

the Journalist

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As we went to press, the new UK government was in its first few days with Sir Keir Starmer and his ministers racing around the country.

Elections are a huge journalistic endeavour both for the campaign run-up and of course the night itself. They famously throw up stories and images you couldn't possibly predict – torrential rain in Downing Street, D-Day absences, Sir Ed Davey's seemingly ridiculous but ultimately effective stunts.

They are one of those events which underline the need for good, well-resourced journalism.

Of course, this is the year of elections and journalists in the UK are joined by those in France, India, and the US in producing a mountain of reports and interviews and ensuring that democracy is served by good information and holding candidates to account. In this edition we also have a different view of the election in Macedonia by a local democracy reporter who attended as an international observer.

The NUJ is also part of the year of elections with two of its own. The election for the Editor of The Journalist is underway and you can read the candidates' responses to questions set by our president on Page 26-30. Later in the year there will be an election for the union's General Secretary. You can see the job advert also on Page 26.

Please play your part in our democracy.

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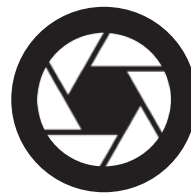
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Springer Nature pay deal after staff stage two days of strikes

MARK THOMAS



SPRINGER NATURE, publisher of world-leading scientific journals, have agreed a two-year pay deal with the union just days after journalists staged two days of walkouts.

In a joint statement both sides said: "The NUJ and Springer Nature are pleased to have reached an agreement which ends our pay dispute through a two-year settlement and would like to pay tribute to the mutual efforts that helped us find a way forward.

"We are committed to re-establishing our good relationship and look forward to increased and regular communications going forward. The recent events have emphasised the importance of open dialogue, and we are dedicated to ensuring that this continues to be a central aspect of our working relationship."

The journalists had walked out for two days in late June in a move which won widespread support.

They had turned down a 5.8 per cent offer saying that their pay hadn't kept pace with the cost of living. NUJ members said they were struggling to pay bills and cope with rapid rises in rent, mortgage and childcare payments. Some said they couldn't afford to live in London where their offices are based.

An open letter signed by almost 500 academics and including several Nobel prize winners, has been sent to Springer Nature in support of staff demanding an increased pay offer. The strike was also backed by actor and presenter Stephen Fry

Professor Ben List, director of the Max Planck Institute for Coal

Research and professor of organic chemistry at the University of Cologne, 2021 Nobel Prize winner for chemistry, said: "Science should not be the subject of greed, but rather of openness, freedom, enthusiasm, and fairness."

Professor May-Britt Moser, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, 2014 Nobel Prize winner, said: "Nature editors do a fantastic job, salaries should reflect that."

The picket lines outside Springer Nature's offices in King's Cross, London were visited by union leaders and journalists from around the world who were in the capital attending the International Federation of Journalists AGM. Other visitors to the picket line included Lord Hendy QC and his dog Bob.

inbrief...

ASSANGE IS BACK IN AUSTRALIA

Julian Assange, the Wikileaks founder, is back in his native Australia after a plea deal with the US. The deal in June ended 14 years of Assange facing possible extradition to the US, during which time he spent seven years in the Ecuadorian embassy in London and five years in Belmarsh prison. As a condition of his plea, he will be required to destroy information provided to Wikileaks

Meet the Assange-avists, Page 17

BUSINESS WEEK BECOMES A MONTHLY

Business Week, the 95-year-old US based magazine, has moved from weekly to monthly publication. Its editor Brad Stone told Press Gazette that it had a future in print because readers want the distraction-free luxury of print. The title claims a circulation of 220,000 in print.

BRUTON TO JOIN GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Jane Bruton, the former deputy editor of The Daily Telegraph, is to become the editor-in-chief of Good Housekeeping UK later this year. Bruton was previously editor-in-chief of Grazia for 10 years before leaving for The Telegraph in 2015.

General secretary to leave

Michelle Stanistreet, the NUJ general secretary, is leaving later in the year. An election for her successor will begin in the next few months.

In an email to members, she said that it had been and continues to be a privilege to

work for the NUJ. She said that her decision to leave was based on health reasons and knowing that it was time to hand over to a new general secretary.

Michelle, a former journalist at the Daily Express and a

former president of the NUJ, was first elected deputy general secretary in 2008. She was then elected unopposed to the top job in 2011 when the previous general secretary Jeremy Dear left. Subsequently she was

unopposed again twice when the post came up for election at five-year intervals.

[Job advert, page 26](#)



Senedd warned over bill

MEMBERS of the Welsh Senedd have been urged by the union to scrap a clause in the Local Government Finance (Wales) Bill which could push the newspaper industry, already on the brink of collapse, over the edge.

Clause 20 of the bill ends the requirement that local authorities advertise changes to council tax in local newspapers and allows them to make an announcement on their council websites, depriving newspapers from a vital source of revenue.

A letter from Nick Powell, chair of the NUJ's Welsh executive council, says:

"This proposed legislative change threatens not only to diminish the availability of important information to the public but also deprives local newspapers of an important income stream at a time when they are already under severe financial pressure."



Computer Weekly's special Orwell award

Computer Weekly was awarded a special prize at this year's Orwell awards for their work in breaking the story of the Post Office Horizon scandal and keeping up investigative work and coverage of the story over many years. Rebecca Thomson, who broke the original story, and Karl Flinders, who carried it on, accepted the award on the magazine's behalf. The Crick Prize for best essay was awarded to Robert Saunders of Pocial Quarterly.

Scale of Northern Ireland police spy tactics sparks serious concerns

THE NUJ has expressed grave concern at a report by the Police Service of Northern Ireland's (PSNI's) chief constable into the use of covert powers against journalists and lawyers.

The McCullough review was presented to the Policing Board of Northern Ireland in June and revealed that 323 applications for journalists' phone data, including 10 attempts to identify confidential sources, had been made by the PSNI. In addition, 500 applications were reported in relation to phone data held by lawyers.

The report was delivered against the backdrop of revelations at the Investigatory Powers Tribunal regarding the surveillance of investigative journalists Barry McCaffrey, Trevor Birney and Vincent Kearney and the recent announcement by the chief constable of the appointment of a king's counsel investigation by Angus McCullough into the use of surveillance powers.

Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, has been appointed to a group of experts and stakeholders advising the investigation.

He said: "The NUJ has grave concern at the scale and extent of the surveillance revealed yesterday. The report raises fundamental questions about how the PSNI views journalists and the official perspective of the role and function of journalists in a democratic society.

"The NUJ, Amnesty International and the Committee for the Administration of Justice have been to the fore in highlighting concerns at the use of surveillance powers, covert and non-covert, to track the work of journalists and to undermine journalistic sources. Police accessing journalists' communications data for the explicit purpose of identifying



KEVIN COOPER

confidential sources is unacceptable and we do not accept the attempt to reframe 10 incidents which were unambiguously for the purpose of identifying their confidential sources on 10 occasions."

He added: "The McCullough review is an important development and may offer NUJ members an opportunity to clarify the practices and procedures used by the PSNI and allay some concerns.

"However, it is not a substitute for an independent inquiry established under statute by the policing board or the justice minister.

"The outcome of the McCullough review should inform the actions of the Policing Board and will have to consider the eventual outcome of the ongoing Investigatory Powers Tribunal cases, which have shaken the confidence of the public in the PSNI."

The report raises fundamental questions about how the Police Service of Northern Ireland views journalists

Séamus Dooley
NUJ assistant general secretary

Missing Ukrainian reporter detained

THE FAMILY of a Ukrainian journalist reported missing in August 2023 have been told by Russia that she was arrested and is in custody.

Viktoria Roshchyna left Ukraine on

27 July with plans to travel to eastern Ukraine through Russia before her disappearance.

Her father received a letter from the Russian military police informing

him of her detention. Her reporting on the conflict had been extensive and appeared in multiple Ukrainian media outlets.

Sergiy Tomilenko, president of the

National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, said: "Unfortunately, we do not know the details of Viktoria's whereabouts.

"She is deprived of any opportunities for legal protection or communication with others."

Vigils for Palestine and Orgreave

JOURNALISTS and film-makers, including members of Sheffield and South Yorkshire NUJ, joined a vigil in support of Palestine in June during the Sheffield International Documentary Festival.

The festival champions the breadth of documentary form – journalism, film, television, immersive and art each year.

Protesters read out the names of 116 journalists killed since October by Israeli forces and an installation of paper flags and commemorations was shown outside the cinema where delegates met.

The event was organised by a delegation from the Palestine Film Institute, who met colleagues and journalists during the festival to extend networks and explore collaborations.

In attendance were members of Sheffield NUJ and the Orgreave Truth and Justice Campaign, as well as film-makers and delegates from all over the world. There was a mutual showing of solidarity with the 40 years of Orgreave vigil a day later. Daniel Gordon's Strike: an Uncivil War documentary was premiered, and guests included miners who were arrested during the 1984 strike.

GARRY CLARKSON / BMT FILM & MEDIA



Union wins recognition at PA Media after long battle

PA MEDIA has been ordered to negotiate with the NUJ over pay, hours and holidays for editorial staff after union recognition was approved following a long campaign.

The NUJ has welcomed the decision to approve union recognition without the need for a ballot, after a concerted efforts over four years to achieve collective bargaining power at the company.

The Central Arbitration Committee (CAC), an independent body that resolves collective disputes, approved recognition automatically because more than half of journalists in the relevant cohort at PA were NUJ members.

There was resistance from

managers at PA, which employs more than 270 staff. Journalists across the company supported the call for recognition.

The CAC found no evidence that union members at PA would not want collective bargaining conducted on their behalf, as the company had suggested. It also said there would be no benefit to delaying the process with a ballot.

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said: "This campaign, backed by hundreds of journalists across the group, will no doubt inspire editorial workers at other organisations that achieving union recognition is possible in the face of opposition.

Jonathan Brady and Emily Pennink, co-chairs of the PA NUJ chapel, said: "This is the culmination of a long process that began in 2020, and we

real say in what happens at PA. We all love working for PA – it is a huge honour and responsibility to bring the news to people, one we all



pa media

are so grateful to everyone who has been involved and for the support we've had.

"We are now looking forward to working hard to get the best we can for our colleagues. This decision ensures they can all have a

take very seriously.

PA Media said: "We respect the outcome of this process and the views that have been shared. We will work with the NUJ and our teams to continue to make PA a great place to work and build a career."

inbrief...

TELEGRAPH'S WINNETT STAYS PUT

Robert Winnett, deputy editor of The Telegraph, has stepped back from a planned move to be editor of The Washington Post, after his appointment triggered critical coverage in the US media, including in the Post itself. The criticism centred on allegations that Winnett had published stories in the Sunday Times in the early 2000s based on material obtained illegally.

CABLE IS ON TRACK FOR GROWTH GOAL

The Bristol Cable media company has said that it is 60 per cent of the way to its goal of increasing annual membership income by half (or £60,000) in a year. The Cable said it had been offered a bonus grant of £40,000 by the Chicago-based Reva and David Logan Foundation if it meets its target by the 31 August deadline.

INFORMA CLOSES TWO TV OUTLETS

B2B publisher Informa has closed Digital TV Europe and Television Business International. The decision follows plans to merge the Informa Tech business with the US-listed Tech Target to boost scale and growth in B2B. Digital TV Europe had published news and analysis for 40 years and Television Business International for 36 years.

Bob Norris award winners

THREE high-achieving student journalists have won prestigious awards in an annual scheme dedicated to the memory of NUJ stalwart Bob Norris.

The trio – Binta Trawally, Nathaniel Lawson and Reece Barrett – are studying with

the journalism training providers in the Solent region. These are the University of Portsmouth, Solent University and City of Portsmouth College.

The students were nominated by their tutors for exceptional efforts.

Each will receive a trophy, certificate and cash from the NUJ Solent branch as a tribute to Bob, a former branch chair.

London-born Binta, 21, is a third-year student at the University of Portsmouth. Her tutors said she

maintained a strong work ethic and dedication to her studies despite also managing family responsibilities.

She said: "I feel honoured and thrilled to receive the Bob Norris Award. This inspires me to continue striving for excellence and making a positive impact."

