

# theJournalist

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## Smash and grab

Or valid copyright enforcement?

# Contents



**C**opyright and the protection of image use has always been a key issue for our members. Now it is moving to a whole new level with the pursuit of image payments, sometimes stretching back many years, by specialist copyright enforcement agencies. In our cover feature Helen Nugent looks at how to ensure you're on the right side of copyright.

Are you wondering how to get to the top in journalism? One way could be to learn some management skills. These are attributes that are notoriously lacking in a profession populated by self-starters and scoop getters. Neil Merrick looks at ways to learn management skills for journalism.

Another way might be to make yourself award-winning. Linda Harrison considers how to get awards and then how to make the most of them once they are in the trophy cabinet.

You may need to extend your journalism into different formats too. Stephanie Power, pops along to the Podcast Show to see whether this format has peaked or has further to go.

And do take a look too at Pages 24-25 where the two women vying to be the next NUJ general secretary set out their stalls. It is an important election, the first in 23 years. Please play your part in the union's democracy.

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**Cover**  
Andy Potts

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Access all the latest NUJ news and views by scanning the QR code here or by visiting [www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk)



# Funding call as the BBC faces fresh round of redundancies

JESS HURD

**THE NUJ** has called for an urgent reconsideration of the BBC's funding after yet more damaging cuts across the corporation were announced.

The BBC intends to cut around 115 editorial and production roles in the nations and regions, as part of overall plans to save £500 million by March 2026.

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said: "Coming on the back of a painful cull across BBC Local, these latest cuts across its regions and nations will further hollow out local news provision at a time when resources are stretched to breaking point. Our public service broadcaster is a global asset that acts as a pivotal driver for our entire creative industry. After years of being used as a political

punchbag and subjected to wrongheaded interference and cuts, there needs to be urgent intervention that prioritises the funding of its grassroots news and programming and sets the BBC on a more sustainable footing."

Earlier this year director general Tim Davie said the BBC was well on its way to delivering £500 million of annual savings by March 2026 but was working on plans for a further £200 million of savings.

While the NUJ shares the BBC's hope that job cuts can be achieved through voluntary means - a four-week voluntary window is opening - the union is concerned that it amounts to further salami slicing across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. England has



already suffered sharp cuts, with 450 jobs lost in 2020 and closures of BBC local radio programmes.

The BBC has said there will be editorial and production job cuts in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

The union believes that the BBC remains one of the UK's most trusted news brands, but the increased erosion of investment in journalism is

alarming at a time when there is a proliferation of misinformation and disinformation on social media networks.

Laura Davison, senior organiser said: "These cuts have come about because of the repeated failure of previous governments to properly fund the UK's public service broadcaster. Licence fee freezes, making the

corporation fund free licenses for the over-75s, and subsequent small increases have left the BBC in a perilous state. The BBC boasts that it has moved some of its programmes and news departments outside London, in a project ambitiously called "Across The UK". But what we see today is a potential significant further reduction in roles that truly serve our Nations and Regions. We are further concerned that colleagues who are left behind will have to pick up the workload done by those who are leaving. Again, we have already seen the consequences of this in England, with many local radio stations now having afternoon news bulletins pre-recorded by neighbouring stations or sharing output across large regions with no shared identity. Further savings will inevitably have an impact on output in the devolved nations."

## First general secretary vote in 23 years

**NUJ MEMBERS** will soon vote in the first contested election for the position of general secretary for 23 years. Two candidates - Laura Davison, a senior organiser at the union and a former BBC journalist (pictured above right), and Natasha Hirst, the union's current president and a photographer (pictured below right) - are competing for the top job.

The election follows the decision of Michelle Stanistreet, the current general secretary, to stand down citing health reasons and feeling that it was time to move on. Stanistreet became general secretary 13 years ago following the departure of Jeremy Dear, but she has not faced election by the membership, being elected unopposed three times.

Jeremy's second term in office before he left in 2011 also came after he was elected unopposed.

You can read election pitches from Laura and Natasha on pages 24-25. Members can also check with their branches for any election hustings.

Ballot papers were sent to the 21,500 NUJ members who are eligible to vote on

September 16 and voting closes at midday on October 7. The result will be announced on October 8. If you haven't received a ballot paper or need other help, please email [gselection@nuj.org.uk](mailto:gselection@nuj.org.uk). The winner will serve for five years before facing re-election again.

[See pages 24-25](#)



## Journalist editor is re-elected

**CHRISTINE BUCKLEY** has been re-elected editor of The Journalist by NUJ members.

Nine candidates stood in the election which is held every five years. This time the ballot, which was

conducted in the summer, was run twice because of postal problems in Ireland and Northern Ireland in the first vote. Those first votes were all scrapped, and a new digital poll was run with postal ballots also available

for those for whom the union didn't have email addresses.

Christine said: "I'm proud to be re-elected by NUJ members and look forward to working again with our great contributors, union branches, chapels and reps. We're the current TUC union journal of the year and I will aim for more such achievements."

The ballot was conducted on a single transferable vote system. The results were: Sean Bell 132; Christine Buckley 1198; Tessa Clarke 151; Phil Creighton 141; Gerard Cunningham 162; Samantha Downes 139; Helen Parton 58; Brian Pelan 116; Craig Thomas 57.

The turnout was 10.1 per cent.

# AI developers breaking copyright law on a 'vast' scale, say creators

**COMPANIES** developing artificial intelligence (AI) systems are breaking the law on a 'vast' scale by using journalists' work without permission, attribution or payment, according to the Creators' Rights Alliance (CRA).

The alliance, of which the NUJ is a member, has written to the organisations involved, accusing them of regularly lifting huge quantities of copyrighted text to develop and operate AI models.

The letter from the CRA, which represents a wide range of creators including authors, artists, photographers, illustrators, translators, performers and musicians as well as journalists, acknowledged that AI, including generative AI programs, could be useful tools.

"However, to safeguard human creativity, truthful content and the rights of authors, creators and performers, it is vital that AI models are developed and used in a legal, sustainable, and ethical manner," it said.

It said the practice was causing great personal and financial

harm to authors, performers and visual creators.

The letter pointed out that UK law does not allow copying for such purposes without the explicit consent of the creator, their licensee or appointed representatives.

"Accordingly, the large-scale copying (including, but not limited to, extraction and transformation) that has been

carried out to date amounts to copyright infringement for which rightsholders and creators should be compensated," it said.

The other option would be to have material and work derived from it removed. Where permission

is granted for work to be used, full credit should be given for all past and present uses.

The 500,000-member CRA has urged developers of all, but especially generative, AI systems to provide 'full transparency' about the material already used to develop their model.

Among the other demands is that companies should in future seek authorisation in advance from the creator and copyright holder.



**Companies should seek authorisation in advance from the copyright holder**

**Creators' Rights Alliance**

## Job cuts threaten Scotsman's coverage

**STAFF** on The Scotsman have told management the newspaper is dying from a 'thousand cuts'.

In a letter to Claire Jackson, head

of HR at National World, the NUJ chapel said the loss of five more jobs means readers will lose out on quality and in-depth coverage of key

issues such as health. However, editor Neil McIntosh refused to meet editorial staff to explain the decision, despite the letter's

expression of no confidence in the publisher's strategy. Journalists were told about the cuts the day before National World announced a 17 per cent growth in revenue in its half-yearly results, including a 12 per cent rise in digital income.

## Steve Bell



# Keep journalists safe, employers urged after attacks during riots

LUKE HALL / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

## THE INTERNATIONAL

Federation of Journalists (IFJ), and the NUJ have urged employers to ensure the safety of staff and freelancers in the wake of the summer riots across the UK.

Journalists were attacked, intimidated and their equipment destroyed during the unrest, triggered by an anti-immigrant disinformation campaign following multiple stabbings in Southport on July 29.

At the time of the riots, the NUJ organised an emergency legal number for members covering the protests and recommended its Journalists' Safety Toolkit, which contains advice for reporters, photographers and



videographers reporting on the disturbances.

On August 3, Belfast-based freelance journalist Amanda Ferguson was attacked while covering a far-right riot in the city. When Ferguson approached a protester who

was filming her, the man called her a 'traitor' and hit her phone out of her hand, damaging it.

Three days later, Belfast Telegraph photographer Kevin Scott was attacked by a crowd of masked men, who

damaged his car and tried to enter it.

In Bolton, an agency photographer, quoted anonymously by The Guardian, said that while he was looking through his camera lens at a riot in the town on August 4, he was punched by an Asian man in a balaclava who was part of a counter-protest against the far right.

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, described the riots as "some of the worst and most widespread public order disturbances in modern times". Police and employers should do "all in their power" to ensure that journalists can work safely, she said.

Tim Dawson, IFJ deputy general secretary said: "Those who attack journalists are attacking democracy, and undermining everyone's right to know."

On a visit to The Yorkshire Post, media minister Stephanie Peacock, Labour MP for Barnsley South, praised the 'really important' work of the local media in covering the riots.

As a consequence of the riots, education secretary Bridget Phillipson said there would be a review of the primary and secondary school curriculum. This would seek to enable children to tell authentic from fake news and arm them against 'putrid conspiracy theories'.

## Don't seize images, police told

**THE UNION** has warned police chiefs that attempts to force photographers and videographers to hand over images is an attack on media freedom.

In a letter to the National Police Chiefs' Council, the

union also emphasised that such tactics put the media workers' safety at risk.

The letter followed reports that South Yorkshire Police had demanded a photographer hand over images taken during rioting

in Rotherham, threatening a court order if the request was ignored. However, Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, asserted that journalists would not be exploited as 'investigative shortcuts'.

Any member who faced such demands should approach the NUJ immediately for assistance, she said.

Stanistreet added that news outlets must also be mindful of their obligation towards journalists when taking decisions about how their material is used.

## Ignore status in scandals, BBC told

**IN THE** wake of the Huw Edwards scandal, the NUJ has demanded that the BBC treats everyone the same, regardless of their role or perceived status in the organisation.

'Power imbalances' should not be allowed to influence decision-making and contractual and collective agreements should be respected, the union declared.

The NUJ said it was aware of the importance of due process in internal procedures and of an employer's duty of care. Nonetheless, the corporation should be 'fully transparent' in its account of the handling of the investigation into Edwards, its knowledge of his arrest and the circumstances of the 'shocking crimes' to which he had pleaded guilty.

Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, said: "The appalling revelations about Huw Edwards have been met with shock and revulsion across the BBC, with morale amongst newsroom colleagues particularly low."



### Bristol Cable's prize for challenging status quo

Independent news title The Bristol Cable has raised more than its £100,000 membership target and has unlocked a £40,000 grant as a consequence. The additional cash came from Chicago-based charity Reva & David Logan Foundation that supports investigative journalism. The Cable launched its membership campaign in September 2023 to encourage more Bristolians to back their in-depth reporting. The charity's website says its mission is to "initiate and support powerful innovative ideas and approaches that challenge the status quo".

