

theJournalist

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Media in critical state

Journalism needs urgent boost

University
Coventry and Warwick
NHS

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This edition is dominated by the impact of the coronavirus crisis on the media, how journalists are working through it, and what the union is trying to do to strengthen the industry.

The crisis is one of the most serious threats to the future of the media in recent times and it's important that politicians and the industry now look to the future and the importance of the media. In our news section we outline the NUJ's recovery plan which would see hard-pressed media organisations helped by a tax on the big technology companies.

In our feature section, Ruth Addicott looks at how more journalists are turning to the union for help and how the crisis could lead to more people becoming actively involved.

Natasha Hirst, chair of the union's photographers' council, looks at how the crisis has been covered by photographers and the different approaches to media access taken in different countries. Josiah Mortimer looks at what state support is being given to the media and assesses the eventual cost.

This edition is also the first one for many years to be available only in a digital format after the union's emergency committee decided that the union needs to save the printing and postage costs. The Journalist will be online only for two more editions after this. Please spread the word as emails sometimes get overlooked.

Here's hoping that the coronavirus crisis eases soon.

Christie

Christine Buckley
Editor

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Snoddy**
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Cover picture
Jonny Weeks /
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The Journalist's polyfilm wrapping is recyclable at carrier bag recycling points in supermarkets.

Union issues plan for media to survive the crisis and then thrive

THE NUJ has drawn up a news recovery plan to sustain the media through the coronavirus crisis and make it stronger in the longer term. It is lobbying the Government to enact the measures.

In *From Health Crisis to Good News: a Recovery Plan for the News Industry*, the union is calling for:

- A windfall tax of six per cent on big technology companies
- Tax credits and interest-free loans to support jobs for reporters covering the crisis
- No public money for firms making redundancies, cutting pay, giving executive bonuses or blocking union organisation
- Investment by central and local public bodies in advertising, including for the hyperlocal sector
- Further funding by Nesta



(a charitably-funded grant organisation) for innovative, public interest journalism and a similar scheme in Ireland

- Free vouchers for online or print subscriptions to all those aged 18 and 19 and tax credits for households with subscriptions.

The NUJ is seeking initiatives including:

- A government-funded journalism foundation – as recommended in the Cairncross Review – to invest

in local news and innovation

- Giving local papers ‘asset of community value’ status so they can potentially be preserved through community ownership
- Tax breaks, rate relief and other financial support for local social enterprises and cooperatives taking over titles from regional operators
- Employee representation of 25 per cent on boards in receipt of public funding
- Independent, sustainable funding of public service broadcasting
- Reform of media ownership <https://content.yudu.com/web/3pylg/0A43xvo/NewsRecoveryPlan/html/index.html?origin=reader>

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The union is calling for no public money to be offered to firms making redundancies, cutting pay, giving executive bonuses or blocking union organisation

inbrief...

MAIL GIVES HARD-HIT FIRMS FREE ADVERTS

The Mail, Metro and i titles are giving small businesses facing difficulties during the coronavirus crisis free advertising worth £3 million. The papers’ publisher – the Daily Mail and General Trust – is offering 1,000 companies £3,000 worth of advertising each. The scheme is being run in conjunction with the Federation of Small Businesses.

EX-TELEGRAPH AND TIMES CHIEF DIES

Former Telegraph editor in chief and Times managing editor and author John Bryant has died at the age of 76. Bryant began his journalism career at the Edinburgh Evening News and his subsequent roles included consultant editor at the Mail and editor of the Sunday Correspondent and The European.

REACH SEES REVENUE DROP 30 PER CENT

Reach, the publisher of the Mirror, Express and Star, saw revenue fall by nearly one-third in April as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. April was the first full trading month hit by the lockdown. Group revenues dropped by 30.5 per cent, with print revenue down 32 per cent and digital revenue falling by 22.5 per cent.

IFJ joins NUJ in call for tax on tech giants

THE INTERNATIONAL Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has launched its international recovery plan.

The Global Platform for Quality Journalism, like the NUJ’s plan, calls for a six per cent tax on Google, Facebook, Amazon, Apple and

Microsoft to create a \$54 billion worldwide journalism fund.

Anthony Bellanger, IFJ general secretary, said: “Unions naturally work collectively, and the media industry recovery plan concerns several actors in our professions –

journalists, of course, but also employers and governments.

“The NUJ, the Americans and the Danes have also made excellent proposals – a recovery plan will only be possible with real political courage.”

International media offered state support

SOME governments have announced support packages specifically for the media, including those of France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria and New Zealand.

The amount of support varies, and measures include directing government advertising at newspapers, compensating media organisations for the fall in advertising revenue, paying

for the newspaper delivery and giving targeted support to local broadcasting.

In the UK, newspapers have been allotted a three-month £35 million package of government advertising, which mostly concerns messages to the public about coronavirus.

The UK chancellor has also cancelled VAT on digital newspaper and magazine subscriptions.



The Stage keeps actors connected

The editor of The Stage has said that the 140-year-old title is acting as a community glue for those in the theatrical profession who are not in work or are working remotely. Alistair Smith told Press Gazette that, although print sales had been hit, digital traffic had grown by 20 per cent year on year in March and April.

Iconic newspaper group under fire for laying off dozens of employees

THE NUJ has strongly criticised Iconic newspapers over massive cutbacks and has called for a more robust attitude to media ownership by Ireland’s Department of Communications.

The union is demanding that further media takeovers by FormPress Publishing and Iconic Newspapers, which are owned by UK businessman Malcolm Denmark, should be subject to scrutiny.

The company has laid off dozens of journalists, made a number of editorial staff compulsory redundant, temporarily shut two newspapers and maintained a significantly reduced staff to work on the remaining titles and websites.



PAT STOCKLEY

Despite NUJ opposition, the company decided to lay off dozens of editorial staff rather than apply for the government’s coronavirus temporary wage subsidy scheme on their behalf. However, the NUJ understands that the company applied for the scheme for those who remained working. This followed written assurances by Denmark to staff that the company was in a stronger financial position than most to deal with the crisis.

FormPress has also imposed compulsory redundancies

and these appear to have been inflicted on journalists with less than two years’ service. This means the company does not have to pay people under statutory redundancy terms and instead is required to pay only for the notice period and any outstanding wages and annual leave owed.

Ian McGuinness, NUJ Irish organiser, said: “It is abundantly clear that FormPress is financially healthy.

“While, like all companies, it will have suffered a financial shock due to the coronavirus crisis, it has decided to act in the most cynical manner to inflict misery on our members during this crisis, during which we have all seen how quality journalism is needed now more than ever.

“FormPress has exploited the crisis, using it as an opportunity to get rid of some employees permanently and cheaply. It has also moved to temporarily slash its wage bill by forcing lay-offs of some editorial staff and refusing to apply for the wage subsidy scheme for those employees.

“This has left those individuals with no choice but to claim social welfare, so the Irish state will have to pick up that bill.”



FormPress has exploited the crisis, using it as an opportunity to get rid of some employees permanently and cheaply

**Ian McGuinness
NUJ Irish organiser**

Jewish News is back in business

JEWISH News is back and being published as usual after a rollercoaster period when its plans to merge with the Jewish Chronicle failed and both papers went into liquidation.

Their owners said the coronavirus crisis had forced the papers into liquidation

before a merger could be finalised.

The Kessler Foundation, which owns the Chronicle, had submitted a bid to the liquidators to buy both of the papers’ assets and merge them into one title. This would be edited by Jewish News editor Richard Ferrer.

Then, a consortium of business and media people made a larger offer than that by the Kessler Foundation.

The new consortium includes: Sir Robbie Gibb, the BBC’s former head of political output and an ex-director of

communications at Number 10; former Panorama journalist John Ware; and broadcaster Jonathan Sacerdoti.

After the merger plans were thwarted by the new bid, Jewish News’ owner Leo Noe took the title out of liquidation and agreed to fund its ongoing operations.



Attacks show rise in attempts to silence journalists

THE COUNCIL of Europe Platform for the Protection of Journalists’ annual report for last year recorded 142 serious threats to media freedom. These included 33 physical attacks against journalists, 17 new cases of detention and imprisonment and 43 cases of harassment and intimidation.

The analysis shows a growing use of intimidation in an attempt to control and silence journalists in Europe

The physical attacks included two killings – Lyra McKee in Northern Ireland and Vadym Komarov in Ukraine. Only Slovakia showed progress in the fight against impunity after the

country indicted the alleged mastermind and four others accused of murdering the journalist Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová.

At the end of 2019, the platform recorded 105 cases of journalists in prison in the Council of Europe region, including 91 in Turkey.

Treasury urged to help #forgotten freelances

THE UNION is pressing the Treasury to support the many freelances who fall between the cracks of the current coronavirus financial assistance programme.

It has written to the Chancellor Rishi Sunak and Jim Harra, first permanent secretary and chief executive of HM Revenue and Customs, asking for meetings to discuss the plight of freelances who are ineligible for the existing help. These

freelances include those paid by PAYE for shifts who are not being furloughed; the newly self-employed and people earning more than £50,000. Freelance journalists used by the BBC are also exempt because the corporation, which is a public organisation, cannot access the furloughing support scheme.

The NUJ has more than 8,000 freelance members, many of whom have seen their incomes disappear overnight because of the contraction in the media industry and the

cancellation of events and sport that would have been covered by reporters and photographers.

If you are a #ForgottenFreelance who is not eligible for the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) you can make your case to your MP. Your MP can also support Early Day Motion 389 tabled by Caroline Lucas MP which notes concern that the details of SEISS do not reflect the reality of self-employment in the UK.



An NUJ survey of freelances found that a third don't expect their incomes to improve until next year, with 40 per cent saying it could take three to six months, while 16 per cent believe they won't be making their living from journalism after the coronavirus pandemic. However, that means nearly 88 per cent of the more than 1,200 members who responded said they intended to trade in 2020/2021.



A third of freelances don't expect their incomes to improve until next year

NUJ survey

inbrief...

FT MAKES A RANGE OF SPENDING CUTS

The FT is cutting spending on freelance contributors and implementing further cuts to pay and working hours. All non-editorial staff earning £50,000 or more will have a 10 per cent reduction in both working hours and salary from the start of July. In editorial, the savings are being made in a more flexible way.