Reporter made freeman of borough

NUJ life member David Skentelbery – aged 86 and still working – has been made an honorary freeman of the borough of Warrington.

He attended a special meeting of the borough council, not knowing why he had been invited, and received the honour from the mayor.

He said: "It came as a complete surprise. I'm not at all sure I should be receiving this honour as really all I have been doing is my job."

Freedom of the borough is the highest award a council can give. Skentelbery joins a select group of people at Warrington which

includes former England World Cup footballer Roger Hunt and former MP Lord Hoyle.

This is the first time a journalist has been made a freeman at Warrington.

Skentelbery joined the Warrington Guardian in 1960 after working in Knutsford. Apart from a year in Wigan on the Lancashire Evening Post, he has spent his whole career in Warrington, going freelance in 1968 when he founded Orbit News Ltd.

The company has since evolved into a magazine and news website publisher run by his son Gary.

According to local legend, a freeman has the right to drive sheep across Warrington Bridge.



David with wife Patricia, son Gary, granddaughters Hannah and Amy and great granddaughter Olivia after the presentation

NUJ defends reporting of political donation at TUC Cymru congress

NATASHA HIRST

TUC CYMRU celebrated its 50th anniversary at its biennial congress in Llandudno in May with the NUJ advocating on behalf of journalism in Wales.

The week started on a controversial note as some supporters of the first minister accused journalists in Wales of being motivated by racism in the ongoing coverage of Vaughan Gething's troubles. News outlets in Wales had reported Gething's acceptance of £200,000 of donations for his leadership campaign from a businessman twice convicted of environmental crimes.

The NUJ told the pre-congress general council meeting that coverage of the donation from a criminal, the emerging news of deleted phone messages that might be of interest to the UK Covid Inquiry, along with the sacking of a minister who denied being the person who leaked deleted messages was legitimate as they were all matters of public interest.

David Nicholson (pictured), who represents Wales on the NUJ's national executive, was the union's sole delegate to TUC Cymru. He successfully moved a motion on public interest journalism in Wales. The union was seeking support for its proposals to the Welsh government to ensure coverage of local news in news deserts and for greater diversity in the workforce.

The teachers' union, NASUWT, supported the NUJ's proposals saying local school strikes in Wales were not being reported due to the absence of local newspapers in those areas.

The NUJ amended a motion on artificial intelligence to draw attention to its impact on journalism and what the union is doing about it. The union also spoke in greater detail at a fringe meeting on artificial intelligence.

The NUJ amended a motion on culture funding in Wales to share misgivings at the way the Books Council of Wales gives public money to fund the Welsh magazine



sector. Recently, two long-standing Welsh magazines, Planet and New Internationalist, had to close after losing their grant funding.

Nicholson also spoke at a fringe meeting on Gaza about the work the NUJ and the International Federation of Journalists are doing to support journalists in the conflict.

The well-attended meeting was told how money raised by NUJ members is providing practical help, how the union has drawn the British government and the International Criminal Court's attention to the high death rate and injuries sustained by media workers in Gaza and the allegations that the Israeli Defence Force might be deliberately targeting journalists.

Nicholson was re-elected to TUC Cymru's general council for a further two years.

The coverage of a donation from a criminal, deleted phone messages and a minister's sacking was legitimate as they were issues of public interest

Steve Bell



More people avoid the news as they find it relentlessly depressing

NEARLY four in 10 people in a study of 20 countries are avoiding the news because it is relentless and depressing, according to the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. In the UK, that figure is 46 per cent.

In its Digital News Report, the institute found that 39 per cent of people actively avoided the news – the highest level since the report began 12 years ago. The previous high was in 2022 when 38 per cent avoided the news.

The proportion of people in the UK saying they actively avoid the news sometimes or often is up from 24 per cent in 2017 to 46 per cent this year. This year’s proportion is the same as in 2022 although there was some improvement to 41 per cent in 2023. Worryingly, just 25 per cent of the 2,017 UK respondents to the survey said that they never avoid the news.

Across a broader study of 47 countries, the UK was ninth highest for news avoidance. The top two ‘avoiders’ were Bulgaria (60 per cent) and Greece (59 per cent).

The biggest increases in news avoidance were seen in



countries including Ireland (up by 10 percentage points to 44 per cent), Spain (a rise of eight percentage points to 37 per cent), Italy (up seven percentage points to 36 per cent), Germany (an increase of five percentage points to 37 per cent), Finland (a five percentage points rise to 26 per cent) and the US (a five percentage points rise to 43 per cent).

In the UK, interest in news has almost halved since 2015, with a fall from 70 per cent saying they were extremely or very interested in news to 38

per cent this year. The UK saw one of the biggest drops in percentage points, alongside Spain (down from 85 per cent in 2015 to 52 per cent). The report suggested that increased use of smartphones, push notifications and algorithm-based social media feeds could be fuelling the feelings of news overload.

The report said that many news organisations around the world have introduced ‘user needs’ models aimed at making the news more accessible and engaging by supplementing news updates with stories that “educate, inspire, provide perspective, connect, or entertain”.

inbrief...

SUNAK’S EX COMMS CHIEF AT GUARDIAN

Amber de Botton, Rishi Sunak’s former director of communications, has joined Guardian Media Group. De Botton is the chief communications officer for the publisher and sits on its executive committee, reporting to editor-in-chief Katharine Viner and chief executive Anna Bateson.

HANCOCK LOSES CASE AGAINST TELEGRAPH

Former health secretary Matt Hancock has failed to have a complaint to IPSO about a Daily Telegraph story upheld. The story, based on leaked Whatsapp messages, said he rejected advice from the chief medical officer. Hancock had given the messages to Telegraph journalist Isabel Oakeshott so she could ghostwrite a book with him.

MILL MEDIA WANTS TWICE THE STAFF

Mill Media, the Substack-based publisher behind the Manchester Mill, Liverpool Post, Birmingham Dispatch and Sheffield Tribune, is to double its staff – adding 11 roles. The new jobs coincide with the forthcoming launch of Mill titles in London and Glasgow.

DAILY MAIL STARTS ONLINE VIDEO SHOWS

The Daily Mail has launched a video offering on YouTube and other platforms. Shows of 15-30 minutes will cover entertainment, news, sports, crime and royals.

LDRs angry over unfair pay rise

THE NUJ has condemned publisher National World’s failure to offer a fair pay rise to journalists providing news stories including on corruption and council scrutiny to local communities.

Local democracy reporters (LDRs) at National World are funded by the BBC as part of its flagship Local Democracy Reporting service.

This year, they will receive a 1.5 per cent pay rise issued by the BBC as part of its agreement with publishers.

National World has refused to contribute to the award despite doing so in previous years.

LDRs at a rival publisher recently received a five per cent increase in line with pay rises offered to journalists at the company.

Despite both publishers receiving £38,299 from the BBC per filled LDR role outside London and £40,551 within, National World has cited national insurance and other costs including

management time, finance, human resources and training as additional expenditure incurred and therefore impacting their ability to provide a pay award journalists deserve.

The NUJ National World LDR chapel said: “Members are angry that the firm is taking this unfair stance towards local democracy reporters.

“The firm receives £38,299 per reporter outside London from the BBC – thousands

more than any of us are actually paid. So, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, we refute the company’s argument that it is losing money on the scheme.”

The NUJ has asked the business to disclose details of costs but has received no written information.

The current BBC-set minimum salary for senior LDRs is £24,416 outside London and £26,636 within, leaving a significant surplus.



Evening Standard to go weekly

LONDON’S Evening Standard is to shut its daily newspaper and replace it with a weekly publication, bringing an end to almost 200 years of the title in the capital.

The newspaper said it had been damaged by the introduction of wifi on the London Underground, a shortage of commuters owing to the growth of working from home and changing consumer habits.

The Standard has lost £84.5 million in the past six years, according to its accounts, and relies on funding from its part-owner Evgeny Lebedev. Its other shareholders include a bank with close links to the Saudi government.

Industry sources suggested Lebedev had been willing to consider selling the outlet in recent years but no buyer was found.



Story behind the picture

The Nigel Farage show had pizzazz – but failed to convince on hopes for Reform
By Jess Hurd

He descended Trump-like from the gods in Clacton's Princes Theatre, flanked by security, the soundtrack of Eminem's *Without Me* blasting out. Two pyrotechnic flares exploded as he took to the stage to a standing ovation from a sell-out crowd.

This was my first Reform UK general election event and the Meet Nigel Farage evening had all the pizzazz this depressed seaside town could muster. Clacton has the all-too-familiar appearance of many English coastal resorts – decrepit amusement arcades, abandoned shops, addiction and homelessness, a picture postcard of this austerity and cost-of-living, crisis-ridden country.

According to colleagues, this was his most right-wing speech yet on the campaign trail. Buoyed by a YouGov poll putting Reform UK ahead of the Conservatives and flushed with a succession of local Tory councillor defections, Farage stormed in heavy against migrants. He declared them a threat to national security which drew a rapturous roar from the crowd.

The demographic of the room was old, white, England tattoos peeking out from under shirts, with a smattering of young Tory types for good measure.

Farage boasted of his political revival when he was crowned 'most sexy politician' after deliberately showering naked in reality television show *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here* in 2023.

Outside after the event, I chatted to one Reform UK supporter, originally from Bow in East London.

"Do you think he will get in?" he asked.

I relayed my colleagues' observations that Farage did not have much support on the ground and Reform UK campaign posters were a rare site around town.

"It's a Tory pressure group at the end of the day," I said. "But they might get a large portion of the Tory vote."

"Labour are still going to get in anyway," he said nonchalantly.

The media has to form the true opposition



We cannot let Starmer ignore two big issues, says **Raymond Snoddy**

The general election campaign of 2024 ended as a tragicomedy for the right-wing newspapers. It was so bad you almost started to feel sorry for them – almost.

Any hope that Rishi Sunak would lead the Conservatives to another five years in office had long been abandoned and, in the final days, the campaign was all about trying to spook disgruntled Conservative voters with the threat of 'locking Labour in for a generation' or letting Labour win by a landslide.

Or, as former disgraced prime minister Boris Johnson, whistling in the wind, put it in the Daily Mail: 'Boris: Britain can still swerve Starmergeddon.' More desperation came with Sunak warning Starmer would 'wreck Britain in just 100 days', while the Sunday Telegraph stoked hysteria: 'Labour will bankrupt every generation, warns Sunak.'

Just occasionally, the voice of reason seeped out from the generally Conservative-supporting Sunday Times although The Times was unable to go that far.

In a long, closely argued editorial, it concluded that the Conservatives had forfeited the right to govern and "it is now the right time for Labour to be entrusted with restoring competence to government".

The Financial Times decided to back Labour for the first general election since 2005 and The Economist took a similar view.

Rather surprisingly The Sun, which always likes to back the winning team, held back to the last moment before a grudging recognition of reality. It was, nonetheless, very noticeable during the campaign that Starmer was given ample opportunity to set out his views

and there was no repetition of the monstrosity meted out to Neil Kinnock by then Sun editor Kelvin MacKenzie.

It's all history now – but what will the Conservative-supporting media do when confronted with the near disintegration of the party, and what if Sir Keir Starmer does manage to return competence to government?

The position of GB News will be particularly challenging. Until the election, the right-wing channel could count on cabinet ministers turning up almost daily for an easy ride, not least the prime minister himself. It's rather doubtful that Sir Keir will very often find the time to be interviewed by GB News.

And that's before considering its financial plight. The channel's next accounts will almost certainly show that accumulated losses so far will have broken through the £100 million barrier.

Will one of its main backers Sir Paul Marshall, a multi-millionaire hedge fund investor, think it's worth pouring good money after bad in the changed political and media environment?

Sir Paul, an evangelical Christian, is widely believed to be the favourite to buy the Daily Telegraph and Spectator. If he does buy the titles, the paper might retreat further into right-wing trenches rather than become a sane voice that could lead right-of-centre politics to a more rational future.

There is more than a danger that papers such as the Daily Mail and the Daily Express will spend the next five years carping from the sidelines thereby becoming progressively irrelevant.