# REASONS TO JOIN



## Press Freedom

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

**Are you keeping good company?**

Join the NUJ today at

[nuj.org.uk/join](https://www.nuj.org.uk/join)

**NUJ**  
NATIONAL UNION  
OF  
JOURNALISTS

[www.nuj.org.uk](https://www.nuj.org.uk)

# NUJ backs BBC presenter accused of bias over Gaza by Israeli official

**THE UNION** has sprung to the defence of BBC Today presenter Mishal Husain who was accused of pro-Palestine bias by Israeli government spokesperson David Mencer.

In a heated exchange during a recent interview on Radio 4's Today programme, Mencer, a British citizen and former director of Labour Friends of Israel, attacked Husain personally and the media generally for their coverage of the conflict in Gaza.

However, NUI general secretary Michelle Stanistreet said Husain was right to highlight the Israeli government's refusal to allow international journalists into Gaza.

"This failure to provide access has been condemned by media outlets and media freedom organisations around the world and the NUI reiterates its demands to allow journalists full access to Gaza," she said.

"The hypocrisy of condemning news reports coming from Gaza, including the latest figures of civilians killed, as speculation and baseless propaganda, whilst refusing to let the world's media in to report, was laid bare in the interview with David Mencer. Proclaiming that it's right to smear the BBC and making ridiculous accusations against his interviewer and other



journalists was desperate stuff. Abusing and hectoring journalists is always a bad look, particularly so when it is an official response from a government that seeks to make much of its democratic credentials.

"Mishal Hussain was the consummate professional, but government personnel should take their obligation to engage with the media and be scrutinised more seriously – not least when it is about a conflict that is causing so much devastation and instability in Gaza and in the wider region."

The NUI leader said there was mounting evidence that media staff had been targeted in Gaza "simply for doing their jobs". At least 132 media workers have been killed in the area, according to the International Federation of Journalists.

During the interview, Mencer said Husain warranted being made pro-Palestinian reporter of the year when she questioned him about reports of torture of Palestinian prisoners. He said when the BBC "parroted" death toll figures and information from Palestinian sources, it was making "Jews in the UK afraid to walk the streets".

**Abusing and hectoring journalists is always a bad look, particularly so when it is an official response**

**Michelle Stanistreet**  
NUI general secretary

## Unions fear for future of creative work in Wales

**ARTS** and culture in Wales is facing an existential crisis, according to a wide coalition of unions.

Funding cuts, the cost of living crisis, the pandemic and an exodus of workers have created a 'perfect

storm', said the Wales Federation of Entertainment Unions (comprising Bectu, Equity, the Musicians' Union, the Writers' Guild of Great Britain and the NUI).

The unions, representing the country's writers,

musicians, performers, creative professionals, journalists, crew, front of house staff and backstage workers, have written to the new first minister of Wales, Eluned Morgan, pointing out that cultural spending as

a proportion of the Welsh Government budget is one of the lowest in Europe. It is less than 0.15 per cent, compared to an average of 1.5 per cent.

The unions believe the government needs to draw

up a coherent, long-term investment strategy.

Broadcaster S4C's funding has been reduced from £101m in 2010 to £88.85m in 2023-24. Two of Wales' magazines – Planet and New Welsh Review – have closed.

## Afghan media licences suspended

**MORE** than three years after the Taliban's takeover in Afghanistan, the government has attempted to take broadcasters off air.

On July 22, the Afghan Telecom Regulatory Authority suspended 17 broadcast licences of

at least 14 media outlets in Nangarhar province in the east of the country, due to alleged non-payment of licence fees. The International Federation of Journalists condemned the attack on Afghanistan's media and demanded that the licences be reinstated.

The Afghan Ministry of Communications and Information Technology reportedly warned the 14 organisations they would not be allowed to operate until they settled their outstanding annual licence fees, amounting to 108,000 Afghanis (around £1,200) a year. The outlets in question, however, have continued to operate despite the allegations, according to the Afghan Independent Journalists' Union.



### National World makes 'niche' Mancunian move

National World has rebranded its Manchester website with the tagline 'Ordinary Mancs, extraordinary stories' in an attempt to increase readership. Manchester World is being relaunched 'with a new purpose and ethos centred on the people of the city', according to Press Gazette. Similarweb estimates the site received 770,230 visits in July compared to 36.5 million for the Manchester Evening News. Editor Adam Lord said it was about developing the site as a niche product.

# Do it yourself

## Graeme Bowman on how to get a book into print without using a publisher

**O**K, you've written your bestseller – what next? You can hand it over to a publisher who'll design your book cover, get it printed and deal with marketing, promo, distribution etc – but they'll also take most of your revenue.

Or you can self-publish and retain all your rights and revenue – but you'll have to deal with all the sales and production stuff yourself which will leave precious little time to crack on with your next bestseller. And great writers aren't always great booksellers.

I never wanted to self-publish. I wanted to hand my masterpiece (*Empire First: Churchill's War Against D-Day*) over to a publisher who'd sort out all the tedious admin while I soaked up the acclaim. But my 'reputable' publisher turned out to be something very different and that experience forced me to self-publish. On reflection, this suited my old school DIY sensibility perfectly.

I want to encourage NUJ members to bypass publishers and retain control of their rights and revenue so here's a selection of top tips gleaned from my own self-publishing experience. These are based on self-publishing a 520-page non-fiction paperback on a commercial basis: different rules might apply to different books.

**Font:** Your font says a lot about you and your book so play around till you find something suitable. I opted for Gill Sans MT because its minimal, uncluttered look suited a serious book on the Second World War and it's nice and thick in bold (great for chapter titles).

**Font size:** This is another crucial early decision because you must strike a balance between cost and readability. Big fonts are easy to read but need more pages (which will eat into your profits). I opted for size 11 Gill Sans

because it strikes a nice balance between readability, number of pages and printing costs.

**Book format:** Another crucial early decision. Look at other books in your genre and adopt a similar format. Most history books are A5 or royal – I tried A5 but royal makes more of a statement.

**Page formatting:** Normal Word documents are fine for tweaking drafts but the document you send to a printer must be formatted with differently sized right and left margins on alternate pages to accommodate the gutter that runs down the middle of every printed book. A friendly printer gave me a template to use for Empire Software packages, such as Vellum.com. You'll also need to set the size of your top and bottom margins and decide where your page numbers sit (I put mine at the top to avoid cluttering my footnotes).

**Printing:** Shop around – a local printer might reduce delivery charges. Most printers' websites offer free online quotes, but to use this, you need to know your book format, number of pages, preferred paper quality, whether you want a matte or gloss cover etc. Request



// I wanted a publisher to do all the tedious admin. But my 'reputable' publisher turned out to be something very different

a proof copy before placing your order (to make sure everything's tickety-boo). Finally, you'll need to balance the size of your print run against potential sales. Big print runs mean lower unit costs and more profit... but will your book sell?

**ISBN and bar code:** You'll need an ISBN to sell your book commercially in stores and through wholesalers. This is a three-step process: buy your ISBN: <https://nielsenisbnstore.com>; generate an ISBN barcode: <https://www.nielsenisbnstore.com/home/barcodes>; register your ISBN with Nielsen title editor: <https://www.nielsenitleeditor.com/titleeditor>.

**Website:** You'll need a website to sell your book – shop around to get a good deal and use someone who understands ecommerce. My website cost £500 but I was quoted £1500 and £2800 for the same job. Your book and website should - ideally – be identically titled so buy your domain name early.

**Book cover:** We live in an image-driven society so you really need to get this right. I'll close by showing you my two covers and ask you three questions: which cover do you prefer? Which will sell better? Why am I changing covers?

Good luck with your writing and shaping your own future. And I haven't even mentioned ebooks, spine size, working with Amazon/KDP or targeted Facebook ads...

**Empire First: Churchill's War Against D-Day is available via [www.empirefirst.org](http://www.empirefirst.org) (£15 + p&p paperback, £9.99 ebook)**



# Spluttering bile at the horror of Labour



The right-wing press should cut the apoplexy, says **Raymond Snoddy**

**L**ess than three months into a Labour government after 14 years of what many would see as Conservative misrule, the right-wing newspapers are in full cry.

There was barely even a honeymoon moment before the storm of cronyism, sleaze and scandal broke over the head of new prime minister Sir Keir Starmer. Psychologists might recognise a nice example of displacement theory.

Newspapers such as the Daily Mail, Daily Express and Daily Telegraph happily turned a blind eye to Conservative cronyism, sleaze and scandal on an industrial scale. The Times and The Sun have been more factual and balanced; they have effortlessly transferred their bile to Labour, not put off by the marked lack of evidence of any serious misdemeanours.

The newspapers criticising the ‘tensions’ in Downing Street created by Sue Gray, presumably being the chief of staff Sir Keir wants her to be, were silent as Dominic Cummings virtually ran the country while Boris Johnson completed a book. The prime minister is accused of being in the pockets of the trade unions because crippling strikes were quickly settled. The previous government failed to negotiate meaningfully with either junior doctors or train drivers; the cost of settling was less than the cost of the damage done to the country.

One area where the prime minister has been strong – dealing with extreme-right riots – is turned into a negative because prisoners were released early to make room for sentenced rioters. It is forgotten that the Conservatives already had such a policy in place and the crisis in the prison and judicial system was the result of years of underfunding.

The cronyism allegations stem from Sir Keir wanting a few of his outsiders in government, something done by many administrations over the years.

Then there is the great Lord Waheed Alli scandal or, as the Mail and Express dubbed it, ‘glasses for passes sleaze’.

While it would have been wiser if Sir Keir had paid for his own glasses and the suits also paid for by Lord Alli, it is absurd for the papers to suggest any connection with a temporary parliamentary pass and the £20,000 involved. The ‘scandal’ is reminiscent of the great Starmer pint and curry Covid issue and the Angela Rayner two houses affair. Both involved page after page of coverage, day after day, and the waste of thousands of hours of police time yet resulted in no action.

It is difficult to think of any reason why Sir Keir or even Sue Gray should not have given a Labour peer of more than 25 years’ standing a temporary pass if he had business to conduct in Downing Street.

Perhaps the biggest ‘scandal’ of all that has excited the Tory-supporting press is that Labour has deliberately exaggerated the parlous state of the public finances to justify new taxes.

That overlooks the fact that official figures announced during the election campaign showed that the national debt had risen to its highest level since 1962 – higher than during the pandemic.

According to the Tory press, the £22 billion black hole simply does not exist – even though the Office of Budget Responsibility is investigating former chancellor Jeremy Hunt’s budget forecasts involving such a sum.

LBC presenter James O’Brien aptly summed up the campaign – in particular by the Daily Mail – against Sir Keir and the Labour government:

“Page after page of spluttering vitriol” designed to denigrate Starmer “for not much at all.” After all, this was the paper that not only justified ‘the depravity and incompetence’ of Boris Johnson when prime minister but also gave him a lucrative column after he had been removed by his colleagues.

“What will they [the Mail] have left if/when he [Starmer] really messes up?” O’Brien asks. There are areas where Labour can be criticised. The removal of winter fuel allowances from 10 million pensioners seems too broadly drawn and will cause hardship to too many.

The biggest flaw in Starmer policymaking is one the right-wing press will never criticise him for – not in the most obvious way anyway. Starmer is turning a blind eye to the biggest black hole of all: the annual £100 billion cost in lost output of Brexit, according to Bloomberg, and the resulting £40 billion hit to the public purse.