ECONOMIST CUTS 7% OF ITS WORKFORCE

The Economist Group is reducing seven per cent of its global workforce and turning its culture and lifestyle magazine 1843 digital-only. Some 90 jobs will go out of a global workforce of 1,300. Editorial staff are unaffected, with cuts focusing on events, client solutions and its marketing agency.

COURT CITES SIR CLIFF BBC CASE

The Court of Appeal rejected a Bloomberg challenge to a ruling against its reporting of a criminal probe into a businessman. The court cited Sir Cliff Richard's privacy win over the BBC. Judges upheld the original court finding, which ordered Bloomberg to pay £25,000 in damages for publishing details, taken from a leaked confidential letter, of an ongoing investigation.

Buzzfeed closes UK and Australian services

BUZZFEED, the online news platform, is closing its dedicated UK and Australian news operations.

The company said that the decision to stop covering

local news in the two countries has been made 'both for economic and strategic reasons'. About 10 UK staff have been furloughed. BuzzFeed will

carry on publishing news in the US and said that some UK staff will be retained to cover specialised news for the American audience. BuzzFeed UK was

struggling before the coronavirus crisis and has cut staffing substantially in each of the last two years.

Recruiting in the digitals, page 16

Midlands News cuts 90 jobs

THE MIDLAND News Association, publisher of the Wolverhampton Express & Star, England's largest paid-for regional daily newspaper, is to cut 14 jobs in the editorial department. Another 45 will go in advertising, 15 in production and operations, seven in transport, six in circulation and three in finance.

The cuts will hit the free weekly newspapers – the Chronicle and Journal series - which circulate throughout the Black Country, Shropshire and the Welsh border.

Chris Morley, NUJ northern and Midlands senior organiser, said: "It is the least worst option that the company is seeking to achieve such big reductions by voluntary means. But the magnitude of the cuts is such that this needs to be done over a longer time frame and with greater consultation to arrive at the best possible outcome for the business to survive after the coronavirus crisis has passed."

soulmates stops online dating

The Guardian is closing its online dating service Guardian Soulmates at the end of June because it's no longer viable. The move comes amid the growth of global dating apps such as Tinder, Hinge and Bumble. The online site launched in 2004 although the first Soulmates ads first appeared in the Guardian's weekly arts supplement The Guide in 1996.



Uniting to stand up for the media in Northern Ireland

THE NUJ, politicians and newspaper editors in Northern Ireland have joined together to stand up for journalists threatened by the loyalist group the South East Antrim Ulster Defence Association.

Threats have been made to the safety of journalists at the Belfast-based Sunday World and Sunday Life newspapers. The threats have been treated as serious by the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI).

A large number of union members and politicians signed a statement which ran on the same day in three Belfast newspapers – the Belfast Telegraph, which is owned by Independent News and Media which publishes the Sunday World and Sunday Life; the Irish News and News Letter.

Séamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general

secretary, said: “The initial reaction to the vile threats against journalists appeared to be one of resigned acceptance but the reaction to the statement reflects a real awakening. From right across the community but especially in the trade union movement the message is clear – threats to journalists are unacceptable and should never be tolerated. The response, locally, nationally and from international supporters was unambiguous. The political response cannot be ignored by the PSNI, who have a clear obligation to deal with the sources of these threats.”

The statement said: “Over the past 12 months we have witnessed with alarm an increase in the number of violent threats against journalists in Northern Ireland.

This month (May) Loyalist paramilitaries have threatened all journalists working at the Sunday Life and Sunday World newspapers in Belfast. This follows recent threats against journalists working for the Irish News.

Attempts to intimidate journalists have come from dissident Republican and Loyalist paramilitary groups and are intended to prevent the media from investigating their activities and exposing criminality.

Threats against journalists and media organisations have no place in our society. It is vital that such behaviour is not tolerated. No worker should be exposed to threats for doing their job.

At a time when the media is playing such an important role in covering the terrible Covid-19 pandemic the recent, blanket threat is especially worrying.

Elected politicians who criticised the threats have now become the subject of intimidation from groups without any mandate.

Attempts have been made to silence public representatives

for defending the right to freedom of expression.

Public support has sustained journalists during the dark days of the past.

We assert the right of our communities to be informed by journalists operating without fear or intimidation.

It is the function of the media to ask difficult questions, to speak truth to power, to expose corruption, to shine a light into dark corners.

Journalists in Northern Ireland will continue to do so.

A free, independent media is a cornerstone of democracy.

No group can be allowed to undermine the freedom of the press. Every effort must be made to ensure that those who are guilty of intimidation are brought to justice.

We call for the

immediate withdrawal of all threats against journalists in Northern Ireland and for the freedom of the press to be respected and protected.”

Peter Vandermeersch, Independent News & Media, publisher of the Belfast Telegraph
Martin Breen, Editor, Sunday Life
Brian Farrell, Editor, Sunday World
Eoin Brannigan, incoming Editor in Chief, Belfast



Telegraph and Sunday Life

Sarah Little, Publishing Director, Independent News & Media, Northern Ireland

Noel Doran, Editor, Irish News

Alistair Bush, Editor, News Letter

National Union of Journalists, UK & Ireland: Sian Jones President

Michelle Stanistreet: NUJ General Secretary

Seamus Dooley: Assistant General Secretary

Bernie Mullen: Irish Executive Council

Bimpe Archer: Irish Executive Council

Gerry Carson: Irish Executive Council

Kathryn Johnson: Irish Executive Council

Anton McCabe: National Executive Council

Ciarán O Maoláin: National Executive Council

Anthony Bellanger: General Secretary, International Federation of Journalists

Younes M'Jahed: President, International Federation of Journalists

Public Representatives

MLAs: Arlene Foster: Fermanagh and South Tyrone, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party and First Minister of Northern Ireland

Michelle O'Neill: Mid Ulster, Sinn Féin, Deputy First Minister.

For a full list of signatories and how you can help see <https://www.nuj.org.uk/news/northern-ireland-unites-journalism/>



Threats against journalists and media organisations have no place in our society. It is vital that such behaviour is not tolerated

Joint statement

Gender pay gaps widen at news media groups

GENDER pay gaps increased last year at more than 60 per cent of UK news media companies, according to the latest figures.

The figures cover only 14 media organisations overall because the Government said companies no longer had to report pay differences between women and men for 2019 to help them focus on surviving the effects of the coronavirus crisis.

Of the 14 media companies that decided to publish their figures anyway, 64 per cent saw an increase in pay inequality.

If the four subsidiaries of Reach – Mirror Group, Express Newspapers, Media Scotland and Local World – are treated separately, the total rises to 18 companies.

Last year, the BBC and the Guardian reported significant reductions in their pay gaps after the BBC reduced the earnings of many of its top-earning male employees.

Earlier this year, BBC presenter Samira Ahmed won a landmark victory for equal pay when, backed by the NUJ, she took the corporation to an employment tribunal because she was being paid substantially less than Jeremy Vine for fronting similar programmes. The tribunal ruled decisively in her favour.

The Economist Group continued to have the highest median gender pay gap at 29.5 per cent. It also recorded the biggest rise in the median bonus pay gap, up from 15.7 per cent to 38.3 per cent.

The median gap at Express Newspapers grew from 14.6 per cent in 2018 to 23.3 per cent. The biggest movement towards parity was at STV, where the median pay gap fell from 18.5 per cent to 11.9 per cent.

CNN had the biggest median bonus pay gap for the third year running at 57.3 per cent. It said this was affected by women who had recently joined and were not yet eligible.



Of the 14 media companies that decided to publish their figures, 64 per cent saw an increase in pay inequality

inbrief...

STAR EDITOR GOES TO BELFAST TELEGRAPH

Eoin Brannigan, editor of the Irish Daily Star, has been appointed editor-in-chief of the Belfast Telegraph and Sunday Life. He had edited the Irish Daily Star since 2017 and has worked at the paper for 23 years. The Telegraph marks its 150th anniversary this year.

POLITICS EDITOR TAKES A PUNT ON PR

Kevin Schofield, Politics Home editor, is to become director of communications and digital at the Betting and Gaming Council, a new standards body set up to build public trust in the gambling industry. He will start in the summer.

RADIO 4 PRESENTER GOES TO TIMES RADIO

Broadcaster Aasmah Mir, who has presented Radio 4's Saturday Live for six years, has left the BBC after almost 20 years to join News UK's Times Radio, which will be launched in the summer. Channel 4 News' Cathy Newman is also joining the station and will interview politicians and discuss the news on Fridays. She will still present Channel 4 News from Monday to Thursday. John Pienaar, the former BBC deputy political editor who joined the station this year, will present the drivetime show from Monday to Thursday.

Pearl accused rearrested after acquittal

FOUR men accused of the murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl in Pakistan in 2002 were rearrested on April 4, two days after a court

overturned their convictions. On 2 April, the high court of Sindh province acquitted the four, including Briton Ahmed

Omar Saeed Sheikh, who was sentenced to death in 2002 for organising the murder. The other three were sentenced to life imprisonment.

Pearl was investigating Islamist militants in Karachi, after the September 11 2001 attacks on the US. He was kidnapped in January 2002 and beheaded weeks later.

Remembering Lyra one year on

NUJ MEMBERS and many other people marked the anniversary of the death of Northern Irish journalist Lyra McKee on April 18. Lyra was 29 when she was shot in the Creggan area of Derry by republican group the New IRA while observing clashes with police. Tributes to her journalism and her spirit were shared on social media.

Séamus Dooley, NUJ Irish secretary, said: "Lyra had an unrivalled zest for life and for living. That is what makes her senseless killing so cruel. In her journalism, she combined her passion for journalism with a deep commitment to social change.

"In her writing, in her approach to issues of poverty, equality and exclusion, Lyra was not afraid to ask difficult questions, to challenge the conventional and accepted wisdoms and to look for new and imaginative solutions to problems. That's her legacy."

Rebellion at Russian paper

Journalists at the Russian business newspaper Vedomosti have publicly declared their opposition to new management. This follows the paper's editor being accused of banning criticism of constitutional amendments backed by Vladimir Putin and the use of data from an independent pollster.

