

# theJournalist

WWW.NUJ.ORG.UK | FEBRUARY-MARCH 2023



## Around the world in 80 Mbps!

Foreign reporting speeds up and cuts back



# Contents



**W**elcome to the first edition of The Journalist for 2023. It's (still) a new year but journalism and the union faces some familiar challenges amid the drive of media organisations to do more with less.

NUJ members at BBC Local are balloting for industrial action over plans to programme-share and cut jobs, just as MPs on the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport select committee warn that local journalism and democracy will decline unless there is a government boost for regional reporting.

From local to international and our cover feature by Peter Popham looks at how one of the most coveted jobs in journalism – a foreign correspondent – is no longer the dream it once was.

And if you are an older female journalist, you may find you face even more difficulties if you're a victim of 'gendered ageism'. Jenny Sims reports on an NUJ workshop on the issue.

But a new (ish) year is also a time to contemplate new ventures. How about self-publishing? Samantha Downes looks at the rise of Substack, where you could make decent money and speaks to one early adopter – Rory Cellan-Jones – who finds it a good platform for life after the BBC.

I hope you like our features, regular columns, and news. Do let us know if you do or don't, as I'm keen to revive our feedback pages – [journalist@nuj.org.uk](mailto:journalist@nuj.org.uk)

*Christine*

**Christine Buckley**  
Editor  
[mschrisbuckley](mailto:mschrisbuckley)



## Main feature

**12 A vanishing breed**  
New world for foreign correspondents

## News

- 3 BBC Local journalists ballot for action**  
Plans to reduce service challenged
- 4 Tribute to murdered journalists**  
Exhibition tours the country
- 5 Reach cuts 102 UK jobs**  
... But launches in the US
- 6 Always ask for more!**  
Phil steps down after 40 years

## Features

- 14 Money-maker for freelancers?**  
Try Substack
- 16 Older women still losing jobs**  
Legal action 'tip of the iceberg'
- 20 First book at 83-years-old**  
Ex union president tells his tales
- 24 Homage to an NUJ legend**  
Jim Eadie obituary

## Regulars

- 10 Spotlight on Nottingham**
- 21 Looking back to 1963**
- 27 And finally...**

## On Media

Ray Snoddy  
BBC cronies  
Page 09



## Tech Download

Free Windows software  
Page 20

## Arts

Alberta Whittle and more ...  
Page 22



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**Editor**  
[journalist@nuj.org.uk](mailto:journalist@nuj.org.uk)  
**Design**  
[Surgeycreations.com](http://Surgeycreations.com)  
[info@surgeycreations.com](mailto:info@surgeycreations.com)  
**Advertising**  
Square7media  
Tel: 020 3283 4055  
[hello@square7media.co.uk](mailto:hello@square7media.co.uk)  
**Print**  
Warners  
[www.warners.co.uk](http://www.warners.co.uk)  
**Distribution**  
GB Mail  
[www.gb-mail.co.uk](http://www.gb-mail.co.uk)

**NUJ**  
72 Acton Street  
London WC1X 9NB  
[info@nuj.org.uk](mailto:info@nuj.org.uk)  
[www.nuj.org.uk](http://www.nuj.org.uk)  
Tel: 020 7843 3700  
**Manchester office**  
[nujmanchester@nuj.org.uk](mailto:nujmanchester@nuj.org.uk)  
**Glasgow office**  
[nujscotland@nuj.org.uk](mailto:nujscotland@nuj.org.uk)  
**Dublin office**  
[info@nuj.ie](mailto:info@nuj.ie)  
ISSN: 0022-5541



Cover picture  
Andy Potts

# BBC Local journalists begin ballot for industrial action

**NUJ MEMBERS** working for BBC Local, which is also known as BBC England, are being balloted to take industrial action over the corporation's latest proposals to share local radio programming across the network.

The move follows a consultative ballot which was held to gauge how many members might still want to take industrial action after the BBC altered plans announced late last autumn that it would roll out shared programming and cut jobs.

Under the BBC's original proposals, BBC local radio stations would share programmes with neighbouring stations after 2pm on weekdays and at weekends.

Some news bulletins would also be pre-recorded.

The plans would result in a loss of about 40 posts and with hundreds of journalists having to reapply for their own jobs.

A compromise put forward by the BBC which would have seen less sharing was rejected by 70 per cent of NUJ members.

The union says it had no option but to move to a formal ballot; a consultative ballot held in January was overwhelmingly in favour of action. If the formal ballot result is the same then strikes or action short of a strike would start in March. The journalists involved work for local radio, online and TV in England.

Paul Siegert, NUJ national broadcasting organiser, said: "There is real anger about the BBC's plans for local radio which will result in 5.7 million people getting a much-reduced service. It will completely undermine the BBC's public service remit and take the 'local' out of local radio. We expect there to be an overwhelming vote for action. The union has made it plain that it supports the

BBC's expansion of digital, but believes it can be done without destroying local radio."

BBC members in Northern Ireland have voted 95 per cent in favour of industrial action over plans to cut 36 posts and end the popular Radio Foyle Breakfast Show.



- The BBC has named five chief presenters for its TV news channel merging the UK and international services - Matthew Amroliwala, Christian Fraser, Yalda Hakim, Lucy Hockings, and Maryam Moshiri. The loss of about 70 jobs in London is expected. Jane Hill, Martine Croxall, Ben Brown, Annita McVeigh, Geeta Guru-Murthy and Shaun Ley are among those to have lost their roles. Hill is going to news bulletins and others may apply for other roles.

**Large turnout for Foyle meeting, page 7**

## inbrief...

### FUND NEEDED FOR LOCAL JOURNALISM

The quality and coverage of local news will continue to decline and damage democracy without new support from the government, the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Select committee said. It urged the government to establish an innovation fund for news, as proposed in the Cairncross Review, make it easier for publishers to get charitable status, and encourage more philanthropic funding.

### TIMES MERGER PLANS FOR SCOTTISH TITLES

News UK is proposing to make The Times Scotland and Sunday Times Scotland a single seven-day operation. In February last year, the then culture secretary Nadine Dorries released News UK from its legal requirement, in place since Rupert Murdoch bought the titles in 1981, to keep them separate.

### NICK COHEN LEAVES THE GUARDIAN

Nick Cohen has resigned from The Observer on 'health grounds' after being the subject of an investigation by publisher Guardian News and Media. His departure follows an investigation over a number of allegations about Cohen's behaviour in the office.

## Union granted legal challenge

**THE NUJ** has been granted permission to intervene in the human rights organisation Liberty's "People vs the snoopers' charter" legal appeal.

This will allow the union to provide a voice for journalists

in this challenge to the 'bulk' surveillance regime contained in the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA 2016).

The IPA 2016, which has been dubbed the Snoopers Charter by campaign groups, empowers authorities to

intercept and retain communications data on an unprecedented scale and without any requirement for "suspicion" of wrongdoing. The Act has implications for press freedom in view of the risks of intrusion into

journalists' private communications and the protection of sources.

The NUJ's lawyers said: "This is a vital opportunity to play a significant role in protecting the freedom of the press, which is under threat from the bulk surveillance powers in the IPA 2016."

## Journalists abused after migrant story

**THE UNION** has condemned online abuse of Irish Times journalists Kitty Holland and Dara Mac Dónaill following their coverage of a violent incident in Dublin.

They had reported on a group of men who arrived at a migrants' encampment on the banks of the Tolka river in Ashtown, with dogs and sticks. The attack was interrupted by the journalists who were there to interview camp residents.

Following the story Kitty Holland was abused on social media and there were suggestions that their story was fabricated.

Séamus Dooley, NUJ Irish Secretary, said: "The attempts to smear a reporter and photographer are despicable. The abuse of Kitty Holland, in particular, is vile and beneath contempt."



### UK offered legal help to Putin ally

The UK government reportedly helped Yevgeny Prigozhin, a sanctioned ally of President Putin and leader of the mercenary army Wagner Group, sue British journalist Eliot Higgins, founder of investigative website Bellingcat. According to openDemocracy the Treasury issued special licences in 2021 to let him start legal action against Higgins. James Cartlidge, exchequer secretary, has said that the government is reviewing protocol on granting such licences to sanctioned people. Higgins believes suing him rather than the website was intimidation.

# Touring tribute to murdered journalists visits NUJ headquarters



**THE NUJ'S** head office has hosted a touring exhibition commemorating the work and legacy of murdered British environmental journalist Dom Phillips and Brazilian Indigenous rights advocate Bruno Pereira, *Cristina Lago writes*.

Phillips and Pereira were killed in June 2022 by men involved in illegal fishing while on a research trip in the Brazilian rainforest for the book Phillips was writing, *How to Save the Amazon*.

Phillips was a respected freelance journalist who had written extensively on environmental issues and the destruction of Indigenous communities for *The Guardian*, *The Washington Post*, *The Times* and other outlets. He had met Pereira in 2018 during a reporting trip in the Javari valley.

The exhibition, *For Dom, Bruno and the Amazon*, was produced by designers at Lancaster-based events space Halton Mill with the help of Phillips' family members, environmental organisations, journalists and academics. It features

photographs exposing the Amazon's deforestation and threats to its indigenous peoples while making calls to action.

"This is a story about challenging political regimes that do not subscribe to ecologically sustainable models of living," said Dominique Davies, Phillips's niece and one of the exhibition organisers, at an evening discussion hosted by the NUJ at Headland House. "It's about the protection of journalists to allow them to report freely and safely and about asking for justice for Dom, Bruno and the Amazon."

Brazil's union of journalists, FENAJ, documented 430 aggressive acts against journalists in 2021 and raised concerns about the country's previous administration's continuous attacks on media professionals. After Phillips and Pereira disappeared, former president Bolsonaro accused them of undertaking an "adventure" that had been "ill advised".

"When Dom was murdered, he was not in the wrong place at the wrong time," said Jim Boumelha, former president of the International Federation of Journalists and chair of the NUJ's policy committee. "It was not just any journalist writing on climate change issues. He understood well the politics of this dark period in the history of Brazil and its impact not only on this country but on the rest of the world."

In January, Brazil's new justice minister, Flávio Dino, announced the creation of the National Observatory of Violence against Journalists, an initiative supported by FENAJ.

Phillips's family is appealing for funds for the completion of *How to Save the Amazon*: <https://gofund.me/a5529377>

The exhibition *For Dom, Bruno and the Amazon* is available to host on tour. Contact Fiona Frank on [fiona@haltonmill.org.uk](mailto:fiona@haltonmill.org.uk)



**It's about the protection of journalists to allow them to report freely and safely and about asking for justice for Dom, Bruno and the Amazon**

**Dominique Davies, Dom Phillips' niece**

## Global journalist death toll rises

**LAST** year 68 journalists were killed while working, according to the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), with Ukraine the most dangerous country in 2022. The annual toll compares with 47

journalists' deaths in 2021.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine saw journalists reporting from war zones, and Ukraine recorded the highest number of journalists' deaths, with 12 murdered this year. Violence

in Colombia led to the deaths of four journalists and media workers and, in Mexico, 11 deaths were documented, as criminal organisations continued to wield power.

