences with shows such as *Cruising with Jane McDonald*, generated new formats with the likes of *Rich House, Poor House*, and has cautiously moved into entertainment with the *Blind Date* reboot and *Lip Sync Battle UK*.

Along the way, there have been misses, too, notably Stone Age reality show *10,000 BC* – a co-production between Channel 5 and fellow Viacom service MTV.

The focus on creating new titles has helped the channel to increase its share among the advertiser-valuable 16-34 age group and ABC1 audiences,



Cruising with Jane McDonald

Channel 5

problem. This is due both to past programming (even though former Chair and CEO Dawn Airey said Channel 5 was “not just about football, films and fucking”) as well as the tone of much of the current schedule.

He reckons that Channel 5 broadcast more than 1,200 episodes of *Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away* across its various channels in 2017. “Many desirable viewers avoid the channel wholesale”, says Harrington, and notes that it will be “difficult to move away from its traditional audience at any great pace”. In 2011, over a quarter of the channel's viewing came from what the ONS calls Social Grade E, although this is now falling.

When Viacom acquired Channel 5, many believed that the company would use it as a prominent home for its US-made content. However, Channel 5's spend on first-run, UK originations rose to £129m in 2016 from £113m a year earlier, according to Ofcom figures.

Channel 5's director of programmes, Ben Frow, has a reputation as a straight talker and an instinctive ideas man. He has sought to boost the level of commissions since he arrived five years ago. Back then, he says, the channel was in decent shape but very heavily reliant on American acquisitions, such as the *CSI* franchise and *Ice Road Truckers*.

“I saw the opportunity to create a channel that had a unique voice, its own personality and that had a much broader range of programming,” says Frow. He set out to diversify the schedule by moving into new genres, and by introducing well-known presenters, such as Jane McDonald, Chris Tarrant, and Eamonn Holmes and Ruth Langsford. “We didn't really have any faces, but a channel is often defined by faces.”

The broadcaster's tone has also evolved significantly during Frow's tenure. “We have had different channels,” he says. When he first arrived, Channel 5 was “quite shouty, we had to make a lot of noise”. There were a lot of one-off documentaries with irreverent titles such as *Age Gap Love*.

Then came Channel 5's grittier phase, which spawned a plethora of shows with “benefits” in the title (including *Gypsies on Benefits & Proud* and *Benefits: Too Fat to Work*), as well as shows such as *The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door*.

“They delivered big numbers for us and were very helpful in terms of growing share, but less helpful in terms of our reputation,” admits Frow.

More recently, the channel has

moved on. There is a focus on celebratory, aspirational and life-affirming shows, such as *The Yorkshire Vet* and *The Dog Rescuers*.

Existing series that were known for being confrontational have been repositioned to celebrate positive outcomes rather than confrontation.

Frow traces the tonal shift to a gut instinct that viewers were after something different in the era of Brexit and Donald Trump: “Suddenly, the world became a very confrontational place. When the world is confrontational, that is not what viewers want to see at home.”

Looking ahead, there are big decisions to come for Channel 5, notably about the future of *Big Brother*. Ratings have been in decline (the 2017 series was its least-watched to date), and this summer's series will be the last to run under the three-year contract with Endemol.

Frow has talked in the past about moving on from *Big Brother*. Certainly, plenty of new shows could be commissioned for the estimated £40m a year that he pays for *Big Brother*. The downside is that Channel 5 would be left with more than 110 hours of prime-time TV to fill.

Frow says that negotiations over a new contract continue with Endemol. “It is a very expensive show, and I would relish the opportunity to have that money to spend on other things. It is 18 years old, and our schedule has changed. Increasingly, it sits at odds with where I want the channel to be.”

Whether this is a negotiating tactic to reduce *Big Brother's* price will soon become clear; after all, the show remains important to Channel 5 because of the high number of commercial impacts it generates among 16- to 34-year-old viewers.

Enders Analysis calculates that, of the top 100 broadcasts on Channel 5 since 2011, 81 of them have been for *Celebrity Big Brother* and *Big Brother*.

Elsewhere, Channel 5 is mulling over a move into drama, a genre that is noticeable by its absence on the main channel. Frow is exploring the possibility of commissioning low-cost drama at around £250k an episode.

Meanwhile, he says, 2018 will see a further shift towards feel-good and aspirational programming. He also predicts more growth: “I still don't believe Channel 5 has reached its potential. I am not interested in managing decline. That is a depressing outlook. We want to be a channel that grows.” ■



WGW Mitchell (left) honorary secretary of the Television Society 1929-44, with John Logie Baird, preparing for a demonstration

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The Trustees must be satisfied that the work they are supporting either could not be finished or published without the grant and that, with it, the work will be completed, or, the grant will provide the initial phase of a project that will be continued and completed with other identified funding.

Applications will be considered broadly in support of research, development, writing, editing or publication. Grants for research will require that the results of the work will be made known and accessible through appropriate means. In the case of literature, projects must have a real prospect of publication. Applicants must demonstrate that their work will have a clear expectation of making a significant contribution to the objectives of the Trust.

Applicants will be required to satisfy the Trustees of the soundness of their projects, and identify any grants from other sources. The Trustees will not make commitments to support recurring funding, nor make grants to cover fees or maintenance of students undertaking courses.

George Shiers

George Shiers, a distinguished US television historian, was a long-standing member of the RTS. Before his death in 1983, he and his wife, May, provided for a bequest in their wills. The Shiers Trust grant, now in its 18th year, is normally worth £2,000. This year, to mark the 90th anniversary of the RTS, it has been raised to £4,000. Grants will be considered and approved by the Trustees who may, at their discretion, consult appropriate experts to assist their decisions. In assessing priorities, the Trustees will take into account the sums of money available.

Application procedure

Applications are now invited and should be submitted to the Trustees by Friday 30 March 2018 on an official application form (available from the RTS, address below). Applications should set out the nature of the project in not more than 500 words. Supporting documentation may also be included. Details of your experience or qualifications should be provided. Applicants should ensure that their project conforms to all the criteria. Applications should be accompanied by a budget that clearly identifies the sum being requested for a grant and the purposes for which it will be used. **Application forms are available either from the RTS website:**

www.rts.org.uk

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Clare Colvin, Archivist, Royal Television Society,
3 Dorset Rise, London EC4Y 8EN.
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4 2014: Shared between Dr Sheldon Hall, whose *Armchair Cinema* is a study of feature films on British television, and Marc Scott, who has researched the unofficial development of TV in Australia



5 2013: Barry Fox has built a website (www.tekkiepix.com) to present his collection of historical consumer electronics imagery and documents.



6 2012: Paul Marshall researched a biography of Alan Archibald Campbell Swinton, the early visionary of all-electronic television



7 2012: Simon Vaughan digitised the 300-page 'Black Book', the first manual of the Marconi-EMI electronic television system, installed in 1936



8 2011: David Rose presented an illustrated retrospective of his exceptional career as a groundbreaking television and film producer to a large number of live audiences



9 2008/2010: Steve Arnold digitised back issues of *Radio Times* to make a searchable online archive of articles and schedules



10 2010: John Wyver conducted interviews on the presentation of theatre plays on British television



11 2009: Ronald Sandell, a key planner of the analogue terrestrial transmitter network, conducted research for a book, *Seventy Years Before the Masts*



12 2005: John Grist wrote a biography of Grace Wyndham Goldie, the first Head of BBC Television News and Current Affairs



13 2004: Don McLean compiled an authentically accurate audio two-CD presentation of the beginnings of TV in Britain



14 2001: Simon Vaughan, archivist of the Alexandra Palace Television Society, printed a collection of 1,200 photos by the father of television lighting, Desmond Robert Campbell

OUR FRIEND IN BANGLADESH

Landing a major assignment or, as modest journalists would prefer to phrase it, getting your teeth into a powerful story, can sometimes be a mix of good fortune and the result of a sequence of random, unrelated events.

Towards the end of August 2017, my team and I were preparing to head out to Bangladesh to cover floods in the north of the country. It was not particularly unusual – sadly, Bangladesh experiences them every year. The situation was severe but certainly not the worst in its history.

In fact, many Bangladeshis were a bit puzzled that we had chosen to cover the floods at all. However, being part of the Western media brings its own set of imperatives. The Houston floods were getting blanket coverage but, while many people had been affected, it was nothing when compared with South Asia. So, we figured, Bangladesh is where we must go.

It was around that time that we started spotting stray reports in the Bangladeshi local media about refugees from Burma arriving in the south-eastern corner of the country. Many were making for Cox's Bazar, known more for its spectacularly long (and relatively unspoilt) beach. Not many people around the world knew who the Rohingyas were – a Muslim minority community living in a tiny part of north-western Burma bordering Bangladesh.

Like many other foreign correspondents based in the region, I knew a fair bit about the Rohingyas' unhappy history of persecution at the hands of both the country military and the Buddhist majority.

Sanjoy Majumder describes how the plight of Rohingya refugees became a big Western news story



BBC

However, it was not an easy story to sell to editors or, for that matter, audiences, especially on the back of Europe's own refugee crisis that summer. There was simply not the appetite for yet another refugee tragedy that was only just beginning to unfold.

But, even as we landed in Dhaka, three boats carrying Rohingya refugees capsized off the Bangladeshi coast. More than two dozen people died, many of them women and children.

In these days of social media and mobile phones, it didn't take long for the first traumatic images to surface. And that meant that we were immediately told to change course – not to head north, as planned, to cover the floods but south-east, instead.

Even after a decade of covering conflicts, natural disasters and other

tragedies, I don't think any of us were quite prepared for what we were eventually to uncover during the coming weeks.

Over the next several days the Rohingyas first trickled and then flooded across brilliant green paddy fields, over forested mountain passes, wading through rivers and streams, and by sea on rickety fishing boats.

What stood out, and will always remain with me as the defining element of the Rohingya crisis, as it has come to be known, was the sheer number of children involved.

Many of them had witnessed unspeakable horrors, seeing their parents or other relatives murdered in front of them. Some of them had been separated from their families and were lost, wondering aimlessly in the camps.