In an opinion article on the paper's website, the editorial staff said the new editor had undermined trust by intervening in coverage of state energy company Rosneft.



TREVOR MCBRIDE



ITARTASS NEWS AGENCY / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Tax the tech giants to strengthen the media



Now is the time to shape the future, says **Raymond Snoddy**

The plans drawn up by the NUJ and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) for the future of news after the pandemic are comprehensive and telling.

Now is exactly the time to focus on visions of 'a news reimagined' and news focused 'squarely on the public good' even though it may appear utopian in the midst of such a crisis.

The heart of such a plan, however, has to be economic if anything is to be done about closed newspapers, lost jobs and freelancers left without an income.

There is only one plausible solution, and it is a solution put forward by both the NUJ and IFJ – a windfall tax on Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft. Everything else flows from that.

The tech giants had already sucked much of the advertising out of local, regional and national newspapers before the virus struck across the world and made things ten times worse.

The economic impact of the pandemic can be countered only by international 'reparations' from the multi-billion dollar corporations – who are publishers in all but name.

Together, they have extracted advertising and personal data and, in the case of Amazon, retail sales on an international industrial scale and shown little interest in paying anything like a fair share of taxes in return.

Those like Facebook, which disseminate information and views, have never developed effective mechanisms to prevent the spread of fake news or, in recent times, dangerous conspiracy theories such as

5G being a cause of Covid-19.

So only a windfall tax of six per cent or other appropriate percentage using the digital services tax will do if there is to be any chance of funding a news recovery plan.

Such sources could also contribute to a government-funded journalism foundation suggested in the Cairncross Report, and needed now more than ever.

Unfortunately, there are many barriers to get over.

The tech giants will wriggle and dissemble and, in any battle for public funds, the airline, tourism and hospitality sectors could shout louder than journalism, whether this is right or not.

Politics could also play a large part in determining whether the news business receives any help.

It may need a centrist Conservative government led by – say – former health secretary Jeremy Hunt, or a centrist Labour government led by Sir Keir Starmer before much happens.

The present government has already displayed considerable malice towards news organisations and individual journalists who persist in asking difficult questions.

It may not be comparable with Trumpian standards. Instead, it is done in a more subtle though still nefarious British way. Journalists who depart too far from the official line do not get to ask questions or are quickly shut down without a follow-up.

Photographers are in trouble if they try to show an absence of PPE equipment or shoppers behaving badly at supermarkets.

There is an inevitable tension

between journalists doing their jobs vigorously and a government that has plenty to hide on how it delayed imposing the initial lockdown and compounded the error by starting to lift it too soon in an atmosphere of maximum confusion.

There is even greater tension between an industry asking for economic help and a government inevitably facing intensifying scrutiny over the next few weeks for its many failures.

Some questions will have to be asked again and again until there is some explanation of why four weeks were lost in February and early March.

Did the Government receive poor scientific advice from its professional advisers or did it ignore the scientific advice it was given?

There may be problems of definition and recording methods in creating a precise league table of deaths, but there can be little doubt that the UK has among the largest rates of Covid-19 deaths in the world.

Nothing apart from the flu pandemic of 1918 compares with the coronavirus crisis.

Has there been such a tragedy in recent times or such a public policy scandal that allowed it to happen?

As Sir Keir asked Boris Johnson in the House of Commons: "How on earth did it come to this?"

Answer came there none.

Journalists must brace themselves for the brickbats to come as they spearhead the call for a full public inquiry – a call the Johnson government will be reluctant to grant.

Tough times to come, but the NUJ/IFJ plans are the right approach – or at least heading in the direction.

“**There is tension between a media industry asking for economic help and a government facing intensifying scrutiny for its many failures**”

Turning to the NUJ

The union has been inundated with calls for help. **Ruth Addicott** reports

Shortly before lockdown, freelance journalist Louise Bolotin saw her income disappear almost overnight. Bolotin was a freelance sub on a small local newspaper and did editing for business clients. One by one, they cancelled, leaving her approximately £10,000 out of pocket.

“My situation has been horrific,” she says. “I was worried I’d lose my flat. I thought I’m facing destitution.”

Bolotin, 58, has been in journalism since she was 16 and is now looking at supermarket jobs to bring in cash.

Like many journalists who have lost their livelihoods, she has no idea when she will work again.

Since the crisis began, the NUJ has been inundated with enquiries. Union officials have been working flat out to secure key worker status for members, and to protect their income as well as the future of the industry with its From Health Crisis To Good News recovery plan.

As well as regular discussions with the secretary of state for digital, culture, media and sport, treasury officials, publishers and police chiefs (over the freedom to report), NUJ reps have been supporting members on a daily basis.

Tim Dawson, who represents freelancers on the union’s national executive council and is welfare officer for the London freelance branch, says enquiries from branch members have risen from one or two a quarter to one or two a week.

“Most are from members whose work disappeared around the time the lockdown started,” he says. “One had been working four or five news shifts a week on national newspapers. These were reduced to one or two. The work

being paid on a PAYE basis and the titles using the furlough rules cynically exacerbated problems. Photographers covering events have seen all their work evaporate as events have been cancelled. And one member was not able to work because their partner became seriously unwell with the virus.”

While the self-employment income support scheme announced on March 26 was welcomed, it excluded thousands of workers.

Many news organisations pay journalists and photographers through PAYE (although they are not on the staff) and have refused to put them on furlough. The union has around 8,000 freelance members, many of whom juggle jobs that are taxed differently.

One member, who pays taxes both under PAYE and as a self-employed person, says: “This leaves me in a situation where I am entitled to less than two days’ earnings. It works out less per month than universal credit (to which I am not entitled). I’m also aware that, as the chancellor has heavily hinted, come next year I’m going to be paying more tax on my self-employment to cover the government help – help that I will have received on only a small fraction of my income.”

In April, the NUJ launched its #ForgottenFreelances campaign to strike a deal for those who have fallen between the cracks. Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, called on the chancellor to act urgently, saying freelancers should be given “the same safety net as other workers”.

Brian Williams, secretary of Brighton and Mid Sussex branch, points out that many employers are choosing to use the job retention scheme, but not always sticking to the rules.

“We have heard of employers trying to furlough staff, thereby not having to pay them, then bringing in freelancers at a lower rate of pay to do the job. You can’t get much more in breach of the Government’s scheme than that,” he says.

“Clearly, being furloughed is better than being made redundant, but it’s important to do it properly.”

Issues over whether to agree to conditions of a furlough and how contracts should be changed to accommodate it are a widespread problem (the union’s legal team has a template for reps to use).

Williams says: “Where there is no union representation, members have to agree the terms of a furlough themselves – and that’s where we can do a lot of the heavy lifting for them by advising what they should and shouldn’t sign up to.

“This crisis is going to get worse before it gets better. I can’t think why any journalist wouldn’t want the support and advice the NUJ can provide right now.”

Scotland organiser Nick McGowan-Lowe has also seen an increase in calls. Employers have been approaching staff individually, which has caused anger among members. One major publisher told freelancers they would not be paid for work commissioned but not yet published – a decision they managed to get overturned.



Most enquiries are from members whose work disappeared when the lockdown started



How to work from home and do it well

- **Act as if you’re going into the office** – resist the urge to hit the snooze button, get dressed and start on time.

- **Stay in contact with colleagues** – pick up the phone and schedule meetings via Skype/Zoom/Microsoft Teams.

- **Create a designated workspace** – don’t be tempted to work from bed. Adjust your chair and screen to support your posture



- **Structure your day**

- that includes taking regular breaks. Short, regular breaks are more beneficial than less frequent longer ones.

- **Do the most important tasks first** – that’s when you have most energy

- **Get fresh air** – go for a walk, run or cycle even if it’s just for 10 minutes



“The work done by our colleagues in London in lobbying through the TUC for financial support for freelances has been invaluable, but there is no doubt that the true effects of this crisis have yet to be seen,” says McGowan-Lowe. “The cancellation of the Edinburgh festivals and Fringe will have a huge effect on our arts writers, almost all of whom are freelance. A significant number of our freelance photographers depend on shifts covering football matches, which have all been cancelled.”

Other branches have had issues with journalists feeling pressured into going into the office when they have vulnerable family members at home. One employer wanted furloughed staff to give up part of their holiday entitlement. The only NUJ member in the office persuaded colleagues to stand together and got the plan reversed. In Northern Ireland, journalists have faced difficulties in getting information on the numbers of people testing positive for coronavirus and about a PPE audit from the Western Health and Social Care Trust and at checkpoints crossing the border.

The Bristol NUJ branch has been trying to locate vulnerable members to offer help. They have also set up a WhatsApp group for Covid-related issues and fortnightly branch meetings on Zoom.

“We’ve tried to keep them shorter and less formal, and focused on Covid topics – eg difficulties in working outside from police or public,” says Bristol NUJ chair Paul Breedon.

“We are also campaigning for public sector advertising to support local publishers. So far, the NUJ has been successful at

negotiating NHS adverts for national and regional press, but not the weeklies or hyperlocals. In Bristol, we have the Voice network of 18 monthly hyperlocals which are now in jeopardy. We are hassling MPs to get them to ask for national and local adverts, from the NHS and councils, to support local media, particularly the smaller players at risk of collapse.”

Chris Wheal, chair of the union’s charity NUJ Extra, says requests for application forms are up nearly tenfold compared to a normal month and continue to rise.

The charity is initially offering support for two months and requires examples of work volumes from before and after lockdown.

“If we pay out £500 a month to an individual with no dependants, it takes only a few hundred applications for us to have spent half a million pounds,” says Wheal. “We stand ready to do that – and more if necessary.”

The charity has received nearly £30,000 in donations since March 24, including from nearly 200 individual NUJ members who donated nearly £12,000 between them.

“This is trade unionism at its finest,” he says.

Amid the turmoil, the union has seen a lot more engagement from members as well as non-members.

Ann Shuttleworth, mother of chapel at Emap, says: “I can’t remember a time when we’ve had this much visibility with journalists, the wider company and senior management. We’re all stuck in this mess. It’s a big opportunity for unions to show what they can do.”