In Africa, four journalists

were killed in Chad and Somalia, marking the lowest number of murders among the five regions recorded in the IFJ's list.

The number of journalists' deaths in the Middle East and Arab World rose from three to five and included the shooting of

Shireen Abu Akleh by Israeli forces.

Around the world, media professionals have been targeted for a number of reasons including their efforts to expose criminal behaviour by gangs, environmental harm and state corruption.



## Reporter dies after attack in Bangladesh

**THE NUJ** has joined the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in condemning the murder in Bangladesh of reporter Ashiqul Islam.

On January 9, Islam (left) was left seriously injured and later died in hospital after being attacked by assailants on his way home.

Police have arrested someone suspected of involvement in his death. Anthony Bellanger, IFJ general secretary, said: "The IFJ expresses its condolences to the Bangladeshi journalists' fraternity and joins them in seeking a swift investigation into the case and for the

authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice."

The NUJ is also urging the authorities to ensure justice is sought for Islam's death.

His murder is the first journalist killing in the country this year, following Shabnam Sharmin's death in late 2022.



# Reach cuts UK jobs as it launches in the US

**THE NUJ** group chapel at the publishing group Reach has passed a motion highlighting the anger and frustration from journalists at the company, following proposed job cuts in editorial posts. It pledges that it will fight any compulsory redundancies.

Journalists at the publisher whose titles include The Mirror, Express, Irish Star, Birmingham Mail, the Manchester Evening News, Bristol Post and Liverpool Echo have expressed their dismay following a decision to cut 102 editorial roles at the company.

Plans come amid expansion in the US with the creation of operations there for the Mirror, Express and Irish Star.



The motion reads: "This group chapel is dismayed that Reach plc is proposing to axe 102 editorial positions across the group having already shed hundreds of journalist roles over the last few months. The attack on core frontline jobs is viewed as akin to industrial vandalism.

"Our members are angry and frustrated that positive

moves forward following the settlement of the pay dispute and strike last year have been overshadowed and undermined by a planned widespread cull of jobs that are essential to the success of the company's business model.

"Inexplicably, front line roles – especially photographers and digital reporters – are being

targeted in the face of the company's professed business model to build a sustainable digital operation with quality journalism and original content at its core.

"The planned wipe out of professional photography in many places within the group removes at a stroke what has been a mainstay of journalistic craft for more than a century and will surely be regretted in the years to come.

"At least 22 reporter jobs and 13 photographer roles are in line to be cut, although the full extent is not yet known, along with other digital and social media based posts."

It adds: "NUJ chapels are still assessing the potential damage to be inflicted on local operations, but members are clear that compulsory redundancies are unacceptable and will be vigorously challenged."

## inbrief...

### REUTERS TO CREATE 100 JOBS WORLDWIDE

Reuters will create 100 new editorial roles around the world under an expansion of its partnership with the London Stock Exchange Group. The new posts will focus on four main areas: financial markets; mergers and acquisitions; energy transition; and data visualisation.

### FT AND TIMES TOP SUBSCRIPTION COST

The Financial Times is the most expensive consumer digital news subscription in the UK or US, followed by The Times. An annual digital subscription to the FT costs £319 while it costs £312 for The Times. The next most expensive digital news subscriptions are Bloomberg at £199 per year and The Telegraph at £189.

### NEW EDITOR FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES

Ben Taylor is the new editor of The Sunday Times. He replaces Emma Tucker who is going to the Wall Street Journal. Taylor joined The Sunday Times in 2020 as deputy editor. He was previously executive editor of the Daily Mail, where he had worked for 22 years. Krissi Murison, editor of The Sunday Times Magazine, is the new deputy editor of the newspaper.

## Channel 4 rescued from sale

**MICHELLE DONELAN**, who was culture secretary until the recent Cabinet reshuffle, said that Channel 4 won't be sold. It will also be allowed to make its own content to build sustainability and help it "better compete in the age of streaming giants".

The broadcaster had faced privatisation under Nadine Dorries, who was culture secretary during Boris Johnson's premiership.

Daily Mail political editor Jason Groves reported that a Whitehall source said the plan was driven by

Johnson's anger at Channel 4 putting an ice sculpture in his place when he failed to appear on an election leaders' debate about the climate crisis in 2019.

Donelan said at the start of the year: "After reviewing the business case and engaging with the relevant sectors, I have decided that Channel 4 should not be sold."

## BBC switches on to TikTok

**TIKTOK** is to be one of the BBC's main priorities for this year, the corporation has said.

In an advert for four journalists to join a new TikTok team as part of its social news operation, the corporation said: "Growing the BBC News TikTok account to make it the biggest and best, both globally and in the UK, is one of News' main priorities for 2023."

In January last year, two social and digital chiefs told Press Gazette that the corporation had stayed off TikTok as they did not have the resources to create bespoke content properly – and because it was not true to the BBC's values to produce 'light news'.

However, by March, after Russia had invaded Ukraine, the broadcaster realised the platform offered opportunities to combat disinformation about the war.



### Magazines fear postal cuts

Royal Mail dropping Saturday deliveries could cost the publishing industry "millions of pounds in losses" to subscriptions, MPs have heard in a debate. News and current affairs magazines such as The Economist, the New Statesman, The Spectator and Private Eye have expressed worries about the proposal, fearing cancellation of subscriptions if the time-sensitive publications are not delivered quickly. Labour MP Kate Osborne, who worked for Royal Mail for 25 years, said an Ofcom review of users' needs did not properly show this effect of the removal of Saturday deliveries.

# Always ask for more: Phil clocks up 40 years' service with the union

**PHIL SUTCLIFFE** has stepped down from the London freelance branch committee, after an astonishing four decades, to devote time to writing a book, writes Mike Holderness.

Members paid tribute to his work for the union at the branch seasonal event in December. Branch chair Tim Gopsill organised and presented the traditional giant card, packed with tributes from members past and present. Gopsill observed that Sutcliffe had done most of the work putting the gathering together – so he remained the perfect trade union colleague, unwittingly organising his own leaving do.

Sutcliffe, a former music journalist, joined London Freelance Branch in 1979 – at the time of a freelance strike at IPC Magazines – and swiftly became a keystone of its work.

He has been chair and secretary of the branch, and was most recently joint membership secretary. He also served as chair of the union's freelance industrial council and a national executive council member. In 2006, he was made an NUJ member of honour.

Humphrey Evans recalled working with Sutcliffe on NUJ training courses Getting Started as a Freelance and Pitch and



HAZEL DUNLOP

Deal – the latter covering the niceties of getting commissions and negotiating good terms for them.

Sutcliffe, he said, was remarkable for always giving every course participant individual and personal attention – asking after their specific circumstances in breaks and keeping his door open for further advice years down the line.

And Humphrey reminded all freelancers of the key message that Phil chalked up at the end of each course: "Always ask for more."



**Sutcliffe was remarkable for giving all course participants individual attention and keeping his door open for advice years down the line**

**Humphrey Evans**

## Family courts open to reporting

**THE BAN** on reporting what takes place in family courts has been lifted under a 12-month pilot scheme in Cardiff, Carlisle and Leeds.

Guidance issued by the president of the Family Division, Sir Andrew McFarlane, will permit

journalists who hold UK Press Card Authority accreditation to access certain court documents as of right, and – subject to anonymisation and compliance with the terms of a transparency order issued in each case – to publish

from those documents, report evidence given in court, and publish their observations of proceedings.

Family members and other parties will also become free to discuss their case with duly accredited journalists without being in contempt.

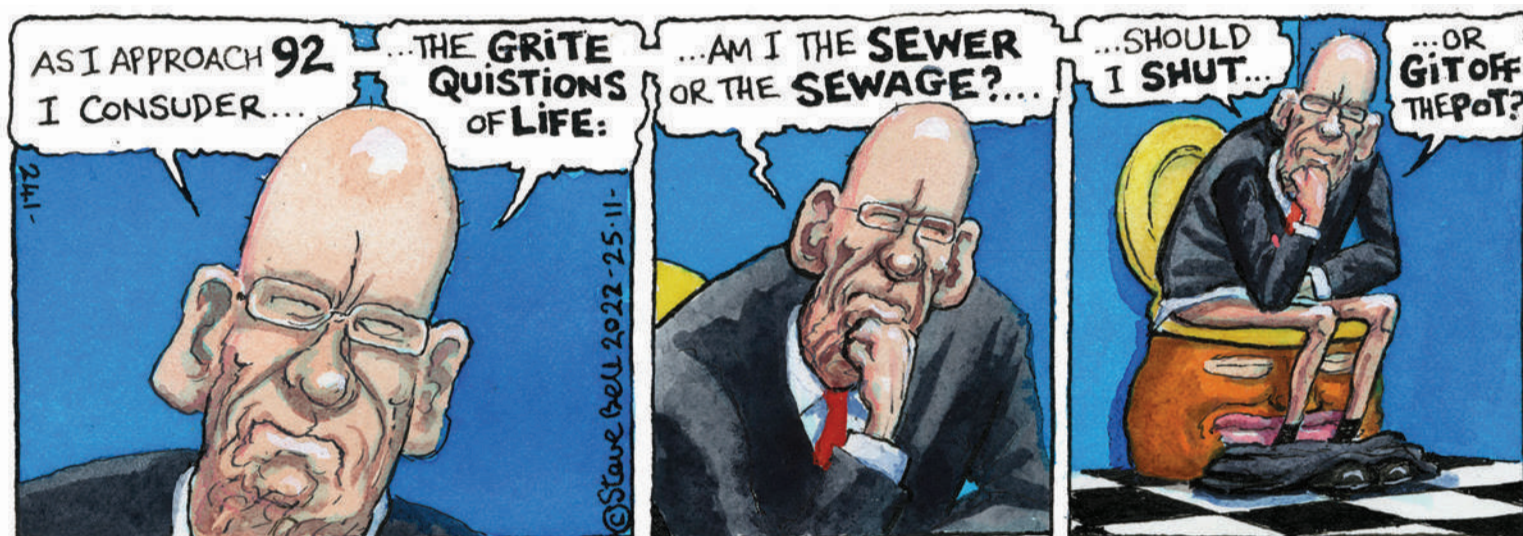
The pilot emerged following concerns raised by MPs, the media, families, charities, lawyers and the judiciary.

This resulted in Sir Andrew's report Confidence and Confidentiality – Transparency in the Family Courts, which was published in October 2021.

To support journalists who wish to report under the pilot scheme, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism has created a microsite at [www.tbij.com](http://www.tbij.com), with information for reporters and others.

Queries from the media to the judicial organisers of the pilot can be sent to [pilots@thetig.org.uk](mailto:pilots@thetig.org.uk).