Increasingly, political irrelevance is a dangerous business tactic given that most national newspaper print sales seem to be declining at an inexorable rate of around 10 per cent a year. Online reach may rise but the bulk of revenues

still come from print. Printed national papers will still be around in five years. But what influence will they have in the general election campaign of 2034? There could easily come a time when it won't be economically feasible to ship papers around the country every day.

Meanwhile, the sections of the media that have been friendly or at least not overly hostile to a Labour government will face a different but still considerable challenge.

The weakness of the opposition will mean that the media will have to form the true opposition and hold this government to account.

While there will be obvious troubles over finances despite the promise of a 'fully costed' manifesto, there are also two huge gaps in Labour's policy that will eventually have to be addressed.

One is proportional representation, a policy backed by the last Labour conference. Given the size of the majority at 181, Sir Keir might be tempted to ignore the party. Fairness and good governance argue otherwise.

The biggest elephant in the room is Brexit. Here, Sir Keir's vague hopes of improving trading relations with the EU while ruling out rejoining the single market or the customs union are unrealistic. With 62 per cent of the population now believing that leaving the EU was a bad idea and a majority, albeit it a bare one, wanting to rejoin, it falls to the loyal opposition in the media to expand the prime minister's horizons. It is hard to see where the growth needed for Labour's social mission will otherwise come from.

Freedom of movement and rejoining the single market are out for this parliament but, with a little help from the more rational sections of the media, how about next time?



Given the size of the majority, Sir Keir might be tempted to ignore the party. Fairness and good governance argue otherwise

Southampton

Ruth Addicott anchor at Europe's sailing capital

Strolling down the waterfront past multi-million-pound superyachts might sound like a scene from Monaco, but for hacks in Southampton, it's just another end of a shift.

Along with its extensive maritime history and recent football success following its promotion to the Premier League, Southampton is at the heart of the UK's sailing capital, the Solent, and has plenty to offer, not just for holidaymakers queuing up for a cruise but also for journalists looking for a better quality, more 'outdoorsy' way of life.

Although staff jobs have reduced significantly in recent years and both broadcasting and print have been hit by strike action, the city's location and commuter links to London provide plenty of earning potential.

Southampton is the regional broadcasting base for BBC South and daily news programme BBC South Today, which covers Hampshire, Berkshire, Dorset, Oxford, Surrey, Sussex, Wiltshire and the Isle of Wight.

The building on Havelock Road in the city centre is also home to BBC Radio Solent, the local radio service for Hampshire, Dorset and the Isle of Wight.

The BBC's plans to cut programming and jobs in local radio have affected Southampton like other areas and journalists at BBC South Today and Radio Solent have taken part in strikes.

Kate Taylor, planning editor at ITV News Meridian, says there are broadcasting jobs around, but there is a lot of competition. "Resilience is the key," she says.

Although ITV Meridian no longer has a base in Southampton, it has studios at Whiteley, off the M27, with around 33 journalists, plus technical staff. There are additional journalists at ITV's other regional locations in Brighton, Didcot and Maidstone.

Taylor has worked for the broadcaster for 28 years, based between Southampton and Portsmouth, and covers a huge area from Weymouth to Margate and up to Banbury.

She has worked on all kinds of stories, from a piece about climate change in Antarctica, for which she flew to the most southern point of Chile, to a Royal Television Society-nominated programme last year that shone a light on forgotten carers. The investigation she is most proud of though was exposing the crisis in NHS intensive care beds. "People were dying," she says.

Daily newspaper the Southern Daily Echo and its website dailyecho.co.uk cover news across Hampshire and are owned by Newsquest.

The Daily Echo, founded in 1888, became an evening paper in 1958 and was renamed the Evening Echo. It reverted back to being the Daily Echo in 1994.

Staff are now based in Ocean Village, a modern development surrounding the marina with superyachts, restaurants, hotels and shops.

While the annual Southampton Boat Show – the largest on-water boat show in Europe – attracts big crowds, the front pages recently have been dominated by football, following the Saints' promotion to the Premier League.

Even Rishi Sunak is a fan (having grown up in the town), and said he used The Echo's news app more than any other to keep up with the coverage.

The Daily Echo produced a Saturday football paper, Sports Pink, for 119 years until 2017.

Other papers in the area include the Hampshire Chronicle, Bournemouth Daily Echo, Basingstoke Gazette and Romsey Advertiser.

Sally Churchward worked for The Daily Echo for 20 years and says "it shrunk from being a huge operation to a ghost town".

As mother of chapel, she supported colleagues through redundancies and significant cuts and took part in industrial action. She was made redundant herself in 2019.



Work and play on the coast

Arts, sea and air

Aside from superyachts, there are the Cultural Quarter and Guildhall Square, with Southampton City Art Gallery and SeaCity Museum, depicting the story of

the Titanic. There's also the Mayflower Theatre, Westquay shopping centre and Solent Sky Museum, showcasing the city's aviation history, including the Spitfire, which was designed and built there.

Pitches wanted

Elizabeth Kirby, editor of Hampshire Life and group editor of titles covering the south west, says the magazines rely on contributors and welcome

pitches: "We pay for words and images. If photographers have some great cover shots or anything that might go alongside a feature, we've got a budget for that too."

Learn broadcasting

Kate Taylor, planning editor at ITV News Meridian, advises

journalists to apply for the ITV trainee scheme: "It gives a fabulous introduction to all aspects of broadcast journalism with extensive training and usually ends with a job within an ITV regional newsroom." ITV News Meridian also takes people on work experience.

"I was absolutely devastated," she says. "I loved writing and I loved my role promoting the community, particularly giving a voice to people who don't get that platform very often."

Within 24 hours, she launched a crowdfunding campaign and set up In Common, an independent, not-for-profit website featuring stories about arts, culture and people in the local area. It is volunteer led, but her aim is to get funding so everyone can get paid.

Churchward, originally from south London, says she loves Southampton's strong community.

"It's very interconnected and there's this incredible grassroots movement with DIY projects that are run for love just because people think they should exist," she says. "It's really gutting that we didn't get the City of Culture bid."

Southampton was one of four cities shortlisted for the 2025 UK City of Culture – losing out to Bradford.

Claudia Murg, an investigative journalist originally from Romania, has found the community very welcoming.

She moved to Southampton from London in 2006 to work on a six-month contract as a senior investigative producer with BBC Inside Out, and has worked on investigations for Dispatches, Panorama and The Sunday Times. In 2016, she set up community website We Make Southampton and says that, while it doesn't provide an income, it has helped her feel at home.

"I learnt early on that there are no jobs – you've got to create it yourself," she says.

The main magazine in the area is monthly glossy Hampshire Life, now owned by Newsquest. The team shares an office with The Daily Echo (which also produces free magazine Hampshire Living).

Elizabeth Kirby, editor of Hampshire Life and Cornwall Life, says: "Hampshire Life started off about 25 years ago as a

"It's a lovely place to live and super well connected. If you love that outdoorsy waterfront living, you'll enjoy living in Southampton."

Elizabeth Kirby,
editor, Hampshire Life

"It's a small, multicultural city with a thriving arts scene and lots of green space. Unfortunately, it took a battering during the Second World War and postwar architecture isn't great."

Kate Taylor,
planning editor,
ITV News Meridian

"It's got a really strong community. I know people who have put roots down here more quickly than in 15 years in London."

Sally Churchward,
journalist and
editor, In Common

90-page publication and we now have about 212 pages each month. We're a really big magazine and encompass everything to do with the county."

Kirby has lived in Southampton for 20 years, after moving there to go to university.

"I love being close to the water. I think that's one of the biggest draws," she says.

She now has two boys of her own, one of whom belongs to the local sailing club and the other is learning to sail – not an opportunity she had growing up in Northampton.

Another advantage is the proximity to London. Kirby used to commute regularly to do shifts on women's magazines (a direct train takes just over an hour). Bournemouth, Bristol, Brighton, Winchester and the Isle of Wight are also within reach, as well as beaches, the New Forest and South Downs.

The cost of living, rent and house prices are much lower than in London and Kirby says that if you cross the river Itchen and move a bit further out to areas such as Woolston, you can get even more value for money.

Aside from being Europe's sailing capital, it is very green.

"The parks within the city are some of the prettiest I've ever seen and quite unexpected," says Kirby. "You've got on one hand a very industrial waterfront and, next, you're walking through wisteria tunnels in East Park. There are lots of lovely opportunities for walking."

Plans for the marina include a £200 million scheme to redevelop Town Quay, with four apartment blocks and a five-star luxury hotel with panoramic views.

"It's a very progressive city," says Kirby. "There is lots going on behind the scenes to try to elevate it and transform it."

If it was good enough for Ken Masters back in the 1980s (TV series Howard's Way), its transformation could make it an option for hacks today.



Ask not what your union can do for

Members should play a more of a part in union life – as they used to, says **Paul Breeden**

A LONG time ago (I've just become a life member, so you can work it out) I started as a junior reporter on a weekly paper in the Home Counties. The tightly packed town centre office squeezed in six reporters, a news editor, a sub-editor, a photographer and an editor – all to cover two small market towns which comprised a single parliamentary constituency.

My innocent eyes widened when I was told that this small office was home to a number of intimate relationships, some of them public knowledge and some more clandestine. One journalist was alleged to be in relationships with the two reporters who sat either side of them. I could say more but this is a family magazine.

What has this to do with the NUJ, you harrumph? Well, journalists do form relationships like anyone else, and this is just one of the things that has become much more difficult since our industry was slashed to ribbons over the last 20 years. That town centre office is long closed and, as far as I can tell, there isn't a single reporter left who covers the constituency exclusively. Local journalism is conducted principally by young, underpaid journalists who work from home and scarcely meet their colleagues.

One thing that has resulted from the jobs carnage of the past few years is that union membership has increased in many workplaces where journalists are permanently worried where next the axe will fall.

That should lead to an increase in union participation and activism, right?

Well, no. Let me revisit the distant past once again. Our crowded little office was populated mainly by NUJ members. I joined partly because of my own politics but partly because so many of my colleagues were members. It was the sensible thing to do; if we stood together, we could prevent the exploitation of any of us by management and, hopefully, achieve better pay and conditions.

Those things proved to be true because, in our own little way, we were organised. We had our own father or mother of chapel (not, I hope, a term to be entirely lost to history) and a chapel secretary. We were part of a group chapel in the county-based company that employed us and members of a regional branch.

When we had a group meeting, which was not infrequent, we piled into our cars and headed for a pub in the London suburbs. We were out of the office for two or three hours. Not an eyebrow was raised; this was just what happened.

When we were in dispute over wages, we didn't go on strike – not that that would have been too difficult to arrange, as this was before the Thatcher restrictions on ballots and notice periods. No, we simply worked to rule. This meant that we didn't do any work. If we were asked to do so, we said that

Get involved and make the union better for all

Attend a meeting

Your branch or chapel is a great network if nothing else.

Talk about a matter that concerns you. Consider if there is some way you could help run things.

If the meeting is boring or irrelevant, think of ways in which the union could serve people like you better – and do your bit to bring those things to fruition.

Have your say

The union is acting on and talking about issues from artificial intelligence to Gaza, ethics to journalist safety, copyright to freelance rates.

You're bound to feel strongly about some of them. Contribute to the debates.

Write to The Journalist and tell the editor how this article has got it all wrong.

Spread the word

If your colleagues are not members, tell them what they are missing.

Get some training

NUJ training for reps and activists is brilliant and free. There is professional training too at reduced rates.

What not to do

Pay your subs and do nothing else.



our you...

health and safety checks were needed on our equipment (typewriters) and we wouldn't lift a finger until this was done.

This was accepted with more equanimity from our non-union colleagues than you would expect. We didn't fall out with any of them and when the dispute was over we were all mates again. Again, this was just what happened.

What point am I trying to bulldozer ineptly into your consciousness, beyond the fact that everything was better in the good old days?

Simply this: as union members, we have fallen out of the habit of being organised. Of everyone being expected to play a part in union life. Of young journalists rubbing shoulders in the office and then... sorry, I digress.

It's always been difficult to find those people who are essential for effective union work: the chapel and branch organisers, chairs, secretaries and treasurers who do the donkey work and keep everyone moving in the same direction. So many of those I've met took the job only because no one else would and stayed doing it for years because no one else showed willing.