Reliving a tragedy through a child's eyes is something that moves even the most hardened individual. It compels you to recognise injustice and cruelty that you might otherwise overlook or choose to ignore.

It is perhaps the hardest thing a journalist has to do and also something that raises hard ethical questions.

It is gut-wrenching to listen to their testimonies, recognising the fragility of their emotions and wondering what bringing their stories to the world is doing to them.

Perhaps the best way to address this dilemma is to own up to these conflicting emotions on air.

Doing so makes us journalists more human, and possibly more grounded in the world we choose to temporarily inhabit. ■

Sanjoy Majumder is deputy managing editor, BBC World Service, India, and was BBC South Asia correspondent when the Rohingya crisis broke.



How to get a job in TV



25 April

RTS Yorkshire Masterclasses

With True North and Lime Pictures

Venue: College of Music ● Time: 2pm start

Tickets: Call Victoria Griffith ● 07880 231626 ● victorialgriffin@gmail.com



RTS EARLY EVENING EVENT

MIND THE GAP

Closing
the gender
pay gap in
broadcasting



16 April

Venue: The Hospital Club, London WC2 H 9HQ

Jane Corbin

BBC current affairs journalist

Rt Hon Harriet Harman MP

Former Minister for Women and Equalities

Sian Kevill

Former BBC executive and
founder of Make Productions

Charlotte Sweeney OBE

Expert adviser on equality, diversity and inclusion

Jane Martinson (Chair)

Guardian columnist and journalist

Booking:
www.rts.org.uk





The scholar who loves sharing stories

BBC

Mary Beard's career began with a piece of cake. On a trip to the British Museum with her mother, a curator noticed her struggling to see one of the exhibits, a 3,000-year-old piece of carbonised cake from Ancient Egypt.

"He got his keys out, he opened the case, he got the bit of cake out and he showed it to me." It was a "light-bulb moment" for the then five-year-old, and a lesson in the joy of sharing. "People will see you wanting to know something and they'll get their keys and unlock the case."

The classicist has built a career out of unlocking cases, as an academic at Cambridge and, more recently, as an author and broadcaster. Her latest case is *Civilisations*, the BBC's much-anticipated culture series, which launched earlier this month.

The show arrived almost 50 years after Kenneth Clark's *Civilisation*, which had been commissioned by

Culture

Mary Beard tells Pippa Shawley why she was reluctant to become a TV presenter and reveals her own viewing habits

David Attenborough when he was controller of BBC Two. At the launch of the new series, Sir David explained that the original programme was intended to sell more colour TV sets. The simple plan, he said, was "to get all the loveliest things in colour [and] put them in a chronological order and to contemporary music".

The task for the 2018 series was rather more ambitious. "You couldn't make a history of European history now and just call it *Civilisation*," says Beard, who presents two episodes

of the new series, alongside Simon Schama and David Olusoga, "but it does mean there's a lot to do."

For the new series, the team headed to 31 countries across six continents, rather than focusing on Western Europe as Clark had done.

"If you're doing, in principle, the world, you can't do it chronologically. You can't say, 'Meanwhile, in Australia...,'" says the professor. "That's quite frightening when you start, but it's also liberating. It means that what has to drive this is the argument."

Executive producer for the BBC Jonty Claypole said he wanted nine "polemical essays" to drive the series, and that it was important to feature different voices to reflect the number of narratives in the representation of history.

In her episodes, Beard looks at the depiction of the human body, from the Terracotta Army in China, to the Colossi of Memnon in Egypt, and at the relationship between religion and art, for which she visited Angkor Wat and Istanbul's Blue Mosque.

The BBC's publicity machine has >

gone full throttle to promote the show, but Beard says that the filming was much the same as the other history programmes she's worked on.

"You still go to the same slightly grotty hotels and you still complain about the food being dreadful," she recounts. "Television crews are wonderful complainers, me included."

The classicist was fairly late to programme-making. She was approached by former BBC Two controller Janice Hadlow, who had read her book about Pompeii while on holiday. Beard was reluctant at first: "I knew that television was terribly time consuming, and I don't have very much patience."

Hadlow persuaded her, however, suggesting that the academic should put her money where her mouth was and, instead of complaining about too many "wrinkly old guys wearing suits", she should have a go herself. "At this point, I thought, 'I've been snookered,'" she confesses.

Pompeii: Life and Death in a Roman Town was nominated for a Bafta and paved the way for more series about the ancient world, including *Caligula with Mary Beard* and *Mary Beard's Ultimate Rome*.

Today, despite a growing library of television series under her belt, Beard still regards television as a hobby. Broadcasting has added another element of fun to her job as a classicist, but she identifies as an academic.

By the time the television commissioners came knocking, she had built a career as a classicist, and rigorous academic debates had made her resilient in the face of criticism. It's just as well. While her programmes have been popular with audiences, her presenting style has divided the critics.

She remembers telling Hadlow: "I don't think AA Gill will like it. I was right. Absolutely psychic."

The late *Sunday Times* critic seized on Beard's appearance, writing: "For someone who looks this closely at the past, it is strange she hasn't had a closer look at herself before stepping in front of a camera. Beard coos over corpses' teeth without apparently noticing she is wearing them."

While such scathing personal attacks would leave some retreating to the shelter of the university library, Beard

has taken her critics head on. She regularly rebuts arguments on her blog, *A Don's Life*, which she writes for the *Times Literary Supplement*, but she also takes on the Twitter trolls.

"It would be wrong to say that it doesn't bother you at all [when] you look at your phone and you discover that kind of crap," she says. "I think that, when I was younger, that sort of

stuff would have bothered me much more."

She ignores the popular Twitter advice – "Do not feed the trolls" – and responds to many of her abusers.

"It would be wrong to say that the majority apologise, that would not be true," she admits, "but enough do so to make it worthwhile."

A few days after we meet, one of Beard's own tweets makes a stir.

"Of course one can't condone the (alleged) behaviour of Oxfam staff in Haiti and elsewhere," she tweeted. "But I do wonder how hard it must be to sustain 'civilised' values in a disaster zone. And overall I still respect those who go in to help out, where most of us wd [sic] not tread."

Her poorly worded missive was met with a backlash, including accusations of colonialism and racism.

"I was certainly *not* saying that Haiti was uncivilised," she later wrote in a blog post. "Mea culpa if it looked as if I was (it just happens to be the precise opposite of what I believe!)" Just days before, she had said over tea and biscuits that "absolutely everyone who uses Twitter says something stupid from time to time". Psychic, once again.

The issue highlights the complexity of Beard's approach to public life. She is generous with her time, engaging in email correspondence with people who want suggestions for reading material, replying to the tweets she receives, both positive and negative, and accepting invitations to go on programmes such as *Question Time*. Academia has helped her build a thick skin to disagreements.

While her first instinct was to decline the invitation, she agreed to join the *Question Time* panel "because it seems chicken not to". She also did it because she was curious about how it worked, and who she would meet. "I've made some good friends on *Question Time*, because everyone is so

WHO IS CIVILISED? WHO WOULD ACTUALLY AVOW IT?



fucking terrified," she laughs. "You bond. It is as if you've all been kidnapped."

She believes that non-politicians have a civic duty to get involved in politics: "There's an obligation on citizens to participate the best they can and not to leave politics to professional politicians."

As someone who is not afraid of debate or strong opinions, she strikes me as a person who might have pursued a career as a politician. "I think it's too late," she says, but she would have considered it if someone had suggested it when she was younger. A long-time Labour Party member (she has now left the party), she thinks that she would struggle to toe the party line. Backbench life would not suit her, either: "I wonder if anybody really goes into politics thinking, 'Do you know what I want to be? I want to be a backbencher for ever!... You watch these idiots on the front bench and you think: 'I can do better than that!'"

For now, Beard hopes has found her niche as an outspoken classicist who is vocal about the public's role in politics. "It's not good just tut-tutting



Civilisations BBC

about how professional politicians are,' she advises.

She is, at heart, an educator, passionate about sharing stories, whether in the lecture theatre, in books or on TV and radio. She defies most of the stereotypes of a classics teacher, drawing you into her world, rather than sending you to sleep. She is not an intellectual snob.

While she battles great academic theories at Cambridge, she also loves to binge-watch box sets, most recently the third series of *Broadchurch* and *Endeavour*. BBC One's long-running medical soap *Casualty* provided a much-needed break when her children were young. "It was my real pleasure when the kids were very small: get the buggers off to bed, bottle of wine, *Casualty*," she recalls.

Growing up in Shropshire, she watched "everything". "There wasn't much else to do where I came from," she says. Her favourite shows included *Monty Python*, *Crossroads* and *Till Death Us Do Part*. "I wasn't particularly hooked on the highbrow, I'm happy to say."

Not having much to do led the

young Beard to explore what was on her doorstep. At the time, there were lots of opportunities for teenagers to get involved in archaeological digs. "Part of the pleasure of going on an archaeological excavation was to get away from the parents," she admits, "while doing something that was absolutely pukka and intellectual. The act of getting bored can be a more stimulating one than people think," she believes, as it drives people to think.

She hopes her own programmes and books inspire people to get out and explore the arguments she has put forward. "What you want to do is give people some insights and some tools that they can use for themselves," she explains, "not just to look at your programme and go, 'Oh right, fine, lovely. God, wasn't that amazing?'"

In this spirit, she will follow her episodes of *Civilisations* with an extra 60-minute show called *Civilisations On Our Doorstep*.

In it, she travels around Britain, looking at what lies in museum collections outside of London. The idea is to

take the theories that have been presented in the main series, and get the public to go and investigate in their local museums.

"Inside any local museum there is something wonderful," she says. The programme ties in with the BBC's wider relationship with museums for the Civilisations Festival, which aims to shine a spotlight on the collections of partnering museums.

More than 250 organisations have signed up for the festival, from national ones, such as the British Museum and the National Army Museum, to smaller establishments, including Wakefield Library and Torquay Museum.

The show will also examine what is meant by the term "civilisation", a word so complex it is unlikely to be solved in an hour-long episode. "Who is civilised?" asks Beard. "Who would actually avow it? Who would get up and say, 'Well, I am civilised'? You wouldn't."