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Natasha Hirst looks at how photographers are reacting to the pandemic

Visuals of the virus

More than ever before, the coronavirus crisis is demanding that journalists and photographers document what is happening, and hold elected bodies to account. It is also the latest challenge to the ability of photographers to make a living in an increasingly precarious industry beset by job losses, freelance budget and shift cuts and growing use of free, user-generated content.

The coronavirus pandemic emerged at the time of year where photographers' diaries usually start picking up. As the lockdown descended, the list of conferences, sporting events, festivals and gigs steadily decreased. Many photographers, myself included, lost most of their income over a few days and, as the crisis bedded in, it became evident that our bread-and-butter work would not be returning for a considerable time.

The NUJ was quick to respond by lobbying the Government to ensure journalists, including photographers, were key workers. With the National Police Chiefs' Council, the union sent information to police officers outlining how to support those with press cards to get on with their work.

Photographers have been working in an environment of increasing obstruction and hostility, partly fuelled by right-wing activity. This has strengthened anti-media rhetoric with photographers being the most visible target for verbal and physical attacks. More widespread, though, appears to be a growing suspicion and lack of understanding regarding the role of photojournalists in a democratic society. The pandemic has amplified this.

Open attempts to document people in public spaces or social distancing queues or to demonstrate the lack of PPE for staff in supermarkets have been met with anger and threats and accusations of spreading the virus and faking news. One photographer, who wanted to stay anonymous, said: "I had my car

surrounded by six workmen telling me I couldn't take pics and I should get a proper job." The majority, working ethically, were not helped by social media trends to shame people who appeared to be flouting lockdown rules.

Difficulty in gaining access to document frontline work in the NHS has been a significant source of tension for press photographers. Many have reported requests being turned down with responses stating they would 'get in the way', or that journalists were not allowed in for 'safety reasons'. Others were told to obtain permits that proved highly elusive.

The limited spaces at far fewer press events are often allocated to agencies, which pool images, cutting out opportunities for freelancers. Photographers have had to be creative and persevere in negotiating an often collaborative approach to gain access to the stories that needed telling. Slowly, new images have emerged.

When access is granted, it provides an opportunity to showcase the incredible dedication and care provided by NHS staff, many of whom welcome the coverage.

"I think we all require honest, meaningful reporting in this time of crisis, and I know that words and photographs are immensely powerful tools," says Jonny Weeks, a freelance photographer for the Guardian. Weeks was able to build trust with one hospital to secure access and was welcomed in. He says: "I also had a duty to tell the stories of patients and to be respectful to all involved in such a challenging environment."

Many aspects of life for essential workers have been covered. Charlotte Graham, based in the north west, documented a police officer on duty: "I wrote an article in support of the police, about the abuse they got, I also got the same [abuse]."

A stark contrast in the ease of access between working in the US and the UK has been reported.

British photographer Adam Gray, now based in New York, has documented many aspects of the pandemic from the streets to inside his local

hospital. He experienced no obstruction from the police nor negative comments from the public.

"The public never say a word really – half of them are filming it themselves or just curiously ask what's happening. Freedom of speech is very serious here," he says. His images in and around the hospital respected patient privacy and health and safety but still portrayed a powerful visual record of the impact of the coronavirus.

Nigel Dickinson, a Paris-based freelance photographer, ran into difficulties with the police when documenting on the streets. However, he points out that journalism is considered an essential service in France bolstered by a history of defending free speech. The coverage is important, he says, because "photojournalists need to be able to document all aspects of the coronavirus pandemic as it happens, for transparency, news purposes, dissemination of information and as a historical document for the future".

Adapting to the loss of work, photographers recognise their own lives and home environments are worthy of being documented. Guardian freelance photographer Sarah Lee has published compelling observations from her daily walks, documenting the nuance of local surroundings as the social fabric was transformed around her. On her Instagram account, she wrote: "Camden sounded like a small town or even a village. And, with its newly fresh air, it smelt like one too. It's an exceptionally horrible time but these things are quite lovely even if they can't possibly qualify as a silver lining."

Photography networks and collectives have responded by organising online meet-ups, talks and image showcases. On the Women Photograph Instagram account, members are sharing images and thoughts on life in lockdown.

Photographers have covered the activities of volunteers, charities and the #ClapForTheNHS, showing solidarity in communities.

There are a diversity of stories and many ways of covering them. Photojournalism plays a crucial role in documenting society's transformation through the crisis, both to inform now and to provide a lasting historical record of our lives.

We have space for reflection and opportunities to create a visual record of what is happening in this new context, and wonderful work has surfaced. Freelance photojournalist Suzanne Plunkett has received socially distanced portrait assignments and also turned her attention to family life. "Whenever I worked in places like Afghanistan, I was always on the look-out for the stories of what life was like for women and children," she says. "It feels strange to be surrounded by the story now in my personal life."



Left: Officer from the K9 unit of the North Wales Police as lockdown beds in.
BY CHARLOTTE GRAHAM



Top right: Prepared to disinfect ambulances in New York.
BY ADAM GRAY



Centre right: Stocking up with loo rolls in Streatham, London.
BY PIERRE ALOZIE



Below right: frontline NHS staff at University Hospital in Coventry.
BY JONNY WEEKS/GUARDIAN/EYEVINE



Below left: women walk past art by Mark Titchner in Bethnal Green, London.
BY JESS HURD



Above right: nurses hug as people cheer healthcare workers in New York.
BY ADAM GRAY



Left: In a COVID-19 life support ward in New York.
BY ADAM GRAY



Right: Applauding the NHS in Tower Hamlets, London.
BY JESS HURD

Josiah Mortimer on state support for the media and longer term survival

TO THE

RESCUE

For a few days at the start of April, the media was the opposition. Parliament was in recess and Labour was emerging from a leadership election. Sensing concern over a democratic vacuum, Michael Gove made a surprise defence of the media. A government that had previously pledged to 'whack' the BBC, and had barred critical outlets from media briefings, stated: "Robust scrutiny is to be welcomed; it is the duty of the media."

The Government would 'support' the scrutineers by investing in local and regional press in the coming months, Gove told the April 4 Downing Street press conference.

We heard little more until Friday April 17, when there was a dramatic show of unity across the British media. Hundreds of local, regional and national papers carried a single message on their covers: "stay at home for the NHS, your family, your neighbours, your nation, the world and life itself".

The Government's rescue package for print media had come through – a three-month, £35 million print ad blitz. Every major news publisher (bar the Financial Times) was initially on board, covering around 600 titles. The Daily Mail and the Guardian had the same front page for the first time ever.

Newsworks, the marketing arm of national news brands, which coordinated the deal with government ad buyer OmniGov, hailed it as a victory. "In less than a week – we took a brief and delivered it," Newsworks' executive chair Tracy de Groose told *The Journalist*.

Two weeks later, the deal was official. Chancellor Rishi Sunak announced the ad spend and rescue package – bringing forward the end in VAT for digital news and magazine subscriptions.

While the VAT cut will be welcome for larger publishers, the advertising windfall will quickly disappear.

Media research group Enders Analysis estimates that print outlets will see £250 billion wiped out from people not going out to buy papers this year.

Meanwhile, businesses have abandoned their advertising campaigns. The cost is staggering: a predicted £550 million loss for news brands in 2020.

Record-breaking online traffic has not translated into booming online ad revenue. Many advertisers have blocked their material from appearing next to 'negative' content, such as 'coronavirus'. This move could cost outlets another £50 million if it continues for the duration of the crisis, according to a report in PR outlet Campaign.

It is a double whammy of crushed circulation and advertising drought. More than £1 billion is likely to be wiped off the news/magazine market this year – an 'existential threat' to many in the sector, Enders analyst Alice Pickthall says.

In this light, the £35 million ad spend starts to look like – to pinch a phrase from the PM – chicken feed. "It's a tiny amount of money compared to the financial hit they're going to take," says Rasmus Nielson, director of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism.

Nonetheless, the largest publishers do have some level of buffer. Reach – the owner of the *Mirror*, the *Express* and many regional titles – had a 2019 revenue of nearly £800 million. Mail-owning conglomerate DGMT's was £1.4 billion. The nationals are also, arguably, best placed to capitalise on a surge in online readership, with titles like the *FT* reporting a 10-fold rise in digital subscriptions in March.

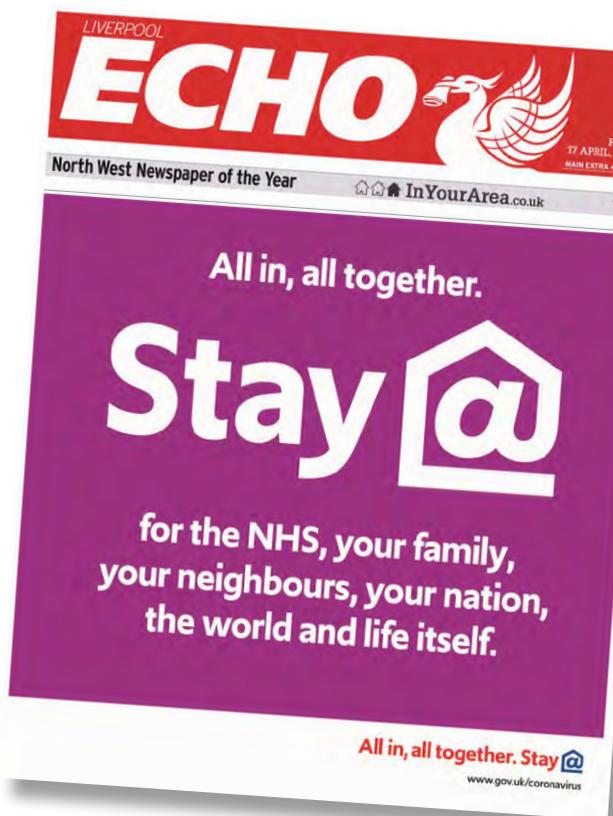
In contrast, many freesheets – reliant on ad revenue – have stopped publication, including all Midlands News Association titles. Paid-for Tindle outlets in Wales have also been suspended.

The Public Interest News Foundation (PINF) estimates there are around 150 'hyperlocal' outlets for whom £35 million would have been a lifeline. But publications from South Leeds *Life to YourThurrock* and the *Edinburgh Reporter* say they were left out of the Government's ad deal.