## Steve Bell





# Talk to Radio Foyle listeners about cuts to news, BBC bosses urged

**TIM DAVIE**, the BBC director general, and corporation chair Richard Sharp are being pressed to visit Derry and engage directly with the community on the future of Radio Foyle. In common with other BBC local radio stations, it is threatened with cuts to jobs and programming.

The NUJ has pointed out that as there is no Northern Ireland representation on the BBC board, decisions in relation to services in the region have been taken with no local input.

The union organised a public meeting in Derry's Guildhall, hosted by the mayor of Derry and Strabane district, Sandra Duffy, which attracted more than 250 people.

Séamus Dooley, the NUJ's assistant general secretary, who chaired the meeting, said that only an out-of-touch BBC board would ignore "the angry and determined voice of a risen people".

Under the BBC's plans, eight jobs out of the 30-strong workforce at Radio Foyle are threatened.

The audience included nationalist and unionist politicians as well as members of the clergy, farmers, factory workers and trade unionists.

Radio Foyle presenter Dean McLaughlin told them: "This is a battle and, like our newsroom, we are ready to go to the battlefield."

After the meeting Dooley said: "The historic Guildhall echoed to the rafters as more than 250 people demanded the retention of existing news services at Radio Foyle. The director general and chair need to show leadership, engage with the



© KEVIN COOPER PHOTOLINE

community and hear what their local listeners have to say."

"The powerful testimonies from across every sector of the community are confirmation of the role which Radio Foyle plays within its vast catchment area, which extends beyond Derry's walls.

Because of the current political deadlock in Northern Ireland there is no NI nominee to the board, as provided for in legislation.

"In these circumstances, there is a particular onus on Richard Sharp to protect the interest of Northern Ireland. One way he can do this is by coming to Northern Ireland and engaging with the community."

You can sign the petition to oppose the cuts at <https://tinyurl.com/57dbm9ze>

## Newry paper saved by buyer

**ONE OF** Northern Ireland's oldest papers has been saved from closure after it was bought by National World.

The Newry Reporter weekly paper, founded in 1867, was due to bring out its final

edition on January 25. Ten jobs would have been lost.

National World executive chairman David Montgomery – a former editor of the News of the World and ex-chief executive of Mirror Group –

said: "The Reporter has a proud history and National World is committed to uphold and foster its heritage.

"It is important that its independent editorial voice is protected and plays a part in

promoting Newry and the wider region.

"We are proud to take on that role and support all The Reporter's staff and contributors in that mission."

The NUJ has said the loss of the paper would "pierce the very heart of the town".

## Lyra murder charges

**TWO MEN** are to stand trial for the murder of Lyra McKee, the journalist and NUJ member who was shot dead while reporting on a disturbance in Derry in April 2019.

Peter Cavanagh, 35, and Jordan Devine, 22, are both from Derry and will stand trial in Belfast on a date yet to be fixed. They deny the charge of murder and are on bail pending a trial date.

The two have also been charged with rioting on the same night of the shooting along with six other men.

Lyra was killed shortly after the 21st anniversary of the Good Friday agreement and her death made headlines around the world.



## inbrief...

### PUTIN'S PEOPLE AUTHOR GETS MBE

Catherine Belton, the former Financial Times Moscow correspondent and author of the book *Putin's People*, was made an MBE in the New Year's honours. The book was hit with a legal claim from oligarch Roman Abramovich. She used her award to call for action to end intimidating law suits against journalists.

### GEORDIE GREIG GOES TO THE INDEPENDENT

Geordie Greig is the new editor of the digital-only Independent. He was appointed in January, just over a year after he was ousted from the top job at the Daily Mail. The Independent, which closed its print edition seven years ago, has been led by acting editor David Marley for over two years since Christian Broughton moved from editor to managing director.

### THE PAPERS DOES ITS FINAL REVIEW

Nightly newspaper review programme *The Papers* has ended. *The Papers*, which was broadcast after BBC News at Ten on the 24-hour news channel, was produced for the final time on January 2. It had previously been a popular programme on the main BBC channels, at one point getting more viewers than *Newsnight*.

### GUIDE ISSUED ON REFUGEE REPORTING

The NUJ and UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, have published guidance for the media during the largest refugee emergency in Europe since the Second World War, caused by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia. *Reporting on Refugees, Guidance by and for Journalists*, covers all the main terms and definitions as well as the different forms of protection that are available to refugees, to assist journalists in carrying out their work. It can be downloaded from <https://tinyurl.com/5ar2sdvc>

# Inquest report victory

Faced with extreme restrictions on the use of inquest recordings, **Louise Tickle** took action

**T**his is a story about not ignoring those niggles journalists sometimes get – the sense you’re being told something that just isn’t right.

Last May, I attended the first two days of a six-day inquest at Hull coroner’s court into the death of a woman who committed suicide after suffering domestic abuse. I couldn’t be in court for the full inquest so I applied for a copy of the recording of the hearing. Although the media isn’t entitled to this as of right, the chief coroner’s guidance, indicates a strong presumption that it will be provided if asked for.

It took months to get a decision. I was to be permitted the recording. But there was a kicker. I would have to sign an undertaking before the Hull coroner would release it. This stipulated:

1. *This recording is not to be used for any purpose other than transcribing for possible legal proceedings or listening to.*
2. *Any other use of the recording or part of it by copying, publishing, transmitting or broadcasting in any way [...] without the consent of the coroner may be a contempt of court punishable with imprisonment.*
3. *If the recording is used to produce a transcript, the transcript must be shown to the coroner before being used [...].*

I was baffled. My investigation would result in a podcast. I needed to transcribe the recording, wanted actors to revoice parts and, as the reporter, to quote things that had been said in

court. Signing this undertaking would mean I could do none of them.

That felt all wrong. What is said in open court is reportable. So I emailed the coroner, saying I didn’t think the wording was lawful.

I suggested an alternative: ‘The recording is not to be used for any purpose other than for listening to, for transcribing for possible legal proceedings, or for the accurate reporting and quoting of what took place in open court.’

A few days later, I got a reply, asking me to confirm that I did not intend to ‘re-enact’ any parts of the inquest, as opposed to the coroner’s purpose for releasing the recording, ‘which is merely the accurate reporting of the inquest’.

Now I was baffled and cross. I couldn’t understand why I shouldn’t be able to make a transcript for whatever journalistic purpose I wanted, including – given this was a podcast – revoicing it. Everything had been said in public.

I needed that recording, but something stopped me signing the undertaking. I thought: let’s ask a lawyer.

Paul Bowen KC is a human rights barrister who has helped me in the past. He very kindly said he would take a look, so I sent over all the correspondence.

Within hours, an email landed in my inbox: “Dear L,” Bowen had written. “So, you may have stumbled across something that is unlawful.”

I love these moments.

“On the face of it, para 1 of the warning is incorrect,” he wrote. “I think the next

**//**  
I couldn’t understand why I shouldn’t be able to make a transcript for whatever journalistic purpose I wanted

step is to write to the chief coroner requesting him to review his guidance.”

The process was to send a letter before action, pointing to the problems caused by the undertaking and suggesting new wording. If that didn’t work – judicial review.

I asked the Hull coroner to reverse her decision and allow me to report as I saw fit, and the chief coroner to amend his guidance “to permit the use of a transcript of a recording of proceedings provided by a Coroner for journalistic purposes including by reading out or voicing verbatim sections of the transcript as part of a radio broadcast or podcast”. I gave them 14 days to reply.

A couple of days before the deadline, the chief coroner emailed: “I concede that this wording is misleading.”

There may have been a small squeak followed by an air punch.

The letter went on: “There should be no blanket prohibition in chief coroner guidance on the use of any recording or transcript for the purpose of accurately reporting court proceedings or on the use of actors to voice a transcribed recording to produce a fair and accurate re-enactment for broadcast purposes.” He said he would revise his guidance “to make it clear that these are both legitimate activities”.

He also said he would inform the Hull coroner. She swiftly informed me she had taken note and I could have the recording without the restrictions.

I’m incredibly pleased, not only because it means my investigation can go ahead unhindered, but also because now, all journalists reporting on inquests will no longer be constrained on how they can use official records of what took place in open court.

I’m also very glad I didn’t brush aside the niggles and sign the undertaking – and beyond grateful for Paul Bowen KC’s advice and support which made this gain for freedom of expression possible.



# Sharp has crossed a dangerous line



The BBC chair has undermined himself, says **Raymond Snoddy**

**T**he main act was always going to be the now sacked Nadhim Zahawi, the man who negotiated and settled a multimillion fine imposed by HMRC while he was in charge of that very body as chancellor of the exchequer.

Somehow, he accidentally neglected to pay capital gains tax on £27 million gained from the sale of the YouGov polling organisation he co-founded.

Zahawi, it appears, also forgot to mention the payment to former prime minister Liz Truss and current PM Rishi Sunak before his appointment as chairman of the Conservative Party.

The formal investigation completes a unique treble at the top of this most singular of Conservative governments – the now former party chairman, deputy prime minister Dominic Rabb and former prime minister Boris Johnson have all been under investigation at the same time for allegations of different breaches of the Code of Standards for MPs.

In comparison, the Richard Sharp affair seems like a mere leitmotif carrying persistent echoes of cronyism rather than corruption, amid question marks over what is appropriate behaviour for a chairman of the BBC.

Appointing chairmen of the BBC – they have always been men – has consistently been a murky business. Labour as well as Conservative tend to appoint sympathisers to the post.

Duke Hussey is believed to have got the job because his wife Lady Hussey (of recent controversy while lady-in-waiting to the Queen) asked whether something could be found for “Dukie”.

Rupert Murdoch, his employer at the time, was flabbergasted at the appointment.

Obscure accountant Stuart Young just happened to be the brother of successful businessman David Young who went on to become Tory cabinet minister Lord Young of Graffham.

Against such a background, there was nothing totally unexpected about the appointment of the well-connected former Goldman Sachs merchant banker Richard Sharp. He had advised Boris Johnson when he was mayor of London and Sunak at the Treasury.

Sharp had also been Sunak’s boss at Goldman and, over the years, had donated £400,000 to the Conservatives. But, what the hell, he was certainly better than the original preferred candidate – Lord Charles Moore, Margaret Thatcher’s official biographer and arch critic of the BBC and its licence fee.

With such high-level Tory contacts, Sharp might even be a useful voice arguing for the BBC and its funding.

Then came the Sunday Times revelation that Sharp had been involved in manoeuvres to guarantee an £800,000 loan for the needy Boris Johnson during the final stage of his bid for the BBC role. The paper said that Sharp linked one old friend, multi-millionaire Sam Blyth, with the prime minister. Johnson and Blyth happen to be distant cousins.

Sharp insists he did nothing wrong and that he told the head of the cabinet office Simon Case about this to avoid any conflict of interest. He does not seem to have realised that this approach, which would inevitably have reached Johnson, amounted in itself to a conflict of interest. Surely, all he had to do was privately give Blyth Johnson’s telephone number and let them get on with it.

Then naturally the three had to dine at Chequers afterwards – according to the Sunday Times, they ate chop suey

and drank wine – although Sharp denies the loan was discussed.