The classicist may not have all the answers, but she will never shy away from the big questions. ■

You could say that Aleks Habdank is a man who is ahead of his time. Eight years ago, Virgin Media appointed him head of on-demand.

In those days, Netflix was in transition from a DVD-rental company to an online one, Sky was thriving despite the fallout from the economic crisis, and TalkTalk was a subsidiary of Car-phone Warehouse.

Today, on-demand is mainstream and Sky is a pan-European behemoth being fought over by some of the world's biggest media groups.

Meanwhile, Aleks Habdank runs TalkTalk TV, the smallest of Britain's pay-TV companies and, nowadays, part of a standalone public company that competes head-on with Sky, Virgin and BT for broadband subscribers.

A neutral observer might wonder why such an experienced veteran of subscription-TV isn't working for one of the big players. Prior to working for Virgin, he was employed by Liberty Global, where he spent a decade in various roles. Before that, he worked for the UK-cable TV pioneer NTL.

At Virgin, he was smart enough to figure out which way the wind was blowing when, in 2012, he signed a deal with Netflix.

He recalls: "We had a long debate about it but, ultimately, it was decided that it was going to happen, so better to have them inside the tent. Netflix is there, you can't hide from it."

At Virgin, he also oversaw the launch of both TiVo and Virgin Movies.

At TalkTalk, which he joined more than two years ago, he has moved fast to bring the service up to date.

During a demo of TalkTalk TV, which he gives me at the company's west London HQ, it is hard not to be impressed. The functionality looks good across TV and mobile, especially for on-demand and catch-up. The latter includes a backwards function.

However, TalkTalk TV's boss knows that, with only 1.3 million TV subscribers, his company is something of a minnow and remains a bit of a mystery to many people. "If I'm brutally honest, our biggest challenge is awareness," he concedes. "A lot of people in the UK aren't aware that TalkTalk is an alternative to paying Sky or Virgin vast amounts of money to watch the content they want."

He adds: "A former colleague once said to me that TalkTalk TV is British

TalkTalk TV is the UK's smallest pay-TV provider. Its Managing Director, **Aleks Habdank**, explains to **Steve Clarke** why it can only get bigger

Pay-TV

British TV's best-kept secret

TV's best-kept secret. That was a bit unkind but the spirit behind it was that the product is great." He continues: "We are the smallest but that has certain benefits – we can be more nimble. That allows us to focus on looking after the customer and do the right thing by our customers, rather than having to meet big, corporate objectives."

To a Sky subscriber such as myself,

A LOT OF PEOPLE IN THE UK AREN'T AWARE THAT TALKTALK IS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PAYING SKY OR VIRGIN VAST AMOUNTS

the BBC iPlayer looks much more user-friendly than what I'm used to. According to Aleks Habdank, it boasts better functionality because there's more content and better catch-up, which, he says, is available "immediately following live transmission".

Having completed a deal with both Sky Sports and BT Sports in 2016, the TalkTalk executive claims that the only content his company lacks that Sky

offers are shows found on Sky Atlantic. Even then, having done a secondary rights deal with HBO, Sky Atlantic's most popular show, *Game of Thrones*, is available on-demand on TalkTalk the day after episodes are premiered on Sky. "You can buy an entire series to keep for £14," he points out.

The pay-as-you-go TalkTalk TV store was launched two years ago and features a library of movies and TV series.

As full-fat pay-TV packages become less and less attractive to consumers, especially young people keen to save money, perhaps TalkTalk's time may be approaching. It recently launched a skinny bundle that costs a mere £7 a month: the 13 channels include popular Sky, UKTV, Fox and Viacom services.

"We are the youngest player in this space," says the TalkTalk chief. "We should be compared to Virgin and Sky. I'd say we're better than BT. Ultimately, it boils down to the content."

He adds: "We are pretty much like-for-like with Virgin. BT doesn't offer some key pay-TV staples such as Sky One and Sky Living. We do."

Of course, what TalkTalk TV lacks is exclusive content, something that BT Vision does have, thanks to its deal with AMC.

But one element in the TalkTalk TV mix that is strikingly original is a remote control specially designed for young children. Launched last summer, it is priced at £5. Unlike traditional



remotes, it is circular and brightly coloured, the result of extensive research in schools. The child-centric remote operates in tandem with an app that takes younger audiences into the kids' viewing area of TalkTalk's EPG.

For parents, it has the added advantage of being able to set the times of the day when children are allowed to watch TV. This, in theory, should help avoid disputes over when to turn off the telly. There is even an icon that appears on the screen to tell the young viewer there is, say, only five minutes left until bedtime. "Children pay attention to the TV," he insists.

The Habdank kids are too old, at 11 and eight, to take full advantage of this remote. "We asked parents what the pain points are for parents and children when they watch TV," he explains. "One of the things that came out is that parents want their children to be safe and know their children are not going to wander off and watch inappropriate content. Second, kids like to feel in control."

As good as the remote looks, it is hard to see how it will substantially impact on TalkTalk TV's growth. It boss agrees that the brand is still somewhat tarnished by an incident in 2015, when 157,000 subscribers' personal details were stolen following a cyberattack. This security breach led to a record fine of £400,000.

"We have a combination of awareness and historical brand drag to overcome but, increasingly, the customers we have stay with us and love us."

Not only is churn reducing, but the company's lowest cancellation rates come from its fixed, low-price broadband and TV customers.

Meanwhile, TalkTalk's ARPU (average revenue per user) is around £26, and Aleks Habdank expects that "to edge up over the next couple of years".

So where would he like TalkTalk TV to be in five years' time? "I'd like to have significantly dented Sky and Virgin. But I'm not going to give you a figure [on subscriber numbers]."

Our interview takes place on the day that Comcast announces its \$22bn bid for Sky. In a rapidly consolidating media world, where does this leave companies such as TalkTalk? "It's a good question but I will pass on it," he replies. "The answer to that is beyond my pay grade." ■



Panellists (from left):
Remel London, Anita Rani,
Ria Hebden, Marverine Cole
and Melvin Odoom

Sage advice from the TV pros

More than 1,000 people attended the TV Careers Fair at the Business Design Centre, London, in early February, making it RTS Futures' most successful event to date.

The all-day fair offered five sessions on getting started in television, while, in the exhibition hall, some 40 broadcasters, independent producers and industry bodies were on hand to pass on their TV knowledge to the eager students and media hopefuls.

In the first session, "Get ready for your TV job", Jude Winstanley, who

RTS Futures

Attendees at the RTS's biggest TV Careers Fair yet received copious expert advice, reports **Matthew Bell**

runs jobs website Theunitlist.com, advised her audience to forget the grand job titles of producer or director that they had enjoyed when making student films at university.

"In the real professional world, you are not one of those," she said, emphasising that TV novices start at the bottom, as runners or loggers.

The RTS Futures Committee member added that "film and TV are very different things", even though their "roles may appear similar". Moving between the two industries is not easy.

Employers hire on the basis of a person's track record, so it is vital that entrants build a reputation in the TV industry as reliable and enthusiastic workers. "It's less about who you know, more about who knows you," said Winstanley.

Work experience is important, she

explained, but it should never be exploitative: "There are loads of wannabe producers who will think nothing of using you to further their careers." She said that internships should be paid and that volunteering should be reserved for charities. And, if you offer your services to a short film, "make sure you are learning something of value".

Sky One entertainment and arts commissioner Bill Hobbins, who chaired the session on the entertainment genre, revealed that one of his earliest jobs in TV, 25 years earlier, was as a runner on BBC One game show *Happy Families* – working for one of the panellists, David G Croft.

"To get ahead, you need a number of breaks – pieces of luck," said Croft. His good fortune came on a new BBC Two arts and music show, *Riverside*. He was making films for the show when, midway through the series, the multicamera director left and Croft stepped in to take control.

He went on to direct some of TV's top entertainment shows, including *Shooting Stars* and *The Crystal Maze*, and is now the National Film and Television School's head of television, where he runs the MA course in producing and directing TV entertainment.

One of Croft's recent graduates, Lucy Smith, is working as an assistant producer in programme and format development at Firecracker Films. She quoted, approvingly, Hughie Green – host of British TV's original talent show, *Opportunity Knocks* – on the public's thirst for entertainment on the box: "People do not want three hours of fucking *King Lear* in verse when they get out of a 10-hour day in the fucking coal pits."

She added: "In TV entertainment, I'm working with so many smart, creative, intelligent people."

Children's writer Hannah George revealed that, as a would-be dramatist, she had been "writing and writing, sending scripts to people who would not read them".

She continued: "It's a long and arduous process to get anywhere because no one wants to really read anything unless it comes from an agent. You've got to keep doing it." Eventually, she got her break on CBBC fantasy drama *Wolfblood*, she said in "From script to screen", which was chaired by

Edinburgh International Television Festival Talent Schemes producer Holly Close.

But you don't have to be a writer to work in drama, the audience learnt. Nawfal Faizullah, a script editor at leading indie Left Bank Pictures, described his job as being a "problem solver", helping writers to "fix flaws or execute their vision for a show".

Charlie Coombes began as a runner, before landing a job as a PA in BBC Comedy, where she started to dabble in development. Now, at CPL Productions, she works on developing "everything from pure studio sitcoms to big drama".

In "How to make it as a presenter", which was chaired by fellow presenter Ria Hebden, some of the UK's leading TV and radio hosts discussed how they broke into the industry. *Countryfile* presenter Anita Rani, whose first media gig was on Leeds Student Radio, said: "There's no real route or set trajectory."

She added: "Bring your own skills and the best of luck to you." Practice,

though, makes perfect. "Presenting is a craft that you develop over time – you can get better at it," said Rani.

Melvin Odoom, who hosts the radio show *Kiss Breakfast* and ITV shows such as *Bang on the Money*, added: "Work experience, for me, was imperative to understand how the industry works."

Capital Xtra presenter Remel London told the audience that she "grew up with radio 24/7", and tuned her TV to daytime talk shows hosted by the likes of Ricki Lake and Oprah Winfrey. Broadcast journalism at Leeds University was followed by stints at online youth entertainment channel Link Up TV and work as a production assistant before she secured her current Capital gig. She described this process as "climbing a ladder" but "a ladder that is not quick".