In recent years, these activists have become harder to find. I've noticed entire chapels fall into inactivity and fold because a single leader moves on and is not replaced.

In south-west England, our new region-wide branch was formed a year ago because, out of the dozen or so branches that existed here about 20 years ago, only one could muster enough activists to hold regular quorate meetings.

It is not really surprising. Britain is a much less unionised place than it was in the 1980s. So many offices no longer exist. So many employees on the payroll don't meet each other – and so many more members are freelance, with no colleagues at all.

What troubles me, as an old fart about to step down from his union roles next year, is that perhaps the most important thing we have lost is the expectation that each and every union member will be called upon to DO something to help run chapel life. Perhaps not necessarily be as an elected official but assisting with a social, attending meetings as a matter of course and being ready to take part in industrial action when it is democratically called.

I'm not calling for a return to all our old ways. I can't see our work-to-rule practice being accepted nowadays, and I can't really defend it. But the notion that we all have a part to play in our union needs more attention.

So many members I speak to tell me that they regard NUJ membership as an 'insurance policy'. They regard the subs

they pay as a fee for the help they will need if they face redundancy, a disciplinary or a legal problem.

I can see the logic of that. But what they cannot see is that their subs are not fair recompense for their 'insurance'. Sure, when the bombshell lands in their working life, they may well have recourse to one of our almost unbelievably hardworking and dedicated paid officials. And excellent help they will receive. But the NUJ's paid staff comprises just 42 people, serving a membership of more than 20,000. The staff can't and they don't provide all the help that is given to members.

So many of the people who accompany members to their disciplinary meetings, advise them on their redundancy offer, organise the branch meeting at which they air their views and listen to their account of how dreadfully they have been treated by their employer (and, increasingly, how it has impacted their mental health) are volunteers. Not paid, not a penny, beyond perhaps some expenses.

That doesn't mean that we begrudge our efforts. Far from it. I see it as a privilege and an honour to be trusted to support members in their hour of need. Thanks to the excellent training the NUJ provides in welfare, health and safety, employment law and the rest, I regard the support work I've done with members as the most important and rewarding work I've done in my life.

Reading this back makes me feel pompous as well as an old fart. So be it. But if the NUJ is to continue offering excellent personal and professional support to its members on demand, it will need a few more of those members to step up and provide their colleagues with just a little of their time.

Paul Breeden is the chair of the NUJ's south west England branch

“
Many people who advise members and listen to their account of how dreadfully they have been treated are volunteers



MARK THOMAS



A different view

Anttoni James Numminen helped to ensure fair play as Macedonia voted

More than half the world's population – in over 80 countries – is voting in elections this year. As journalists, we often consider ourselves to be in a unique position for reporting on elections and observing democratic processes. But there's a less well-known group of organisations and people who report on elections around the world, usually voluntarily: election observers.

Unlike party representatives at vote counts, election observers are deployed globally to report impartially on democratic process and make recommendations where necessary.

Having learned that such opportunities existed, in May I packed my bags and got on a plane to Macedonia (officially North Macedonia) to help observe the country's presidential and parliamentary elections as part of an international mission organised by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

In a way that is increasingly rare in journalism, I got to spend a whole week getting to know a part of the country, speaking to voters and election officials ahead of the vote, visiting polling stations, observing the processes on election day and staying after voting had ended.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are lots of similarities between journalistic election coverage and acting as an official observer. While you often get to use the same skills, it can sometimes be difficult to put your reporting skills in the passenger seat when you see something that would make a great story – but you cannot interfere

What is election observation?

Election observation missions are organised by various organisations to be the eyes and ears of the international community. They are not very widely known about, and I only found out about them because my mother took part in several election observation missions from Ukraine to Kazakhstan.

My mission was with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), which was set up by countries to promote transparency, human rights and elections among participating states.

Having booked time off work as a local democracy reporter, I finished a shift covering the results of May's local elections at a vote count in Yorkshire and caught my flight to Skopje, Macedonia's capital, for more elections.

As a politics journalist and a graduate of international relations, I've had a long interest in elections but that has been largely limited to working as a reporter or doing my democratic duty as a voter. To be able to observe on

behalf of the international community gave a fascinating insight into the workings of another country and an international organisation.

For the first two days of the week-long mission, almost 200 other international observers and I received comprehensive briefings covering political overviews of the country, the electoral system and the media environment. One of the first things we were told – and one of the biggest differences from journalistic coverage – was that, while political context is important, the process, rather than the results, is key.

Cultural exchange

I was assigned to observe in Bitola, Macedonia's second city and cultural capital, with my partner, an experienced American civil rights lawyer and regular election observer. In addition to being partnered up with an observer from another country, each team is assisted by local support staff.

Our translator, Natasha Sipkoska Todorovska, started supporting election observation missions in her native Macedonia more than 20 years ago. She does it "because of the thrill of being part of something that is very important for your country and people".

Todorovska, a teacher, thinks the missions are "very effective" and that, in addition to their democratic objectives, they act as a form of cultural exchange: "It is always a pleasure because I get to learn new things and meet new

How to take part in a mission

Missions are organised by various bodies including the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union.

Different missions:

Governments invite organisations to observe their elections. Sometimes, missions involve only a core team of paid experts, whereas larger ones will include long-term observers (LTOs) and short-term observers (STOs). I was an STO for a week whereas LTOs arrive up to six weeks before election day.

Register: In the UK, the Westminster Foundation for Democracy acts as a focal point and you can sign up to receive alerts of upcoming opportunities (sometimes with just a few weeks' notice). EU or dual nationals can also apply for EU missions and those organised by the country of nationality.

Complete training courses: You need to pass courses set by the sending organisations.

Apply: Once you've passed the courses and are signed up for email alerts, you can start applying. Most journalists already hold a lot of the key competencies for election observation: impartiality, good interpersonal skills, an ability to work under pressure and a keen eye for detail. Language skills and experience of elections and international organisations are also advantages.



of an election

2023 ANNA BARCLAY

people and stay friends with them for a very long time.”

Election observations attract a wide range of people. I befriended a former Nordic defence minister and an Olympic-level figure-skating coach. But the best encounters were with so many Macedonians – whether voters, election administrators, translators, or officials – doing their part to ensure people could have their say.

ODIHR’s philosophy and methodology are based on the principle that observation is not a one-day event but requires the presence of observers before, during and after polling day. Without this approach, my understanding of local issues and ability to speak with officials would have been severely limited. Perhaps this is something to take on board in journalism, especially when covering international events.

The reception we got was also different from that I often experience as a journalist. There was much less scepticism, for one thing. With an ODIHR armband, you’re not just an individual getting a story; you’re the face of a bigger, perhaps more trusted organisation. But I still prefer being the lone reporter for my day job.

Some polling stations we visited and observed on election day were tiny and rural. Some were in ancient churches up steep hills. Others were in schools with 30 registered voters and only two or three students. This is not unknown in the UK, but to have several such schools and polling stations a few miles apart was surprising.

Observers are rarely paid. While travel and accommodation costs were covered and we received a per diem for food and incidentals, there was no financial remuneration. This unavoidably limits the pool of people who can take part. But international bodies would argue paying salaries would limit their ability to organise sufficiently sizeable election missions.

While Macedonia is a safe, peaceful country, many missions take place in less stable states with higher risks. As in conflict reporting, some people feel a calling to take part in work despite or even because of possible dangers.

Brooke Nagle, a California retiree, has observed more than 20 elections around the world in the past decade.

She says that while “some election observation missions could be dangerous, I have never felt at personal risk” and adds that “challenges in countries with very limited resources” were often related to accessing clean water.

Her motivation for election observations stems from the possibility to make “positive changes in the democratic process”, she says.

Should journalists get involved?

I think journalists make excellent observers, especially if you are naturally curious about new places and can adapt to changing and sometimes challenging circumstances. An ability to get along with people is key, not to mention



Antoni James Nummenin (right) with fellow observer Jack Van Valkenburgh



extremely long hours on election day – nothing new there.

The observer role is defined as being neutral, objective and impartial ensuring transparency. Journalism shares many of its goals, but I believe there is no absolute objectivity in journalism and the ability of a reporter to gauge nuances and pursue stories and lines of inquiry is not necessarily compatible with the goals of a mission. If you see a discrepancy, you note it down and move on. The tried-and-tested methodology places a premium on collective, rather than individual, findings with final reports and recommendations, but does not have the immediacy of journalism.

As elections change and methods of influencing them become more difficult to track, upholding free, transparent and democratic processes becomes harder. Disinformation and the questioning of basic principles underpinning democratic societies is being used to influence electorates. Even if secrecy at the physical ballot box is maintained, it is less meaningful if voters cannot know what or who to trust.

I asked Nagle what she thought about the role of journalists on observation missions. She says: “I believe there has to be distance between the media and observer groups as the goals of both groups are not the same,” she says.

And, while I agree and think you cannot do both at once, there is a lot to be learned from each other.



**Journalists
make excellent
observers if
curious about new
places and able to
adapt to changing
circumstances**

'Why don't we start our own?' **Kent Barker** looks back on 10 years of a free community newspaper set up and run with a low budget and high ideals

Filling the local gaps

Amazingly, the Hastings Independent is 10 years old and has just produced its 250th issue. Amazing because it began in a local pub with a group of acquaintances decrying the agenda of the Hastings Observer, then owned by Johnston Press. Pleased as some may have been that Hastings did have a local paper, there was considerable dissatisfaction with its politics and its perceived lack of community spirit and involvement.

As the cry went up "Why don't we start our own alternative?", few could have realised just what this would involve. From the beginning, there was to be a non-hierarchical structure with no overall editor. Each of the 10 or so sections would have its own head. No one except the designer and printer would be paid, and as much input as possible would be sought from local people.

This might be thought to be a disastrous recipe for producing a free 24- or 28-page newspaper every fortnight with a print run of 7,000 and an active online edition. But, somehow, the Hastings Independent has not only continued to appear but has thrived, largely due to the dedication and hard work of successive groups of volunteers.

There have been some tensions – largely over what a 'community' paper is or should be. Many of the more radical founders have moved on and some are concerned their successors have toned down their initial vision.

As one, Sam Kinch, put it: "The average age and level of financial stability of volunteers has changed significantly... the impact this has had on the editorial position is noticeable – a more 'grown-up' voice has emerged, for good or ill." In other words, most of those with the time and energy to produce the paper now tend to be retired and relatively solvent, which doesn't entirely reflect the Hastings population.

It is true that, along the way, some of the firebrand radicalism has been tempered. Many may have admired the witty lead headline Rivers of Rudd over a story about the then home secretary and local MP Amber Rudd's pronouncements on immigration. But it wasn't exactly calculated to widen the paper's appeal among all members of the community.

Plus the newspaper is reluctant to accept ads from national chains or businesses that 'mistreat or underpay their staff, or operate against the interests of the community'. Coupled with the lack of money to employ advertising sales staff or fundraisers, it means that only about half of the £1,500 fortnightly costs are covered by ad revenue. The rest has to come from the modest subscriptions of 'friends' and special supplements or events.

This affects the commitment to training and mentoring aspiring local journalists. Two years ago, the paper had an extremely successful self-funded placement from the journalism course at the University of Sussex. But the university organisers now – not unreasonably – insist their students are paid, which the paper simply cannot afford to do.

This autumn, Hastings Independent Press is planning to run two six-month internships for local people in the hope that they will subsequently continue in the profession with full NCTJ training. But, currently, it cannot even offer them expenses for travel around the area to cover stories.

Time spent seeking grants or



contributions takes vital time needed for the actual production of the paper.

Quite apart from the fortnightly job for all section heads – commissioning stories, editing copy, fact checking, subbing for publication, sourcing illustrations, submitting to a flat plan, checking captions and credits etc – when the 7,000 copies are delivered to someone's garage, there's the task

of dividing up the bundles and harnessing teams to walk, cycle or, if necessary, drive round the area to distribute them to shops, pubs, cafes or other outlets. The fact that very few copies are returned is testament to the popularity and respect for the paper locally.