Then came another episode, showing the perfectly concentric circles in British society. The commissioner for public appointments, William Shawcross, was called in to investigate. Total coincidence but his daughter Eleanor just happens to be head of the Number 10 Policy Unit. Adding to the fiasco, he then excused himself, admitting he had met Sharp several times.

Along the way, The Guardian reported Sharp owns a multimillion pound stake in health care company Oncimmune granted £600,000 for Covid research while he was an adviser in Downing Street. He is a former director of the company. The grant, it is insisted, was independently awarded and his stake is now in a blind account.

As far as an outsider can tell, Sharp has fought for the interests of the BBC since his appointment, but there is one important charge against him.

According to former BBC North American editor Jon Sopel, Sharp caused disquiet when he was involved last year in the interview of the excellent Deborah Turness for the post of chief executive of BBC News.

BBC editorial appointments are ultimately the responsibility of the director general, who is also editor-in-chief. They are not the responsibility of BBC chairmen and Sharp was seen to cross a dangerous line between the BBC’s editorial impartiality and the politically appointed chairmanship.

Unlike Zahawi, Sharp will probably escape with a ticking-off for, his political naiveté. However, his reputation will have been greatly damaged. We can be certain that the next Labour government will not be reappointing him for a second term.

**Appointing chairmen of the BBC - they have always been men - has consistently been a murky business**

# Nottingham

**Ruth Addicott** talks to journalists about what it's like to live and work in Nottingham

**I**n 1985, the Nottingham Post ran a campaign called The Old and Cold, following a story about 90-year-old war veteran Jack Hobbs, who was using candles to cut his electricity bills. The campaign ran for two decades and was a lifeline for Nottingham pensioners.

Nearly 40 years on, the reports are still the same, but the newsroom could not look more different. The daily tabloid, owned by Reach and founded in 1878, no longer has an office and journalists on the paper and on [www.nottinghampost.com](http://www.nottinghampost.com) all work from home.

While newspapers across the country are rapidly following suit, Diana Peasey, chair of the Nottingham NUJ branch, brands this change “a disgrace”.

“Journalists need to meet up together to get their creative juices going and to spark ideas,” she says. “I would like to see a creative centre, a hub, so they can go somewhere and talk to each other and have a creative environment.”

One option under discussion in Nottingham is a possible tie up with Nottingham Trent University (NTU), which is looking at providing space for the reporters.

Deborah Wilson David, head of department, journalism and media at NTU, says: “We know that the Nottingham Post – along with many newspaper brands – no longer has a physical office. We are discussing ways of helping with that and are hoping to provide space that they can use – which will also benefit journalism students who will have the chance to work alongside professional reporters on a daily basis.”

Wilson David came up with the idea after visiting the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass

Communication at Arizona State University in the US, where students and journalists work alongside each other.

“It was a model I saw work well in the US 10 years ago. I proposed it at my last university and my ambition is to make it happen here too,” she says.

NTU offers a wide range of journalism and media courses and has strong links with local media. Around one-third of journalists employed by Reach in the area are graduates from NTU, many working at the Nottingham Post. The university also has an independent local TV channel, Notts TV. Students can do a year's placement in the newsroom and many have gone on to work on network news and nationals.

Meanwhile where is significant uncertainty about job cuts and proposed changes to local radio; regional or national programming could replace local output after 2pm on weekdays and over most of the weekend.

Kevin Stanley, a journalist at BBC Radio Nottingham and NUJ secondee for the BBC nations and regions, says: “The NUJ is, rightly, mounting a robust campaign to challenge this. It would seem perverse for the BBC to imagine that the appetite for local radio and breaking news on linear radio simply disappears at a set point of the day or that audiences won't notice. They will – and the listeners in our most vulnerable sections of society will likely lose out.”

ITV Central has a newsroom on the NG2 Business Park near Nottingham city centre with three on-screen journalists and two managers. The famous Lenton Lane studios, which used to produce Crossroads, Supermarket Sweep and Central Weekend closed in 2005 and the ITV Central East Midlands programme is produced in Birmingham.

On the commercial side, Global Radio has a base and runs some local news bulletins, and there is Gem, a Nottingham-based independent local radio station owned by Bauer.

“Commercial radio still covers the big stories really well, with Gem doing a good job with social media platforms as well as on-air material,” says Stanley. “The BBC may still





## Pictures and protests

### Photo freedom

The approach of the police towards photographers has become a concern for Nottingham branch members. "Increasingly, the branch has raised the issue

off what happens when photographers are taking pictures and people don't like it - ie the police or members of the public - and that is quite a strong issue in Nottingham," says branch

chair Diana Peasey. The branch meets monthly.

### Common causes

The branch works closely with Nottingham TUC, co-ordinating protests on

issues such as the cost of living and rallies in defence of Ukrainian journalists. Both have also expressed concern over what is happening regarding Russian journalists.

### Get out and about

As well as good links to London (a direct train takes

two hours), Nottingham has a comprehensive bus and tram network and there are e-scooters that can be hired for the short and long term. "I use them to get into the office and travelling to stories. I don't need a car," says BBC journalist, Kevin Stanley.

dominate the news landscape but the commercial sector packs a good punch here."

Nottingham is also home to UK-wide DAB station Boom Radio, which is 'run by baby boomers for baby boomers'. Although the programmes are broadcast from presenters' homes and the station does not employ journalists (news is provided by IRN/Sky), it's a local success story, amassing almost half a million weekly listeners.

While PR, comms and social media management appear to be thriving, opportunities in magazines seem scarce.

One of the most successful is independent art and culture magazine LeftLion, set up by Nottingham-born Jared Wilson and his friend Al Gilby in 2003.

Wilson started it as a hobby while working as a copywriter and marketing assistant, but by 2014, it had become a full time job and they now employ a small team.

"We set it up because we loved the city and wanted to shine a light on some areas of culture and entertainment we didn't think were being covered elsewhere," he says.

Wilson puts its success down to the quality of its content, "stubborn-ness" and "a genuine love for the city".

"We consider ourselves print first, putting out a new issue each month, and we don't go for clickbait with our online publishing," he says.

In addition, there are lifestyle magazines Nottinghamshire Aspect, the Dilettante Gazette and the Nottingham Arrow, which is owned by the city council.

"We get emails from a lot of people, including many journalism students, who ask us about jobs and work experience," says Wilson. "In all honesty, I think there are fewer opportunities out there than there are people looking for them. But that's partly because we have hundreds of people studying journalism courses in the city."

"It's a fun place to live as well as work, so a great place to start a career. We also have our fair share of local authority dramas, so plenty of opportunities to hold power to account."

**Deborah Wilson David, head of media, Nottingham Trent University**

"From Robin Hood to the Luddites, Nottingham has always been a city of rebellion, which I like to think is reflected in a strong tradition of trade union activity and solidarity."

**Kevin Stanley, BBC journalist and NUJ rep**

"I've lived in other cities - London, Sheffield and Exeter - but there's something that always brought me back."

**Jared Wilson, editor in chief, LeftLion magazine**

For freelance writer Kirsty Knaggs, who was born in Nottingham, one of the upsides to moving back was the cost of living: "I couldn't afford to live in Brighton by myself, but I can here - just!"

Knaggs, whose home is in Sherwood, says Nottingham is a very creative and inclusive city.

"It's a great community, with a very vibrant/eclectic/artsy centre," she says. "Brighton was of course very buzzy too, but it was a lot more self-consciously hipster. People tend to be more genuine here."

So, apart from lace-making and links to Robin Hood, what else is Nottingham famous for?

Tarmac, Torvill and Dean, Boots and brown sauce all came from Nottingham, as did Raleigh bikes. Sport is well catered for with test cricket at Trent Bridge, football clubs Nottingham Forest and Notts County, and the National Ice Centre, which is home to the Team GB short track speed skating squad. Nottinghamshire was also home to literary giants Byron, DH Lawrence and Alan Sillitoe.

"It's a great city to live in," says Wilson. "There's always something to do, lots of good places to go out and eat and drink. Lots of gigs, theatre shows and cinemas. Now that I have young kids, I appreciate the range of family activities on offer. There are also lots of green spaces."

"In terms of the cost of living, it's still a lot more affordable than most cities. Obviously, the price of most things is rising everywhere right now, but house prices are lower than the national average and, as a city, it's got everything you want."

Real ale aficionado Kevin Stanley was so inspired that he started a website on 'great places to drink' in and around Nottingham ([www.nottsnight.com](http://www.nottsnight.com)).

"Nottingham is my home city, I've lived and worked here for most of my life, I love it," he says.



# It's another world now

**Peter Popham** on the demise of a coveted posting

**A**ppointed Rome correspondent by The Independent in 2002, I found the Eternal City disappointing: gridlocked traffic, graffiti everywhere, swarms of tourists. I had to live miles from the centre in a modern block of flats. I moaned about it to Richard Owen, the correspondent of The Times. "Peter, take a tip from me," he said. "Never complain about Rome. No one in London will understand."

He was right of course. The city is sublime and my deal, in hindsight, was a dream. I was on staff, accommodation and expenses paid, with a free office in an Italian daily. No money for an assistant, unlike in Delhi, my previous posting, nor for a car and driver, but a modestly comfortable life for me and my family. In return, I sent offers of stories for the foreign pages every morning, filed a piece of, say, 400-1,800 words three or four afternoons a week, was on the alert for hot news – pope falls off Popemobile, Berlusconi throws a bunga-bunga party – and happy to turn out the odd colour read for the magazines.

Compare that with the situation today. Staff jobs grow sparser year by year – I was one of the Independent's last staffers in Delhi and the last one in Rome – so it's down to locally hired stringers, paid by the word, struggling to patch together an income from half a dozen outlets with no security beyond the next piece and no money for housing, let alone air fares.

Then there's the internet. This was slow to affect my own work because The Independent in the early 2000s – cash-strapped as ever – had a primitive website that was only updated overnight. But, all around me, colleagues' working methods were being transformed. Going to one press conference, I noticed that all the other reporters had brought laptops, primed to ping the minute the conference ended.

"Today there's an expectation that you'll read your emails every five minutes," observes John Hooper, Italian correspondent of The Economist. "It's very difficult to argue for the 24 hours needed to digest what's happened."



**My Rome deal, in hindsight, was a dream. I was on staff, accommodation and expenses paid, with a free office**



In fact, in the 50 years since I typed my first piece on a little portable in Tokyo, stuffed it in an envelope and took it to the post office for mailing to London, the profession has changed beyond recognition.

The most obvious way is the technology. Richard Owen says: "When I arrived in Moscow as The Times correspondent in 1982, you had to book a phone call to London and hope that you were eventually put through. Naturally, the KGB listened in and recorded the call. In the office, there was a telex machine on which to write and send articles to London. If the KGB didn't like what you wrote, the telex transmission suddenly died."