Starmer is still insisting the Brexit issue is settled when it is clearly not, with a growing majority happy to rejoin the European Union. He is even against rejoining the Erasmus scheme that allows young people to study in the EU. Political expert Sir John Curtice has argued that Starmer had nothing to fear from Red Wall seats and that he would have got a larger share of the vote had he supported joining the single market.

Sir Keir should be criticised for all of the above, but not by the Brexit-supporting press which is accusing him of Brexit betrayal for largely symbolic trips to Germany and France.

In that – as in many things – the right-wing press have still not come to terms with the prospect of at least five more years of Labour government.

And, as they continue to splutter their vitriol, they face increasing irrelevance.

“There was barely a honeymoon moment before the storm of cronyism, sleaze and scandal broke over the head of new prime minister Sir Keir Starmer”

# Swansea

## Ruth Addicott looks at life and work in the Welsh city

**I**

f you stand by Swansea Bay and look out over the sea, you can see the lights from the steelworks in Port Talbot flickering in the distance.

The town has been synonymous with steel for more than a century and employed nearly 20,000 people at its peak. The steelworks' impending closure is a massive story.

Dean Thomas, Swansea correspondent for ITV Wales, says that for the surrounding community, it is akin to the closure of the mines.

"It has that gravity around it in terms of impact and the fear of what it means for the community, not just the workers but also the supply chains that go into the factory," he says. "The vast majority of the workforce will come from Swansea – it is going to have a huge impact."

Thomas was born in Swansea and has worked for ITV Wales since 2009.

"People in Swansea think they don't get heard – they get ignored, particularly in seats of power in the Senedd and Westminster – so my job is to get Swansea's issues at the top of the agenda. If I can lead that bulletin, whether it be the maternity scandal or Port Talbot, I get to represent the community."

His investigation into the maternity unit at Singleton Hospital led to the Welsh Government putting the unit into enhanced monitoring and an independent review, but he is one of the few reporters on the ground.

ITV Cymru Wales, BBC Cymru Wales and BBC Radio Wales are based in Cardiff. Welsh language broadcaster S4C is in Carmarthen. Local radio station Swansea Sound is now Greatest Hits Radio South Wales, owned by Bauer.

When it comes to TV and film, Swansea has become a sought-after location. ITV World Productions filmed its upcoming drama *Until I Kill You* in the city, which tells the true story of Delia Balmer and her relationship with murderer John Sweeney. The Bay Studios have facilities on the outskirts and Dragon Studios, the largest film and TV complex in Wales, is near Bridgend.

The daily newspaper is the South Wales Evening Post and covers Swansea, Carmarthenshire, Neath and Port Talbot. It was founded in 1893 (Dylan Thomas worked there briefly) and is published by Reach.

The paper has seen huge cuts like everywhere else, which included the closure of its previous headquarters in Adelaide Street, which looked like the office from *The Office*. Staff now work predominantly from home.

The website merged with WalesOnline in 2017 and, along with the Carmarthen Journal and Llanelli Star, became part of the national Media Wales business (which owns the Cardiff-based Western Mail, South Wales Echo, Wales on Sunday and the Celtic Weekly Newspapers).

Kathy Thomas joined the South Wales Evening Post as senior reporter in 1991 and worked there for 24 years. She covered the devolution vote, the 1997 Labour landslide and the Clydach murders and years of ensuing appeals.

"There was always a Swansea link to nationwide stories – one of Fred West's victims, someone in Lockerbie, someone working in the Twin Towers," she recalls.

"Gradually, fewer and fewer of us were required to do more and work longer hours while becoming more of an irrelevance to the community as we watched sales plummet.

"It didn't matter that we were still the largest-selling paper in Wales – that just meant we were haemorrhaging readers more slowly than our rivals."

Thomas eventually made the move to comms with other former colleagues and is now press officer at Swansea University.

"In an ideal world, I would still be there now, part of a

## A place to broadcast about

### Jobs on air

Although trains to Cardiff take less than an hour and living costs are marginally lower, Dean Thomas, Swansea correspondent for ITV Wales, says broadcasters

often struggle to find journalists: "People see Cardiff as the capital but there's a lack of knowledge – people feel they'll become isolated. I know that's an issue felt by ITV and BBC."

### Learn in an hour

NUJ Training Wales runs various courses and 'fast skills Fridays' where you can learn a skill in an hour. Project manager Rachel Howells says the courses are open to

anyone. There is particular demand from freelancers' and late-career journalists looking to diversify and build skills in social media and video.

### Glorious and golden

Andy Pearson, former journalist and now PR for Swansea Council, says:

"Living here is brilliant. Although the city still bears the scars of World War Two bombing and industry decline, its natural environment is glorious – we have many miles of highly accessible golden sandy beaches and tracks for walkers and cyclists."

15-sub desk producing a paper that was selling 60K a day, but those days went," she says.

She says the closure of the newsroom and the direction taken by Reach will impact generations of future journalists as they will no longer experience the essential training and camaraderie.

Andy Pearson also has a background in newspapers and moved to Swansea in 1989 as a reporter for the Western Mail. He was sub-editor and features editor on the South Wales Evening Post and, later, editor at the Llanelli Star. He took redundancy in 2006 and now does PR for Swansea Council.

He says: "There was a time, not so long ago, when some media industry big players had significant news teams here, especially the Western Mail, South Wales Evening Post and radio station Swansea Sound. That's not the case now."

A lot of journalists are working in public sector PR, comms and marketing for the council, the health board, the police and universities.

One resource that has been pivotal in helping members sustain an income is NUJ Training Wales, run by Swansea-based Rachel Howells.

Howells was born and bred in the city and moved back after a stint in London. She is an active member of the NUJ, including being vice-chair of the Welsh executive council, and was inspired to get involved after receiving support from the NUJ herself after being made redundant as editor of the Big Issue in Cardiff.

"Journalists at the Evening Post fought a hard-won recognition battle, but then a lot of the activists were made redundant," she recalls.

Howells says members were "concerned about putting their heads above the parapet". There were also huge numbers of jobs lost around that time, the turnout at local

"There has always been a feeling that we are forgotten as a city."

**Dean Thomas,**  
Swansea  
correspondent,  
ITV Wales

"The people are excellent – they love their sport, music and big nights out."

**Andy Pearson,**  
former journalist,  
now PR for  
Swansea Council

"We've got everything we could want from living in a city, but we've also got beautiful, award-winning, world-class beaches."

**Rachel Howells,**  
project manager,  
NUJ Training Wales

branch meetings fell and the Swansea and district branch became dormant.

The Welsh executive council has now formed a South Wales branch for journalists across south, west and mid Wales. It has 370 members and is being trialled for a year, and is keen to hear from anyone who wants to get involved.

Disillusioned by the cuts, after the Port Talbot Guardian closed in 2009, Howells got together with local journalists and founded a local news service, the Port Talbot Magnet. She ran it for seven years while doing a PhD at Cardiff University on the demise of local newspapers. However, The Magnet folded in 2017 due to lack of funds.

A major problem for Swansea is that it is often overlooked when it comes to investment, with a lot of funding going to Cardiff instead. Thomas says Westminster's attitude is an issue and there is "a lack of knowledge and a lack of desire to improve places like Swansea". He cites the example of the £1 billion tidal lagoon, which was expected to transform the region and be replicated around the world but never materialised.

What Swansea lacks in funding, however, it makes up for in sport, with Swansea City FC, The Ospreys, Swansea Rugby Club (dating back to 1872), triathlons, cricket, watersports, golf and the Wales National Pool. It's also a top spot for surfing.

As well as the Mumbles, there is the new 3,500 seat Swansea Arena, the Grand Theatre (founded in 1897), the Dylan Thomas Centre and Swansea Museum – the oldest in Wales.

"It's a fantastic place to live," says Kathy Thomas. "Even though the city centre has since seen the decline of its role as a retail centre with a huge hinterland and is now the typical collection of vape shops, bubble tea takeaways and charity shops, nothing can ever take away the fact that it lies alongside an enormous sandy beach with access to some of the most beautiful countryside in the UK."



# Can journalists be good leaders?

An editor needs a specific set of skills.  
**Neil Merrick** learns how to develop them

**T**he road to an editorship is generally paved with years of dedicated journalism, plus a scattering of exclusives. In theory, only the very best are appointed to head media titles and inspire others. But what skills are needed to be an editor, and do the best journalists necessarily make the best managers or leaders?

Earlier this year, the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) launched its first leadership qualification for recently appointed editors, which has the same academic value (level 7) as a master's degree. It is also open to more experienced editors who wish to brush up their skills.

Topics include leading a team, change management, strategy and wellbeing in the workplace. The course is studied independently through distance learning.

Before setting up the course, the NCTJ consulted editors to find out what type of skills should be covered. The message received was that editors are extremely busy people but keen to both learn new skills and fine-tune existing ones. Good communication came high up the list, as well as handling difficult situations.

"We wanted to touch all bases and reflect an ever-evolving industry," says Laura Adams, head of the NCTJ's journalism skills academy.

Traditionally, editors made their way to the top by excelling in the newsroom, with limited additional training. An appointment was more likely to stem from hard work and a little luck, rather than any leadership prowess, says Alan Geere, a freelance trainer and former editor of titles in the UK and the US.

"You find yourself climbing the pole," says Geere. "Suddenly, you're in the editor's chair without any preparation for the role other than being a good journalist. Most editors are woefully underprepared."

Once settled in their oak-panelled office (or open-plan equivalent), editors must get to grips with finance and recruitment. Managing a media budget is more complex than filling out an expenses form, says Geere, while successful recruitment depends on support from HR professionals, not relying on instinct.

Twenty years ago, the University of Central Lancashire was somewhat ahead of its time in establishing a postgraduate programme for newsroom leaders. After a four-year break from 2015, it was relaunched as the journalism innovation and leadership programme (JIL), attracting people from media titles and publishers from across the world.

Programme director François Nel sees the rise of leadership training in the media as a reflection of relatively recent changes, notably 'digital transformation'. At one time, he says, editors were appointed "to steer the ship and avoid any icebergs" and that was about it.

To some extent, they operated in a similar fashion to the people they once worked for or alongside in newsrooms. As editors, they were responsible for training staff beneath

## Course gives 'helicopter view'

**MATT BRINDLEY** was delighted to be invited by ITV News, his employer, to join the innovation and leadership programme for journalists at University of Central Lancashire.

After completing the year-long programme last December, Brindley not only holds a postgraduate qualification but also has picked up ideas from editors across the world.

Chief among them are the need to escape from short-term deadlines and think more strategically about what will benefit his organisation in the longer term.

"It helped me to define my North Star goal and how to get there," he says.

Brindley became managing director of the ITV Network newsroom two years ago after holding other leadership posts at ITV.

The education programme, he says, made him a more holistic leader who is happy to take time to understand situations.

"It enables you to see things in 360 degrees," he says.

Last year's programme was also attended by Maeve Connolly, head of audience

strategy and growth at the Irish News.

"It was great to step outside the day job and get a helicopter view of the industry, as well as learn from others," she says.

She was promoted to her post this summer after being deputy digital editor. By the end of 2024, she should complete her second year of the course and gain a master's degree after writing a thesis on how young people in Northern Ireland perceive legacy media coverage of issues linked to the Troubles.