Against the backdrop of continuing cuts to local papers and the warnings from the cross-party Commons report on the sustainability of local journalism about concomitant threats to local democracy, it would seem that small community newspapers like the Hastings Independent could well be the best way forward. But they desperately need funding – not least to enable the next generation of journalists to get a foot on the ladder.

The newspaper is reluctant to accept ads from businesses that mistreat or underpay staff, or operate against the interests of the community

REASONS TO JOIN



Press Freedom

The NUJ lobbies for journalists' rights so you can protect your sources, have editorial independence and do your job safely and freely, without censorship from the state. As a member of the International Federation of Journalists we are part of a 600,000-strong community working to ensure the safety of media workers across the globe, fighting for freedom of information, open government and plurality of the media.

Are you keeping good company?

Join the NUJ today at

nuj.org.uk/join

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Earn while not w

Fancy passive income from online books or guides? **Linda Harrison** gets advice

Ever dreamed about making money while you sleep? For former TV news journalist and best-selling author Lucy Griffiths, this became a reality a few years ago. Indeed, *Make Money While You Sleep* is the title of her book showing others how to do it.

Griffiths previously worked for Associated Press and Al Jazeera in Asia and the Middle East. But, after the birth of her son, health issues meant she could not return to frontline journalism, so she started business leaders be more confident on camera.

She says: "As the business got busier, it was increasingly difficult to juggle parenting and working on shoots all day. So, I created my first course, *Confident on Camera*. It went on to sell over 50,000 – and has sold over one million dollars' worth of courses. This became a programme called the Membership Course Academy, which shows small business owners and freelancers how to package up their skills and experience and turn them into a digital course or membership (<https://lucygriffiths.com>).

In her book, Griffiths says that digital courses are one of the most lucrative income streams: "This recurring revenue gives you the financial freedom and flexibility to work and live life your way... The magic is about automating your processes and building an audience so you can get leads on repeat to sell your digital courses."

What is passive income?

Passive income is something that makes you money while you're not working, perhaps from packaging your knowledge and selling it as a digital product.

Joelle Byrne is a business strategist who works with entrepreneurs and business owners to make passive income, including from online courses, via her website <https://joellebyrne.com>.

She says: "When people hear the phrase 'passive income', they instantly recoil. They imagine it's a bit like a pyramid scheme. But it's really nothing like that."

For Byrne, it's about changing our thinking around work being an exchange of time for money. As there are only so many hours in the day and therefore so many hours we can work, this puts a cap on what we can earn.

Byrne explains: "For me, it's about creating passive products to run alongside your business or job, which can involve using your existing skills and knowledge to create products such as courses and memberships. Digital products are brilliant because you create them once and then keep selling them over and over."

Which product?

Lauren Holden started her career as a local journalist in Morecambe, Lancashire, before moving into copywriting. She has created a range of downloadable guides, including one showing business owners how to craft a press release.

Holden says: "It's packed with actionable tips – and offers an example of a press release. I've also created a *Blogging for Businesses* product for people wanting an at-a-glance look at everything that goes into blogging for their website, including content suggestions, how to formulate a blog and how to incorporate keywords."

Holden got the idea from her client requests and is planning to sell the guides on Etsy (at [WriteStuffwithLauren](https://www.writestuffwithlauren.com)) and then via her website at www.laurenholden.co.uk.

She adds: "There's been a real shift in the freelance landscape in the past couple of years, what with AI snapping at many a copywriter's heels. I've still been relatively busy but certainly quieter than previous years – and I thought now's as good a time as any to put my energy into slightly different things."

Alongside templated graphics that people can use to bolster their social media profiles, Holden has found content-writing guides and prompts are among the most sought-after downloadable products.

Benefits - and difficulties

Creating the product in the first place takes an investment of time (including doing research, creating the course and doing

Create an online course

SOPHIE CROSS is a marketer who started making online marketing courses for freelancers in 2020. These courses are now her main revenue stream.

Her latest online course – *A Course, of Course* – shows how to create and launch a course.

Top tips

- Build a course around what you know, what you're already asked about and what people will perceive as valuable.
- Have a look and compare the main

online course platforms for cost and functionality, but don't spend too long researching.

- Your course's success or failure will not depend on the platform you use – you could deliver it via email, Zoom or YouTube.

- Always focus on the learner experience and transformation. A course should not be every single thing you know

about a topic – it needs to be engaging, something the learner wants to complete and where they feel a transformation.

- Landing pages and waiting lists are your friends. Start building a waiting list as early as possible and test your idea before you put it into practice.

- You need to put at least as much effort into the marketing and distribution as you do into creating, so save some energy. Build it – but they won't come unless you tell them about it.



working

the marketing) as well as money (any software you might need, the selling platform you use etc).

But Holden says that if you do your market research and create the right product – and one that’s evergreen – you could potentially reap the financial rewards for long after you put in the initial work.

She advises: “There’s a lot of noise online and everyone seems to be selling a course, an ebook or a downloadable guide. Ensuring you have a good point of difference is probably the most challenging element of the passive income process – alongside pricing your products correctly, of course.

“While one person might think a £5–£10 for a downloadable guide is too steep, another might be chuffed to bits that they’ve paid £50 and thereby saved hundreds by learning how to do something themselves as opposed to paying a professional to do it for them.”

Byrne says that pricing is tricky. Price too high and you might put people off. Price too low and they will not see the value. She advises finding out about who you are selling to, and where they are in terms of affordability and disposable income.

And, while ebooks can create passive income, this is not always the case with traditional books.

Clio Wood is a women’s health advocate and freelance journalist who has written for The Telegraph, the *i* paper and Grazia. She is also the author of *Get Your Mojo Back: Sex, Pleasure and Intimacy After Birth*.

Wood says that while being a published author offers kudos and great opportunities such as brand partnerships, having a book is not all that passive in terms of income.

She explains: “Once you have your book, you don’t have to produce it again. But you do still have to keep selling it all the time. As well as social media, I use my newsletter and go on podcasts.

“My top advice would be to not underestimate the marketing you’ll need for a passive income stream, and don’t imagine it’s going to be the ticket to solving everything – it’s still a lot of work to create the product.”

Begin with the buyers

When planning which product to create, start with your audience.

Byrne says: “If you already have a following on social media, you already have an audience of readers, which will save time on marketing. Think: ‘How can I best help them?’ What can you give them that’s going to be a no-brainer for them to buy? What topics can you write about forever and keep them engaged?

“Also, think about which outfit to sell your product in – a subscription model, ebook, set of templates or course? That outfit has to fit the audience that’s buying it. For example, if you’re creating a course for busy commuters, they don’t have time to sit and read a course. They might have 10 minutes on

Legal essentials

Clare Veal is a freelance solicitor and founder of Aubergine Legal, which specialises in commercial issues. She has the following advice on selling passive content on websites

• **Intellectual property:** Make sure you include a copyright legend on your content and be ready to prove the date you created the work (in case someone tries to copy you).

• **Data protection:** Comply with the UK’s data protection laws (UK GDPR) when collecting, using or storing data from customers. This includes having a privacy policy and registering with the Information Commissioner’s Office.

• **Check your terms:** Provide clear information about your products, appropriate disclaimers, your company details and a refund policy/cooling-off period for buyers (although this sometimes isn’t applicable for downloadable products).

More information:
9 Legal Tips for Selling Online Courses: www.auberginelegal.co.uk/post/selling-online-courses



the train. So, redirect it into their ear. Make sure it’s done in a way they can absorb or it’s never going to sell.”

Selling platforms for beginners include Etsy and SendOwl.com, plus there’s Thinkific, Teachable and Podia.

Byrne adds: “If you’re having to actively post on social media every time you want to sell your digital product, it’s not passive. Use blogging and SEO along with a landing page, then invest funds from it into advertising. This very quickly creates a funnel that funds itself.”

Test the water

Griffiths says that only one per cent of people buy from you in the online world on average, so the bigger the (right) audience, the more likely you are to sell.

Take every opportunity to shout about your product – even before you create it.

Donna Eade is a podcast host, producer and consultant who has created a three-part training course to help people launch their podcast (<https://donnaeade.com>).

She says: “Before you put any work into creating a course, talk about it, float the idea and do a pre-sale. If you can get 5–10 people to buy before it’s created, then you’re onto a winner. And you’ve also given yourself the motivation to get on and create it.”

Journalism: the novel approach

Journalistic fiction tells us more than just a story. **Conrad Landin** reports

What is the difference,” asks Ernest in Oscar Wilde’s *The Critic As Artist*, “between literature and journalism?” His interlocutor Gilbert does not hesitate: “Oh! Journalism is unreadable, and literature is not read.

That is all.”

Almost a century and a half later, reporters still bristle at the mention of ‘journalese’ while most novelists look despairingly at their sales figures. Now – as then – the divide is often bridged, whether by journalists dipping their toes into the world of fiction or novelists deploying their literary skills in the service of a reporting assignment.

Many writers relish the freedom that fiction offers in comparison to the journalistic requirement to stick to the facts. But there is a strong tradition, too, of journalistic fiction which not only holds up a mirror to its time, but also relies on the tools of the reporting trade.

The literary world seems increasingly obsessed with ‘autofiction’ — stories strongly based on one’s own experiences — which has brought us some of the most powerful writing of the past decade. However, reported novels offer us an insight into not just the individual mind but also society at large.

Over more than three decades at the *London Review of Books*, Andrew O’Hagan has become famed for his long-form journalism on subjects from Grenfell Tower to Julian Assange. He has written seven novels since 1999 too. But his latest, *Caledonian Road* (Faber, £20), is of a different breed. Ostensibly the story of the downfall of a public intellectual called Campbell Flynn, this doorstopper tome features more than 40 characters across the social spectrum of contemporary Britain. And at its heart is London’s King’s Cross district — which is, incidentally, home to the NUJ’s Headland House.

“A lot of my reportage over the years for the *London Review* and elsewhere has gone into this book,” O’Hagan says over a drink at the Steps Bar in his native Glasgow. “Cryptocurrency is a world I got to know very well. The world of street gangs,

knife crime and the garment workers in Leicester — I went to Leicester and researched that. You can almost fact check parts of the book — in that way, that had kind of drawn on journalistic research.”

It’s something equally apparent in Jilly Cooper’s latest instalment of the *Rutshire Chronicles*, *Tackle!* (Penguin, £9.99). With a similar number of characters to *Caledonian Road* (and both, like the best investigative features, come with a cast list to help us out), her plot centres on her returning hero Rupert Campbell-Black’s purchase of a local football club, Searston Rovers.

The political and romantic escapades that follow take place entirely within the world of football — but NUJ member Cooper is a self-described “football ignoramus who still can’t

Bat ears and vanity

READING up on your subject matter is an essential part of an author’s research. But is desk-based study sufficient?

Many powerful portrayals of contemporary society have come from writers with great powers of observation.

Patrick Hamilton’s depiction of British blackshirts in his 1940 novel *Hangover Square* was so on point that his friends in the Communist Party believed he had to be a closeted fascist. Journalist Claud Cockburn credited this to Hamilton’s “bat-winged ear”, which would pick up patterns of speech and behaviour in pubs.