Then there were the copytakers for those filing by phone. Elizabeth Nash, ex-Madrid correspondent of the Independent, recalls filing to the paper in those years. "I wrote the copy on my dad's portable Remington in my flat, corrected it by pen then read it down the phone, reversing the charges," she says. "It would take the copytakers 40 minutes to get an 800-word story down. They were very deadpan, very professional."

When things occasionally went wrong, there were





simple fixes. John Lichfield, the Independent's former Paris correspondent, says: "In 1983, I spent 20 minutes dictating a very detailed story to the Sunday Telegraph on a European currency crisis. The copytaker took it all down patiently then said, 'Are you sure this is for the News of the World, mate?' I had got one digit wrong in the phone number. 'Never mind, mate,' he said. 'I'll just run it across the street.'"

Even when laptops and modems put the copytakers out of business, the core of the job remained the same: to bring the country to life. And often that meant going places.

Nash remembers: "If something happened – violence in the Basque country, a bridge collapsing somewhere – often the desk would say, 'Why don't you go there? I think you should go.' Although there was good information about the event on the wires, there was still the appetite to say 'go.'"

Jason Burke, the Guardian's Africa correspondent, based in Johannesburg, a couple of decades younger, works in a different world: "It's a continuous express train of news and your job is to jump on and hold on as long as possible before being hurled off. It's a fire hose of news blasting past all the time from a million different outlets so you try to surf it."

"In Africa, you're still doing journalism – something happened so you go out and find out what's happening. But more and more today, you have the journalist as aggregator. There's much more scrutiny, especially on social media, much more emphasis on speaking languages – it's a lot more diverse."

And there's what he calls the Great Flattening. "Everything's less hierarchical. You can't get away with just having a drink with someone at the embassy, 1970s style. There's a mass of local media that are much more knowledgeable."

"In India, for example, where I used to be based, there are lots of start-up websites, some of them really good, that have broken up the monopoly of the big papers. Now local people read your stuff. Before, people in Uttar Pradesh or in Upper Kenya would never see what we wrote. Now people can read everything."

He continues: "Before, there was always the thing about where are you going to file, how are you going to file? Now, even in Africa there's always someone with wifi. The communications have been completely revolutionised. The rhythm of work has changed as a result. In the

Gaza war in 2014, my first file was at 8 or 9 am, then

## A rival to a 'local hire' in India

**IN MY** novel *India Be Damned*, set in Delhi in 1947, Fred Niblett is the new correspondent of *The Times*:

For *The Times*, Niblett was a bargain: as a 'local hire', he came without the bells and whistles of his predecessor: the home leave, the aeroplane and limousine account, the dues for the Gymkhana Club, the boarding school fees for his children, the large domestic staff. He lobbied successfully for a bigger place to live, and for a teleprinter to be installed. He didn't bother about any of the other things.

Then Zacharay Starr, a

thrusting young Brit, is after Fred's job:

It was decided in the Editor's splendid room before conference. The Foreign Editor fumed sleekly. "After that absurd lie," he said, "Niblett simply clammed up. Zacharay told him we were waiting for an explanation. But not a peep."

"Poor show. So he's been snapped up by the Obs. Or the Mail."

"According to Zacharay he denies it stoutly."

"As one would."

"We need to run something tonight. Starr's ready and willing. We'll have to fix the byline of course."

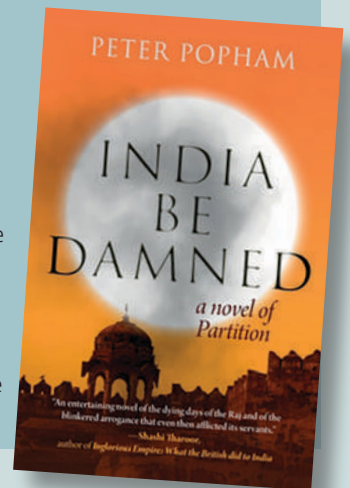
"So what's detaining us?"  
"There's a price. He wants Niblett's title."

The Editor's eyes flickered across the enormous Canaletto on the wall.

"Is Niblett in the union?" he enquired.

"No."

"Then I don't see what's holding us up, do you?"



I'd go out and report, update early afternoon, then head out again, come back, write the news story through then write up the report I'd been working on."

But it's not all slog, and a Guardian colleague of Burke's reveals that a big trend in the past couple of decades – the explosion in the number of female foreign correspondents – has made the job less all-consuming in its demands.

Kate Connolly has reported from Berlin since 1996, first for the Telegraph, now for *The Guardian*. She has two children, aged 9 and 11, and, although her husband is a high-flying doctor, she's continued working throughout, and the paper – with women in senior positions from editor down – was always understanding. "During the pandemic," Kate says, "it was very gratifying that *The Guardian* never kicked up a fuss about home schooling. They never said it's just not on."

She says that the job has also become more collegial. Three days a week, after filing, she has a conference call with the other Guardian corries in Europe and the foreign staff in London.

"We started doing it during the pandemic," she says, "but so many people are still working from home that we've continued."

That way the sense of being far from home – "the paranoia of the foreign correspondent, the feeling of being out on a limb," as she puts it – is diminished. And, when correspondents are in touch with each other regularly, there is a gain for the paper, too.



# Taking back cont.

## Samantha Downes looks at self-publishing on Substack – and getting an income from it

**L**ast summer I found myself with a couple of interesting stories, not front-page exclusives but ones I knew would get read. An ideal situation if you, like me, are a personal finance journalist who believes in holding our financial institutions to account as well as alerting consumers to possible scams and expert money-saving advice.

Not ideal if it is a silly season though, and everyone – i.e. most of your commissioning editors – is too hot and bothered to want anything beyond top-line, clickbait first-person pieces.

Fair enough, but I knew my stories were not likely to stay just mine for long.

I couldn't wait for the cooler, more collected days of September, so finding a home for my stories became a quest.

As a freelance, I am technically self-employed but, in reality, my work flow is determined not just by whether editors want my stuff but also whether they have the budget that week/month or the pagination available for any stories.

A few years ago, I had toyed with setting up my own magazine with other writers to publish the stuff we knew should be out there.

Life then got in the way – children, marriage – but I eventually found myself conversing with fellow frustrated journalists on Facebook groups.

The model the more successful self-publishers appeared to be adopting was that of the subscription-only newsletter. Unlike blogs, which can get lost in the ether (literally), sending a newsletter means you can connect with readers.

One name kept coming up in our online conversations about subscription newsletters: Substack.

It's like a literary version of OnlyFans, where people sign up to read stuff from writers or personalities.

I had associated Substack with the musings of Boris Johnson's former adviser turned adversary Dominic Cummings. For journalists with less controversial but no less interesting views, Substack is becoming the self-publishing platform of choice and, according to Substack, someone with 100 subscribers paying £8 a month could make around £700 after fees.

Lily Canter is co-founder of Freelancing for Journalists, which uses Substack to reach out to its members.

She says: "There are a variety of platforms but Substack has emerged as the most reliable."

Lily explains that Substack has a reputation of being well filtered – which means no spam – and for being easy to use.

"Substack also has an easy way of getting subscribers and paid subscribers which makes it ideal for freelancers," she adds.

## 'A way I could keep writing'

### RORY CELLAN-JONES

started using Substack when he left his role as BBC News' technology correspondent two years ago.

Cellan-Jones was at the coalface of internet journalism. While at the BBC, he had helped expand the coverage of new media and the internet.

"I had a different motive to making money when I started using Substack," he says.

"I had got to the stage where I had a fantastic career but, when the BBC wanted to move my job to Glasgow, it seemed like a good time to go."

"When I left the BBC, I was

going to have a portfolio career, do some well-paid PR gigs for a couple of days a month and fill in the rest with writing. I really did want to keep on writing – the question was how and where."

"Then, a friend of my wife who is a historian in New York was offered £100,000 to write a Substack newsletter.

"I knew I wasn't going to earn quite such amounts but it did make me want to explore Substack as a way I could continue writing."

"I found that it was an easy-to-use platform. And, if you are on Twitter, then you can post a link to it from your Twitter account and

connect with readers.

"So, I tried it out and liked it, and launched a health tech newsletter – Always On – back in January last year."

When Cellan-Jones started out, he allowed subscribers to access his copy for free.

"You can switch on the paid option, which means people then pay for posts. But those

who signed up for free will stay free. It's a dirty secret."

Cellan-Jones has 4,000 subscribers, of whom 80 are paying: "I don't make a salary out of that but I do see small amounts of money go into my account each day."

His subscription fee is £4 a month, which works out at around £3 per subscriber after Substack takes its fees.

"I have former BBC colleagues who write on Substack and they make very reasonable amounts."

Like anyone on a deadline, Cellan-Jones admits to feeling 'performance pressure'.

"I do wonder what the hell am I going to write sometimes. But I make sure I put at least

two pieces a week up of 500-600 words."

Cellan-Jones also credits his Substack success to writing about his Parkinson's disease; he was diagnosed with the condition a few years ago.

"I'm writing about health and sharing my story – people want to read about other people."

Substack is not for everyone. Cellan-Jones advises that those who want to use it should have a strategy and be pragmatic.

"You need to be realistic about whether there will be an income and think about what your specialist subject will be and what you can say that others don't."

"Oh, and remember – you will have to keep feeding the machine."



 substack



# rol (and cash?)

Also unlike most blogs, from which copy can be taken, writers retain full copyright on Substack.

"Authors own their copy, so you do own your copyright to any original content and you have a contract with Substack that sets this out clearly," says Lily.

So, setting up a Substack account is the easy bit, it would seem. But then writers progress to the much harder bit: how to write, what to write and when to post. Oh, and how to make money from it.

## Beginners' guide to **Substack**

### ✓ **Step one: be prepared to post regularly**

"A lot of journalists use it ad hoc, as and when they have something to promote," explains Lily. "I don't personally think this is very successful. It puts me off as a subscriber and certainly puts me off wanting to pay for content."

Successful Substackers post at least once a week. "Journalists are used to working to deadlines so, even if it's every third or fourth Wednesday or once a month, you have to set that deadline and you have to stick to it."

### ✓ **Step two: decide what to write**

You do not need to be constantly posting exclusives, as Lily reassures me. Freelancing for Journalists does not include original news and she points out that its most successful newsletters are the personal ones: "We surveyed our subscribers and found our readers wanted to know how we had overcome challenges. The really personal stuff does best."

### ✓ **Step three: tell a story**

Sticking with the personal theme, it would seem Substack newsletters where the writer 'embeds themselves' in the story also score highly with subscribers. Lily says the most engaging ones written by journalists might, as well as telling a story, include explanations of how they found it and how they went about presenting it.

### ✓ **Step four: use analysis**

"The most-read Substacks are the analytical ones," says Lily. "The biggest one reports on news in China. It's technical, it's detailed and it's analytical. People want long reads."

### ✓ **Step five: free or paid - you decide**

Writers of the most popular newsletter are earning in the hundreds of thousands from a large audience. Most writers may need to bring in subscribers for free and start charging when they reach a threshold.

Freelancing for Journalists earns money in two ways: sponsorship (an advert at the top of the newsletter) and subscription fees: "Even so, we are talking thousands, not tens of thousands a year."