In the day's final session, Josh Portwine from equipment supplier Shooting Partners cast his expert eye over the leading cameras on the market and offered advice on how to find work as a camera operator. ■

The RTS Futures TV Careers Fair was supported by the Edinburgh International Television Festival, the National Film and Television School and Sky One.

IT'S LESS
ABOUT
WHO
YOU
KNOW,
MORE
ABOUT
WHO
KNOWS
YOU

What the experts say



Paul Hampartsoumian

The National Film and Television School's David G Croft outlined a four-point plan for breaking into TV:

- Look at yourself in the mirror and ask, 'Do I really want a career in television?'
- Try to work out what it is you want to do.
- Research the industry and understand how it works.
- Start making contacts with people from whom you could learn things and who may be able to help you in your career.

Sky's Bill Hobbins advised: 'If you know the shows that you love to watch and that's the world you'd like to work in, then get your CV ready and find out which indies make those programmes and get in touch... Don't be too pushy; be nice, keen and passionate.'

'If you want to be a director, go out and make something... have something to show. If you just go [to meet someone] and say, 'I want to work in telly because it looks fun', you will never float to the top.'

Children's writer Hannah George advised: 'Do not be scared to send people your scripts – I know so many writers who never send anything out. It's very exposing sending someone your script, but you have to get over it.'

'Rejection is the biggest part of being a writer, but you've just got to learn to live with it. People are going to be rejecting you more than they accept you... If someone says they are not interested in your script, it doesn't necessarily mean it's bad, it's just not for them.'

TV presenter Anita Rani warned: 'You need to be tenacious – it takes a long time and you've got to be prepared to work long hours doing things you don't necessarily want to do.'



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RTS Television Journalism Awards 2018

Hosted by
Reeta Chakrabarti
and sponsored by
GuestBooker, the
awards were presented
on 28 February at the
London Hilton, Park Lane

The winners and nominees of
all 21 awards are listed over the
following five pages >

News Coverage – Home (*The Grenfell
Tower Fire – Newsnight*); and Nations
and Regions News (*ITV News London –
Grenfell Tower*)



Breaking News

Manchester Terror Attack

Sky News

'Entries in this category focused on two terrible tragedies here in the UK – the Grenfell Tower fire and the Manchester bombing. There were extraordinary demands made on broadcasters in matters of speed of response, sensitivity in dealing with grieving families and friends, and the delivery of context and explanation while events were still unfolding. The winning entry provided all this as well as a remarkable background exclusive within hours of the event happening.'

Nominees:

Grenfell Tower Fire, Sky News

Good Morning Britain – Grenfell Tower Fire, ITV Studios Daytime for ITV

Camera Operator of the Year

Antonio Denti – Reuters World News Service

Reuters Video News

'This was a really powerful portfolio, the camera operator had an amazing ability to tell a story with images, some of which moved the jury to tears.'

Nominees:

Mstyslav Chernov – The Associated Press

Olivier Sarbil – Channel 4 News, ITN for Channel 4

Current Affairs – Home

Undercover: Britain's Immigration Secrets – Panorama

BBC Panorama for BBC One

'A very impressive piece of TV, with shocking and riveting undercover footage. A compelling watch, and a remarkable young undercover protagonist.'

Nominees:

Grenfell Tower: The 21st Floor – Newsnight, BBC Two

Primodos: The Secret Drugs Scandal, Sky News

Current Affairs – International

The Rohingya Crisis: The Tula Toli Massacre – Newsnight

BBC Two

'Outstanding and exceptional, with great access and interviews. It was well-judged and compellingly told.'

Nominees:

North Korea: Murder in the Family – This World, BBC Current Affairs for BBC Two

Syria's Disappeared: The Case Against Assad – Channel 4 Dispatches, Afshar Films for Channel 4

Daily News Programme of the Year

BBC News at Ten

BBC News for BBC One

'The winner showed the value of high-quality journalism at home and abroad. It had confidence and authority, whether in the studio or on location.'

Nominees:

ITV News at Ten, ITN for ITV

Victoria Derbyshire Programme, BBC Two

Interview of the Year

Victoria Derbyshire Programme – Football Abuse Revelations

BBC Two

'A major scoop that was very delicately handled. The humanity and empathy displayed by the interviewer unlocked moving and heart-rending testimony from a group of people for whom talking about the events being disclosed was a challenge.'

Nominees:

Newsnight – Grenfell: Emily Maitlis interviews Theresa May, BBC Two

A Nolan Show Investigation: The Arlene Foster and Jonathan Bell Interviews, BBC One Northern Ireland

Nations and Regions Current Affairs

Inside Out – An Inside Out Special: Operation Sanctuary

BBC News English Regions for BBC One NE & Cumbria

'A quality production with the technical elements skilfully directed. The small team had clearly invested heavily in this hard-to-tell story and overcame legal hurdles to ensure it was broadcast... a standout piece of journalism that raises important moral questions.'

Nominees:

BBC Scotland Investigates – Humans for Sale, BBC Scotland for BBC One Scotland

The Hunt for Classroom Extremists, BBC News English Regions for BBC One (West Midlands)



All pictures: Richard Kendal

1 Host:
Reeta Chakrabarti

4 Current Affairs – Home:
Undercover: Britain's Immigration Secrets – Panorama

7 Interview of the Year:
Football Abuse Revelations – Victoria Derbyshire Programme

2 News Coverage – Home:
The Grenfell Tower Fire – Newsnight

5 Current Affairs – International:
The Rohingya Crisis: The Tula Toli Massacre – Newsnight

8 Nations and Regions Current Affairs:
Inside Out – An Inside Out Special: Operation Sanctuary

3 Breaking News:
Manchester Terror Attack – Sky News

6 Daily News Programme of the Year:
BBC News at Ten

9 Nations and Regions News:
Grenfell Tower – ITV News London

Judges' Award

Exit polls led by Sir John Curtice

'This was one of the stand-out TV moments of the year. Ten o'clock on election night and who can forget where they were when they heard the result of the exit poll. The poll stunned the country and caused at least one person we know to shed a little tear.

For the past three general elections, the joint ITV, Sky and BBC exit polls have been uncannily accurate. But what makes this year's exit poll even more outstanding is that the team of political scientists, psephologists and pollsters behind it had only seven weeks to put it all together.'



Judges' Award: Exit-poll team

Nations and Regions News

ITV News London: Grenfell Tower

ITN for ITV

'This was a brilliantly executed response to a massive and tragic breaking story. The programme had a remarkable degree of authority, with powerful storytelling and compelling pictures.'

Nominees:

Meridian Tonight – Camber Sands, ITV Meridian News for ITV

Granada Reports – Manchester Arena Bomb, ITV Granada for ITV

Nations and Regions Presenter of the Year

Nina Hossain – ITV News

London ITN for ITV

'Her range and personality demonstrated... versatility and warmth... and a remarkable ability to stay calm under pressure. She conveyed authority on the big stories, as well as good humour and a rapport with the audience on the lighter ones. The tone and incisiveness of her interviewing on day one of the Grenfell fire was outstanding.'

Nominees:

Mark Carruthers – Political Programmes, BBC One Northern Ireland

Roger Johnson – BBC North West Tonight, BBC North West for BBC One



Nations and Regions Presenter of the Year: Nina Hossain – ITV News

Network Presenter of the Year

Victoria Derbyshire – Victoria Derbyshire Programme

BBC Two

'The winner is a relative newcomer to television, but in a short time has established herself as an on-screen presenter with a remarkable ability to connect to viewers of all kinds. Her programmes on football abuse and after the Grenfell fire were standout examples of her empathy combined with authority, and a tenacious determination to hold those in power to account.'

Nominees:

Julie Etchingam – ITV News & Current Affairs, ITN for ITV

Andrew Neil – BBC News for BBC One and BBC Two

News Channel of the Year

Sky News

'All three channels demonstrated a remarkable breadth and depth of coverage, each in their own distinctive style. The winning entry offered gripping and brave coverage of breaking news around the world – but added an

additional layer of longer-form analysis, and well-judged and compelling campaigning.'

Nominees:

BBC News Channel
CNN International

News Coverage – Home

The Grenfell Tower Fire – Newsnight

BBC Two

'This programme stood out for the range of its journalism – from forensic investigation of the causes and robust interviewing of political leaders to a commitment to telling the story of the people who lived on the 21st floor. Outstanding... journalism of the highest standard.'

Nominees:

Victoria Derbyshire Programme – Football Abuse Revelations, BBC Two
Knife and Gun Crime Uncovered – BBC News, BBC News for BBC One

News Coverage – International

Yemen – BBC News

BBC News for BBC One

'The winning entry showed incredible storytelling, consistently high standards and exceptional scripting to give a comprehensive sense of what the situation was all about.'

Nominees:

Rohingya Crisis – Channel 4 News, ITN for Channel 4

The Demise of Isis – ITV News, ITN for ITV



1 Network Presenter of the Year:
Victoria Derbyshire – BBC

4 News Technology:
NHS Tracker – BBC News

7 Camera Operator of the Year: Antonio
Denti – Reuters World News Service

2 News Channel of the Year:
Sky News

5 Scoop of the Year:
Libya Slave Market – CNN International

8 The Independent Award:
Battle for Mosul – Channel 4 News

3 Television Journalist of the Year:
Orla Guerin – BBC News

6 News Coverage – International:
Yemen – BBC News

9 Specialist Journalist of the Year:
Michael Crick – Channel 4 News

All pictures: Richard Kendal

Outstanding Contribution

Dorothy Byrne



Richard Kendal

‘Dorothy Byrne started in local newspapers, where, according to one of her early bosses, “She’d happily walk into any pub in any grotty area you can imagine, announce what she was up to and the sort of people she wanted to find, and hey presto!”