Despite reaching an estimated 14.9 million unique website visitors per month – as well as shifting more than 400,000 printed copies of their publications – the Independent Community News Network (ICNN) say its members were

£550m

**Predicted loss
for news brands
in 2020**



The price of money

AS 600 titles splashed the Government's coronavirus message on their front pages, Tracy de Groose, executive chair of the national newsbrands' marketing arm Newsworks, said: "Our journalists will continue to scrutinise the actions of the Government at every turn of this pandemic."

But government advertising spending is not without its pitfalls. Once the tap has been turned on, some countries have found it causes concerns over press freedom. Last year, India's right-wing Modi government was accused of using ad spending to 'reward or punish' Indian media. The nationalist

administration stopped buying ads in newspapers that had published critical articles. In addition, US-based NGO Freedom House has said that government advertising spend in Hungary and Serbia was used to reshape the media market in the governing parties' image - as well as exerting a 'disciplining' role on independent outlets. Mexico's former President

Enrique Peña Nieto told 'rebellious' outlets in 2017: "I don't pay you to criticise me." The UK funding does not seem to have muted the press yet. A few days after the 'All in, all together' front page ad, the Sunday Times ran its '38 days when Britain sleepwalked into disaster' exposé on the early days of the Covid-19 crisis. Nonetheless, any process that seems opaque is likely to

garner mistrust. And no outlet wants to become dependent on ad-hoc funding directly from ministers. Responding to this piece, the NUJ called for a 'transparent and fair' system for the allocation of funds: "The support should not be in exchange for political support further down the line when the Government might need it," the NUJ's general secretary Michelle Stanistreet said.

blindsided by the 'All in, all together' campaign launch. These hyperlocals - often run by one or two people and teams of volunteers - are slipping through the net: "They can't benefit from small business grants because they don't have premises. They can't get business rates relief. They can't furlough staff: if they furlough, they can't meet their basic commitments," ICNN director Emma Meese says. Newsworks says around 450 independent local publishers were included in the Government's £35 million print ad spend. But it is not clear what proportion went to independent local and regional outlets rather than nationals or conglomerates. At the time of writing, the Cabinet Office was not providing figures. Few believe Government ads are the solution for an industry

£1 bn
Likely to be wiped off news/magazine market this year

facing an almost 50 per cent drop in revenue this year. Months of not buying a paper might permanently hit circulation. "In any prolonged recession... only part of what is lost will ever come back," Nielson says. "People are going to find the alternatives satisfying and never return to print." The same applies to advertising: "Companies will re-evaluate their ad budgets - and look for the biggest return on their investment. A lot of that money won't return to print," he adds. Predictions like this fuel the debate over long-term funding. The NUJ's news industry recovery plan is clear the media has to change: "This is not and cannot be about the preservation of the status quo," the union said when it launched its plan. The Government has been cautious. It rejected the Cairncross Review's recommendation for an institute for public interest news - a call backed by the NUJ. Instead, it has piloted a £2 million fund through independent grant body Nesta to support innovation in journalism.

In contrast, the Dutch government has handed £11 million to its journalism institute to support hyperlocal outlets and local radio stations during this pandemic. Also, could we have to shift our understanding of media from profit-making enterprises to being a public service? "Some years ago, the media was never seen as a business. For business to work, there has to be profitability," University of Sheffield journalism lecturer Michelle Rawlins says. Once the bill comes in for this crisis, revenue-neutral solutions will appeal the most. PINF executive director Jonathan Heawood says one option is to confer asset of community value status on local papers under threat - a core part of the NUJ's news industry recovery plan. Then, it is also likely the guns will turn on the duopoly of Google and Facebook. The tech giants gained another rise in revenues in the first three months of the year. As Nicole Perrin, principal analyst at research firm eMarketer, told the New York Times: "[The ad market] will be even more concentrated with Google and Facebook... They are likely going to end up in a stronger position after all this is over." It adds impetus to the NUJ's once radical-sounding call for a windfall tax of six per cent on the tech giants. When the Government is paying the salaries of millions of people and will be cash strapped after the crisis, few ideas can be off the table. If the Government truly believes 'robust scrutiny' is vital, it will need to plan for an industry after Covid-19. If journalists are key workers now, they will be when the dust settles, too.



Staff at digital-only news outlets, faced with job uncertainty, have campaigned for union recognition. **Jem Collins** charts their progress

Organising the digital world

When the now 26-year-old Ruby Lott-Lavigna joined Vice UK back in November 2017, it was not quite the smooth landing she had hoped for. Just a few months into her new role, rumours began circulating of a fresh round of redundancies. The global company had already cut 60 jobs as part of a now infamous 'pivot to video' in 2017, as well as laying off 20 people in 2016. In short, this would be the third round of redundancies in just as many years.

"I didn't feel like there was much progression, I didn't feel like there was much security," she says. "And I sort of got to the point where I thought: 'well, what is there to lose exactly?'"

She began by restarting the movement to unionise from three years' before, bringing together a collective from across the newsroom.

"We kind of grew from there," she explains, with the first small groups meeting secretly off site to discuss their grievances while eating home-baked vegan brownies.

However, unlike previous unionisation attempts at both Vice UK and other digital-only outfits, this time momentum kept going. Over months, membership grew, until the chapel had a majority of NUJ members across editorial, production, and post-production. Then, in July 2019, Vice UK announced it would voluntarily and formally recognise the union, making it one of the first digital-only chapels in the UK. It certainly felt like a big moment for digital unions in the UK; was it also a catalyst for something bigger?

Unionisation is tough for online-only outlets and they are still nowhere near reaching a conclusion. While the NUJ can boast a varied presence across Fleet Street, broadcasters and regional publishers, its footprint in the digital world is smaller. AOL granted union recognition in 2005, but Vice UK is the first major breakthrough since then. Even this was a struggle, taking more than three years. In contrast, The Journalist understands it took little more than a year to set up a chapel at the i Paper after it was sold by ESI Media in 2016.

"Digital journalism platforms echoed the start-up culture of the US tech scene at first," explains Jane Martinson, a former media editor at the Guardian. "It was a world in which workplace rights were not necessarily prioritised." Her

observations are not just a theory. In 2015, founder and CEO of BuzzFeed Jonah Peretti told staff that unionising wasn't "the right idea" for the company, "particularly [for] writers and reporters".

Drawing comparisons to tech companies such as Facebook and Google, he claimed unionisation would stop him providing the "amazing benefits" that were the "incentive for people to pick BuzzFeed". As the UK arm of the company came close to unionising in 2016, he ramped up the pressure, personally emailing staff warning them not to make "any irreversible decisions", and the company's head of HR flew to London to speak to staff directly. The hard-fought bid by BuzzFeed UK staff failed.

Then, in November 2017, the company said it was cutting jobs. A further round of redundancies in 2019 saw 200 people lose their jobs. More broadly, digital-only outlets axed some 1,000 jobs in just one week. Recently, BuzzFeed said it was ending its UK operations.

"The digital-only news operations are still finding their feet," says Freddy Mayhew, editor of Press Gazette. "I think it's important to remember they really aren't that old." While he says cuts are part of an industry-wide struggle to "make digital pay", he suggests other factors are also helping to drive a push towards unionisation. "I think it's fair to say that the pure digital players broadly lean left," he observes. "It's also probably fair



What's so brilliant is you have groups of people in different workplaces and they bring these ideas in and that strengthens everybody





NETPHOTOS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Start here

Take five - and keep it human

"My first step would be to find five people who are keen on the ideas as well," says Ruby Lott-Lavigna, mother of chapel at Vice UK. "Start a WhatsApp group and start talking about it and build it from there.

"Don't be freaked out at the idea - you can't be fired for joining the union.

"And give it a lot of humour - we send around memes before meetings and we bake."

Seek out people with experience

One journalist involved with HuffPost UK's union talks stressed the importance of finding someone with union experience, which can be easier than you think: "We found quite quickly there were colleagues with union experience willing to share what they know."

Lott-Lavigna suggests reaching out further. "Talk to as many people as you can from other workplaces who have or haven't unionised. Find out about it."

Don't be put off by the lingo

Union language might not be the most accessible, admits Laura Davison, NUJ organiser, but it is simpler than it may appear.

"The basic principles are easy to grasp. You're more likely to achieve things working together than as an individual. It's having that solidarity."

In short, if you're on board with the principles, the rest of the lingo can wait.

to say the staff are broadly younger than those on established newspapers. Combine that with incoming cuts, and I imagine it will naturally lead to conversations about protecting staff."

This strikes a chord with younger journalists. One reporter who was involved in unionisation talks at HuffPost UK in 2018 said their main motivation was a round of redundancies: "There were rumours that the terms handed out were generous, but the process was totally opaque. It felt like every day could be your last. That's when we began exploring an NUJ chapel. Many of us were in our first or second jobs. It took that period of real uncertainty and change to bring people together."

Though the bid failed to get off the ground, which our source believes was down to a sudden change in senior leadership, they still believe it was beneficial - and that the NUJ has a lot to offer digital outlets.

"It worked in the sense that it brought staff together," the reporter explains. "Our first meetings showed that we had the same concerns and same problems. I think the NUJ is in a good position to help organise digital-only newsrooms, especially those wrought with change and uncertainty in what feels like ever-shortening cycles."

"In recent years, we have seen a shift," agrees Martinson, explaining that people are increasingly looking to protect their rights "as both journalist and employees". While Vice UK might be the first tangible example in Britain, there has been a landslide of successful campaigns across the Atlantic.

BuzzFeed US staff voted to unionise in February 2019, following in the footsteps of Refinery29, Slate and satire outlet The Onion. Podcasting company Gimlet Media voted to unionise in March, recognition was won at Vox Media in June then at Hearst US in November.

The Vice UK campaign, like those in the US, was openly played out on social media, with dozens of staff changing profile pictures to the union logo, photoshoots with branded t-shirts and frequent updates. After their victory, they are encouraging other newsrooms to get in touch for guidance.

"You have to show people that being part of a union is this big collective and there are loads of people involved," says Lott-Lavigna. "It's a really cool, exciting thing to be part of and no one should be worried or ashamed." She believes a public presence is key and that branding should be created with the target audience in mind: "If you want to get 18-19-year-old journalists, you need to change the way you appear to them."