She values how personal and professional development are combined: "You don't just think about the industry but about yourself. It gave me clarity about my work and my career."



them, but this somewhat ad-hoc system ran into trouble when the skills required by editors as well as newsroom journalists changed significantly.

Consequently, senior journalists with years of newsroom experience are now under pressure to return to the classroom and hone their skills.

“Editors like learning but they don’t like being taught,” observes Nel. “There is an appetite but no infrastructure.”

The JIL programme involves distance learning and twice-yearly get-togethers where candidates meet up and share experiences. In 2023, this included face-to-face sessions in southern Africa as well as the UK.

By becoming better leaders, editors can rise up within a media organisation and take a seat at the ‘top table’, says Nel. This is best achieved by learning alongside people from different backgrounds and, perhaps, with vastly different jobs. “You don’t learn from similarity. You learn from diversity and from people who aren’t like us.”

## Skills for editors

- Motivating an editorial team, sometimes in a challenging environment
- Managing underperformance
- Handling difficult conversations, including where there is conflict and anger
- Demonstrating soft skills, including emotional intelligence and empathy
- Managing journalists’ workload
- Financial management, including budgeting
- Understanding how strategy shapes a media organisation
- Implementing change, including overcoming resistance to it
- Encouraging creative and innovative approaches
- Understanding wellbeing in the workplace, including how to manage stress and spot mental health issues

Editor training is also becoming more commonplace at magazine publishers, such as Bauer Media. Bauer runs its own training academy, offering a range of courses for journalists at its own titles, and from outside media.

Tim Pollard, group digital editorial director, says there has been a notable ‘mindset shift’ towards leadership training at Bauer and elsewhere. This includes getting to grips with remote leadership, where a team is split between offices or individuals work from home. “You have to think about setting up an afternoon water-cooler moment to help motivate a team,” he says.

Pollard recently completed a two-year MSc postgraduate degree in senior leadership run by the Bauer Academy and De Montfort University. Among other things, this covered cultivating high-performance teams, management and leadership styles, and data analytics.

“It made me a better leader and showed how to lead teams through change,” he says. “Publishing is heading towards choppy waters and therefore you need people who can lead.”

Some may ask what the difference is between management and leadership. Put simply, management consists of instructing people to do something while leadership involves inspiring them to perform or operate in a particular way.

Editor training does not come cheap. The NCTJ’s leadership qualification costs £999 plus VAT, while the JIL programme comes in at £2,800 or £5,400 for the full MA degree.

The NCTJ qualification stresses the importance of softer skills, such as emotional intelligence and empathy. Meeting deadlines may need to be balanced against the welfare, resilience and safety of individuals, says Adams.

Stefan Stern, a freelance journalist and teacher who writes about management for The Guardian and FT, points out that journalism is not the only profession where people rise to the top based on achievements in non-leadership roles. Teaching, medicine and law come into the same category, to a lesser or greater extent.

While editors need good news sense, the changing media environment means super-hero bosses who walk around the newsroom, shout instructions and rewrite copy are mostly consigned to history.

“The idea that one person provides all the leadership for a complex organisation is a myth,” says Stern.

Distributive leadership, where decision-making is shared among colleagues, is generally more successful in journalism, where staff tend to be suspicious of those who cross into management and of senior management in general.

“A lot of training helps people understand the most effective way of talking to people and guiding them,” Stern adds.

Remote leadership also works better when editors take a collegiate approach and do not give the appearance of a boss ‘checking in’ on team members, says Alan Geere. It is better for an editor to praise journalists for stories. “Everybody should feel it’s a worthwhile exercise,” he adds.

Ultimately, effective editors never forget their roots, but build on their newsroom experience to benefit the wider organisation.

“You become a bridge between senior executives and people doing the job down below,” says Geere. “You are managing up and managing down at the same time.”



# Are podcasts going strong?

Some say the format is still on the rise - others think its bubble has burst. **Stephanie Power** went to the Podcast Show to find out.

**T**he first thing you notice when you walk into The Podcast Show at London's Business Design Centre is the noise. The main hall is filled with exhibitors and there are stages in three of the four corners. Speakers have to compete with hundreds of people milling around. Wireless headphones perch on the back of seats. You can put them on and they'll give you some respite, but it's still hard listening. It's ironic for an event that's all about audio.

Despite this, the annual Podcast Show is a great place to meet and catch up with fellow freelancers working in this seemingly ever-growing industry.

Honestly, everyone's got one. If you have an iPhone, there are 2.7 million of them lurking inside the podcasts app. Only 350,000 are active - but that's still a lot.

Towards the end of 2023, there was talk of the podcast bubble bursting.

Ryan Dille, executive producer at Pushkin Industries, makers of Revisionist History, Against the Rules, and The Happiness Lab, says two things happened:

"There was an explosion of content and many of the people starting a new show weren't told how difficult it is to grow and sustain an audience big enough to make it profitable. Big stars, used to big audiences and big returns, must have been disappointed when both downloads and income were modest. I presume they decided the opportunity costs of making a show were too high, and backed out.

"The second part of the bubble was generated by investors and the big platforms signing multi-million dollar deals."

He is talking about Spotify, which started to buy out other platforms in 2019. In early 2023, it began laying off staff.

"The realisation that a vanishingly small group of podcasters are going to get very, very rich has cast a shadow

over the industry. I don't think this wake-up call is a wholly bad thing. However, it has caused many well-staffed podcast makers to shed employees and look for more cost-efficient formats and production models."

Podcasts generally rely on advertising. In the US, fears of a recession made advertisers more cautious. Then Apple changed the way podcasters could count listeners.

This is something of a dark art anyway. Companies don't share their figures, arguing that they are commercially sensitive. All those millions of podcasts that people are downloading but not actually listening to? They're not counted anymore. This in turn creates a problem for those same podcasters trying to attract ad revenue.

So maybe the bubble is under pressure, but judging by the people at the Podcast Show, it hasn't burst.

What about the types of podcast that are successful? The Podcast Show has a decent collection of celebrities: James Corden, Martin and Roman Kemp, Peter Mandelson, Harry from Traitors, Fearnie Cotton and Cush Jumbo.

Many of these are fronting double-header podcasts that have become so popular and are cheap to make.

If you are a news junkie, there is plenty of analysis to choose from. During the election campaign, you could easily spend a morning listening to the previous day's Newscast, Today Podcast, The News Agents, and then finish off with a bit of The Rest Is Politics. But this is mainly analysis, not news in the traditional sense.

Nick Robinson, who presents Today and the Today Podcast, says: "Our podcast adds value to Today. It's not an alternative. We will do some of the best interviews on Today, then the podcast can draw out from it - why were those questions asked and why were those answers given? What more can we do to analyse the subject and give you more explanation? But all of this is done with the deepest roots into the foundations of the strongest news organisation in the world - the BBC. I listen to some brilliant podcasts, very



# The Rest is POLITICS



**2.7m**  
Amount of apps in the iPhone podcast app store



think 'serious' journalists will rise to the challenge though. The Economist has made some great and popular world affairs series. And the ITV Post Office scandal drama showed that novel, non-news formats can have a huge impact."

Lewis Goodall, formerly of BBC's Newsnight and now a presenter of Global's News Agents, defends podcasting and goes further. Speaking at the Podcast Show about investigative journalism minutes before Rishi Sunak made his rain-soaked general election announcement, he said: "2010 was the TV election with the TV debates, '17 and '19 were the Twitter elections. I sort of feel that 2024 will be the podcast election. Not just because of us but because, in the last few years, there has been such a proliferation of political podcasting where people turn to get their political fix. With the decline of programmes like Newsnight and others, there is going to be such an appetite for this. Hopefully we can satisfy that demand."

In fairness, Goodall does get out and about, making old-fashioned, long-form audio packages. He says you cannot appreciate what's going on unless you are on the ground. I agree. But he's just one person and we need teams of reporters.

Alice Sandelson is commercial strategy director at Tortoise Media, which tries to focus on long-form investigations. "We were approached to make those two-header series. We decided that, in the main, we didn't want to do that. But the move towards celebrity has definitely happened," she says.

Sandelson says sponsorship is vital for Tortoise Media but acknowledges that sponsors often prefer to support long-term programmes rather than limited series. News can be harder to sponsor for two main reasons. One, the audience is generic and advertisers would prefer a more niche audience, and two, news is deemed unsafe because sponsors can never know what's coming next. Despite the tough conditions – Tortoise Media made losses of £4.6 million before tax in 2022 – Sandelson is positive about the future.

"What might surprise some people is that our seven-minute daily Sensemaker podcast – we take one story every day – is our most commercially successful," she says. "We have other significant revenue streams – getting a podcast series optioned for TV or film, for example. We have a first-look deal with Sky Studios which means they get first dibs on our stories. Investigative journalism is expensive but these things come in waves and we believe there will always be room for clever journalism."

Back at the Podcast Show, Nick Robinson and Amol Rajan, who present Today and the Today Podcast, share the stage with Justin Webb and Marianna Spring from Americast, as well as Adam Fleming (from all the casts). They debate over the amount of content on offer, with Robinson jokingly suggesting that peak podcast is right here in front of us on the stage.

Rajan disagrees: "I think the idea of peak podcasting, which I see written about in these unbelievably tedious columns, is such utter bullshit. That's like saying we are at peak YouTube or peak Instagram. It's absurd. When a new podcast comes along, if it's good, I think, great, I'll listen to it. If it's not good, I just listen to something else. It's not a problem. You see this written about by intellectually docile writers who are used to a world where if you listen to one radio station it means you're not listening to something else. Podcasting is not a zero-sum game."

The Podcast Show: panellists discussed whether the decline of news programmes would make people turn to podcasts for a political fix

**There was an explosion of content and many weren't told how difficult it is to grow and be profitable**

successful, but the number of times I think 'you've just listened to the Today programme'. The content they're adding is superb. But what we have to do is to add value."

Is journalism getting pushed out by shows where famous people, ex politicians and journalists just talk to each other? I should declare an interest here.

I've moved from freelance Radio 4 reporting and producing, after 16 years to working for two big-name podcast companies, Gary Lineker's Goalhanger and Amazon's Wonderly, writing dramatic scenes for a history podcast, with two presenters, talking to each other.

And I also have to admit my listening habits have changed. I don't automatically put on Today. I even had a phase of getting my political fix solely from Rory Stewart and Alastair Campbell before I realised that was a bit... narrow.

It's not just me. Ryan Dille, an ex-colleague from Radio 4 News programmes The World at One and PM, as well as Broadcasting House, says he's also lost the habit of turning on a radio station and listening to whatever was on.

"That used to expose me to some great stuff... but also a lot of dross. I worry about the future of 'serious reporting' - because it is a lot to expect a large number of people to tune into reporting on an obscure conflict or a slightly dry public policy debate. I

# And the winner is

Awards give you far more than prizes. They can build your credibility and help you charge more for your work, says **Linda Harrison**

**D**o you enter awards? If you're like me, you probably think it is too time consuming, not to mention an almighty faff. Then there is also the sheer volume of awards out there, with some seeming to exist only to make money for the organisers.