### ✓ **Step six: you might want to use social media**

If you want to extend your reach, having a presence on Facebook and Twitter can help bring in subscribers. Being able to tweet your stories can expand your subscriber base hugely.

### ✓ **Step seven: it's actually quite easy**

You don't need to be a technical whizz: you sign up and just write, and adding images is easy. Lily says: "If you want to use a photo, you upload it and there's a button you can press and it sizes it for you."



Older women are losing media roles, with some employers having used the pandemic as an excuse to get rid of them. **Jenny Sims** reports on recent research

# When a woman's face doesn't fit

**L**egal action over ageism taken by women in the media is the public tip of a huge iceberg, according to Karen Ross, a professor of gender and media at Newcastle University.

And Professor Ross, of the university's school of arts and cultures, believes age discrimination is even affecting female employees below the age of 40.

A presentation by Professor Ross shone a light on bias against older women across the industry, drawing on interviews with 24 older female media professionals and their testimonials.

The professor was addressing a workshop in the run-up to the NUJ's delegate meeting in April, when delegates are expected to call on the union to take stronger action to tackle ageism.

Participants in her study had worked or were still working as journalists, presenters, producers or actors.

Ross said: "Their experiences included having their contracts summarily terminated or not renewed, being manoeuvred out of front-of-camera roles, seeing their career opportunities evaporate when they reached their 40s or even earlier, and being replaced by younger women."

Those brave enough to challenge dismissals, redundancies or job role changes at employment tribunals, even if they won their case, sometimes felt they had lost, she said. When they could no longer find an equivalent job in the same field, some of her respondents said they felt depressed, believing their careers were over.

This is a harsh price to pay, particularly for women in their late 40s and 50s. For self-preservation, few women go to court. The few

who do often make the headlines.

The first to win a UK tribunal case on age discrimination was former BBC presenter Miriam O'Reilly (pictured) in 2011, after she was dropped from its rural affairs show, *Countryfile*, at the age of 53.

O'Reilly was awarded £150,000. After the tribunal, the BBC issued an apology and said it would give additional training to senior editorial executives, and issue new guidance on the fair selection of presenters. They admitted the findings raised questions that needed to be addressed by the whole industry.

## Little change over a decade

So, 11 years on, how much has changed? Not enough, thinks Ross.

In 2022, Donna Traynor, presenter of the flagship Northern Ireland TV *Newsline* programme, quit aged 56 after the BBC planned to move her to a role off screen. She started legal proceedings (which are ongoing) against the corporation on the grounds of sexism and ageism.

While the two cases were different, in both, 'gendered ageism' was at the base of decisions to dismiss them or move them out of their existing presenting roles, says Ross.

She asks whether these hearings are the public tip of a much larger iceberg, which also includes micro-discriminations and instances of professional undermining that many older women experience. Her research demonstrates that they most definitely are.

She has looked at employment tribunal cases worldwide brought on grounds of ageism and sexism, and

found that mostly cases of ageism were upheld rather than both together.

Yet evidence suggests that, all too often, a woman's sell-by date is judged by her age and appearance rather than her experience, skills and competence. Managers use coded language such as 'needing fresh talent' as an excuse when they want to replace them with younger faces.

Ross says that after more than half a century of equality legislation in the UK and elsewhere, it is 'extremely disappointing' to see women moved out of front-of-camera roles as anchors and presenters, marginalised in newsrooms and losing work as actors when they are perceived to have reached the end of their 'viable' career.

She points out that such decisions, based on physical attractiveness rather than professional competence, do not make sense in today's environment in which older viewers make up the vast majority of the terrestrial TV audience, and where studies show that viewers of all ages say



36%

of those aged 50-70 years  
say their age is a  
disadvantage when  
applying for jobs

they want to see more diverse older people on screen, including older women.

What is more, she adds, it makes commercial sense to recognise the considerable purchasing power of the baby-boomer generation and give them a bit more of what they want.

Older women in the media have also found Covid has been used as an excuse to terminate their contracts. One participant said that when lockdown restrictions were lifted, her older male colleagues returned to their jobs but she never got the call back.

Some women took early retirement after

Covid. Others have found new careers.

Some are fighting back by creating their own media and developing opportunities for other women to thrive. Some, who won their tribunal cases but lost their careers, say they have no regrets because it was the right thing to do.

Natasha Hirst, NUJ vice-president, says: "Sexism and ageism can often be subtle and hard to call out but still have the devastating impact of undermining confidence and opportunities or even cutting careers short.

"As well as challenging discrimination where it occurs, it is important for the NUJ to work proactively with employers to eliminate poor practices and strengthen policies that support women in their careers."

### Assumptions about age

Ross's findings resonate with a report by the Centre for Ageing Better charity aimed at tackling ageism and stereotypes around age. Challenging Ageism: a Guide to Talking about Ageing and Older Age says: "Ageist attitudes have worrying consequences for physical and mental health."

It adds: "Age-based stereotypes can also

negatively impact experiences in the workplace, with 36 per cent of 50- to 70-year-olds saying that their age would disadvantage them in applying for jobs.

"Assumptions that older workers are less competent or less capable of learning new skills lead to people being forced out of the workforce or being passed over for job progression."

The future of work, skills and pay was discussed at the recent International Longevity Centre UK's 25th anniversary conference, the Future of Ageing 2022: a Vision for the Next 25 Years..

Tributes were paid to its founder, the late Baroness Sally Greengross OBE. Greengross, a crossbench peer and former director general of charity Age Concern England (now Age UK), was interested in the implications of longevity for intergenerational fairness.

The final session at the event, the Greengross Debate on the Future: Younger People's Views on the Future of Ageing, was led by a panel of young representatives of the Hudl Youth Development Agency, who expressed concern at generations being pitted against each other.

Crossbench peer Lord Simon Woolley, a former equality and human rights commissioner who became principal of Homerton College, Cambridge, at the age of 60, says: "Age is just a number." He plans to keep active and has no plans to retire.

**Jenny Sims is co-chair, NUJ 60+ Council @Jenny\_Sims**

## Union called on to combat ageism

**TWO KEY** strands of the NUJ 60+ Council's remit are to oppose and publicise age-based discrimination and to campaign against ageism in the media.

Professor Karen Ross's research into 'gendered ageism' in the media has shown it is still rife.

Her findings are timely and add weight to the council's motion on ageism scheduled for the NUJ's upcoming delegate meeting in April 2023.

This will call on the union to reinforce its efforts 'to combat ageist discrimination in the workplace and ageist stereotypes in the media.

Nicoletta Flessati, the council's lead on ageism, says: "Age

discrimination and age-based prejudice have an impact on at least one in three older people, resulting in many leaving the labour market for good.

"Age diversity is a plus for an organisation and demonstrates that it values the skills and experience of older workers as part of a multigenerational workforce."

The charity Centre for Ageing Better (CAB) has been testing a number of ways to provide more effective employment support for people aged 50 and over.

This includes better training for work coaches; better support for older workers facing redundancy and tailored help for

people who have fallen out of the labour market completely.

Senior Reporter, the 60+ council's newsletter, has drawn attention to a number of CAB publications addressing ageism during the last year.

These have included guidance for employers (below) and the media for avoiding ageist stereotyping of older people. These are available at <https://ageing-better.org.uk/resources>.





The newspapers made the most of Profumo affair, says **Jonathan Sale**

# THE KEELER INST

**T**he caption of a cartoon, depicting a news vendor, read: “Sorry, sir, we have no Standards. As with many highly topical gags that were spot on when they were published (in 1963, in this case), it needs a footnote, which is that few of those involved in the ‘Profumo affair’ were exactly overburdened with (lower case alert) standards.

“The Profumo affair was made in Fleet Street more than in Wimpole Mews,” declares Richard Davenport-Hines in *An English Affair: Sex, Class and Power in the Age of Profumo*. The second address was where cabinet minister John Profumo (and others) had enjoyed wild parties and assignations with model Christine Keeler which, the author continues crossly, “aroused in Fleet Street a frenzy of ferocity”. It was a story to die for and someone did – not a journalist but one of the leading characters.

This is not to say that the *Evening Standard* was particularly guilty, but it certainly made the most of the tale of the cabinet minister, 21-year-old Christine Keeler, top people’s osteopath Stephen Ward – and a Soviet ‘diplomat’.

However, coming out with several editions during the day as it did, it was the go-to paper for anyone wishing to keep on top of the drama. No wonder the news vendor ran out. You could buy the latest edition, have lunch and, when you left the restaurant, pick up another edition with further sensational details of low scandals in high places.

This is the scandal that defies the adage that if you can remember the sixties, you weren’t there. No one old enough to read the newspapers during the early part of that decade can forget the tales about the ‘party girl’, whose lovers included the secretary of state for war and Russian naval attaché Eugene Ivanov.

Then there was the swimming pool at Cliveden, Lord Astor’s Buckinghamshire estate, where Ward had a getaway cottage and where ‘Jack’ Profumo first clapped eyes on Keeler with or without her swimming-costume (reports vary).

A friend of mine chanced upon the moment

when the papers had their first chance to tiptoe towards the explosive story.

Now a retired high court judge, he recalls: “I was a very junior pupil when the affair first went to court. One day, I went down to the Old Bailey just out of curiosity and went into number 1 court to see how it worked. It was a case of a West Indian involved in some sort of fight at a smart house in central London.”

The *Telegraph* ran this story on the front page. In December 1962, John Edgecombe, one of Keeler’s ex-lovers, had attempted to shoot out the lock of Steven Ward’s flat where Keeler and her friend Mandy Rice-Davies (aka Randy Mice-Davies) were staying. He was now on trial.

On March 15 1963, the day he was sentenced, the *Daily Express* chipped in with a traditional nudge-nudge: next to a story about the defence minister, it printed a photo of Miss Keeler, apparently naked apart from a strategic towel.

The paper declared to Lord Denning, author of the official report on the whole saga, that this juxtaposition was a complete coincidence.

The whispers reached the House of Commons on March 22 when opposition MPs brought up the rumours of a dangerous liaison between a Miss Christine Keeler and ‘a cabinet minister’ – and a Soviet official. In a wonderful example of if the cap fits wear it, John Profumo, who had carefully not been named by the Labour members, made a statement.

There was, he declared, “no impropriety whatever” in his acquaintance with the aforementioned young lady. Furthermore, he would sue anyone making remarks to the contrary. He and his wife, actor Valerie Hobson, who had starred in the David Lean’s classic movie *Great Expectations*, then went off to the races with the Queen Mother.

Lobby correspondents were briefed that the

## Christine takes the chair (back to front)

**AN ICONIC** image of the sixties was the shot of Christian Keeler sitting naked astride what was at first sight thought to be a classic Arne Jacobsen chair. It was used as publicity for a proposed biopic entitled *The Keeler Story*.

This shoot (in Peter Cook’s satirical nightclub *The Establishment*) took place between the denial in March 1963 by cabinet minister John Profumo of an affair with Keeler, and his

admission in June that he had lied to the House of Commons.