For Laura Davison, an NUJ organiser who was involved with the Vice UK campaign, learning from each other is crucial. "What's so brilliant is you have groups of people in different workplaces and they bring these ideas in and that strengthens everybody. I think that the Vice example is inspiring. And, certainly, we've had discussions with other chapels in the wake of that and about looking at these issues for themselves."

At the same time, she believes that most people's reasons for joining a union are broadly similar, whether they work for a digital or print outlet. "I think wherever people are working they will have concerns that are particular to their workplace," she says, "but they also have very common concerns."

"The pace of change in news journalism at the moment means the NUJ will always be playing catch-up to some extent," says Mayhew. "But I think there is a movement to unionise among journalists at digital-only outlets that will continue as long as there's instability in their workplaces - which, given the existential crisis facing the entire industry, is unlikely to disappear any time soon."

And, with an inspirational example to follow, perhaps that's exactly what we're about to see.

Making the news reel

Jonathan Sale cranks the handle of camera history back to when moving pictures made the news

The first television news wasn't on television nor was it necessarily very newsy. That is, the first chance for the British public to see anything like today's TV news, current affairs in moving pictures plus sound, came on June 9 1929 – but only if the British public put on its coat and went to the cinema. There, before the feature films, would be a newsreel made by Movietone News in the shape of a short documentary film with several items of news or topical interest.

Television transmissions did indeed occur that September but, since the single transmitter could transmit only sound or vision – and not at the same time – there were two-minute snatches of shadowy pictures in complete silence, followed by crackly noises plus a blank screen. Not something you would want to stay in for. Particularly if, like everyone apart from a few geeks, you didn't have a television.

Meanwhile, waiting for you at the cinema, was the real world on a big screen with recognisable people doing real things. Film sound systems had improved. Until recently, the dialogue had been delivered by gramophone records which coincided only roughly with the lips of the speakers on the film; now the more accurate 'sound on film' technique was being used. Much was made of seldom heard noises; goats chewing on laundry got a big hand, or hoof, from Movietone audiences.

Movietone's rival Pathé News was already screening newsreels in cinemas but they were silent; soon, it added soundtracks and both companies were bringing before the very eyes of cinema-goers a host of movers, shakers and stars of the early 20th century, literally larger than life. Admittedly, if you came back next day, those movers and shakers were liable to be making the same moves and shakes on the screen as before, since a newsreel was repeated several times and changed it only twice a week. It was no wonder

that the newsreels had a static feel; the first Movietone cameras needed three strong cameramen to heave them around.

The idea of pointing a movie camera at something important which was happening had been earlier put into practice by Birt Acres, who had designed his own hand-cranked photographic device. Clearly, there wasn't much happening in Britain on 20 June 1895, to judge by the fact that he went to Germany and recorded on film the opening by the Kaiser of the Kiel Canal; one of the highlights was the laying of a foundation stone.

Not many laughs there, you might say, but Birt then got rather more dramatic footage by asking the Uhlan Lancers to charge at him, with

horses, sabres and their trademark lances. (Twenty years later, German horsemen could be seen charging at the British for real.)

These cinematic milestones did not receive a public screening until the January 1896 meeting of the Royal Photographic Society back in Britain, by which time their topicality was a little tarnished.

The first news film shot by the pioneering Birt (or anyone) in Britain had its premiere at a Royal command performance in Marlborough House during the following year. This involved royalty and the action – if that's the word for the Prince and Princess of Wales arriving at the Cardiff Exhibition premises – was better off camera than through the viewfinder.

The deal with the Wales-es was that Birt could film so long as he could not be seen. Unfortunately, he could not see either, being behind a canvas screen; this had a hole but only for the camera, so he had to wait for a flunkey to tip him off when the moment came for him to turn the camera's handle in the hope that someone royal would walk in front of the lens, as indeed they did. This was in June and the result was shown in July, all of three weeks later.

After this rather modest start in the UK, it was the French who launched the world's first newsreel for general distribution, Pathé-Journal, in 1908. Two years later, the Pathé Animated Gazette started on our side of the Channel with cameramen who were actually allowed to look through their viewfinders, and, as Pathé News, it continued to grace our cinema screens until 1970.

Celluloid cuttings

IT WAS the Kennedy assassination that is presumed guilty of killing off the newsreels, those short – initially very short – shorts consisting of several mini-documentaries crammed into a package to be screened in cinemas before the main attraction.

The Dallas drama has been described as the first 24-hour news event and the television offered nightly coverage, unlike the Movietone and Pathé newsfilms, which were shipped to cinemas twice a week.

The writing had been on the wall, or screen, in Britain when the BBC started its first daily news programme in 1954, presented by the late and much-loved Richard Baker.

The plummy, stiff-upper-lip voices of the newsreel

commentaries had an authoritative, no-nonsense air but this sounded increasingly like echoes of the Ritz in the Blitz instead of the tones of the Swinging Sixties.

Pathé News was a French export to Britain and its first offerings

here began in the era of silent movies. After 60 years of screenings, it turned off its projectors in 1970.

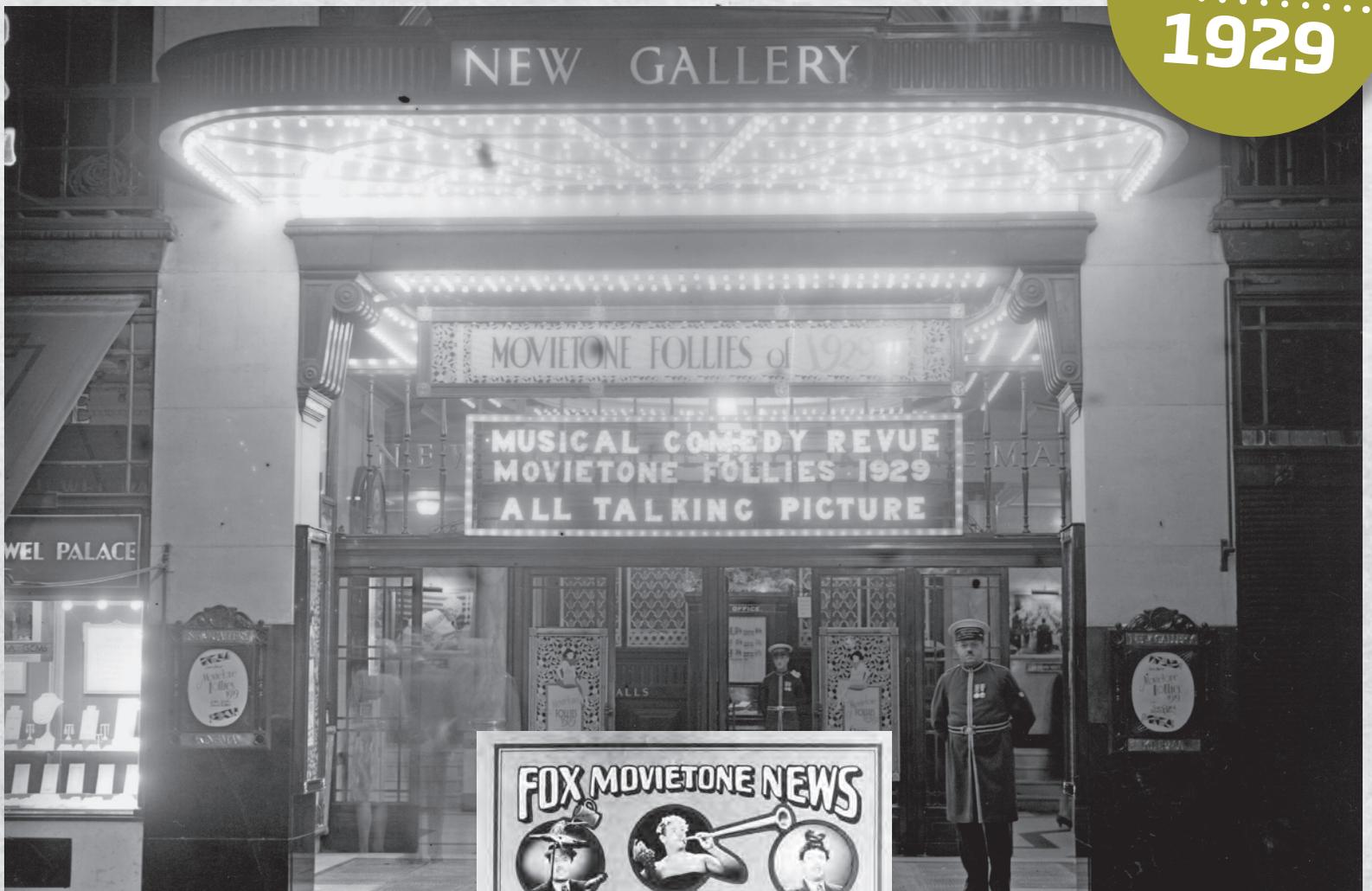
British Movietone News, an offshoot of the US's Fox News, had clocked up half a century when it came to the end of its last reel in 1979, well after its American parent had mothballed its newsfilm cameras.

Both brought current events to British audiences in pre-television times. Now those same films in the archives of Associated Press give us moving snapshots of past events – a sort of visual cuttings library.



EVERETT COLLECTION HISTORICAL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Looking
back to:
1929



TOPICAL PRESS AGENCY

Considered as records of history in the making, Pathé's early newsreels suffered from the disadvantage (unless you could lip read) of being silent and the odd full-screen caption was no substitute for words that people could receive via their ears. Starting, as the name suggests, in the US, the newsreels of Fox Movietone News were also silent when it was launched in 1919. Then, when Charles Lindbergh made aviation history in 1927 by flying across the Atlantic, Fox made newsreel history by recording the takeoff with sound as well as vision. In 1929 it gave birth to a British cub, British Movietone News. And so British cinema-goers too could enjoy news enhanced by state-of-the-art sound.

June 9 was clearly a slow news day, as Movietone kicked off its first short in this country with a full-screen caption of the type and typeface used on silent comedies: 'The Duke of Connaught Takes Salute at King's Birthday Parade'. However, this was not looking for laughs: it was the Trooping of the Colour. The ceremony itself dated back to 1748. It was in the news in 2020 because it was cancelled on account of coronavirus but news values were clearly more elastic in 1929: it made the bulletin merely because was the first Trooping since, well, 1928.