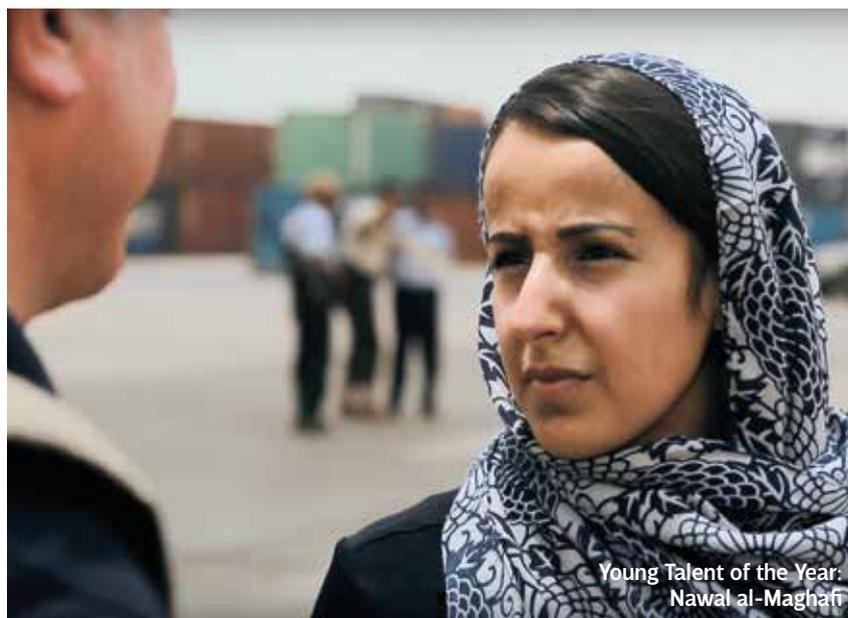
‘At the other end of the scale, she also considered that close attention to *Hello!* magazine was a vital part of the investigative journalist’s armoury.’

‘She went on to run ITV’s *The Big Story*, where her formidable storytelling skills and fertile ideas were brilliant assets.

‘She has been at the helm of Channel 4’s journalistic output for many years. In that time, all her great qualities have come to the fore: her intellectual curiosity, her openness to new ideas, her constant challenging of herself.

‘Her programmes have garnered all the awards this industry can give, many times over, and she has nurtured the careers of innumerable television journalists, especially women, and ensured that Channel 4 supports an MA in investigative journalism to bring people from different backgrounds into this area.

‘She is fearless, ferociously loyal and totally committed to public service broadcasting.’



Young Talent of the Year:
Nawal al-Maghafi

BBC

News Technology

NHS Tracker

BBC News for BBC

‘This represented genuine public-interest journalism, holding government to account while being useful to the audience – allowing them to find out how their local hospital services are performing.’

Nominees:

CNN VR, CNN International

Innovative use of 360° video during ground combat in Mosul, The Associated Press

Scoop of the Year

Libya Slave Market

CNN International

‘The winning team displayed courage and enterprise on a very dangerous story. It resonated widely with a younger audience via social media... This was the first independent verification [of slave trafficking in Libya].’

Nominees:

Rohingya Refugee Crisis, Sky News

Priti Patel Resignation, BBC News for BBC One

Specialist Journalist of the Year

Michael Crick – Channel 4 News

ITN for Channel 4

‘From his forensic investigation of election expenses, his dogged pursuit of Paul Nuttall in Stoke and one of the longest doorsteps all the way down Whitehall, this was vintage stuff from a specialist at the top of his form. Tremendous, excellent, outstanding work.’

Nominees:

Chris Cook – Newsnight, BBC Two

Jason Farrell, Sky News

Television Journalist of the Year

Orla Guerin – BBC News

BBC News for BBC One

‘[With] a record of reporting calmly and courageously from some of the world’s most dangerous places, while never sensationalising war, [she] showed a range and depth which marks her out from a very strong field.’

Nominees:

Jonathan Miller – Channel 4 News, ITN for Channel 4

Stuart Ramsay, Sky News

The Independent Award

Battle for Mosul – Channel 4 News

Nine Finger Productions for Channel 4

‘This was an extraordinary film, beautifully shot and portraying the reality of war, but with great humanity. It was refreshing to hear so many local views in a film like this.’

Nominees:

Dispatches – Undercover: Britain’s

Cheap Clothes, Blakeway Productions for Channel 4

Unreported World: Africa’s Perfect

Storm, Quicksilver Media for Channel 4

Young Talent of the Year

Nawal al-Maghafi

BBC News for BBC One

‘She showed exceptional bravery and is wise beyond her years. Along with great access, she had good scripting and a very understated delivery.’

Nominees:

Ashley John-Baptiste – Victoria

Derbyshire Programme, BBC Two and BBC News

Helen-Ann Smith, Sky News ■

Archives: the future is digital

London Centre **Matthew Bell** discovers that the clock is ticking on digitising TV's rich heritage

The future of television programmes past and present is digital – and safe – according to a panel of archivists assembled at ITV London Studios. At this joint event organised by RTS London and the Federation of Commercial, Audiovisual Libraries (Focal) in late February, the experts said that – although it is a huge task – they would be able to digitise the best of TV's vast archive of taped programmes.

Steve Daly, head of technology at BBC Archives, described his job as “looking after everything the BBC would like to keep for ever”. This includes paper records, radio archives, sheet music, its social-media archive and music libraries, as well as TV programmes.

Since late 2014, all programmes commissioned by the BBC have been delivered in a digital file, rather than on tape. “That effectively closed the door on our videotape archive for new material coming in, except for an occasional tape found in someone's cupboard,” he revealed.

No new tape machines are being manufactured and existing equipment is not being maintained. This, said Daly, “sets a ticking clock on our ability to play back the large [tape] collection we have in our archive”.



Basil Brush

BBC

ITV's archive, which is stored in Leeds, includes the television programmes broadcast since its birth in 1955 and British film collections, such as early-period Alfred Hitchcock and David Lean classics.

“We decided to build our own digital infrastructure to enable us to hold all the new forms of content in the archive and to start to digitise our back catalogue on an as-needed basis,” explained Dale Grayson, ITV director of content management and Chair of the RTS Archive Group. He added that there were no plans for a “mass digitisation project”.

The British Film Institute (BFI) archive contains around 625,000 TV programmes in addition to its film collections. It has digitised more than 10,000 pieces of archive film,

which can be watched, mostly free, on the online BFI Player.

Charles Fairall, head of conservation at the BFI National Archive, suggested that the

title of the RTS/Focal event, “Future past: Will archives survive digitisation?”, should be rephrased. “How can archives do without digitisation?” would be more appropriate, he argued. “One of the biggest challenges is the

THERE IS A PRESSING NEED TO GET SHOWS OFF TAPE

sheer scale of videotape that exists still in its original form on shelves around the world in broadcast and heritage archives. Digitisation is the only answer for the long-term restoration of content.”

Tom Blake, director of media management and content distribution specialist Imagen, whose clients include the BFI, said that “accessibility and preservation go hand in hand”.

He explained that the role of his firm was “to build the best tools so that the [archivists] can make the best possible use of their digital content”. He added that some of this archive would “have a value”, which could be monetised.

The BFI's Heritage 2022 project aims to digitise and preserve at least 100,000 programmes, originally only on tape formats, over five years. These include comedies such as *At Last the 1948 Show*, current-affairs show *Nationwide* and children's programmes, including *Basil Brush* and *Tiswas*. “There is a pressing need to get [shows] off videotape,” said Charles Fairall.

“I find it very hard to make the argument to keep all the tapes when we've digitised them because of the cost [of restoration],” he added.

“We're going to see a secure digital future and then we're going to have to be realistic about disposing of the originals.” ■

The RTS London Centre/ Focal event 'Future past: will archives survive digitisation?' was held on 21 February. It was chaired by Focal International's Sue Malden and produced by Carol Owens.

Scotland attracts record entries

Scotland Centre More than 120 nominees, lecturers and professionals from across the TV industry came together to celebrate Scotland's young TV talent at the end of January.

A record 40 entries were received from 10 institutions for the RTS Scotland Student Television Awards. They were held at Cottiers Theatre in Glasgow and hosted by comedy actor Karen Dunbar.

Chip shop drama *Salt & Sauce* was a hit, with James Wright and Mario Cruzado of Edinburgh College of Art receiving craft awards for their achievements in sound and editing, respectively.

enjoy the students' talent before they embark upon their professional careers."

Louise Thornton, BBC Scotland commissioning executive for youth, digital and social media, was impressed by the standard of talent in the room and remarked that it gave her "enormous hope for the future of media in Scotland".

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland student Alison Still's period piece *Antonio* was the overall Drama category winner, with Siiri Korhonen also picking up the craft award for production design.

The 2018 RTS Scotland Student Television Awards were sponsored by Media-spec, a specialist in audio, video and storage solutions for the UK media industry. **Alice Ariès**

Former RTS Scotland Chair James Wilson, who chaired the judging panel for the first time this year, said: "We were lucky to get the chance to

RTS Scotland student winners

Animation-Expedition-Samantha Hendrie, University of the West of Scotland

Comedy and Entertainment-Best Men-Andrew Ashworth and Alia Ghajar, Edinburgh College of Art

Drama-Antonio-Alison Still and Hannah Smith, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Factual-Hear Me Now-Maria Craig, Josefín Dahlin, Hannah McKelvie and Joel Rock, University of Stirling

Short Feature-Poet With Punch-Zdenek Ruzicka, Amber Saunders, Paul McGranahan and Ryan Smith, University of the West of Scotland

Craft Skills: Camera-The Bladesmith-Andrew Berry, Glasgow Clyde College

Craft Skills: Editing-Salt & Sauce-Mario Cruzado, Edinburgh College of Art

Craft Skills: Production Design-Antonio-Siiri Korhonen, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Craft Skills: Sound-Salt & Sauce-James Wright, Edinburgh College of Art

London shares awards around

London Centre Prizes were spread around the capital's universities at the RTS London Student Awards, which were held in early February.

Exist. Live. Rejoice, which is set in a Lithuanian hospice, won the Factual category for the University of Westminster. "Death is a difficult subject, but there was no shying away from the realities the film-makers wanted to communicate," said the judges.

University of Greenwich students scooped the Drama award for the political thriller *Philip Knight*, which "sparkles with good direction and good ideas, terrific – but heightened – performances, exciting camerawork, some unusual locations and classy art-department work".