Where do you start? And is trying to become an 'award-winning' journalist really worth the bother?

Debbie Tilley is an award strategist and writer. She launched her award-writing business in 2022 to help female entrepreneurs win awards. In 2023, she achieved an impressive 97 per cent success rate of getting entrepreneurs shortlisted.

Tilley says: "Entering awards is the absolute best way of not only getting your name out there but also getting you known by your target audience, whether they be ideal customers, employers or potential partners. And, crucially, getting you known as the go-to – a credible subject expert. That opens doors to endless opportunities."

## How awards help careers

Freelance journalist Donna Ferguson agrees that awards open up opportunities. She has won an incredible eight awards for her work on The Guardian and The Observer as a freelance financial and property writer since 2013 and has been shortlisted for another 30. What is her secret?

Ferguson says: "I decided to go freelance while on maternity leave – I was an editor and it was a full-on job, and I went freelance so I could work flexible hours. I'd never written for any nationals before I went freelance and I had major imposter syndrome. I worked during my baby's nap times. I started pitching to The Guardian because it was my dream publication. I got a commission and my story made the front of the Money section."

Ferguson entered the article into an award. She remembers that the rules of the awards at that time stated that you needed three pieces to be allowed to enter. As she'd only just started freelancing, she only had three pieces in total, all of which were for The Guardian. She put them all in and was astonished to be shortlisted.

"I couldn't believe it when my name was read out at the awards ceremony," says Ferguson. "I had trembling legs and couldn't speak – it was a huge shock."

"But it was also a massive self-confidence boost, and it went on to open a lot of doors for me. After the award win, money editors started following me on social media. And I began writing for more publications, and then entered more awards."

She now writes for a range of titles and also teaches a masterclass for Women in Journalism on freelancing to help women build their confidence.

Ferguson adds: "Winning awards is great for your reputation. And being able to put 'award-winning freelance journalist' in your email signature puts you in a stronger negotiating position for fees."

"Winning awards has been great for my confidence but it's also been very important for my career."

## Fill your trophy cabinet

### DONNA FERGUSON

shares her advice for winning a few prizes.

- When entering awards, choose the piece you care about the most. Mention any personal reasons behind writing it, go into the story background and explain why you're putting that piece forward. How can you get the judges to sit up and take notice?
- Is there an article that was hard to pitch, where you bent over backwards to get a commission or you had to be super persistent to get information? Maybe you had to send lots of

emails to get an interview or you had to keep chasing for information. Show you've been tenacious and persistent. It's often not what you've written but the effort it has cost you.

- You'll usually find previous winners and the articles they wrote listed on awards websites. You can sometimes also view

the shortlisted pieces.

This, more than anything, gives you a sense of what judges are looking for in that category.

- Ask other people, including journalists, which of your articles they think are the best.
- Once you have been shortlisted – or have won – keep entering. Once you have won one award, it gives you more confidence to enter again. The more award schemes you enter, the more you'll find out what the judges like; it's often a case of learning about it through trial and error.







S...

### What judges want

If you are struggling to know where to start with an awards entry, have entered an award in the past, but didn't manage to get shortlisted, it can be extremely disheartening.

While it is disappointing to spend hours perfecting an awards entry only to read through the shortlist weeks later and realise that you're not on it, don't give up. Half the battle is knowing what the judges are looking for.

Tilley says that judges like 'the out-of-the-ordinary' in entries.

She explains: "They mainly want to see something unique that they haven't seen before, and they want to feel your passion."

Lily Canter is co-director of Freelancing for Journalists – and part of the team that shortlists entries for the Freelancing for Journalists awards.

Her advice is: "First, make sure you enter awards. Some categories have so few entries that it can be relatively easy to be shortlisted. You can usually tell if awards are struggling for entries as they extend the application deadline."

Canter also recommends trying to surprise the judges or those deciding on the shortlist.

"The pieces that really resonated with us this year were unusual takes on well-worn subjects, or something we didn't know about that we just found fascinating," she explains. "It doesn't need to be mainstream at all – just super interesting."

### Find an award scheme

- There is a list of free-to-enter journalism and student journalism awards on the [JurnoResources](https://tinyurl.com/jr-awards) website, which is updated regularly: <https://tinyurl.com/jr-awards>
- You can view the 2023 Freelance Journalism Awards winners, with the judges' comments, here: 2024 winners: <https://tinyurl.com/fl-journo-awards-2024>

### How to perfect your entry

This sounds obvious, but it is important to read and check all the criteria carefully.

Canter says: 'This year, we had feature articles entered into the news category and campaigning stories entered into the features category. Think carefully about which category your entry fits best. And don't write a really long supporting statement. Like good journalism, keep it short, snappy and engaging.'

You also need to evidence everything, whether through stats showing growth or client satisfaction, or via stories of hardships overcome or clients awed.

'It's important to use a mix of both because, while the stats are necessary, it's the stories that will resonate and be remembered,' Tilley explains.

'Top bloopers include not using all the word count available, wasting words with unnecessary intros, making big statements without giving specific examples and writing like a corporate business report. Write like the human you are and let your passion show.'

Tilley also suggests using active tenses to take ownership of what you have done and not being shy about writing about your achievements. One tip is to pretend you are writing about your best friend – or get them to read it through and big you up.

'And, if you're nominated, shout, shout and shout some more,' she adds. 'Waiting until you actually win is one of the biggest mistakes a finalist can make.'

'Shout as soon as you're shortlisted because 90 per cent of the benefits of awards are accessible purely through being a finalist – but only if you make the most of it. Connect with all the other finalists, sponsors, judges etc, attend all the events, and share, like and comment on social media.'

The Women in Journalism (WIJ) Scotland website also has some great advice on how to enter awards and some top tips for entering the Scottish Press Awards. First, it advises that 'substance trumps style every time'.

Then, it recommends choosing your strongest stories.

Also awards entrants should not worry about an article's layout as the judges will be going beyond that. WIJ Scotland notes what they will be looking for: 'powerful story-telling, inclusive comment or game-changing investigation will impress, however presented on the page or online'.

Provide plenty of context, and explain to the judges why your work had impact when it did – and how important that was.

And don't think that just because your work is local, it will not stand up against national stories: 'Strong, impactful journalism is strong impactful journalism on whatever landscape or platform it's published.'

And WIJ Scotland's final piece of advice? Just enter. It states: "There is no point in simply muttering about the same old people winning if you don't take part. Have confidence in your own work and get it out there."

Your historic photo use can land you with a big bill, says **Helen Nugent**

# Shocks from **the** **past**

**W**hen an email arrived demanding more than £400 for an image used two years ago, I assumed it was spam. Then, two weeks later, a similar message landed in my inbox, insisting that I owed more than £700 for a photo published a decade earlier. I started to panic.

As a freelance journalist, I am vigilant about image use. I always ensure that the relevant permissions are in place, and I steer well clear of anything even vaguely questionable. In my spare time, I'm the editor of a volunteer-led culture website which doesn't make any money so I'm reliant on images provided by PRs, photos for which we have written authorisation and our own photography. Aside from the odd unscrupulous individual trying his luck, I've rarely had any issues.

But times have changed. The increasing sophistication of technology, able to scrape the internet for content and data, means that tracking down unlicensed images is quicker, easier and cheaper than ever before. A slew of copyright enforcement agencies has sprung up, joining the more established picture companies, and advanced automated software scours the internet for infringements. Claims dating back many years are common, and it's not just freelance journalists who are receiving emails out of the blue.

## Horror stories

While increased scrutiny of online images is a good thing – of course photographers should be paid for their work – the approach being taken by various picture agencies seems entirely disproportionate to any perceived infractions and, as I discovered, is causing widespread anxiety and stress.

With the NUJ's help, I learned that the emails I received were legitimate, sent by PA Media Group and Alamy (PA acquired Alamy in 2020). I asked for advice on a freelance journalism forum and was inundated with replies. Agencies

wanting payment for pictures used many years ago were common occurrences, as were automated emails adding multiple late payment fees. A detailed breakdown of the large fees was not provided unless asked for, nor was proof readily given that the agency owned the rights to the image.

One freelance told me about a £450 fee for a licence originally costing at £45. Another said that an image initially used because it was free was later attached to a licence fee. Another woman told me that, after paying a collection agency for image use, it continued to hound her for yet more money, claiming it could still see the picture on the back end of her WordPress site.

Meanwhile, Elyssa Campbell-Barr, editor of *Walk*, the Ramblers' magazine, explains what happened to a local Ramblers group.

"We have walking groups all over the country run by lovely volunteers who just like to get people out walking. A lot of them are retired. They are doing it out of the goodness of their hearts and there is no profit involved at all. So, one group forwarded a historic usage email to us asking for nearly £500. It had been used on a local Ramblers' group website nine years previously because they were doing a walking trip, and was uploaded by an elderly volunteer who was just starting to learn how to build a website.

"In the intervening nine years, the volunteer who had built the web page had died. The person the email was sent to had never built a website and hadn't had anything to do with images before. It was an elderly guy who was not in good health and suddenly he received this threatening email for a huge and frightening amount of money."

She continues: "The email was forwarded to us and there were lots of exchanges of emails with the picture agency where we urged clemency and pointed out that it was a

## What do photographers think?

### SIMON CHAPMAN

(pictured) is a freelance photographer and vice-chair of the NUJ's photographers' council.

He says: "It's not good enough not to understand the rules if you're handling photos for publication.

"Press photography has been hammered over the last 20 years and, frankly, we're not massively sympathetic to people saying that they don't understand the rules."

However, Chapman says there is another problem:

"Some PR agencies don't seem to be able to read the metadata [the image information and how it should be used] on a photo, and don't realise the importance of sourcing and where the photos have come from."

Natasha Hirst, president of the NUJ and chair of the NUJ photographers' council, says that copyright theft is common, which is why many photographers hand over to companies to chase up infringements on their behalf.

However, she believes agencies that "very aggressively chase infringements and frighten people with threats and heavy fines are damaging the reputation of photographers who deserve to be paid for the use of their images".



SIMON CHAPMAN

ANDY POTTS

genuine mistake, it was nine years ago, no money was made from it and the person who posted the picture was no longer alive. After a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, we managed to whittle the fee down. It took four months to get it sorted.”

Campbell-Barr believes that the action taken by the picture agency amounted to bullying and that the sum demanded was out of proportion to the website it appeared on and the person who initially used it. She also feels there should be a time limit attached to cash demands and a more measured approach taken by picture agencies – sentiments echoed by many others.

Georgia Lewis is a freelance journalist and editor. She was editing a travel trade magazine when an email arrived from Schillings, claiming that a photo featured in an advertorial produced in partnership with a tourism board, which had supplied the image, had been used without permission.

“I kept getting the same email demanding payment and I kept giving the same explanation, informing them to contact the tourism board about image use. In the meantime, we removed the promotion from our website, but there wasn’t much we could do about the printed copies of the magazine. I tried to contact the tourism board myself to let them know what was going on and suggest they be more diligent with images they supply to the media, but my emails went unanswered and phone calls were unreturned.”

Lewis says that the law firm’s actions “felt like harassment” after “the saga went on for weeks”.