The chair was actually a copy bought for five shillings, the movie never made it to the screen (*Scandal*, a later film, did) and Keeler’s pose is perfectly discreet.

The film’s producers had demanded that a reluctant Keeler strip for nude snaps: it was in her contract.

“The situation became rather tense,”

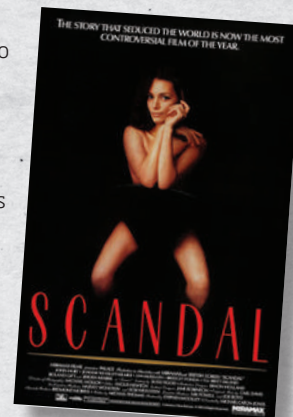
recalls photographer Lewis Morley.

He saved the day and Keeler’s modesty by suggesting she sit back to front on the chair. His final shot was the one we know and love.

The pose, with a different woman in the chair, was used as publicity for Andrew Lloyd-Webber’s musical *Stephen Ward*, named after the osteopath known as the ‘fixer’ who fixed up fun-loving girls with girl-loving toffs. It closed after less than four months.

The photo of the bottom of the actual chair reveals the names – but not the bottoms – of others who have sat astride it: David Frost, Joe Orton and Barry ‘Dame Edna’ Humphries.

The actual chair has a place of honour in the V&A.





Looking  
back to:  
.....  
1963

EVERETT COLLECTION INC / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

# TINCT

prime minister regarded the matter as closed. They were soon to be re-briefed.

The rumours persisted. On June 5, Profumo resigned from the government and parliament with a statement admitting 'with deep remorse' that 10 weeks earlier he had lied to the Commons.

No more parties for him – nor for Russian diplomat Eugene Ivanov, with whom Keeler had been having an affair and who had been recalled to Moscow.

For his subsequent public life at least, Profumo received considerable credit.

As Lord Astor's son William, who was 10 at the time of the swimming-pool incident, put it much later: "The disgraced minister still sets an example, never surpassed by any subsequent politician, of how to behave with courage and dignity following a scandal."

Profumo turned to charitable work, beginning a long stint at Toynbee Hall, an East End settlement, by washing dishes.

My late wife, who was also volunteering there, heard a puzzled local lad asking him over a communal meal why he wasn't at the House of Commons. "I lied to parliament," replied the former defence minister simply.

Another young lad, a student rusticated after being involved in a very responsible protest, went to see him about a job at another charity in which Profumo was involved. Which was how Jon Snow, later of ITN and Channel 4, became director of the New Horizon Youth Centre for homeless young people.

The happy conclusion to all this was Profumo's award of a CBE and a seat next to the



Queen at Margaret Thatcher's 70th birthday party.

For the socialite osteopath, it was a very different story. For a start, it came to an end in 1963. His fate can be summed up by the title of a book by Caroline Kennedy and Phillip Knightley, *How the English Establishment Framed Stephen Ward*.

He became convinced that dark forces were out to get him because he knew too much – and they certainly got him.

On the grounds that the young women had helped out with housekeeping expenses, he faced a charge of living on immoral earnings and found himself in court on June 10.

Deserted by his socialite friends, he was found in a coma before the eighth day of his trial, a bottle of sleeping tablets by his side. He died in hospital.

Keeler was the source of a lucrative kiss-and-tell feature in the *News of the World*. The *Sunday Mirror* matched this with a front-page headline of 'Prince Philip and the Profumo scandal – rumour utterly unfounded'. This canard was later to quack in *The Crown*.

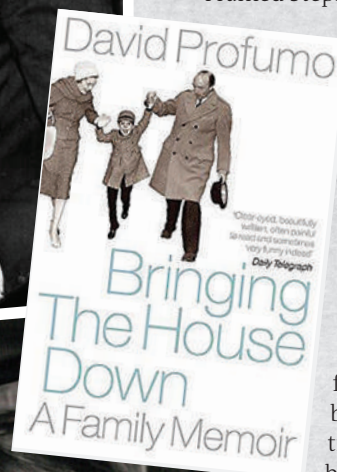
Valerie Profumo stood by her husband. Incredibly, the family skeleton was kept securely in the cupboard away from the young David Profumo – seven at the time – until a fellow pupil at Eton

recognised his surname.

Decades later David, now a novelist and fishing correspondent of *Country Life*, produced what can claim to be the best book on this engrossing subject.

"I feel that, a few years after his fall, [my father] had pretty much forgiven himself for his sexual infidelity," he wrote. Indeed, Profumo may well have carried on with it. His remorse was genuine but it was for lying to the Mother of Parliaments, not for lying to the mother of his child.

*Bringing the House Down* was well reviewed. "A beautifully crafted account," enthused one reviewer. In the *Standard*.







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**Chris Merriman** on technology for journalists

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<https://learnndigital.withgoogle.com/>

#### APOLOGY FROM EUFY SECURITY

Finally, I wanted to clarify an earlier review. We recommended Eufy Security products because data is stored locally instead of in the cloud. It has emerged that in some situations, such as facial recognition, images are sent to Eufy's servers. The company has apologised for not making this clear and added a warning to the app. I still rate the products but felt we should make that clear.

[uk.eufy.com](http://uk.eufy.com)

## FREE WINDOWS SOFTWARE



t a time when we're all a bit strapped for cash, I've been scouring for the best free products for journalists.

To start with, how about some

Windows software? German software house Ashampoo has long been a favourite of mine. It produces a wide range of apps, covering everything from video editing to word processing. Many of their products have fully functioning free editions and, while you'll need to give them your e-mail address, you can unsubscribe very easily. You may also get pop-up ads for the paid editions, but they're easy to close.

Products include WinOptimizer Free, which can get rid of the junk slowing your computer down, Photo



Commander Free to organise photos, Audio Recorder Free, to record and edit interviews and PDF Free, which allows you to design and edit pdf documents.

If you stay on the mailing list, there are often discounts of up to 90 per cent on paid versions. Everything is safe, well made and the support is excellent. As long as you don't mind a bit of nagging, the free stuff works brilliantly, plus their paid products are a lot cheaper than their better known equivalents.

[www.ashampoo.com](http://www.ashampoo.com)

## > Cheap and giveaway Android apps

Developers often reduce the price of apps or even make them free for limited periods.

AppSales is an Android app that makes it easy to keep track

of them. It is free (\$2.99/ about £2.50 a year without adverts) and can save you a fortune.

You can create a wishlist and get alerts when an app goes on sale or just browse

through the free or heavily reduced apps lists.

It's secure – once you select an app, you're transferred to Google Play Store, so no third parties are involved. Once

you've 'bought it for free', it stays bought, so you won't have to pay for it later.

Developers may offer free apps to build a reputation, so leave a review if you find something you like.

[www.app-sales.net](http://www.app-sales.net)

### Avoid alpha heaters

You may have seen adverts, mostly on web pages and social networks, for so-called 'alpha heaters'. These are small, cheap devices that plug directly into a socket and are claimed to heat up a room in a few minutes. Please avoid them – for the most part, they run very hot, don't meet UK safety specifications and do not actually work as claimed. With products like this, my first question is always: "If they're that good and that cheap, why don't I already own them?" The answer in this case is because I like my curtains not to be on fire.

**DON'T BURN YOUR DRAPES**

## Reputable global TV news

I've mentioned Plex on these pages before as a great media management tool. In addition, it gives you access to 140+ FAST (free ad-supported television) channels, a range of live streaming TV with everything from documentaries to B movies.

More importantly, it has an excellent news section offering live feeds from trusted news sources including Reuters, The Guardian, Euronews and USA Today. There is some more opinionated US 'news' but you can't really argue with free.

FAST channels are regarded as part of the future of television and it's great to see so many reputable outlets getting in on the ground floor. What makes them more appealing is that Plex is available on every device you can think of from phones to smart TVs.

As ever, there's a paid tier too, but for your live news fix, it won't cost you a penny.

[www.plex.tv](http://www.plex.tv)







# by Mark Fisher arts

## Books >

**The Diaries of Anthony Hewitson, Provincial Journalist. Volume 1: 1865–1887**

*Edited by Andrew Hobbs  
Open Book Publishers*

The diaries of a Victorian journalist, edited by Andrew Hobbs, give rare insights into the profession in his day. Anthony Hewitson went from printer's apprentice to reporter before editing his own paper. Hobbs, a member of the NUJ's West Lancashire branch and senior lecturer in journalism at the University of Central Lancashire, is working on volume two.

<https://tinyurl.com/2jnnzvc8>

**Naked Feminism: Breaking the Cult of Female Modesty**

*Victoria Bateman  
Polity Books*

This is a plea to feminists to challenge the repression of the female body in a study that takes us from ancient Babylon to the purity pledges of today's America. Victoria Bateman asks whether it is right that women's bodies remain at the mercy of state, society and religion. A fellow in economics at the University of Cambridge, she has written for titles including The Guardian and The Telegraph.

<https://tinyurl.com/2jxp8rtq>

## Comedy >

**Frankie Boyle: Lap of Shame**  
*On tour until September 5*

The star of New World Order has increasingly directed his trademark venom at political injustice. Despite a history of fuelling tabloid outrage, this master comedian offers more than shock tactics.

<https://tinyurl.com/ybkmc4ke>

**Josie Long: Re-enchantment**  
*On tour until September 28*

The co-founder of education charity Arts Emergency specialises in a DIY brand of stand-up, free of showbiz glitz and rich in homemade camaraderie. On her mind is a desire to reconnect with nature, the horrors of the government and a recent diagnosis of ADHD.

<https://tinyurl.com/2fge8pm2>

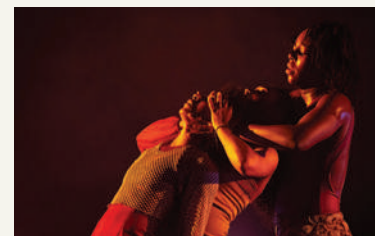
## Dance >

**Born to Exist: the Woman I Know**  
*On tour until March 25*

The third in a trilogy of politically driven dance pieces by Joseph Toonga focuses on unseen women of colour. Using the

techniques of hip hop, the all-female production reflects on immigration, resilience and self-sacrifice.

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



KARIN JONKER

## Exhibitions >

**Alberta Whittle: Create Dangerously**  
*Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh  
April 1-January 7*

The Barbadian-Scottish artist's solo show looks at the consequences of colonialism through sculpture, tapestry, digital collage, watercolour and film.

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



## In depth >

# Lessons on fighting back

**WHEN** Boris Johnson declared a lockdown in March 2020, this did not apply to schools. The assumption was that teachers would put themselves at risk in the name of education.

The National Education Union (NEU) had other ideas. Concerned for its most vulnerable members,

it recommended they stay at home.

"It didn't go to ballot, it didn't look at legislation, it simply issued advice to all of its members who were either at risk or living with someone at risk," says Gawain Little, a member of the NEU's national executive. "There was a crisis and the union was

willing to act. That relied on 10 years of rebuilding the union in the workplace."