Laymun emerged from an

"immensely strong" field to win the Animation award. Set in a Middle Eastern war zone, the Kingston University film offered a "quirky combination of animation styles, together with a thoughtful and imaginative approach to its subject matter".

"The standard of entries for 2018 has been very high, with several jurors stating, 'You could broadcast that tomorrow', about many of the films we watched. This is a huge compliment and a sign of how professional many of the entries were," said Julie Ardrey, the chair of the London Student Awards.

The 2018 RTS London Student Awards were hosted by the TV presenter Ria Hebden at ITV Studios in central London.

Matthew Bell



The Animation award winners with Ria Hebden (right)

Paul Hampartsoulian

RTS London student winners

Animation-Laymun-Catherine Prowse and Hannah Quinn, Kingston University

Comedy and Entertainment-Potty the Plant-Aedden Sussex and Taliah Lamont, Middlesex University

Drama-Philip Knight-Em Cooke, Bethany Cornelius, Joao Corona, Josh Cowle, Horia Dragoi and Chris Hailes, University of Greenwich

Factual-Exist. Live. Rejoice-Devidas Auksciunas, Yiming Yuan, Tom Whitehouse, Sam Charlesworth and Lily Pietersen, University of Westminster

Short Feature-Mm-hmm-Martha Halliday and Hannah McNally, Kingston University

Craft Skills: Camera-Without Christina-Sofia Mellander, Regent's University London

Craft Skills: Editing-1st Old Boys-Natalie Sutton, Dylan Cargill, Thomas Hamblin, Ben Groves and Sassan Salamian, University of Westminster

Craft Skills: Production Design-Delirium-Emily Welfare, Jessica Waters, Kaira Krobo-Edusei and Aanat Huthman, University of Hertfordshire

Craft Skills: Sound-Suonno-Filippo Locatelli, Julia Jędrzejewska, Luca Natali, Leo Merati and Robin Whalley, Middlesex University

Craft Skills: Writing-Punchline-Simon James, Bryan Fitzsimons, Daniel Tempel-Merzougui and Mairi Maxwell, Middlesex University

Welsh college boost

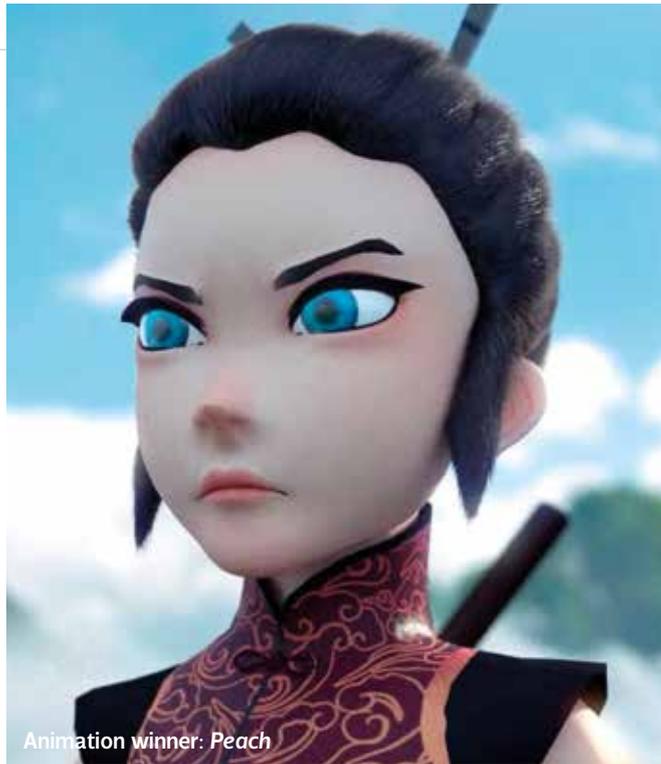
Wales Centre

Marking a new partnership between RTS Wales and the University of South Wales (USW), this year's Student Television Awards were held at the USW Atrium Theatre.

The awards ceremony at the end of January was preceded by a series of "industry day" events linked to the launch of the university's new Film & TV School Wales.

These included a conference on the future of TV in Wales, an industry fair, a Channel 4 factual formats masterclass, an audio recording workshop, the opportunity to meet commissioners and short-film screenings.

"Network supply from Wales – smoke and mirrors?" looked at talent development in Wales. Channel 4's Deborah Dunnett sounded a note of warning: "London is full of people from the nations and regions, which can be a



Animation winner: *Peach*

Catarina Rodrigues and Chris Phillips, USW

challenge if your job is to encourage network supply from the nations."

S4C's Amanda Rees, Julian Carey (BBC Cymru Wales),

Jon Rennie (Bait Studios) and Martyn Ingram (Wales & Co) completed the panel, which was chaired by USW's Tom Ware. All agreed that many

ambitious producers want to work in London for the early part of their career but, to counteract this, strategies were needed to build and retain talent in the nations.

Stand-up comedian and Made in Cardiff station manager Daniel Glyn hosted the awards ceremony – which was attended by 150 students, and members of the RTS and public – bilingually in English and Welsh.

Glyn also sat on the awards jury, along with Lynn Courtney (ITV Cymru Wales), Sophie Francis (Bath University), Martyn Ingram, Owain Morgan-Jones (S4C) and Samantha Rosie (BBC Cymru Wales). RTS Wales Chair Judith Winnan chaired the jury.

USW students scooped three of the five main awards – for *Peach* (Animation), *The Fall Guy* (Comedy and Entertainment) and *Spheres* (Short Feature) – and four of the five craft awards.

A new craft award, Original Score (Music), was added this year.

Channel 4, Boom Cymru, Gorilla, Hoot Studios, Loosemores Solicitors, Cloth Cat/ Bait and Made in Cardiff sponsored the awards. The Welsh Government also supported the awards.

Hywel Wiliam

RTS Wales student winners

Animation - *Peach* - Catarina Rodrigues and Chris Phillips, University of South Wales

Comedy and Entertainment - *The Fall Guy* - Kieran Butcher, Ashley Harris and Christopher Saunders, USW

Drama - *The Forsaken* - Kerry Norton, University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Factual - *Dwy Chwaer a Brawd* - Meleri Morgan, Aberystwyth University

Short Feature - *Spheres* - Yat Fung Leung, University of South Wales

Craft Skills: Camera - *Gone Fishing and Indra's Net* - James Clarke, University of South Wales, and Federico Brown Manzone, UWTSO

Craft Skills: Editing - *Change* - Aaron Steffox, University of South Wales

Craft Skills: Original Score (Music) - *Queen of Toads* - Simon Orman, Lina Alnadi and Lorenzo Mellano, USW

Craft Skills: Production Design - *Spheres* - Yat Fung Leung, University of South Wales

Craft Skills: Sound - *Cari* - Alexander Williams, UWTSO

Film school triumphs in Dublin

Republic of Ireland

Film-makers from the National Film School, Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology, took home four of the five prizes on offer at the RTS Republic of Ireland (RoI) Student Television Awards in late February.

National Film School students scooped the Animation, Comedy and Entertainment, Drama and Short Feature categories at

the ceremony, which was held at RTÉ in Dublin.

Joe McWalter from Dundalk Institute of Technology won the other category awarded on the night, the Student Factual prize. His film about online gambling, *Pixel Value*, was praised by the judges for its "slick editing and impressive pace".

"We were delighted to again hold the awards in RTÉ Television Studio 4, with a

large, enthusiastic audience, mainly from the media colleges. The awards were very well received and the evening highly successful," said RoI Chair Charles Byrne.

Chair of the awards jury Marie Penston added: "It's a privilege to be able to encourage young Irish people in the media business. Good luck – *agus beannacht* [a blessing] to them all."

Matthew Bell

RTS Republic of Ireland student winners

Student Animation - *Consent* - Aoife Moisselle, Tara Woods and Michael Fleming, National Film School, Dún Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology

Student Comedy and Entertainment - *Decades* - Michael Flanagan, Frank O'Malley, Laurent Murray and Eimear Noctor, National Film School, Dún Laoghaire IADT

Student Drama - *Pernicio* - Dave Fox, Alfe Hollingsworth, Laura Gaynor and Conor Donoghue, National Film School, Dún Laoghaire IADT

Student Factual - *Pixel Value* - Joe McWalter, Dundalk Institute of Technology

Student Short Feature - *Growing Alice* - Danilo Zambrano, Gabriela Chrobak, Alisa Barrie and Briana Cullen, National Film School, Dún Laoghaire IADT

Ricochet strikes in Winchester

Southern Centre Brighton indies Ricochet and Lambent Productions enjoyed a successful night at the RTS Southern Centre Professional Awards in February.

At a ceremony hosted by TV presenters Sally Taylor and Fred Dinenege, Ricochet took home the Factual Entertainment award for ITV's *Britain's Favourite Dogs* and the Factual Series – Small Scale award for BBC Two's *The Repair Shop*.

Neil Kent, who has worked on both Ricochet series, won the Camerawork award.

The Factual Series – Large Scale award went to Lambent Productions for BBC Two's *Addicted Parents: Last Chance to Keep my Children*, which the judges said took a “heartfelt, considered and respectful approach to very challenging subject matter”.

ITV Channel Television was another company to taste multiple successes at the Winchester Guildhall ceremony. Jessica Savage was named Regional TV Journalist for “getting to the heart of her stories and delving under the

skin”, while Daniel Skipp scooped the Newcomers On Screen award, demonstrating “great on-screen persona”.

The Jersey-based ITV station also won the Feature or Strand within a News or Magazine Programme award for *Falklands 35* and editor/cameraman Kenny Fillingham took home the Post-production award.

BBC South's Matt Graveling picked up two prizes: Regional Special Feature Journalist and VJ (Broadcast). For the latter category, the judges said: “Matt demonstrated great storytelling and real visual flair.”

The BBC region also won the News Magazine Programme award for *BBC South Today* and its digital video unit bagged the Online Production prize.

Bournemouth University walked away with three of the student categories: Animation for *Liv*; Drama (with Wiltshire College) for *The Manor*; and Factual for *Manambong Road*.