Andrew Draper is editor of BEST (Batteries and Energy Storage Technology). He says: “A picture agency got in touch saying that you have got our picture on your website, you haven’t got a licence and you owe us something like £800. It was put on the website before my time so I handed it over to my managing director, who lost a lot of sleep over it.”

Draper adds that, while there have only been two emails of this type, “the question that immediately comes to mind is, how many more of these pictures are there? I did feel that [the sums] they were asking for were a lot of money. There was a certain amount for a penalty and interest, and it all added up.”

Meanwhile, a former PA employee who wishes to remain anonymous was surprised to learn that big picture agencies such as PA are rigorously pursuing individuals and organisations for historic image use.

She says: “At one point when I was at PA, we were told that, because of AI, there is now this software that scrapes the internet looking for instances [of photos with rights attached]. It sounds like what these agencies are doing. It’s weird because we were told that we’ve got to be careful at PA because this could happen to us. But no one told us that PA was also doing it.”

### What is the best course of action?

When asked about image use, a spokesperson for PA Media and Alamy told *The Journalist*: “Platforms such as Alamy are merely custodians of the content, and the copyright holders who submit to our platform expect us to protect their works in accordance with copyright law.”

The spokesperson also said that “we are happy to negotiate fees on a case-by-case basis depending on the end use and ensure any fees charged are appropriate” and that at Alamy “we don’t have a time limit as such – we will, however, only pursue suspected infringements if the images are on the



**A picture agency got in touch saying you owe us something like £800. I felt the sums asked for were a lot**



Alamy platform or we have permission to act on behalf of the copyright holder”.

It took weeks for me to prove that I had permission to use a single image. In the case of the other photograph, after I put forward my case, the agency agreed to accept smaller sum.

So, what lessons have been learned? Chapman says: “The only safe way to use images is to have clear written permission from the copyright owner or their licensee (e.g. an agency), with a clear paper trail and a good content management system to keep track of how each image can be used.”

I will be following Chapman’s advice. But I hope that agencies will rethink their heavy-handed approach to individuals and organisations which have acted in good faith. Even if the agencies’ actions are lawful, surely it’s not good business practice to put the fear of God into people?

by **Mark Fisher**

# arts

## Books >

### The Newspaper Man

David Belcher  
Out now  
Into Books

The sometime diarist and cultural correspondent on Glasgow's Herald turns fiction writer with a yarn about an ex-hack who moves from Scotland to rural Italy but feels the tug of home.

<https://tinyurl.com/27besdvg>

### Freedom: Memories 1954–2021

Angela Merkel  
November 26  
Macmillan

Germany's former chancellor reflects

on her 35 years in the German Democratic Republic and her subsequent 35 years in a reunited Germany. As well as looking back to the fall of the Berlin Wall, she reflects on her conversations with the world's most powerful people.

<https://tinyurl.com/2819majv>

## Comedy >

### Jon Ronson's Psychopath's Night

On tour  
October 13–November 14

The journalist and filmmaker returns to a subject he tackled 15 years ago in *The Psychopath Test*, with further anecdotes and

questions about what people consider to be normal.

<https://tinyurl.com/2ym88r5h>

## Exhibitions >

### David Kronn Collection

Irish Museum of Modern Art,  
Dublin  
October 28–January 26

Irish-born, US-based collector David Kronn has given nearly 200 photographs to the IMMA. His fourth donation includes the work of modernist photographers such as André Kertész, Irving Penn and Berenice Abbott, as well as many contemporary works.

<https://tinyurl.com/24hg9d5o>



## Festivals >

### Other Voices

Cardigan  
October 31–November 2

Streaming for free on YouTube and taking place live in West Wales in its fifth year, the Irish-Welsh festival features Bill Ryder-Jones, Fabiana Palladino and Georgia Ruth, plus 90 more acts. BBC broadcaster Huw Stephens presents.

<https://tinyurl.com/23ujo4ze>



### WOMEX – Worldwide Music Expo

Aviva Studios, Manchester  
October 23–27

By day, the music industry delegates have a trade fair. By night, the public are welcomed in for an international line-up of 50 acts representing folk, roots, jazz and electronica.

<https://tinyurl.com/2ythpa5y>

## Films >

### No Other Land

General release  
October 4

Created by a Palestinian-Israeli collective, this documentary is about Palestinian activist Basel Adra and Israeli journalist Yuval Abraham as they resist Israel's mass expulsion of Palestinians from Masafer Yatta in the West Bank and record the steady destruction of a community.

<https://tinyurl.com/28vf6z28>

### Small Things Like These

General release  
November 1

Killian Murphy and Emma Watson star in this Magdalene laundry drama. Based on Claire Keegan's novel about a priest who discovers secrets in the town convent, it was acclaimed at the Berlin International Film Festival.

<https://tinyurl.com/2xl3m9mb>

### Never Look Away

General release  
November 8

Margaret Moth was a fearless war reporter for CNN whose work took her to trouble spots in Iraq, Georgia and

## In depth >

# Eccentric tales and major scoops

It seems only appropriate that Alex Morrison's book started with a letter to the editor. In 2022, the sometime local newspaper reporter wrote to *The Journalist* seeking stories from colleagues about their experiences dealing with the public. He was thinking about the unexpected stories that present themselves when word comes down that "there's someone in reception".

That provides the title of his anthology of weird and wonderful stories called – what else? – *There's Someone in Reception: Adventures in Local Journalism*. Drawing on 70 years' worth of anecdotes, many of them gathered as a result of his

letter to this magazine, the book is a compilation of eccentric tales and major scoops that have fallen into the lap of unsuspecting journalists.

Morrison knows it is rare for a story that arrives in this way to have much merit. What a reader and a reporter regard as news are frequently at

odds. But when the two coincide, the result can be what makes local journalism special.

The author, who has also reported for the BBC, gives the example of a walk-in he dealt with as a newbie reporter on the *Crawley News*. He doubted the 78-year-old waiting for him at the front desk would have a breakthrough story, but what the man offered – a theory involving aubergines and climate change – was the perfect combination of the local and the global.

"It's a classic example of why many people hold two (somewhat contradictory) views about local journalism," he writes. "It's ridiculous and it really matters."



Bosnia and earned her a Courage in Journalism Award. Actor and activist Lucy Lawless tells her story in her directorial debut.

<https://tinyurl.com/2awumrhe>

## Television >

### The Frost Tapes

Sky

Autumn

Drawing on David Frost's archive of more than 10,000 interviews, this six-part series returns to some of the key events and personalities of the 20th century from The Beatles to Richard Nixon, supplemented by modern-day talking heads.

<https://tinyurl.com/2yth72bl>



## Sherwood

BBC 1

Autumn

David Morrissey stars as Detective Chief Superintendent Ian St Clair in James Graham's second series of the post-miners' strike drama. David Harewood, Robert Lindsay, Monica Dolan and Sharlene Whyte are also on board.

<https://tinyurl.com/26bcluog>

## Theatre >

### Odyssey 84

Sherman Theatre, Cardiff

October 11–26

Tim Price's play uses Homer's Odyssey as the inspiration to tell a personal and political story of industrial strife and community action.

<https://tinyurl.com/224k54ot>

### Nowhere

Battersea Arts Centre, London

October 1–19

Actor and activist Khalid Abdalla reflects on his involvement in the Egyptian revolution of 2011 and the counter-revolution that followed.

<https://tinyurl.com/235loa4l>

## Spotlight >

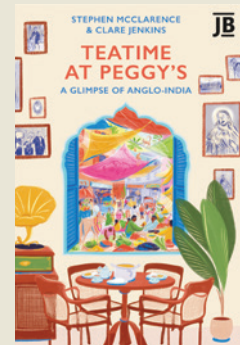
# Two for tea

For NUJ life members Clare Jenkins and Stephen McClarence, Teatime at Peggy's is something of a labour of love. Subtitled 'A glimpse of Anglo-India', it began life when travel writer McClarence wrote for The Telegraph about their 15 years of visits to the railway town of Jhansi in India.

Radio journalist Jenkins also contributed a piece to BBC Radio 4's Home Truths about Captain Roy 'Bud' Abbott, the last British farmer in India, who was responsible for the livelihoods of

3,000 villagers in Madhya Pradesh.

With her company Pennine Productions, she recorded a Radio 4 documentary about the Anglo-Indian families who had once run the nation's railways and communication



services but were now a dwindling minority.

These became the basis of this book about 150,000 people, mainly descendants of British men and Indian women. It takes its title from Peggy Cantem - known as Auntie Peggy - daughter and widow of railwaymen and European cemetery overseer. She and other colourful characters are the last upholders of a culture that seems half stuck in 1950s home counties and half immersed in the very different India of today.

*Teatime at Peggy's, Bradt Guides, out now*

<https://tinyurl.com/22lssf7j>

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ANDREW WIARD



## Dave Wilson

Dave Wilson was no firebrand when he became father of chapel at the Daily Mail. In fact, management believed he would be a soft touch. However, behind the facade was an indefatigable man of principle. He was also considered one of the best subs on the paper.

When they eventually fired him, there was not the slightest pretence it had anything to do with his work – it was all about the threat he posed as a union rep. For the Mail and like-minded organisations, this was a threat of truly historic proportions.

The paper provoked Dave's ire in 1989 when it withdrew recognition from the NUJ and issued personal contracts with a bribe for anyone who signed up. Dave challenged this clear violation of basic rights – a battle that ended 11 years later in victory at the European Court of Human Rights and a verdict that still resonates today.

As general secretary Michelle Stanistreet pointed out, it was a fight that took guts and stamina, but Dave dealt with the strain with typical humour and resilience. She said: "He'll always be a hero to his many friends and comrades throughout the NUJ and the wider movement and will be much missed by us all."

Former deputy general secretary John Fray added: "It was a long struggle, but Dave with John Foster (then NUJ general secretary) never faltered. It was a very important victory against trade union workplace victimisation."

International Federation of Journalists treasurer Jim Boumelha

points out that were it not for Dave, the Press for Union Rights campaign which the NUJ and media unions launched in February 1990 would not have got very far.

At that time, several NUJ chapels embarked on lengthy strikes against the imposition of personal contracts at Maxwell's Pergamon in Oxford, Aberdeen Press and Journal, VNU magazines and the Essex Chronicle series, to be joined later by others such as the Lancashire Guardian. None of them was strong enough to push back against hostile employers and it was Dave's quiet and, he insisted, 'moderate' approach that started unravelling the strategy.

When Dave started the campaign against personal contracts, he had been a news sub for 12 years, three of them in Manchester, previously working at the Sheffield Star.

The 203 members of the Daily Mail chapel started a work to rule on January 24. Although the vast majority were bullied into signing personal contracts, 10 colleagues followed Dave's lead.

Lord Hendy KC represented Dave in what he described as 'an 11-year roller coaster', with numerous legal victories and defeats. "Throughout, Dave was patient, determined, fearless, full of humour," he said, adding that the European Court judgment was a 'groundbreaker' and tens of millions of workers in Europe are in his debt.

Dave died aged 70 after a short illness with his family at his side.

**Barrie Clement**

CONRAD LANDIN



## Ann Coltart

Ann Coltart, who has died aged 82, was an NUJ member of honour and a woman who left an unforgettable mark on everyone who crossed her path. Having joined the union in the early 1960s, she was active until her dying day — drafting NUJ motions and rallying delegates to the Scottish TUC women's conference in the last week of her life.