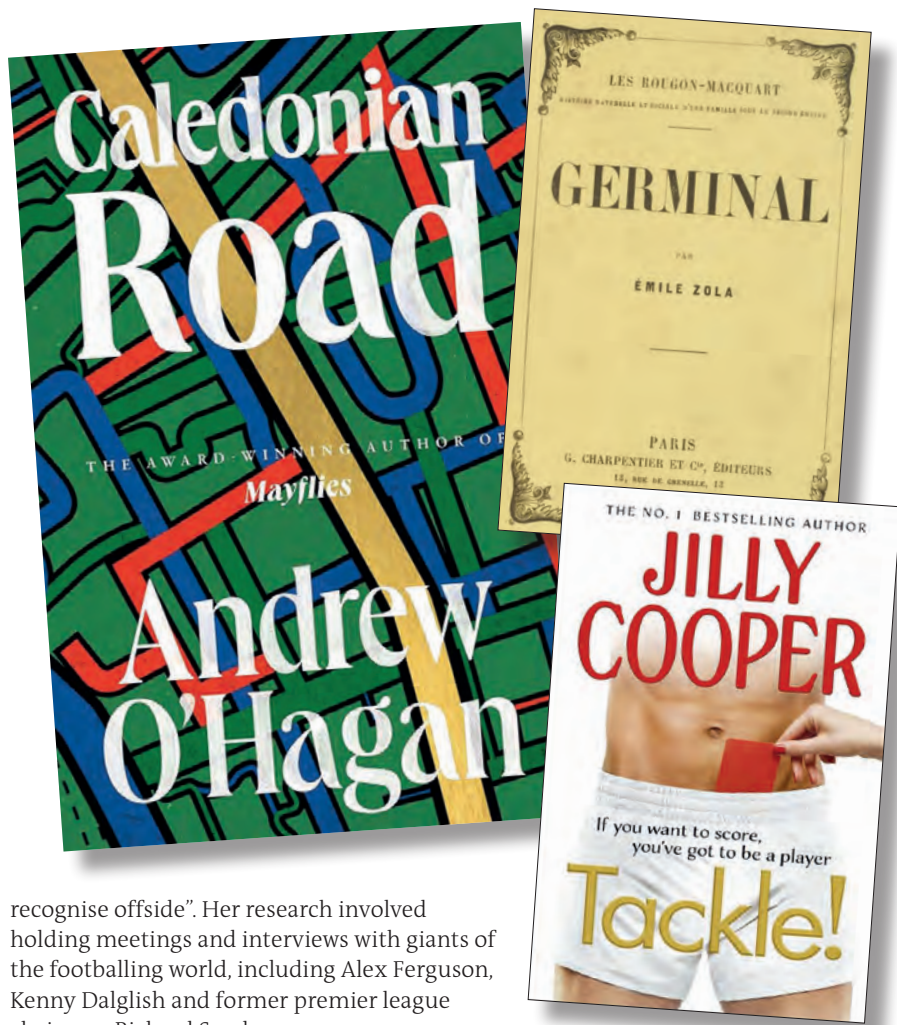
For O’Hagan, personal observation is essential. “My own life and career [have] led me into that world of oligarchs, minor royals,” he says. “Those dukes, I got to examine them with a sort of microscope before I’d written a line. You’d think they’d run away from a person like me or you, but they don’t. The combination of vanity and narcissism and self-certainty

makes those people think their lives are less absurd, less corrupt than they are.”

Novelist Beryl Bainbridge combined news stories with situations in her life, with the result that “the whole thing seems weird”. Her first novel, *Harriet Said*, was completed in 1958 after she read about Pauline Parker and Juliet Hulme, two teenagers who murdered Parker’s mother to avoid being separated across continents. The story so appalled editors that it was not published until 1972.

Jenny Diski, whose novels draw extensively on her life, faced a stumbling block when researching her second book, *Rainforest*: she is terrified of spiders. Rather than travel to the tropics, she settled for a day at Kew Gardens.





recognise offside". Her research involved holding meetings and interviews with giants of the footballing world, including Alex Ferguson, Kenny Dalglish and former premier league chairman Richard Scudamore.

In her extensive acknowledgements, which she describes as "the longest thank-you letter ever written", Cooper also credits advisers on football journalism, horse racing, cancer and explosives.

Speaking to a wide range of sources would be second nature to Cooper, who started her writing career as a journalist.

Similarly, Charles Dickens "poured into his novels" his "instincts as a reporter", says O'Hagan, and he aims to do the same. "Whenever I can, I find facts to pour into a novel – that give it a realistic energy like this. Why would you not want the facts?"

It was a conclusion no doubt also reached by Émile Zola when composing his Rougon-Macquart saga, a series of 20 novels that set out to provide a panoramic view of France's Second Empire (1852-1870). Though the novels were mostly composed after the empire's fall, the France in which Zola was living was still grappling with many of the same issues — including the potential restoration of monarchy.

Among the most famous of these works is *Germinal*. This novel tells the story of desperate poverty in a mining community in the north-east of France and its attempt to wrest back its dignity through a strike.

In a recent episode of BBC Radio 4's *In Our Time*, Susan Harrow, professor of French at the University of Bristol, explains Zola's preparation for writing *Germinal*. As well as library research on mine engineering, the conditions of miners and the landscapes in which they lived and worked, Zola carried out "remarkable fieldwork", she says.

"In February 1884 – it was very fortuitous – it was at the moment of a huge strike. Where 12,000 miners are out on strike, Zola zooms up to the borderland between France and Belgium... and he spends a full week interviewing miners, interviewing colliery managers and learning about the whole spectrum of mining activity and the community cultures around mining.

"At the centre of this was a wonderful opportunity for him to actually go down into a mine. So he gets into the cage, and he experiences that terrifying drop that Étienne does as well at the beginning of the novel, drops to the bottom and is able to experience crawling on all fours down a very tight tunnel to get a literally close-up experience of the miners' work."

But a novel does not become journalistic through the use of research alone. Historical fiction too relies on extensive study of a topic and time — but, crucially, not modern-day society. And, while all novels in some sense speak to the era and society in which they are produced, most do so indirectly.

The reported novel, on the other hand, often includes real-life fact and social commentary in and among fictional characters. It uses observational skill to bring vitality to an imagined scenario.

This often involves a character playing the role of journalist within the action, observing and making enquiries. *Germinal* begins with Étienne, the protagonist, encountering the pit at Le Voreux – "evil looking, a voracious beast crouching ready to devour the world". Throughout, he provides an outsider's way in to an insular community.

In *Tackle!*, characters frequently explain the intricacies of the football world in conversation with one another. Like the journalist's need to summarise complex subjects for a lay audience, these techniques allow vast quantities of research to be distilled into the everyday components of a fictional universe.

These novels have vastly different styles, but look closely and you'll find each reflects the journalistic forms of its day. Both Zola and Dickens produced many of their novels in serial format. Dickens was fond of cliffhangers, while Zola's chapters often end with philosophical observations and invective — but neither would be out of place in the news pages of their time and place.

Dickens's novels also include parodies of newspaper copy, which draw attention, as the critic GL Brook put it, to the journalist's "need to make much out of little". Less consciously, descriptive passages in his books include plenty of unnecessary detail and veer quite suddenly into editorialising of a kind that is a recognisable trait of the 19th century British press.

In the modern day, O'Hagan's style reflects the contemporary journalistic principle of 'show, don't tell'. He says: "I don't editorialise in this book. I let the drama unfold, and you the reader will, hopefully, come to see just how deeply corrupt and inter-connectedly self-interested these institutions and these people are. So, by the end of the book, I think that the reader's been on a journey into the heart of a corrupt Britain, really."

“

These novels have vastly different styles, but look closely and you'll find each reflects the journalistic forms of its days

”

by **Mark Fisher**

arts

Books >

Rebel Musix
Vivien Goldman
September 19
Orion

Anthology by the Sounds, NME and Melody Maker journalist, covering four decades of r championing the sound of the underground from punk to reggae, funk and Afrobeat.
<https://tinyurl.com/2aj27h2v>

A Woman Like Me
Diane Abbott
September 19
Viking

The daughter of parents from the

Windrush generation, Abbott became the UK's first black MP in 1987. Her memoir reflects her championing of causes including the education of black children, the rights of refugees and the wrongs of the Iraq war.
<https://tinyurl.com/yker6xj3>

Comedy >

I Gave You Milk to Drink
Fern Brady
On tour
August 22–November 20

Journalism's loss is comedy's gain. After editing The Student, the University of Edinburgh newspaper, and doing a postgrad in news



journalism in Sheffield, Brady switched to stand up. Now she's asking, "What happens when you get everything you want and it's not enough?"
<https://tinyurl.com/2635xjg7>

Exhibitions >

When the Body Says Yes
Melanie Bonajo
Irish Museum of Modern Art,
Until 27 October

The Dutch video artist presents an installation about intimacy and loneliness, exploring the importance

of touch in a post-Covid world from a queer, non-binary perspective.
<https://tinyurl.com/28tfbe29>

All Over the Place

Glenn Ligon
Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
September 20–March 2

Text-based paintings quoting writers including James Baldwin and Gertrude Stein explore the social, cultural and political constructions of race. As well as paintings, sculptures and prints, there are site-specific exhibits around the gallery.
<https://tinyurl.com/29f7vyxp>

Festivals >

Edinburgh Festivals
August 2–26

The world's biggest arts jamboree comprises several concurrent festivals covering art, books, comedy, film, music, theatre and all points in between. Journalists appearing include Iain Dale, Chick Young, Brian Taylor, Bernard Ponsonby, Fiona Shepherd, Kate Garraway and Terry Christian.

www.edinburghfestivalcity.com

In depth >

Tabloid tales since Strange Newes

So ubiquitous are tabloid newspapers that it is easy to forget they had to be invented.

Terry Kirby, a senior lecturer in journalism at Goldsmiths, University of London, traces their birth back to 1 January 1901 when British editor Alfred Harmsworth was invited to edit a single edition of the New York World.

Having been given free rein, he cut the paper in half and instructed the reporters to write no story longer than 250 words.

Coining the word tabloid to describe both form and content, Harmsworth told his readers this was a newspaper for the 'time-saving century'. Readers approved and had snapped up all issues of the first edition by 9am.

Telling "the scandalous history of tabloid journalism, from 16th century to the sidebar of shame", The Newsmongers traces the story of popular journalism backwards to Caxton's invention of the printing press and the early publication of sensationalist pamphlets



with titles such as 'Wonderful and Strange Newes out of Suffolke and Essex where it Rayned Wheat the Space of Six or Seven Miles'.

From there, Kirby goes forward to the time the Daily Mirror would be read by more than 12 million in one day - with headlines not too dissimilar to those four centuries earlier.

Whether in print or online, the tabloid influence is pervasive. "Tabloid is a state of mind and a method of practice," he writes.

There is plenty of sex, celebrity, salaciousness and a fair few hoaxes, but it is not all 'Gotcha' headlines and bingo prizes. Rich in research, the book looks how mass

literacy and big business combined to bring serious news to vast swathes of the population in a bright and accessible way. It is also about how mass readership generated political power.

He looks too at the pioneering investigative reporters and campaigns against 19th-century child exploitation, wartime cover-ups and Thatcher-era corned beef from Argentina.

It is a lively and colourful story of power and populism in a place, after 1969, where The Sun also rises.

The Newsmongers: a History of Tabloid Journalism, August 1, Reaktion Books
<https://tinyurl.com/2ahebjrm>

Act 1.5 Climate Action Accelerator

Clifton, Bristol
August 25

Massive Attack, long-time climate activists, headline a day-long festival while trialling standards for the decarbonisation of live music in collaboration with scientists. Also on the bill are Killer Mike, Sam Morton and DJ Milo.

www.massiveattackbristol.com



Dublin Theatre Festival

September 26–October 13
Highlights include Benji Reid's Find Your Eyes, combining dance and photography, Mark O'Rowe's Reunion, an ensemble piece about family life, as well as visits from Dublin's Pan Pan, Sheffield's Forced Entertainment and Vancouver's Chop Theatre.
<https://dublintheatrefestival.ie>

Films >
The Goldman Case
General release
August 23

Pierre Goldman was a left-wing French radical and son of Jewish refugees who was charged with murder and armed robbery. This documentary-style movie, acclaimed at Cannes, focuses on his 1976 trial.
<https://tinyurl.com/2catk4xd>

Clandestina
General release
August 23

Margarida Tengarrinha was a Portuguese teacher, artist and writer who forged documents in the name of antifascist resistance after going underground in the 1950s. Maria Mire's documentary learns lessons for political action today.
<https://tinyurl.com/2cteiddk>

Theatre >
A Raisin in the Sun
September 13–November 16

Tinuke Craig takes Lorraine Hansberry's play on tour. The first play

by a black woman to be staged on Broadway, is about tensions between family relatives after an inheritance.
<https://tinyurl.com/2bk8oda2>

Cable Street
Southwark Playhouse
September 6–October 10

A musical by Tim Gilvin and Alex Kanefsky set in 1936. Jews, Irish workers and communists set up blockades against Mosley's British Union of Fascists' march on East London – lives are changed forever.
<https://tinyurl.com/23e59638>



Spotlight >
Remarkable Miller

Lee Miller was the American fashion model who became the apprentice and lover of Man Ray in Paris.