IMPC

And troop they did: men in busbies on horses; men in busbies on foot, sometimes marching backwards, which would fool the enemy. And the sounds: horses trotting, men stamping, sergeant-majors shouting. The sound of bells (but no whistles). In subsequent years Movietone returned – later with full colour – for more Trooping of the Household Division and, by way of variety, the Trooping of the 5th Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment in, as the name suggests, Malaysia.

The advantage of the ceremony for the pioneering picture-gatherers was that they knew where they were, ie on Horse Guards Parade. The

next item, 'the Derby Photographed with Sound', was trickier, as these horses moved around a lot. There was spiel from bookies, women dancing and a man with a drum.

The crowd roared but there was no commentary as such, although a caption did explain 'They're off' and another announced that the winner's odds were 33-1. If a camera had been manhandled to the finishing post, its footage appears to have been mislaid in the ensuing nine decades.

After those early days, newsreels grew up to become the first draft (or rushes) of history. Today, the AP archives bring to life the people and happenings of the last century: suffragette Emily Davison dashing to her death under the king's horse, Pearl Harbour, Hiroshima, Martin Luther King, the Beatles and Marilyn Monroe serenading President Kennedy.

The 1937 Hindenburg disaster showed how far Movietone had come since the goats-chewing-laundry days. The dramatic shots of the giant airship in flames were taken not by chance but because the newsreel executives deduced that sending up balloons filled with highly inflammable gas was a tragedy waiting to happen so they sent camera crews to wait at the docking station until it did happen. Which indeed it did.



TechDownload

Nicholas Fearn on technology for journalists

byte size...

TASK MASTER FOR LONG TO-DO LISTS

Juggling lots of stories and deadlines? Then a task management app is worth considering. With 20 million users and free to download, Todoist offers features for organising, managing and working with others on projects and tasks of all sizes. You can note down ideas, organise tasks by priority, get reminders on deadlines, delegate tasks and see how you're getting on with different pieces of work. It is available for iOS, Android and desktop platforms.

<https://todoist.com/>

PORTABLE POWER FOR MOBILE KIT

To ensure your mobile devices don't run out, it's worth getting a portable charger. Costing £29.95, the Mophie Powerstation Mini has a 5000mAh battery that will give you up to 18 hours of extra battery life and can be used with smartphones, smartwatches and other devices. It has a USB C and a USB A port, so you can charge two devices at once.

www.apple.com/uk/search/mophie

MAIL: MARVELLOUS OR MALICIOUS?

Every day, journalists receive hundreds of emails. How can they ensure these are trustworthy? Red Sift from OnINBOX is a threat detection app. Every email is given a coloured indicator: green (safe), orange (room for improvement) and red (unsafe). Red Sift recently made this product free for all journalists.

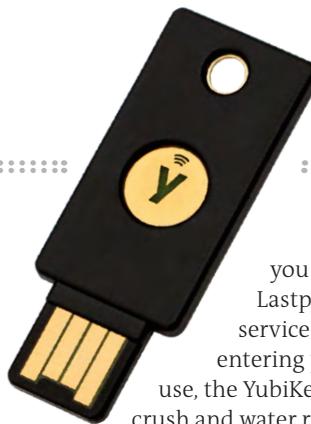
<https://oninbox.redsift.com>

LOCK OUT HACKERS

Journalists are increasingly becoming lucrative targets for hackers. In 2017, Associated Press discovered that more than 200 reporters were hacked by Russian cyber espionage group Fancy Bear.

As the threat of cyber attacks grows, it is clear we need to protect ourselves. However, hackers are constantly finding new ways to bypass authentication systems.

If you want a robust solution to secure your data, a YubiKey is worth considering. Developed by security firm Yubico, it is a hardware authenticator that allows



you to access Facebook, Google, Lastpass, Dropbox and other online services securely and without constantly entering passwords. Reliable and quick to use, the YubiKey provides one-tap login and is crush and water resistant.

Batteries and additional downloads are not needed. To use it with a computer, insert the device and touch the button. If you're a mobile user, tap it against your phone or tablet.

You can purchase the YubiKey-5-NFC model for £41.49 from Amazon.

<https://www.yubico.com>

> An Otter way to turn words to text

Transcription is an integral part of news and feature writing but can be time consuming. That's where speech-to-text software can help.

Mobile transcription app Otter is powered by artificial

intelligence technology, and allows journalists to record and transcribe interviews, meetings, videos, podcasts, speeches and other types of conversation.

Although not always

perfect, the app automatically adds punctuation, grammar and paragraphs and identifies different speakers.

You can also search, highlight, edit and export

your notes in pdf, txt, srt or mp3 formats.

Otter is free to use on Android, iOS and desktop platforms, and gives you 600 minutes of transcription per month. Users can upgrade to a premium or team plan.

<https://otter.ai/>

ONE STOP OFFICE

Productivity gains

G Suite is a set of productivity tools for writing and admin from Google. The basic plan, which costs £4.14 per user per month, provides email, calendar, secure team messaging, video conferencing, word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, website and note-taking applications as well as cloud storage. It can be accessed on smartphones, tablets and tablet PCs. You can use individual services such as Google Docs and Sheets for free.

<https://gsuite.google.co.uk/>

POCKET TRANSLATOR

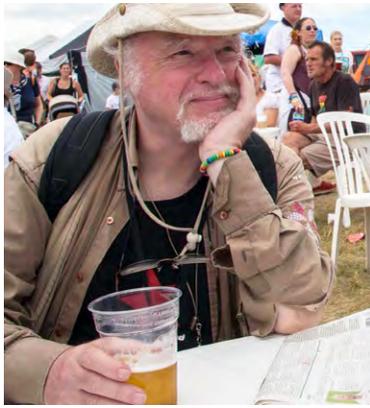
When it comes to interviewing people who speak different languages, the Pocketalk S from Sourcnext can help. This AI-powered voice translator, recently launched in Europe, lets you translate 74 languages. Its two-year data plan provides unlimited data use in over 130 countries.

Pocketalk S translates verbal communication through noise-cancelling microphones and text through a built-in camera. Users can view translations via a touchscreen or listen to them on two speakers. Sourcnext claims that the device can translate local dialects, slang, signs and menus.

Available in gold, back, white and red, the device costs £259 and can be purchased at Amazon and SMARTTECH Selfridges..

<https://europe.pocketalk.net/>





Mike Pentelow

Mike Pentelow – journalist, author, communist and community activist – has died at the age of 73.

“He put the social into socialism,” declared long-time colleague Andrew Murray.

Both were part of a busy team of NUJ members at the Transport and General Workers’ Union from the 1980s for more than 20 years,

alongside myself and Eddie Barrett, and worked on press, publications and campaigns.

Sheffield-born Mike cut his teeth on the Thurrock Gazette in Essex. He feasted on stories of battles over containerisation at the docks, before landing a job on the sports desk at the Morning Star.

After a break at Westminster College, he returned to the industrial beat at the Star where he succeeded Mick Costello and joined the Industrial Correspondents’ Group. Known as The Group, it included the illustrious Barrie Clement, Paul Routledge, Roy Jones and John Richards.

According to friend and contemporary Peter Kirker, this was the context in which he formed lasting relationships with the awkward squad of left-wing union leaders, including Rodney Bickerstaffe and Ken Cameron. He took inspiration – perhaps in more ways than one – from two hard-drinking, erudite and highly cultured NUM leaders, Lawrence

Daly and Mick McGahey.

His switch to the T&G in 1983, forerunner of today’s Unite, led to highly successful and award-winning stints as chief reporter on the T&G Record, with a print run just shy of half a million, and as editor of the Landworker. The latter served the union’s rural, agricultural and allied industry members. They always opened up to him, head inclined, notebook in hand and, as a colleague observed, “an innocent unawareness of anything coming close to politically correct”.

In retirement, Mike was instrumental in reviving the socialist Country Standard (established in 1935), which had been seen at numerous rural labour movement rallies such as Tolpuddle, Burston and Burford, where he was ever present.

He became editor of his local community newspaper, Fitzrovia News, and the International Stand By Me Club Bulletin (proud of his presidency of the club, he cofounded a German beer

cellar, which celebrated the song and sentiments made famous by Ben E King).

His reputation as an author was built on diligent research and a readable style. A Pub Crawl through History: the Ultimate Boozers’ Who’s Who, described hostelries named after commoners (not kings, queens or dukes).

He and photographer Peter Arkell produced Freedom Pass London, designed to help people using Ken Livingstone’s free travel pass to take pleasant walks around stations at the end of London Underground railway lines. Norfolk Red, a biography of farmworkers’ leader Wilf Page, showed Mike’s deep interest in the struggles of rural trade unionism.

As befits a local historian at the hub of community activity, his lavishly produced Characters of Fitzrovia, published by Felix Dennis, was a tour de force. Few would disagree that the book should be updated to include a chapter on Mike himself.

Chris Kaufman



Graham Fulton

Long-time Perthshire Advertiser journalist Graham Fulton (pictured above on the right), has died at the age of 87.

An honorary life member of the NUJ (Perth and District branch), he passed away peacefully at Dundee’s Ninewells Hospital with his wife Evelyn by his side after being treated for coronavirus.

Born and bred in Perth, Graham was highly respected over a journalistic career that combined his twin passions of football and theatre with the news and court and council coverage that is the staple of life on a local newspaper.

Graham’s career with the twice-weekly paper spanned nearly 50 years. He began as an apprentice monotype operator in the days of hot metal printing before transferring to the editorial staff.

For many years, Graham covered the fortunes – and often

misfortunes – of his beloved Saints (St Johnstone Football Club).

A lifelong supporter and a shareholder, he was thrilled to see his team lift the Scottish Cup for the first time in 2014 in the company of the late Perth freelance photographer Louis Flood.

Graham played an integral role in securing boardroom changes when St Johnstone lurched from crisis to crisis and even considered bankruptcy in the 1980s.

In one memorable report, he observed: “It is a sad tale of ineptitude which is merely serving to drag a once-proud St Johnstone to a situation where it is now one of the least regarded clubs in Scottish league football. The people responsible for that state of affairs must go and go now.”