To Ann's friends and mentees in the Glasgow branch and the many union councils on which she served, the picture of Ann they will remember will be the same: giving wise counsel and salacious gossip in a pub beer garden after a long meeting, a glass of white wine in one hand and a menthol roll-up in the other.

Ann's encyclopaedic knowledge of NUJ history was recalled with a serious passion for the labour movement at large and an immense loyalty to her own union — but always tempered with a caustic wit and an unrivalled generosity of spirit.

Born in Stockport, the daughter of a police officer, Ann took her first job on the Birkenhead Advertiser. She later moved south where she worked on local papers in London and the Swindon Advertiser.

She also lived in a women's commune near the Greenham Common peace camp, and served as chair of the Bermondsey Labour Party during the tumultuous 1983 by-election campaign, when Peter Tatchell was subjected to a barrage of homophobia and 'loony left' attacks. Ann's commitment to

equality in the workplace and society saw her face down sexists in the NUJ, and she supported of LGBT rights long before they were a mainstream cause.

During this period of her life, Ann worked primarily in community theatre and adult literacy. Upon moving to Scotland later on in the 1980s to join her then-partner — a Herald journalist — she struggled to find work in these fields, and returned to journalism as a freelance.

She wrote features for the Herald and other newspapers, often profiling pioneering projects such as the Glasgow Women's Library. She threw herself back into NUJ activity and was a regular delegate to Scottish TUC conferences. In 2001 she was recognised with an award from the STUC women's conference, for her work for the movement and women in Scotland at large.

As well as her long spells on the union's equality, disabled members', Scottish executive and 60+ councils, Ann served on the national executive council and appeals tribunal and as a trustee of NUJ Extra.

With Glasgow branch asylum seeker members, she was involved in the conversations with the Scottish Refugee Council that led to the establishment of the Refugee Festival Scotland Media Awards, which recognise fair, accurate and responsible journalism on refugee and asylum seeker issues.

She is survived by her daughter Rebecca and her huge union family.

**Conrad Landin**

EU REPORTER



## Nick Powell

Nick Powell, who has died suddenly of natural causes at the age of 66, was one of the small cohort of journalists who covered the shaky beginnings of the National Assembly for Wales through to its current life as a fully functioning, law-making parliament.

That alone would mark him out as someone who made a valuable contribution to public understanding of a new democracy, but his deep knowledge of Welsh political history enabled him to bring an extra dimension to ITV's reporting of what is now the Senedd.

Brought up in a village in the Vale of Glamorgan, he studied political science and international politics at what was University College of Wales, Aberystwyth (now Aberystwyth University). After graduating, he joined BBC Wales as a trainee, progressing to become a researcher and a producer.

In 1988, he began a 33-year stint with ITV Cymru Wales, rising to become a universally admired head of politics. He rarely appeared on screen, but many colleagues have spoken of the influence he exerted behind the scenes, not in a controlling way but motivated by a mission to explain the intricacies and divisions of the new politics.

In 2021, he left ITV, joining the news website EU Reporter as political editor, bringing his skills to the coverage of European affairs at a time when the UK was becoming self-absorbed following Brexit.

While he was always a loyal member of the NUJ, it was during

the second half of his time at ITV that he became father of chapel. He was also an official of what is now the South Wales branch, serving until his passing as its secretary.

Since 2018, he had chaired the Welsh Executive Council, during which time it grappled with multiple crises: funding squeezes at the BBC and ITV; a series of crises at S4C; and swingeing job cuts at newspapers and their digital offshoots.

Under Nick's leadership, the WEC became a strong advocate for high-quality, public interest journalism, calling on the Welsh Government to address market failure. As a result, a fund was set up that enabled quality news outlets to be launched, defying the more established companies that said there was little public appetite for serious journalism.

Nick was passionate about high-quality, public interest journalism, and this underpinned his work for the NUJ. Yet his approach was all the more effective because of his light touch. He was no dogmatic ranter, but persuaded by being calm, unflappable and wise. He had a dry, unmalicious wit that could defuse rows before they had even begun.

Nick was clubbable and genial, both at work and socially. Many who worked with him have spoken of his kindness to them, especially those at the start of their careers.

His contribution to the union's work will be greatly missed and he will be long remembered.

**Martin Shipton**



Sally-Anne Thomas with former NUJ president Pierre Vicary

## Sally-Anne Thomas

Sally-Anne Thomas, long-time stalwart of the Bush House World Service newsroom, has died.

She was born into a travelling theatrical family. Father Wally ran and acted in touring companies; he married actress and playwright June Garland in 1949, and Sally-Anne arrived in 1951. School was as a boarder at Westonbirt, from where she won a place at Somerville College, Oxford, to study modern history.

During one vacation, she joined her parents at the Leeds Grand Theatre and Opera House, for the PG Wodehouse adaptation *Oh, Clarence!*. The cast varyingly included Cicely Courtneidge, Roger Livesey, Ursula Jeans, Jack Hulbert, Robertson 'Bunny' Hare, Austin Trevor and Jimmy Edwards.

Sally-Anne was surprised to be appointed dresser to Dame Cicely and wardrobe mistress. Dame Cicely did not like Jimmy Edwards, and Wally used to push Sally-Anne into her dressing room saying: "Don't let them come to blows."

In 1972, she started at the BBC as a news trainee, alongside Jeremy Paxman, Richard Ayre, Chris Lowe, Colin Stanbridge and Liz Ramsay. Sally-Anne did not enjoy her trainee time with TV news, finding attitudes misogynistic, but soon made lifelong friends at the World Service.

She rose steadily up the editorial ladder and, when we worked together at Bush House, was one of the rotating editors, managing her beloved team who followed the same shift patterns. She liked clear, plain English, properly pronounced.

She enjoyed debates about the right leads, and was always calm, reasoned and assured in her choices.

She enjoyed the work and was determined that others did too. A compliment about your writing from Sally-Anne meant something. She was in charge of the newsdesk when the World Service won silver at the Sony Awards for the breaking news coverage of the assassination of Benazir Bhutto in 2008.

In 2012, she was an Olympic volunteer, and interviewed paralympic winners for the world's wire services.

Retirement was a mixed bag of international travel and health worries. She part owned a cottage in Brittany (bought with three other Bush hacks at £6k each), and visited relatives in Australia. She was a proud member of the Association Cirneco dell'Etna Adozioni Rescue from 2013, and owned two of these dogs, Agrippina Julia Augusta and Lucrezia Borgia, from 2011.

Sally-Anne entertained many friends with her Facebook posts, often featuring Agrippina eating her lunches, chewing her bras or on 'barkerations'. Both dogs had Facebook pages. She also gave insights into history, and described the very odd people she met while in hospital. She kept a good ear across World Service output, and quietly passed on thoughts.

A splendid colleague and friend, with more influence for good than perhaps she realised.

**Bill Rogers**

# Have your say: Time to vote for

MARK THOMAS



## Laura Davison

In June I introduced our PA Chapel Committee reps to the NUJ's national executive meeting. It was an electric moment.

Our current and former reps, Emily Pennink, Jonathan Brady and Sian Harrison described their four-year campaign for union recognition – that had triumphed a couple of weeks earlier. Congratulations from NEC members poured out. We considered the lessons to be applied elsewhere. Our reps described their pay-claim plans.

As the NUJ's newspapers and news agencies organiser, I had supported them from the outset. Recognition is a milestone, rather than a destination, of course. But two things struck me.

Our PA reps' determination to unionise sprang from their pride in their work. The self-respect, security, and better conditions that NUJ recognition brings, are intrinsic to producing the best possible journalism.

Second, the energy their campaign unleashed is amazing. The confidence and purpose that those reps radiate is strengthening their

own members and inspiring other chapels. When we generate and amplify that kind of dynamism, the NUJ's potential is unbounded.

That NEC's other momentous news was Michelle Stanistreet's decision to stand down. We have been more than fortunate to have had a committed, skilled and empathetic leader, whose support and example has underpinned the development of so many active members, including me. Big shoes to fill!

Those lessons from the PA campaign inspired me to stand for election. Determination to improve our members' pay and conditions and to defend and promote journalism is intrinsic to the NUJ's mission; we do that best by empowering our members.

Of course, the challenges are significant. Headcount in traditional newsrooms falls and falls. Some employers appear determined to starve editorial operations of resources, disregarding editorial quality. Structural change has buffeted freelancers more than most.

Success at PA, and employers such

as Springer Nature, shows that we recruit well where the NUJ is obviously active. Replicating that is critical to membership growth. So too is campaigning vigorously for better freelance rates. Many have remained static for a decade or more. We must make employers ashamed to grievously underpay.

Defending public-interest journalism should also be at the heart of our work. RTÉ and the BBC have global reputations for news production. In recent times, management at both have been careless custodians of these vital institutions. The NUJ's role defending their integrity has never been more important.

Admiring the spirit of our colleagues at PA reminded me how inspired I was, nearly 20 years ago when I was a BBC journalist. Campaigning against job cuts then opened my eyes to the possibilities of union activism. Since then, I have clocked up more than 17 years' experience as an NUJ organiser. I have been engaged in negotiations at the BBC, The Guardian, The Financial Times, Reach, National World and many others. I now want to use that experience to energise the whole union. I hope that you will give me your support to do just that.

### VOTE LAURA DAVISON FOR GENERAL SECRETARY

#### SUPPORT

Successfully leading the NUJ is possible only with widespread and broad-based support. Scores of branch and workplace activists as well as officials and NEC members have urged me to stand, and I am proud to count over 130 of them among my named supporters. There's space only for some names here - you will find a full list at [www.laura4gs.co.uk](http://www.laura4gs.co.uk)

Samira Ahmed, (*presenter*); Gerry Curran and Fran McNulty (*joint vice presidents*); Michelle Stanistreet

(*general secretary*), John Barsby (*treasurer*), Emily Pennink, Jonathan Brady, Sian Harrison (*current and former chapel co-chairs PA*); Georgina Morris, (*former National World group chapel chair*); Steve Bird, (*FT chapel chair*); Martin Shipton, (*Nation.Cymru*); Roger McKenzie, (*NEC Black Members*); Kathryn Johnson, (*Belfast & District Branch*); John Harris, (*photographer*); Andrew Wiard, (*photographer*); Maeva Shearlaw, Richard Alcock, Oren Gruenbaum, (*Guardian/Observer*) Datshiane Navanayagam, (*presenter*); David Gallagher, (*BBC London Branch*); Natasha Wynarczyk, (*Reach group chapel*); Ruby Lott-Lavigna (*former Vice rep*) Jeremy Dear (*former general secretary*); Pierre Vicary (*past President and BBC World Service Branch*); John Fray (*former deputy general secretary*); Sian Jones (*previous Broadcasting Organiser*) John Toner (*former NUJ Freelance and Scottish Organiser*)

### INDEPENDENCE - TO DEFEND MEDIA FREEDOM

As well as advancing members' economic interests, the NUJ defends media freedom. Our union sponsored the most significant legal actions that, as case law, safeguards our right to do our jobs – Goodwin and the right to protect sources; Wilson – the right to trades union membership; Ahmed – landmark equal pay case. Other cases are ongoing, Barry McCaffrey's action resulting from his being spied on by police forces in Britain and Ireland, for example. Retaining the NUJ's independence underwrites this work. Difficult decisions about deploying members' money to support legal cases are always taken by journalists – the people who know best how important such cases are to us all. As General Secretary, retaining the NUJ's independence to continue doing this is an absolute commitment.