Her remarkable career only grew more so after she set up a photography studio in New York, took up with British surrealist Roland Penrose then, as war broke out, reinvented herself as a photojournalist documenting the truth about the Nazi regime for British Vogue.

That part of her story is told in Miller by cinematographer turned director Ellen Kuras. Kate Winslet

stars as a photographer defying the odds as a woman at war to send home defining images of wartime.

Miller focused on nurses tending to the wounded, journeyed to France to witness the liberation of Paris and to Germany where she



was one of the first outsiders to observe the concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald.

Life Magazine photographer David E Scherman (played by Andy Samberg) took a famous shot of her in Hitler's bath, applying a flannel to her shoulder.

Her own pictures were characterised by the combination of unflinching depictions of the horrors of war – bones, corpses, destruction – and artistic techniques she had developed. The price of her bravery was PTSD and alcoholism.

Lee, in cinemas from 13 September and on Sky Cinema
<https://tinyurl.com/yu8bdgvc>

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**REASONS
TO JOIN**



Should You Be Getting Paid Holiday?

Many UK freelancers and casuals are entitled to holiday pay in law, but an NUJ survey found that almost nine out of ten did not receive it. Are you losing out? The NUJ has been successful in winning holiday pay and backpay for many of its members.

Could that be you? If so, the NUJ can help. Contact freelanceoffice@nuj.org.uk

Are you keeping good company?

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Balderdash! The pain of reporting US elections



But gossip and sports writers would excel at this, says **Chris Proctor**

It was good to get the UK elections out of the way and, generally, it all went as expected. Labour mumbled behind its hand, hinting what it might do one day, and left the floor to the Conservatives, who did all they could to ensure a healthy Labour majority.

The US version is a much more lively affair with its mix of criminality, dysfunctional families, age concern, baseball hats, bombast and all-round extravagance. I pity our transatlantic counterparts as they struggle to put something coherent before their public. It must be torture.

The pain began the very moment that the two front-runners – although ‘runners’ in this context is perhaps inapposite – secured their parties’ nominations. First up was Mr Biden. He declared, fearlessly: “I believe that the American people will choose to keep us moving into the future.”

Naturally, I favour Joe. At least he is the same species as us. But it is impossible to overlook exactly how much balderdash there is in this affirmation.

Americans don’t do any ‘choosing’ about ‘moving into the future’. There’s nothing they can do about it. It’s like, you know, time. It happens. Like the Eurovision Song contest, Prince Harry being photographed outside a court or leaves on the line. They can’t choose to move into the future any more than they can choose to move into the past.

Oh. Hang on a minute. They can move into the past. They can vote Trump. He’s still banging on about ‘the wall’, rather in the manner of Pink Floyd. Trump’s new spin, declared at his party nomination, is an undertaking to ‘seal the border’.

Seal it? What with? How do you seal something that isn’t there? I suppose you could seal up a wall with a reasonable supply of grout. But there isn’t one. Does he want to seal the air where the wall was supposed to be?

Can you imagine trying to report this stuff? For their own mental health not to degenerate to candidates’ level, each journalist covering the election should be allocated at least one personal therapist. You can’t expect them to wade through this lunacy for months on end and not come out disturbed.

An alternative is to rest the political commentators from time to time and draft in journalists from other specialisms. Gossip writers are used to casual and unrehearsed warbling so would easily empathise with Trump press calls: gossip-gatherers are encouraged to provide copy with alliteration, metaphors, puns, abbreviations, slang and word combinations like ‘lawfare’. They would feel so at home! This is exactly how presidential candidates speak.

Theatre critics could be assigned to huge rallies and give informed comment on the staging, lighting, dramatic presentation, rhetoric and choreography. Audience participation is a major part of these events, featuring in particular whooping and chanting the initials of the country. In such circumstances, political reporters are redundant. The messages are unimportant. Everyone knows the scripts: one calls for ‘normalcy’ (which is rich coming from a man with Robinette as his middle name); and the other is opposed to it.

Sports journalists – especially those covering the turf (‘Trump’s been pulled up a couple of times and had particular trouble with a fence in New York, while

Biden, who is out of Scranton Pennsylvania, comes from an unsettled stable) could take over commentary on the endless opinion polls. They’re familiar with constantly changing betting odds, not to mention doping and nobbling. They could do a few days on the campaign trail then get back to something serious.

Fashion writers would be perfect for those off-stage moments: “Donald enjoyed dinner with film star Blustery ‘Tennessee’ Whiskey on Thursday evening at the Benjamin Siegel restaurant on the Las Vegas Strip.

“Looking stylish, Blustery, 45, opted for a black leather jacket which she paired with a simple black T-shirt and straight cut blue denim jeans. Don surprised us all with a blue suit and red tie.”

And how are the political journalists faring with their therapists?

“It’s the words. They come out in a terrible jumble and I can’t make any sense of them.”

“And how does that make you feel?”

“I can’t tell you. My own words have become random now. What can I do?”

“I suppose you could work for Fox.”

“This is serious. How do I make sense of Biden calling some heckler a ‘lying, dog-faced pony soldier’? What’s a pony soldier? What about when Trump said, ‘Part of the beauty of me is I’m very rich’? Does he mean for me to write it down? And what about when he told a crowd, ‘I don’t care about you. I just want your vote. I don’t care.’ Was that real?”

“None of it’s real, Scribbles. It’s how we do politics. Take a deep breath and try saying ‘Om!’”

“OK. Om. But what does that mean?”

“It’s the essence of the Supreme Absolute.”

“I’m back where I started.”

Sports writers are familiar with constantly changing betting odds, not to mention doping and nobbling

NUJ general secretary election 2024

The National Union of Journalists is inviting applications, from members of the Union, for the post of NUI General Secretary.

The post is subject to election by ballot of the NUJ membership every five years. It is a full-time post based at the Union's London Head Office working exclusively for the Union.

ELIGIBILITY

To be shortlisted to stand in the election, you must be:

- a full member, dual member, member of honour or life member of the Union
- with five years continuous membership
- and your contributions must be paid up under Rule.
- have trade union experience as a full time official and/or lay officer for a minimum of three years
- have signed an undertaking that you accept the terms and conditions of employment specified by the NEC
- agree to be based at the Union's Head Office (Headland House)
- live or be prepared to relocate to within reasonable distance of London

Additionally, a shortlisted candidate must:

- have the skills necessary to perform the range of duties of the General Secretary to required standards.

THE BALLOT

The ballot will be run by Civica, the organisation appointed as the independent scrutineer for the election.

THE TERM

The successful candidate will hold the position for five years after which they will be subject to re-election at intervals of five years.

APPLICATION PACK

The Application Pack may be obtained from the NUJ website <https://www.nuj.org.uk/about-us/vacancies.html>. If you are having trouble downloading the application pack, please email personnel@nuj.org.uk. The closing date for receipt of completed applications is Noon, Tuesday 27th August 2024

VOTING IN THE ELECTION

Ballot papers mailed out: Monday 16th September 2024
Closing date for receipt of ballots: Monday 7th October 2024

In order to vote in this election, you must satisfy the following criteria:

- Be a full member, dual member, member of honour or life member of the Union and
- not be three calendar months or more in arrears

Don't miss your chance to vote, visit the members area of the NUJ website at www.nuj.org.uk and check that your details are up to date. Ballot papers are mailed out to your home address. Please contact us as soon as possible, at gselection@nuj.org.uk if you have visual accessibility requirements.

Have your say: Time to vote for Editor of *The Journalist*

It's election time at the NUJ, as members are invited to cast their vote for the Editor of *The Journalist* 2024-29.

Elections are held every five year in accordance with the NUJ Rule Book available on the NUJ website www.nuj.org.uk

The following are the voting arrangements.

Ballot papers to go out:	Monday, 15th July 2024
Closing date for receipt of ballots:	Monday, 12th August 2024
Ballot result:	Tuesday, 13th August 2024
NEC endorsement:	Tuesday, 13th August 2024, 2pm

There are 8 candidates in the election, and to help you make up your mind, all have been invited to submit answers of no more than 100 words per question, in a Q&A set by the NUJ President, Natasha Hirst. Seven candidates submitted answers to our questionnaire.

You may also read the applications submitted by each candidate in the members section of the NUJ website at: <https://www.nuj.org.uk/resource/editor-of-the-journal-election.html>

VOTING IN THE ELECTION

In order to vote in this election, you must satisfy the following criteria:

- Be a full member, dual member, member of honour or life member of the Union and
- not be three calendar months or more in arrears.

Don't miss your chance to vote, visit the members area of the NUJ website at www.nuj.org.uk and check that all your details are up to date.

Ballot papers are mailed out to your home address. Please contact us as soon as possible, at editorelections@nuj.org.uk if you have visual accessibility requirements.

The election of editor is unique to the NUJ. It affords members the opportunity to influence editorial content and policy for the next five years.

Please use your vote and play your part in the union's democracy.

MICHAEL GRAY



Sean Bell

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

In addition to continuing the excellent work The Journalist has done in covering issues which impact our members across the UK, my major goal would be to dramatically expand our coverage of developments in journalism internationally, from unionisation drives in New York to press censorship in Hungary. This would, I hope, not only establish The Journalist as an internationally recognised force within labour journalism, but remind our members that though they may feel isolated, they are nevertheless part of a profession and a movement that spans the entire world.

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

The best way The Journalist can promote greater participation in the union's democratic structures is by reporting on the concrete consequences of that participation – by demonstrating that the NUJ is not an organisation where edicts are handed down from above, but a vehicle for workers to articulate their hopes and put them into practice. We can provide a forum for journalists to speak of their struggles and their hard-fought victories – the results should speak for themselves.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

Any time an editor contemplates a significant change, their first act should be to discuss it with those who will be the ones to implement it, as well as the journalists and photographers whose work would be affected by that change. With that

in mind, I will make no commitments to drastically alter the design or layout of The Journalist at this stage, except to say I am always looking for any potential means of increasing the amount of writing we can feature, without sacrificing readability, clarity and a distinctive aesthetic.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

Much mainstream press coverage of union activity focuses on dramatic developments – in particular, strikes and their resolution – but overlooks the context vital to understanding them, or in the words of the American labour journalist Sarah Jaffe, “the particulars of agreements, demands, tensions, and the realities of power.” While coverage of industrial action should always feature within The Journalist, the magazine's unique position demands it prove in-depth explorations of that wider context, a greater comprehension of which would heighten solidarity across our profession, and leave members better equipped to fight for themselves.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

As I am strongly committed to increasing the diversity of those contributing to The Journalist, I would initially set out to do so through expanding our pool of freelancers; however, as open calls and good intentions can only do so much, I would also liaise with the NUJ's equalities councils for advice on a long-term strategy to improve not just the diversity of our contributors, but also our coverage of, and opposition to, all forms and instances of discrimination, inequality and oppression in our industry and society.

PAT STOCKLEY



Christine Buckley

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

The Journalist is the TUC's best union journal of the year. Here is the winning edition:

<https://tinyurl.com/NUJ-aug-sept-flip>

I will build on that success and ensure the magazine appeals to as many members and potential members as possible with quality journalism and relevance. There are many more stories to tell and challenges to face. AI is a game changer; Trumpian lies, and social media disinformation threaten to make the vision of our former member George Orwell a reality. The Journalist must be a key source of information and debate. See more at votechristinebuckley.wordpress.com

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

It's important to highlight the union's democracy in action – at regional and national TUC meetings; at specialist conferences on issues such as disability, gender, and race. We also have reports from student conferences because their participants are our future.

It's also good to feature democracy in the workplace because that is where most people will first encounter the union's structures. In June I reported from a great reception at the FT where the NUJ chapel invited past officials along to learn from their experience and help build the future.

This helps inspire people to get involved.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

It would be good to add value to the digital edition with interactive

buttons, and links to videos and other features that are not possible in print. It would make the digital magazine a richer experience. It would also be an improvement to redesign the magazine for use on mobiles and tablets along with desktops.

We would need further investment for these changes.