The last of these, which examined the life of a family living in a deprived



Award winners (from left) Daniel Skipp, Jessica Savage and Kenny Fillingham

Rob Dunning, Solent Studios

neighbourhood in the Philippines, had “great insight” and was “professionally filmed”, according to the judges.

University for the Creative Arts students won the Comedy and Entertainment

award for *Cold Feet* and the Short Feature prize for *Morris by Himself*, a “very personal and raw look at the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder”, shot by Morris's son.

Matthew Bell

RTS West of England student winners

Animation - *The Station* - Jocelyn and Joshua Wat, UWE

Comedy and Entertainment - *The Girls* - Olivia Joyce, Abbey Kaye, Christy Tattershall, Edith Rose, Jerome Watson and Hattie Williams, UWE

Drama - *String* - Chris Pugh, Bex Rose, Theo Watkins, Romaine Smith and Louie Blystad Collins, UWE

Factual - *Pleasure Boys* - Elliott Watson, Isla Gaffney, Petra Lewis, Patrick Royall, Asa Gartland and Alex Bricknell, UWE

Short Feature - *Piotr* - Zuzana Kopacka, Ross Longhurst, Tommy Reeday, Elliott Watson, Mark Oshana and Alex Bricknell, UWE

Animation Craft Skills:

► **Camera** - *Puppet* - Aiden Whittam, UWE

► **Composer** - *Puppet* - Benjamin Yapp, UWE

► **Production Design** - *Puppet* - Aiden Whittam, UWE

► **Sound** - *Walk* - Benjamin Whitehouse, UWE

Comedy and Entertainment Craft Skills:

► **Camera** - *The Girls* - Christy Tattershall, UWE

► **Editing** - *Pre Retro* - Ross Graham, UWE

► **Production Design** - *The Girls* - Edith Rose and Simona Cucinella, UWE

Drama Craft Skills:

► **Camera** - *Fin* - Bethany Fitter and Charlie Rees, UWE

► **Editing** - *Fin* - Abbey Kaye, UWE

► **Production Design** - *Broadcast* - Max Ramsden, Gloucestershire College

► **Sound** - *Fin* - Frank Lindsay, James Royall and Edd Roberts, UWE

Factual Craft Skills: **Editing** - *Pleasure Boys* - Petra Lewis, UWE

Short Feature Craft Skills:

► **Camera** - *Piotr* - Tommy Reeday, UWE

► **Editing** - *Piotr* - Ross Longhurst UWE

► **Sound** - *Piotr* - Mark Oshana, UWE

UWE film-makers scoop top awards

Bristol Centre The University of the West of England enjoyed a triumphant night at the RTS West of England Student Awards in early February, winning all five main categories. The ceremony, at Bristol's Everyman Cinema, drew a full house of 100-plus guests.

The audience of students heard Aardman senior

designer Gavin Strange discuss being a “realistic idealist”. He encouraged them to create opportunities born from passion, adding that a “creative career is a never-ending story”.

Aardman director Magda Osinska presented the Animation award for *The Station*, a film the judges said was “well conceived and simply done, with original, genuine

RTS Southern winners

Factual Series – Small Scale - *The Repair Shop* - Ricochet for BBC Two

Factual Series – Large Scale - *Addicted Parents: Last Chance to Keep My Children* - Lambert Productions for BBC Two

Factual Entertainment - *Britain's Favourite Dogs* - Ricochet for ITV

Single Doc or Factual - *A34: Fatal Distraction* - BBC Inside Out South

Regional TV Journalist - *Jessica Savage* - ITV Channel Television

Regional Special Feature Journalist - *Matt Graveling* - BBC South

News Magazine Programme - *BBC South Today* - BBC South

Special Event Coverage - *Camber Sands* - ITV News Meridian East

Feature/Strand – News or Magazine - *Falklands 35* - ITV Channel Television

Newcomers On Screen - *Daniel Skipp* - ITV Channel Television

Cameraswork - *Neil Kent* - Ricochet

Graphics - *Sunny Clarke* - LoveLove Films

Post-production - *Kenny Fillingham* - ITV Channel Television

VJ (Broadcast) - *Matt Graveling* - BBC South

Online Production - *BBC Digital Video Unit* - BBC South

Non-broadcast Production - *Wattisham: Both Sides of the Fence* - Viewpoint Productions

Student Animation - *Liv* - Sunniva Fluge Hole and Laura Perkins, Arts University Bournemouth

Student Comedy and Entertainment - *Cold Feet* - Tomas Fernandes, Emilio Gateau, Theo Ashley-Brian and Lidia Rzezniak, UCA

Student Drama - *The Manor* - Will Stone, Adam Pickford, Nick Milligan and Henry Standing, Wiltshire College/Bournemouth University

Student Factual - *Manabong Road* - Louise Thickett and Abigail Owen, Bournemouth University

Student Short Feature - *Morris by Himself* - Ryan Morris, Chris Norman, Adam Waugh and David Kelly, UCA

Gently wins in that good night

North East & the Border

Tyneside Cinema – which co-produced 24 films for Channel 4's short film strand *Random Acts* – was honoured at February's RTS North East and the Border Awards.

The 81-year-old cinema received the Centre Award for its success in talent spotting and developing the next generation of film-makers and producers. To make the films, 16- to 24-year-olds from across the region worked with experienced TV professionals in a scheme supported by Leeds indie True North and Arts Council England.

BBC One detective drama

Inspector George Gently picked up two awards at the ceremony, which was held before an audience that topped 400 at the Gateshead Hilton and hosted by Sky News presenter Jayne Secker. The series took the Long-form Drama prize, and the Company Pictures production team and creator Peter Flannery received the Outstanding Contribution award. Ten years after it first aired, the series ended in October 2017, with the murder of Martin Shaw's character.

Former North East and the Border Centre Chair

Graeme Thompson received the Pilgrim Award, which recognis-

es outstanding service to the RTS. The ex-regional director of ITV Tyne Tees and Border is currently Chair of the RTS Education Committee.

"Graeme has given to the RTS, the North East and the education sector. His service to the charity has been and continues to be exemplary, and he thoroughly deserves to receive the Pilgrim Award in recognition of his hard work, dedication and legacy," said RTS North East and the Border Chair Will Nicholson.

The Dumping Ground star Annabelle Davis won the Performance of the Year award, holding off Brenda Blethyn from ITV's *Vera* and *George Gently*'s Martin Shaw to take the prize.

Teesside University dominated the Student Awards, winning four categories: Animation, Comedy and Entertainment, Drama, and Factual. A student from the University of Sunderland took the News prize for his coverage of anti-Trump demonstrations. **Matthew Bell**



Walking towards death: Inspector George Gently

tension". The Factual award went to *Pleasure Boys*, which was "shot and edited well, visually strong, with good access and lots of energy".

The Short Feature award was presented by BDH's James Pollock for *Piotr*, a beautifully crafted film about an athlete and an artist. *The Girls* took the Comedy and Entertainment award – "a confident film, professional, with good storytelling and... a clear vision". The Drama prize went to *String*, a film that the judges felt sure would stay with its audiences.

Suzy Lambert

RTS North East and the Border winners

Centre Award - Tyneside Cinema

Outstanding Contribution - *Inspector George Gently* production team - Company Pictures for BBC One

Pilgrim Award - Graeme Thompson

Drama – Long Form - *Inspector George Gently* - Company Pictures for BBC One

Drama – Short Form - *They Live in Forests, They Are Extremely Shy* - Candle & Bell for Channel 4

Performance of the Year - Annabelle Davis, *The Dumping Ground* - CBBC

Factual, Entertainment and Features (Broadcast) - *The Yorkshire Dales and the Lakes* - True North Productions for Channel 4

Factual, Entertainment and Features (Non-broadcast) - *Stitch in Time* - Topher McGrillis Photography

News Programme - ITV News Tyne Tees

Outstanding Journalism - *Dan Farthing* - BBC North East & Cumbria

Rising Star - *Emma Wass* - BBC NE & Cumbria

Presenter of the Year - *Chris Jackson* - BBC NE & Cumbria

Photography - *Ed Moore and camera team* - Vera for ITV

Sound - *Andy Ludbrook* - Andy Ludbrook, Sound Design and Recording

Costume and Make-up - *Michael Birtley*, *The Dumping Ground* - CBBC

Graphics and Titling - *Shmay Tan* - SJW Films

Editing - *Chris Middis* - BBC NE & Cumbria

Animation and Games - *Kevin McCoy and creative team* - Arcus Animation Studios

Promotion or Commercial - *South Shields Marine School* - Media Partnerships

Technology Innovation - *DigitalMe* - Digital Voice

Student Animation - *Slalom* - Jonathan Tillson, Teesside University

Student Comedy and Entertainment - *Clyde* - Sam Kane, Alex Burke and Adoou Qui, Teesside University

Student Drama - *Develop* - Ben Driver, Srijiith Jalapathy, Katie Mitchell and Sam Smith, Teesside University

Student Factual - *The Run* - Judy Kulpa and Kathryn Dowson, Teesside University

Student News - *Newcastle Trump Demo* - Theofanis Pegkas, University of Sunderland

First steps revealed in Leeds

Yorkshire Centre RTS Yorkshire leading lights Jo Haddock, Lisa Holdsworth and Fiona Thompson took part in Leeds University's "Media futures" lecture series in February, when they revealed how they broke into TV.

A chance encounter with a producer led to Centre Chair Fiona Thompson's first TV job as a researcher at Yorkshire TV (YTV). She went on to become a freelance producer and director, specialising in religious shows.

She advised anyone wanting to work in TV "to show passion, interest and knowledge to potential employers".

Jo Haddock, a development executive at True North and Yorkshire Centre committee member, initially resisted the leap from magazine journalism into TV as she worried about the lack of job security.

She said that freelance TV work was precarious but, ultimately, rewarding and engaging. Her advice was to make the most of internships and work-experience placements.

Lisa Holdsworth, Yorkshire Vice-Chair, started her 17-year writing career with a work-experience placement at YTV, from which she secured a production co-ordinator job at a local indie. Through that, she was able to get a script to Kay Mellor who gave her a first writing commission on ITV drama *Fat Friends*.