# the NUJ General Secretary

JESS HURD



## Natasha Hirst

The union has had so many uncontested elections for the top post that you might not have voted in one before. But this is an important election where you are asked to make a vital choice at a crucial time.

That choice is about this union's future as a vibrant, influential, independent force in an industry where so many of our members' jobs are constantly at threat. Rounds of redundancies are forcing hard working journalists out of the newsroom. Freelancers find budgets have been slashed and rates are not rising. All to pay greedy executives and shareholders who are only about cost, and not quality.

### Our collective strength

We have done well to manage a decline in membership so far, but the reality is that the regional press sector is around a third of the size it was 15 years ago. Our members in broadcasting are increasingly battling cuts too. We have members across a range of publishing, communications, digital and visual media roles who live with the stress

of unstable and low-paid work, especially at the start of their careers.

Across the industries and nations we represent, the precarious nature of our working lives necessitates a strong challenge and industrial strategy from the NUJ. Our approach must feel relevant to a diverse membership, many of whom work in roles and sectors that didn't exist 15 years ago. Increasing our membership is necessary to avoid ongoing subs rises.

When members move around in their careers, we must make sure that we retain them and offer the support needed as they transition into different roles. As a Union Learning Rep, I am a strong advocate for professional development, skills and reps' training to support our members.

Our strength as a union necessitates organising increasingly isolated freelancers and workers in smaller workplaces. As a freelance photojournalist who lives and works outside of London, I'm familiar with these challenges.

### Sharing our stories

Our union needs members from all backgrounds to influence our policy and campaigns. We need the diversity in our newsrooms that reflects the diversity in our audiences. We can tell our story and share our values in a way that connects with a wider group of members and potential members to inspire understanding, pride and engagement in the work we do.

As president, I've dedicated time to engaging with students, and early career journalists. I have a track record in supporting the development of younger and diverse activists. I will explore how we can urgently boost the capacity of our internal and external communications, to include more multimedia content to strengthen our organising efforts.

We punch above our weight with our lobbying and solidarity work, through the Parliamentary Group, in our devolved nations, Ireland and on the continent, as well as the wider union movement and internationally through the IFJ.

We have tremendous foundations to build on, to inspire hope amongst our membership and collectively defend the values we live and work to.

### Team NUJ

Our union is nothing without the hard work of our members in chapels, branches, and our collective strength across our workplaces and the freelance sector. My leadership is marked by strong collaboration, networking and building teams across the union that work to people's strengths.

If you're active in your branch you've probably heard me speak there. If you work at Reach, National World or the BBC you might have met me on a picket line. If you've had an issue on equalities matters, I may well have spoken to you in my role as an NEC member. If you've been a delegate to our DMs, or you

attended the Dublin Freelance Forum, our reps' network briefings and members' webinars, I will probably have spoken to you at some point. And even if you don't play an active part in the union, but you're a regular reader of this magazine, you've probably read one of my articles here.

It's been my privilege to have been elected as your president, and as vice president before that. I will remain a dedicated advocate and campaigner for every one of you, raising our profile and promoting our professional and trade union values, challenging obstructions to media freedom and campaigning against precarious working conditions to protect jobs, pay, and freelance rights.

I have supporters from across the union, including NEC members, Council, Branch and Chapel chairs and grassroots members who I have worked alongside, advocated for and supported over almost 10 years as an activist.

I urge you to get involved and have your say on how we should futureproof our union. Branches are organising hustings where you can listen to and question the candidates, and you can find out more about my experience and priorities on my website [www.hirstnuj.com](http://www.hirstnuj.com) or contact me on [natasha4gs@gmail.com](mailto:natasha4gs@gmail.com)

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### Council of Lutheran Churches

The Council of Lutheran Churches is the representative and enabling body for 9 Lutheran churches in the UK that offer pastoral care to over 200,000 people. We are seeking a part-time Communications Manager (2.5 days a week) to deliver the Christian message, to support the Council of Lutheran Churches and our member churches in the UK and to raise awareness of the Lutheran tradition and its part in the wider Christian community. We want someone who;

- Will develop an internal and external communication strategy that delivers our mission, vision and values.
- Has a strong background in journalism or communications
- Has an impressive track record in creating, producing and publishing engaging social media content.
- Is an active Christian – ideally with a good understanding of Lutheran theology and tradition.
- Has excellent written and spoken English language skills – ideally you will be a native English speaker as you will be working with a variety of people speaking English as a 2nd language.
- Has experience in setting up and running livestreaming events, as well as providing technical support to presenters and participants.
- Is keen to learn and implement new ideas and technologies and is open-minded to work with people from different cultures and countries.

Please note that the nature of our work means that occasional weekend work and travel within the UK will be required.



We are based in London (Waterloo) and applicants must live within commuting distance of our office.

You can find more information about us and the role on our website; [www.lutheran.org.uk](http://www.lutheran.org.uk)

To apply, please email your CV to; [david.rogers@lutheran.org.uk](mailto:david.rogers@lutheran.org.uk)

**Closing date for applications;  
30th September 2024**

No agencies please

# Will today ever be one of the good old days?



**Chris Proctor** fears for the future of newsroom nostalgia

**T**o start a career in journalism these days, it's advisable to have a degree, enough money to support yourself while you make nothing on an internship as well as the luck of the Irish. Not so long ago, you needed a pen, curiosity and enthusiasm.

The route into the trade was often through the locals. You turned up at the local rag wearing your smart clothes and a polite smile and, if they liked the look of you, you got a start. Gradually, you picked up the tricks of the trade. This was your calling card for regional papers and the golden goal of the nationals.

The worse thing about being the junior reporter was that you got the worse jobs, the lowliest and most difficult being interviewing the relations of someone who had just died, vox pops and weddings.

Barely out of short pants, you stood outside a house where someone had died. Your hand trembled as you watched a finger stretched towards the bell. You desperately hoped everyone would be out. Just before you felt you could make a bolt for it, the door slowly opened.

"Yes?"

The two questions you had been sent to ask were "Did the deceased ever do anything even slightly interesting before yesterday?" and "Have you got a picture handy that I could borrow?" There were various ways in which the enquiries could be made but these contained the essence. If you were lucky, you got a "Not now" and your nose missed being caught by the closing portal.

Almost as bad was being despatched to pick up a few vox pops to fill up a

space. It was when you realise how unobliging the human race can be, how determinedly they can avoid eye contact and how blind can be those who do not wish to see. Worse were the ones who did stop – the neighbourhood windbags.

Reporting on a wedding was a rite to be avoided as it was fraught with difficulties. The details you might notice, like the rat-eyed uncle and the nephew with the enormous ears, were of no interest: what the bosses required in the paper was a pristine list of guests (presented in an order acceptable to the in-laws) and a description of the bridal attire that was ingratiating rather than accurate. You knew you were going to fail.

My colleagues mused for a moment on these desperate episodes from their past, bemoaned the fact that they were paid a sub-pittance for their efforts, flinched at the razor tongue of the editor who would examine their copy, and cried out at the unfairness and lack of sympathy of everyone else who worked there.

Then, they raise a glass to the mouth, sip, nod sagely, sigh – and slowly smile.

"They were great days," one concludes. The mumbled agreement is universal.

It's the bizarre thing about nostalgia: it is the art of amassing facts and drawing irrational conclusions. Or just generally feeling miserable for the loss of something you never had. Mention any date more than a couple of decades ago and people recall it as a golden age of copper-bottomed, chrome-plated diamond geezers in a land of silver linings. We were all in our element.

We weren't. Somewhere, deep down, we know this.

It's like the Americans and their awful MAGAs. They burst with pride when they hear someone banging on about the days of their pomp. When was that exactly? All I can say is – don't ask one of the Native American Pequot tribe. And I wouldn't mention US greatness to the Vietnamese until they've forgotten living in tunnels for years to avoid the bombing. Mind you, a lot of them have probably grown nostalgic about subterranean dwelling by now and are positively thankful for B-52s.

It makes me wonder what today's NUJ members will find to be sentimental about in a few years.

"Great days. Do you know we were allowed to edit the pages that AI had written? Not all pages, of course, but some. We didn't even have to ask AI's permission to make alterations in those days. I don't know who Riley was, but we were living his life.

"Then, some days, you'd sit there wondering how the clicks were going and thinking, 'Only another thousand and we'll be able to lash out on a tin of sardines!'

"Or when you'd get a call to do a story and, if you didn't charge, they'd give you a byline. You didn't even have to pay for it."

We'll all chuckle about those simpler days when the living was easy: "We had no money, but we were happy."

Well, nobody's going to convince me in 30 years' time that these are prime days for our trade. For one thing, I'll be dead and, for another, readers and viewers are losing their trust in the national media and watching local outlets disappear.

To lose these two things isn't going to make me nostalgic. It's going to make me mad – and make me wonder if I did all I could to save them.

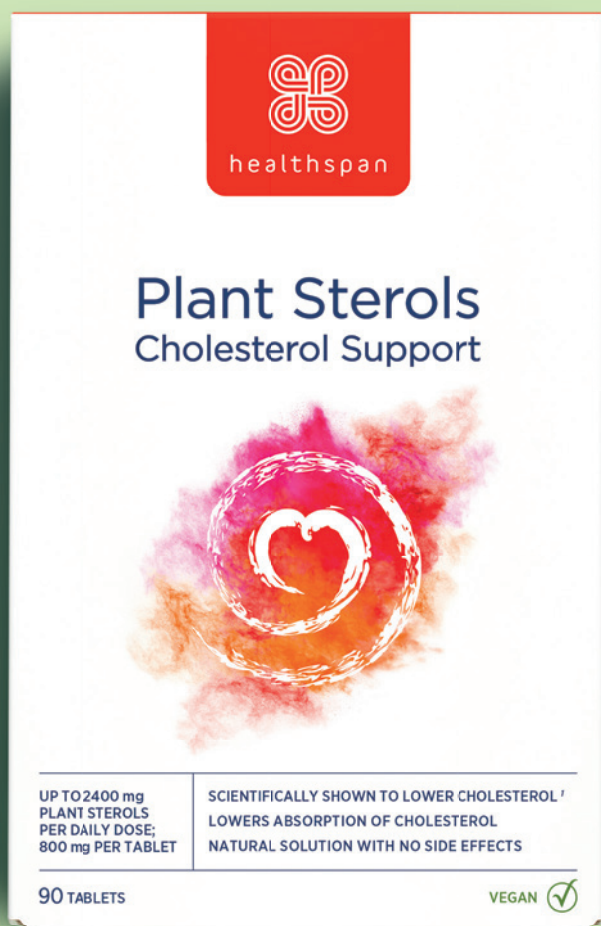
“**Back in the day, we were all in our element. We weren't. Somewhere, deep down, we know this**”

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