It's worth noting though that in 2022 The Journalist (in digital form) was commended in the TUC communications awards and the design and layout were praised. This is a credit to our part-time designer.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

Industrial activities such as organising, pay claims, disputes, and dealing with health and safety issues are bread and butter union work, and so are prominent in The Journalist. In the current magazine we have the inspiring strike and pay win at Springer Nature which gathered support from an array of Nobel Prize winners. We also hail the success of the PA Media chapel who fought a long battle to win union recognition. And we have a great feature by the chair of our South-West England branch on the importance of getting active across the union.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

I am always open to contributions from all members. And I try to ensure that the breadth of our membership is represented. We have had pieces on disability by our president and carry reports on our black members council and the George Viner bursary scheme which promotes diversity in journalism. We have a wide range of contributors and welcome new writers and visual journalists. We have only two regular columnists – Ray Snoddy who is a renowned expert on the media, and Chris Proctor who ends the magazine on a lighter note, which is also important.

CRAIG GREENSLADE



Tessa Clarke

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

THE JOURNALIST will help advance the democratic value of press freedom.

This unites all NUJ members at this critical time. From the culture wars and online press rules to challenging NUJ leaders and the new government, no topic is off limits.

The magazine will be digitally interactive. NUJ members can debate with each other on Zoom online talks, re-broadcast on Youtube, advertised widely on international social media, links published in THE JOURNALIST.

NUJ members of all backgrounds and views are encouraged to engage, even if they disagree.

Press freedom and free speech – if not now, when?

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

FREE TALK: To promote free discussion I will set up THE JOURNALIST Whatsapp groups for members to chat independent of NUJ leadership. Whatsapp groups include "New Online Laws", "Get More Pay" and, "Press Freedom Right Now."

DEBATE PUBLICATION: THE JOURNALIST will help inform the democratic debate about the NUJ. The magazine would publish and broadcast debates for and against setting up an English Executive Council, the UK region missing from the NUJ's Geographic councils. And debate for and against setting up a Working Class Council in the NUJ's Equalities councils.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

AIM: THE JOURNALIST will widen readership beyond NUJ members.

The magazine will become a talking point. More media workers will be attracted to its content and join the NUJ.

NEW DIGITAL FORMAT:

1) The magazine's front page will be a new "MEDIA NEWS," on media issues of the day, plus photos and videos. The Editor's letter becomes a separate "EDITOR'S COLUMN" on the right hand side.

2) Coverage of membership news should be under one heading – "INSIDE THE NUJ."

3) Add a new "JOIN NOW" button on the top right hand corner

4) Add a "MEMBERS ONLY" section.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

THE JOURNALIST is a key tool for members to instantly read, interact with each other and reflect on issues during industrial activities.

Under the heading "THE JOURNALIST: instant coverage, feedback and progress" I propose:

MEMBERS ONLY: In a "MEMBERS ONLY" section, THE JOURNALIST should have box summaries of the facts (eg Freelance Chapel voted 75% to strike). It should ask for volunteers to write up the arguments members consider within the NUJ's forums.

WHATSAPP GROUP: A new THE JOURNALIST Whatsapp group INDUSTRIAL ACTION – for members only – can be used by members to chat "live" and seek support.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

As Editor, building on the existing diversity of contributors, I would: BROADEN COMMUNICATION - advertise opportunities for members to contribute to THE JOURNALIST in a wider range of forums including on the new THE JOURNALIST Whatsapp groups I propose.

INCREASE VISIBILITY - add photographs of contributors beside bylines and encourage a video version of their articles on social media, to increase visibility of contributors.

TRAIN CONTRIBUTORS - ensure a larger pool of contributors by training them in the new online media initiatives for THE JOURNALIST.

JUDITH CREIGHTON



Phil Creighton

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

In an age where newsrooms are shrinking and technology is blurring roles, it is vital the union has a strong publication to unpack issues and cheerlead or run a critical eye over new developments. It should fuse news, columns and features to help members with all aspects of modern journalism. It would be a shareable resource, offering primers on all aspects of journalism, and advice from experienced colleagues. It would champion the importance of press cards, seek to boost engagement between members and chapels, have wit and swagger and make people proud of the Union. For more, visit: philcreighton.uk

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

It is bizarre that in the 30-plus years since the internet became part of our lives there is no dedicated for The Journalist on the NUJ website, when it is a link between member and chapel. The magazine is a key part of membership recruitment and should be showcasing how the union can help all who work in the sector. We should look at facilitating helpful discussions online, such as closed Facebook or WhatsApp groups. The magazine should inspire readers and answer questions. It should feature successful Union actions and engagements, from the small victories to the large ones.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

The online version is hidden at the bottom of the NUJ website homepage, it is not in the website menu and needs rectifying. The

format should be either A5 or A4 to make it easier to print at home. The union should be championing print; if The Journalist was A5 it could be posted at Royal Mail letter rate. Links in the online version should be clickable, and the magazine should have a separate website. The Journalist should be a voice that reacts to breaking developments while presenting a thought provoking read for those passionate about all forms of journalism.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

The Journalist currently does not have a section dedicated to the union's activities. Each chapel, branch and council should be encouraged to blow its own trumpet with updates on meetings, action days, new members, talks, retirements, anniversaries and fundraising. By sharing regular news be it in the magazine or on the website, including NUJ campaigns and Parliamentary endeavours, we can help members stay informed and inspired. It is possible to launch tailored email newsletters highlighting stories and features relevant to branches, chapels and disciplines. This will help encourage participation and pride across the union.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

I am deaf, so have an innate understanding of how hard it is to be a disabled journalist, and how technology can help. I have always encouraged diverse newsrooms. Enhancing representation starts at grassroots level: chapels, branches and councils will know of people who should be contributing to The Journalist. The recent series of Doctor Who shows how this can work: cast and crew came from many backgrounds without anyone batting an eyelid. We all have experiences and knowledge we can share. Working together, the Union can be fully representative of all its members, for the benefit of us all.

GERARD CUNNINGHAM / GUTH PUBLICATION



Gerard Cunningham

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

The Journalist must become a “digital first” publication, if it is to remain relevant. This would mean that while it would still publish a scheduled print edition, it would report first and foremost online, reaching members with up to date news using a combination of web publication, newsletters, and where appropriate other means such as podcast and social media where necessary. I want to reimagine The Journalist as a publication that people read first on their phone or computer screen, and can catch up on later in print.

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union’s democratic structures?

Everyone knows what the problems are which the news industry and the NUJ face. The Journalist needs to show not only the problems facing journalists and media workers, but to highlight the solutions the union can offer, provide profiles of union members and activists and the work they are doing, and advocate for increased participation to encourage more members to contribute time and expertise.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

Stop publishing a PDF.

It’s that simple. A PDF is a format designed to tell a printer what a page should look like. It is a terrible experience for anyone using anything but the largest computer screen, barely readable on most tablets, and impossible on a phone. Meet people where they like, with an interface which presents well designed, readable articles where people read them, on phones,

screens, and smaller laptops as well as in print. Digital First. Not a PDF. There are numerous software options to achieve this, such as Wordpress and Ghost.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

As I noted above, The Journalist needs to show not only the problems facing journalists and media workers, but to highlight the solutions the union can offer. Covering the work of the union at all levels, from chapels and branches to the national (and international) stage is a critical part of The Journalist’s mission.

5. In line with the NUJ’s policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

Invite pitches from first time writers and photographers and arrange for open pitching exchanges. I would also look at audit to identify any systematic, conscious or unconscious biases and ways to overcome them. To this end I would be particularly interested in any inputs from the Equalities Councils.

HELEN PARTON



Helen Parton

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

To champion journalism and provide NUJ members with the insight to future proof the profession, while acknowledging past achievements. I would survey you, the readers, to discover where and how you consume information and adapt The Journalist accordingly, whether that’s in print, online or even through social media and live events. I see the magazine as a trusted, professional advisor, giving practical advice for journalists from entry level to the highly experienced. I would meaningfully campaign around issues such as staff pay, freelance rates, clarity on AI, diversity within the profession and better conditions for those juggling family commitments.

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union’s democratic structures?

As someone who has been a union member for decades but not held a union position, this would be an opportunity to learn with you, the readers, about what those democratic structures are, how they work and what opportunities there are. Putting faces to those democratic structures is key, so I would again look at how members best consume information and invite union officials to participate accordingly, whether that’s through written Q&A, live events, video vox pops or webinars. I’m the questioning, fresh pair of eyes on the tried and tested routes to increase participation!

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

When I edited a trade magazine with very little budget, I worked with the art director to improve the title’s

design and layout. We incrementally overhauled the entire look and feel of the publication, from the logo and section headers, down to the font choice and point size. I could do the same for The Journalist’s digital format, in the first instance by simplifying the page furniture to have fewer, smaller elements. I would use embeddable flipbook tools to improve readability and make it easier to share content via links. I would also explore sharing bite-size content through social media.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

While it’s important to recognise the individual efforts of chapels, branches and councils up and down the country, perhaps this could be largely consolidated into content for The Journalist based around common themes and causes e.g. better pay, saving jobs, inroads towards greater diversity and inclusion. The Journalist should be a unifying force, after all, and we have more that brings us together than the output of the separate mechanisms of the union. That said, rotating a focus, for example of a different geographical area each edition, could be a useful editorial tool in highlighting particular industrial activities.

5. In line with the NUJ’s policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

Three words: do your research. I successfully broadened out the contributor base as editor of the 100-year old Journal of the London Society by using my existing networks to seek out groups and individuals that offered different perspectives. I could do the same at The Journalist. Being humble and open to suggestions is key, as is in-person networking, as well as being honest about one’s own unconscious biases. One of my current areas of interest is neurodiversity and as such this has also led me to a greater understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion. That said, I’m still learning!

KEVIN COOPER / PHOTOLINE



Brian Pelan

1. What is your vision for The Journalist over the next five years?

My vision for The Journalist includes my belief that our magazine must remain available to members in print and digital format. It also needs to be a vehicle for ensuring that journalists are defended in being able to report freely, The Julian Assange case was all about the right for the public to be informed. Our magazine must be to the fore in defending the 'Julian Assanges' of the future. Over the next five years I want The Journalist to be a strong advocate for encouraging more involvement from our members.

2. How can The Journalist help promote greater membership participation in the union's democratic structures?

The pages and stories in The Journalist need to be used to promote why our members should be involved in the NUJ. My own branch – Belfast and District – has more than 600 members. The vast majority do not participate in the workings of the union. I am sure this is a similar situation with many other branches. We need to explore the reasons why many members do not get involved. Our stories should reflect this reality. Let us not be afraid of debate. We have everything to gain if we stimulate greater involvement from our members.

3. In the context of changing readership demands what would be your strategy for improving the design and layout of the digital format of The Journalist

- 1, All stories in The Journalist should be available, for reading purposes, as a separate item.
- 2, We should embed more videos into the magazine.
- 3, We need more long-form journalism rather than lots of small briefs.
- 4, Our front page should mainly

focus on the two biggest challenges facing our members – wages and conditions.

5, 'A photograph is worth a 1,000 words' is still true. I want great photography to play a central role in the magazine.

6, Our magazine must be accessible, in terms of its articles and images, to all members.

4. How do you see the role of The Journalist in covering the industrial activities of chapels, branches and councils?

We need regular reports on the activities of chapels, branches and councils. If the situation is weak, we must report it. If our members get involved in industrial action, we need to provide insightful reports on the dispute and the reasons behind it. We need to ensure that we have a good spread of NUJ activists who are willing and able to report on industrial disputes. If our members win, no matter how small the victory, we must shout about it in the pages of The Journalist.

5. In line with the NUJ's policy objectives how would you propose to increase the diversity of reporters, columnists and photographers contributing to The Journalist?

I would try to establish what is the current diversity of reporting within The Journalist. We should report if the situation is fragmented. We should also actively seek out the voices of the marginalised and those on low wages and encourage them to write for the magazine. Debate should be the life blood of the magazine. Let us start to make some noise that will stimulate our members. Our message should be – It's your paper. Use it and get involved.

CRAIG THOMAS



Craig Thomas

No submission received



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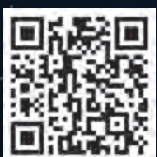
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