A one-time member of Perth Drama Club, Graham also trod the boards with minor roles at Perth Rep.

He interviewed stars as diverse as Eric Morecambe, Rikki Fulton, Patricia Routledge and Sue Holderness, who went on to star in Only Fools and Horses.

After being educated in Perth, like so many of his generation, Graham saw his career plans go on hold until he returned from national service.

In recent years, his home was Ancaster House care home in Crieff, where he enjoyed reflecting on times past with former colleagues.

Graham played an active role in Perth life as a justice of the peace and a member of the High Constables – the top-hatted bodyguard that turns out for royal visits and regular parades.

He and Evelyn, who split their time between Perth and Tenerife after retiring, celebrated their diamond wedding anniversary two years ago.

Sadly, the funeral had to be restricted to close family members, but friends and former colleagues are planning to bid Graham a proper farewell when the coronavirus restrictions are lifted.

Gordon Bannerman

by **Tim Lezard**

arts

Lockdown special
The arts industry hasn't escaped the ravages of coronavirus but there is hope that people will embrace new ways of enjoying live entertainment

Music

Many artists, including Bruce Springsteen, are playing free live shows from their homes. These have



been shown on Facebook and other channels, so check on the social media pages of your favourites.

Some bands have announced free, post-lockdown gigs for the NHS. Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbott, I believe, came up with the idea, and were swiftly followed by the Manic Street Preachers and other big names, including Liam Gallagher, Fat Boy Slim and, erm, Rick Astley.

My personal favourite musical pastime is joining former Charlatans singer Tim Burgess on Twitter as he curates bands talking through classic albums. So far, he's done The Libertines, Billy Bragg and Fontaines DC among others and there's no end in sight as we go to press. Check out @Tim_Burgess and #timstwitterlisteningparty on Twitter.

Stage

Theatre-goers are spoilt for choice for online shows ranging from the National Theatre's free weekly



offerings to paid-for alternatives such as Marquee TV (which also features dance and opera) and Digital Theatre, which has archive footage too. The national theatres of Scotland and Wales are also running online events. If opera's your bag, then the Royal Opera House is screening shows on Facebook and the Met Opera is doing the same on its website.

www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/nt-at-home
www.marquee.tv

www.digitaltheatre.com
www.facebook.com/royaloperahouse
www.metopera.org
www.nationaltheatrescotland.com
www.nationaltheatrewales.org/ntw-projects/network

Screen

Universal has decided to release their films (paid) online via their website, and streaming channels such as Netflix and Amazon Prime have witnessed a rise in subscriptions. The BBC has released classic shows on its iPlayer platform.

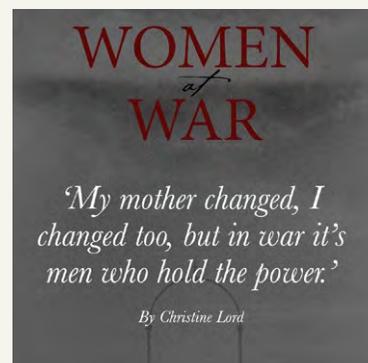
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www.itv.com
www.channel4.com
www.channel5.com
www.sky.com
www.amazon.co.uk
www.netflix.com

Books

Women at War: Inspired by a True Story

Christine Lord

"I thought it important that the stories of German women who grew up under Hitler's rule and then escaped postwar Germany by marrying allied service personnel should be told," NUJ member Christine Lord tells *The Journalist*.



Women at War is inspired by the numerous interviews the award-winning journalist and filmmaker conducted with camp survivors, German civilians, allied service personnel and by her parents' stories.

The novel is about 14-year-old Greta running for her life across Germany in 1945, and poses the question: in war, what would you do to survive?

<https://tinyurl.com/yac875g3>

In Defence of English Style: a Language Guide for the Age of 27/7

RJ Fallon

NUJ member Dr RJ Fallon believes the sanity of British culture depends on good journalism and that good journalism requires uncommon linguistic skills.

In this book he runs the rule over our ever-changing language. He's particularly harsh on the "impoverished" BBC and sets out to defend the English public from 'journalese'. I hope he doesn't mind what I've written here.

www.crossandvine.com/

Comedy

Comedians have adapted to the lockdown by appearing on various online platforms and in podcasts.

NextUpNow is popular with stand-ups, and Go Faster Stripe is selling footage of previous live shows to raise money for the Trussell Trust. Check your favourite comedian's social media feeds for some gems.

<https://nextupcomedy.com/>

[nextupnow](https://www.gofasterstripe.com)

<https://www.gofasterstripe.com>

Galleries

The i helpfully lists 50 virtual days out, ranging from online art galleries to modern wonders of the world.

This takes us on a journey from the National Gallery in London, taking in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Louvre in Paris, the Musei Vaticani and the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Check it out – it should keep you busy for a while and help with your claustrophobia.

<https://tinyurl.com/y7uvy55e>

The Journalist's arts page would like to express solidarity with all entertainment workers who have lost their jobs because of the coronavirus crisis

Spotlight >

Books: virtual shops and clubs

Many people complain that social media or social lives get in the way of reading.

Lockdown offers you the perfect opportunity to turn off your phone and lose yourself in a book. And what better way to do that than support your local bookshop?

"Many stores are offering online ordering and home delivery so customers can continue to have access to books while following government advice," Booksellers' Association MD Meryl Halls tells *The Journalist*.

"There are also virtual events and book clubs to take part in online, reading bundles for self-isolation and curated online shops that recreate the experience of being in store."

Independent bookseller Hereward Corbett has closed his Cotswolds-

based Yellow Lighted Bookshops to walk-in customers and started selling online.

"Cashflow's our biggest issue, but being online helps us tick over," he says. "I'm optimistic we can get through this."

Find your local independent bookshop at
<https://booksellers.org.uk/bookshopsearch>

and finally...

Workers need power more than praise



Decent pay cannot be left to employers' whims, says **Chris Proctor**

For weeks on end, we've stood at our front doors clapping our hands, banging our pans and showing deep gratitude to NHS workers, shop assistants, care workers, food processors, bus drivers and delivery workers. They are our heroes, our role models, our saviours and our friends.

There's been a huge change in our attitudes towards work and worth that need to be remembered when we're out and about again. Sadly, memories can be terribly short and the milk of human kindness can easily evaporate.

This virus has given us an appreciation of the meaning of the term 'key worker'. In the past, we've treated it as a vague measure of goodness. Now we have direct experience.

Essentially, it is someone who does a job that is important for society. Key workers are the ones who tend our sick and infirm, who care for the needs of our elderly in declining health, who deliver what we need, who make our meals, who serve us in our shops and who keep public transport and communications running.

They are also the people to whom we pay meagre wages, expect to work long, unsociable hours and generally ignore.

Non-essential workers we treat differently. These are the people peripheral to our needs, whose absence from work most of us wouldn't notice for years – the likes of bankers, barristers, stockbrokers, investment fund managers, estate agents and

company directors. If staff don't open our food outlets, we're out in the cold. If John Allan doesn't show up to chair a Tesco board meeting, no one cares and nothing changes.

Yet these non-essentials are the people we award with magnificent benevolence. To them, we hand over the fat of the land on a plate. And proffer complimentary knives and forks.

Another group of workers who are key to society is also being recognised – objective and assiduous news-gatherers. Our members. There has been a growing realisation of our worth during the lockdown. If social media had constituted our only information channels, we really would have been in trouble.

We'd have believed that 1,408,526,449 Chinese spent their days swallowing warm bat blood with the vigour of a Friday night toper. We'd be convinced the virus would turn us into the Living Dead unless we gulped gallons of warm bleach as an antidote. We'd swallow tales of an evil strategy to halve the UK population. We'd all blame Bill Gates and - my personal favourite - we'd trace the origins of the pandemic to some grubby 5G aerial mast in a remote field somewhere.

The logic was impeccable. The virus and 5G roll-out started around the same time. Ergo, one caused the other. Equally convincingly, the theorists could have linked the outbreak to the NATO gathering in Watford or Prithvirajsing Roopun's election as president of Mauritius. But the 5G myth was believed by millions because there it was, written down in black and white.

The fact it was nonsense penned by delusionists was not enough to stop arsonists targeting a mobile phone mast in Birmingham that served the emergency NHS Nightingale hospital.

People need to be able to read checked facts, not treated to idle and dangerous speculation. This is what we are trained to do. It is why we are key.

The public has gradually realised that serious reporting from the much-maligned Beeb and responsible papers, magazines and online outlets are central to limiting pointless panics and calming paranoia. At our best, we too are a vital public service.

But there is more. Just identifying and applauding workers in essential services is not enough. It is a useful atmosphere in which to start talking about decent pay, training and recognition for key workers. However, leaving this to outside forces or trusting to the decency of employers means that nothing will happen.

Workers need efficient, strong unions if their contribution is to be recognised. To plead gets you nowhere. To beg makes you a beggar.

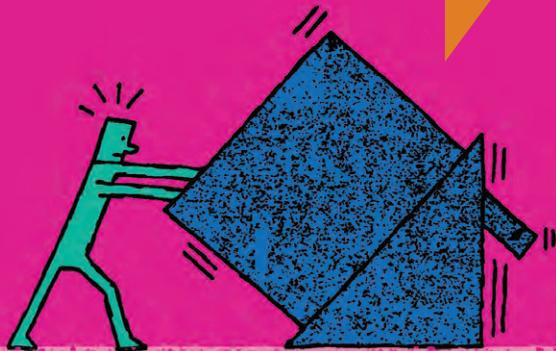
Perhaps coronavirus has forced us to consider our attitude to workers who are central to our wellbeing – but our sympathies and platitudes will get them nowhere.

We'll be grateful for a while and then forget them, content that we've given care workers a badge and the refuse collectors a round of applause. That's not what they need. They don't need a charitable handout or a temporary food bank.

They need a union.

“**There's been a huge change in attitudes to work and worth. However, memories can be short and the milk of human kindness can easily evaporate**”

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Lockdown without journalism?

Unthinkable.

Journalists are working tirelessly on your behalf to keep you up to date on Covid-19 providing information, insight and challenge. Many are facing an uncertain future at a time when journalism has never been so important.

#supportjournalism



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