Since then, she has written for shows such as *Emmerdale*, *New Tricks* and *Ackley Bridge*. Her advice to the students was to put themselves in the path of opportunity: "A work placement might seem to be nothing more than making tea, but you never know who you'll be making the tea for."

BBC shares drama tips



Jo Joyner and Mark Benton in *Shakespeare & Hathaway*

BBC

Midlands Centre How do you go about creating a new TV drama for a worldwide audience? "It has to have something recognisable globally; it has to show good old England," said writer Jude Tindall. She and producer Ella Kelly were sharing their secrets with students at an RTS Midlands masterclass at the University of Wolverhampton in mid-February.

Their new 10-part detective drama, *Shakespeare & Hathaway – Private Investigators*, starring Mark Benton and Jo Joyner, is made by BBC Studios at the BBC Birmingham Drama Village. It began a two-week run on BBC One Daytime at the end of February. Benton plays old-fashioned private investigator Frank Hathaway, while Joyner is his rookie sidekick Lu Shakespeare.

Tindall and co-writer Paul Matthew Thompson chose the Warwickshire countryside as their backdrop and William Shakespeare as their global brand.

Jude Tindall has already found success with six series of *Father Brown*, the most-watched drama on BBC One Daytime, averaging more than 2.5 million viewers, and with a worldwide audience in more than 150 countries.

Kelly said: "It was a really clear pitch and you have to keep coming back to that. As you're making the show, you have to keep thinking of what the show is and what the story is. It's really easy to lose sight of what you started out to make."

Tindall's break came when she was shortlisted for a *Radio Times* writing competition. She advised the students in the audience: "Enter competitions. And write a play. Commissioners are obsessed with playwrights, so write a play, put it on yourself and put it on your CV: you're a playwright!"

Jenny Wilkes

Saorview expands in Ireland

Republic of Ireland RTÉ's Richard Waghorn explained the ins and outs of Saorview – Freeview in Gaelic – at a Republic of Ireland Centre event in mid-February.

Saorview, the Irish free digital terrestrial television service, was launched in May 2011 and is run by RTÉ.

The RTÉ director of transformation and technology explained that Saorview offers RTÉ, TG4 and TV3 channels, as well as Oireachtas TV (the

parliament channel), RTÉ Radio stations and digital Aertel services. It reaches 98% of the population of Ireland.

Saorview gives access to the best in Irish TV and, with certain products, it also offers free channels from the UK.

There are some 1.6 million TV homes in Ireland and Saorview is currently used by 42% of these.

A new service, Saorview Connect, was launched in November 2017. Using home

broadband, it offers numerous features, including online services, access to content recommendations and a mobile app.

Waghorn explained that Saorview's ever-growing range of products and services allows viewers to access free television in a way that suits them, whether that's in their living room or outside the house, watching live TV or catch-up.

Charles Byrne

ONLINE
at the RTS

■ Last month's RTS Television Journalism Awards celebrated the best of broadcast journalism from the past year. In the run-up to the ceremony, the digital team visited newsrooms across London, finding out how they tell compelling stories, deal with sensitive subject matter and hold authority figures to account.

The Grenfell Tower fire dominated the Breaking News category, with Sky News and *Good Morning Britain* both nominated for their coverage, alongside Sky's reports of the Manchester terrorist attack. The teams from both programmes explained the ethical implications of covering a breaking-news event (www.rts.org.uk/breakingnews18).

■ Faisal Islam, Matthew Price and Waad al-Kateab are among the previous recipients of the Young Talent of the Year award. This year's winner, Nawal Al-Maghafi, impressed the judges with her coverage of the Yemen crisis for BBC News. In an interview with the RTS, the reporter explained how leaders in the region often underestimate her because of her age and gender, and how she has used that to her advantage (www.rts.org.uk/NawalAlMaghafi).

■ Theresa May's youthful sprints through wheat fields briefly dominated the headlines in the run-up to last year's general election. The confession generated hundreds of memes, Twitter gags and YouTube remixes. 'All the reading I'd done on it suggested this extraordinarily focused, well-behaved child and student, so I just wondered, really, what moment of rebellion there might have been,' remembers *ITV News's* Julie Etchingham of the infamous interview (www.rts.org.uk/Field_sofWheat).

Pippa Shawley



Plausible but safe fight scenes need stunt directors (though *The Musketeers* is not one of David Goodall's creations)

BBC

Scotland Centre RTS Scotland and City of Glasgow College were thrilled to present a masterclass by fight and stunt director David Goodall in February.

Alistair Scott, director of Screen Academy Scotland, hosted the event in the industry-standard TV studio at the new City Campus. The event drew an enthusiastic audience of 50 students and industry professionals.

Goodall is known for his talents as a director, composer and actor, but on the night he shared his knowledge of directing stunts and fights. His work has appeared in ITV's *The Loch*, CBBC's *MI High* and Andrea Arnold's film *Red Road*.

He talked the audience through a fight scene carried out by student actors Andrew McDonald and Tegan Noble, and shot by TV students Alistair Mitchell and David Calder. The actors broke the scene down at his request, as Goodall explained why each part was key. The cameramen were directed on how to close in on shots for the most naturalistic effect.

The tricks of the fight trade

Goodall was keen to impress that a "fight is as much a part of the story as the narrative", and encouraged the audience to find action that rises out of the story and characters. He

suggested that, before adding a fight scene, they ask, "Why is this action necessary?"

He also showed the audience how to choreograph fight scenes safely.

Alice Ariès

Social media builds audiences

North West Centre A huge 83% of viewers surf the web while watching TV, said Jo Booth at an RTS North West event at Media City, Salford. The director of TV social-media outfit SMMS added that half of viewers also look up the hashtag of a show to see what people are saying.

At an entertaining masterclass in February, Booth claimed: "Social media is transforming the way people experience TV. They're using it to decide what to watch."

Social-media platforms provide programme-makers with "free, or very-low-cost, two-way communication with international reach,

opening companies up to a global market", she said. They "deliver audience numbers, increasing votes, say, at the National Television Awards, making recommissions more likely".

Booth explained how to create a marketing strategy. Facebook users are social networkers, looking for escapism, she suggested, so "promote drama, rather than hard-hitting documentary".

Live tweeting during transmission can be effective, but she advised keeping tweets brief: "Scrolling down a timeline is the equivalent of driving past a billboard at 60mph."

Visuals work well. She recommended using Instagram's efficient editing tools to post good-quality stills and videos of up to one minute, but warned of overdoing hashtags, which can look unprofessional.

"Start the conversation. Find fans. Talk to people," Booth continued. "If you're making a documentary about birds, find people who are interested in birds. Tell them about your show."

"Be present for at least four weeks before TX" and, having built that audience, "keep going during TX and for at least four weeks post-TX".

Carole Solazzo

OFF MESSAGE

Not even the atrocious weather conditions – sub-zero temperatures and a snowy Metropolis – could dent the excited atmosphere at this year’s RTS Television Journalism Awards.

The ceremony was held in grand style at London’s Park Lane Hilton hotel and hosted by BBC News’s Reeta Chakrabati, whose elegance and charm lit up the room.

Not that she entirely avoided controversy. At one point she observed: “It’s great to be here at the Hilton and not down the road at the Dorchester,” a reference to The Presidents Club dinner, outed by the *Financial Times* for its unreconstructed sexism.

■ Traditionally, one of the most keenly contested categories of the awards is News Channel of the Year. This year was no exception as the BBC News Channel, CNN International and Sky News battled it out for the prize.

Sky News’s victory was particularly sweet in view of the doubts regarding the news provider’s future in the light of Disney’s bid for 21st Century Fox. Now that Sky News’s place on EPGs appears safe, following praise for the channel from Comcast, the Sky contingent were in a mood to celebrate.

Off Message counted upwards of 35 Sky people mobbing the Hilton stage to accept this year’s trophy, including a beaming Gary Davey, the broadcaster’s content chief.

Sky News editor John Ryley, looking typically dishevelled, declared: “I strongly believe Sky News will be delivering trusted, impartial, non-stop news for a long time.”

Additionally, the Sky team won the Breaking News award for its coverage of last year’s Manchester Arena bombing.

For the record, this was Sky News’s 12th time as the winner of RTS News Channel of the Year.

■ Among the night’s other big victors were BBC Two’s *Victoria Derbyshire Programme* and *Newsnight*.

Victoria Derbyshire, who has hosted her eponymous daytime show since 2015, won Network Presenter of the Year and Interview of the Year for the programme’s coverage of sexual abuse in football.

Newsnight, meanwhile, scored for its coverage of the Grenfell Tower fire and won the Current Affairs - International prize for Gabriel Gatehouse’s utterly harrowing report on the Rohingya crisis: *The Tula Toli Massacre*.

It was good to see *Newsnight*’s new editor, Esme Wren, Sky News’s former head of politics, at the ceremony to congratulate colleagues, both old and new.

■ The Journalism Awards tend to be highly charged, perhaps because of the levels of testosterone in the room. So, it was particularly heartening to see so many female journalists winning awards.

Young Talent of the Year was BBC News’s Nawal al-Maghafi, the Yemeni/

British journalist and film-maker who has also worked for Channel 4.

The low-key dignity of BBC foreign correspondent Orla Guerin, voted Television Journalist of the Year, belied her courageous reporting from the world’s war zones.

The normally grim-faced reporter even allowed herself a smile.

■ This year, the awards had an added edge because of the rise and rise of rival sources of uncorroborated “news” on social media.

As Fergal Keane, accepting *BBC News at Ten*’s gong for Daily News Programme of the Year, put it: “These awards are the best night for the best answer to fake news.” He continued: “Nobody here does it for the money – certainly not the women.”

■ Talking of women, the last word from the Journalism Awards should go to the iconoclastic Dorothy Byrne, Channel 4’s long-standing head of news and current affairs, and winner of the Judges’ Award.

She was praised for being “fearless... ferocious, loyal and totally committed to public service broadcasting”.

“All women have ever wanted in TV,” opined Dorothy in her brief acceptance speech, “was to have the same chance as men.”

And, revealing that she, too, had been sexually harassed as a producer, she issued a warning when, to applause, she said: “She may be your victim tonight but she could be your boss tomorrow.”

All told, quite a night.



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