Within 48 hours, the government had changed its policy. The union's decisiveness won out.

Its confidence was hard earned, a message reflected in *Lessons in Organising: What Trade Unionists Can Learn from the War on Teachers*, a collection of activist, academic and union official perspectives that aims to set out "the case for a new transformative trade unionism for the 21st century".

It is written by Little, with fellow trades unionists Ellie Sharp, a primary school teacher; Howard Stevenson, a professor of educational leadership and David

Wilson, NEU assistant general secretary.

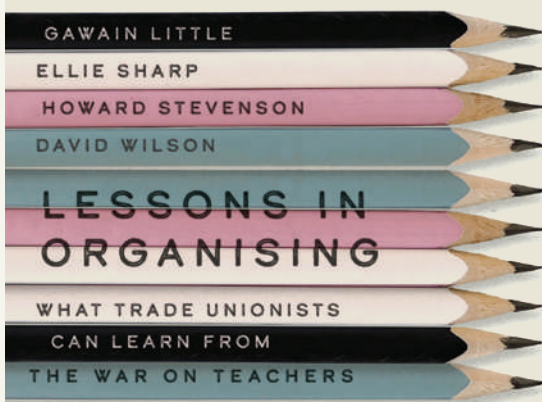
"It is a case study of the NEU's response to neoliberal education reform," he says.

"We draw out a number of lessons for other unions in our experience of fighting back against what we refer to as the war on teachers – a phrase used by the government itself. Education unions have proved far more resilient than they might have thought."

At heart is a call for workplace organising.

"We've lost a lot of the collective culture," says Wilson. "Rebuilding that is a major challenge, but the shift to a high-inflation economy, where unions are fighting back, means people are seeing the relevance of unions to their daily lives."

**Pluto Books, March,**  
<https://tinyurl.com/25pd5kv3>



**Souls Grown Deep like the Rivers: Black Artists from the American South**

*Royal Academy, London  
March 17-June 18*

Most of this exhibition's sculpture, paintings, reliefs, drawings and quilts are on show in the UK for the first time. They are some of the last century's most neglected work, being by black artists and reflecting their experience of slavery, segregation and racism.

<https://tinyurl.com/2oyks7qs>

## Festivals >

**Edinburgh Science Festival**  
*Various venues, Edinburgh  
April 1-16*

Talks include: The Long Shot, hosted by BBC health correspondent Laura Foster; The Keys to Kindness, by presenter Claudia Hammond; The You, the V and the W, hosted by journalist and author Zoe Cormier and Being You, hosted by health writer Jules Montague.

<https://tinyurl.com/2pp8vchg>



**Glasgow Film Festival**  
*Glasgow Film Theatre*  
**March 1-12**

This is NUJ member Allan Hunter's 15th and final year as festival co-director. The festival has a focus on Spanish cinema, a retrospective of women's journeys of self-discovery and a celebration of the documentary work of Lee Grant, survivor of the anti-communist blacklist of the 1950s.  
<https://tinyurl.com/2fbystuk>

**Theatre >**  
**Grenfell: System Failure**  
*On tour until March 26*

Richard Norton-Taylor, the former Guardian security editor who writes for Declassified UK, gets back with director Nicholas Kent for a verbatim summary of the Grenfell Tower inquiry.  
<https://tinyurl.com/2ea3oxwj>

**How Not to Drown**  
*Touring until April 12*

Dritan Kastrati escaped from Kosovo as a child, arriving in the UK with no English and nowhere to live. He stars in his own story, co-written with Nicola

McCartney, in a physically dynamic production by Neil Bettle for ThickSkin.  
<https://tinyurl.com/y344zunm>



MIHAELA BODLOVIC

**Kin**  
*Touring until 2024*

Amit Lahav, artistic director of Gecko, imagines the journey from Yemen to Palestine taken by his grandmother in 1932 to escape persecution.  
<https://tinyurl.com/2kbejbcf>

**The Merchant of Venice 1936**  
*Watford Palace Theatre*  
**February 27-March 11**

Tracy-Ann Oberman plays a female Shylock who has wound up in London, a refugee from Russia's pogroms, when the British Union of Fascists is active.  
<https://tinyurl.com/2eoffrap>

**Spotlight >**

**Running resilient**

**ERIC GRAVEL'S** movie Full Time takes place in a Paris beset by strikes. The rail network is at a standstill, the buses are off and you can get a taxi only by pulling strings.

All of this puts Julie at a severe disadvantage. A single mother of two, she lives out of town and needs astonishing stamina just to get into work. Rarely on time, she risks losing her job as head maid in a high-end hotel.

We hear next to nothing about the reasons for the

industrial action, nor do we need to. We see nothing of the wealthy - and filthy - hotel guests either.

Implicit in Full Time (À Plein Temps) is the idea of an economic system based on exploitation, one in which those who



depend on work for their living are expendable, while the privileged few profit from their labour.

Shot in a frantic close-ups, taut and claustrophobic, it makes for bleak but compelling viewing, not least because of the superb central performance by Laure Calamy (Noémie Leclerc in Call My Agent).

While she is a woman with the odds stacked against her, rarely does her façade of cheery competence crack.

At fault is a merciless system, but it is she who carries the weight, resilient to the last.

**In cinemas from March 17**

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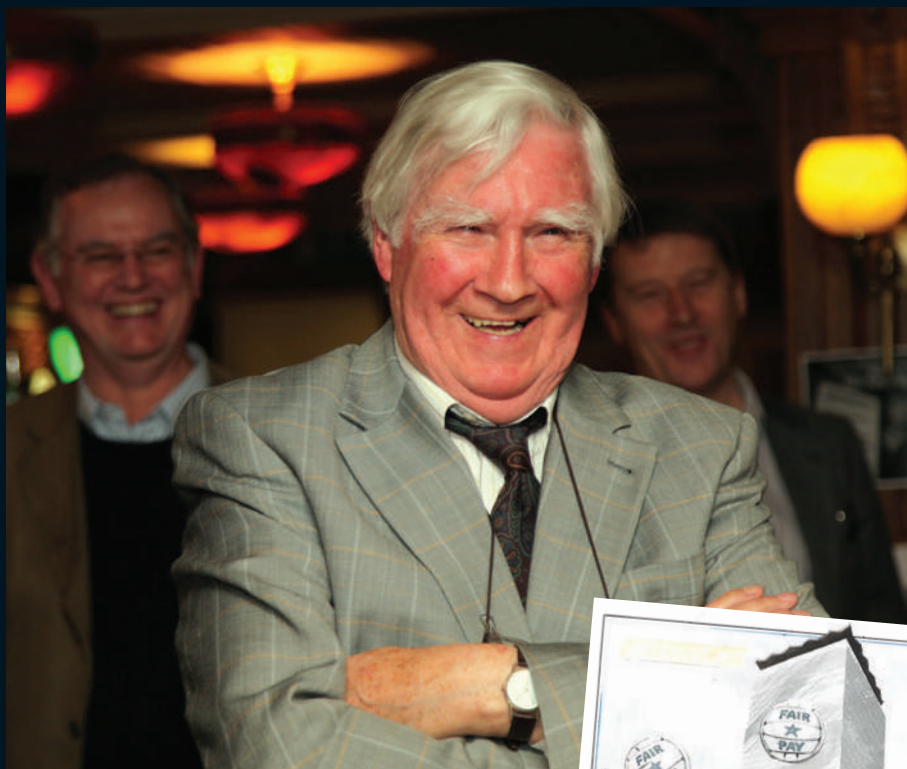
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## Jim Eadie

The death of Jim Eadie at the Beacon Hospital, Dublin, on December 6 severed a link with the establishment of the Irish office of the NUJ.

A member of honour, he was one of the best-known officials of the union over many decades: colourful, committed, controversial and, at times, delightfully contrary.

His passing aged 93, following a short illness borne with typical good humour and stoicism, was marked by many tributes led by the President of Ireland Michael D Higgins, who acknowledged his commitment to journalism, education and trade unionism.

Jim was the first full-time official of the union in Ireland. From its early days, the NUJ had members on the island of Ireland but, until the early 1960s, members north and south were served by London-based officials. Over many years, the national executive council had been resistant to moves for a full-time Irish office but, in 1964, members at the annual delegate meeting defied the NEC by voting to appoint a full-time organiser based in Dublin.

Jim was appointed to the role almost by accident. An Irish Times journalist, Pat Nolan, had been

offered the job. He tentatively accepted but, with a characteristic twist, placed a condition on the appointment. He proposed that Irish members paid a levy to cover his salary as a means of ensuring that he and those he served would not be ' beholden ' to the NUJ's British head office. This was rejected, the job advertised and Eadie was appointed.

Travel to London often exposed Eadie to the cultural differences between the two islands.

During his induction period as an official, he was invited for a drink by general secretary Jim Bradley. It was four o'clock in the afternoon and they could not find any pubs open.

On their way back to the NUJ office, then in Soho's Great Windmill Street, Bradley pointed to a billboard poster portraying scantily clad performers at Raymond's Revue Bar and said: "You wouldn't get that back in Ireland." Eadie responded pithily: "No – but you could get a drink."

Jim's appointment coincided with the opening of an NUJ office in Liberty Hall, the newly opened headquarters of the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union. Office administration fell under the remit of Patsi Dunne who, in 1982, succeeded Eadie as organiser when he was appointed as Irish secretary

or, to give him the original title, assistant secretary (Ireland). Dunne and Eadie had complementary skills and talents and forged an impressive partnership.

The creation of a full-time post was a baptism by fire for Jim, whose appointment coincided with a print industry dispute that saw the entire Dublin NUJ membership being laid off and dependent on union benefits for 10 weeks.

The foundation of RTÉ presented significant organisational challenges but, as in the national newspaper sector, Eadie was blessed with strong, lay activists. In 1963, NUJ members in RTÉ conducted a nine-week strike, which led to pay increases of over 10 per cent.

RTÉ and the national newspapers were already closed shops, with the NUJ and print unions controlling access to employment. National agreements were reached with the Provincial Newspapers Association of Ireland.

All agreements covered freelancers while Jim took pride in the fact that the NUJ was the first union in the Republic to lodge a maternity pay claim to a group of employers.

Afterwards, he discovered that the employers had conceded a claim for 12 weeks on full pay in the belief that it would not be a substantial burden "because we won't be employing many women anyway".



He played a pivotal role in negotiation terms in RTÉ news and Radio na Gaeltachta.

Jim Eadie was born in Stonepark, Roscommon, on June 4 1929, and educated at Roscommon Christian Brothers' School.

He earned a reputation as a tough, uncompromising half forward when lining out on the winning Gaelic football team in the prestigious Connacht Colleges cup final in 1947-48 school year. Such was his prowess on the sports field that he was encouraged to repeat his final exams the following year but a successful objection by St Jarlath's saw Eadie disqualified; he instead served as umpire, only to find himself in dispute with his fellow match official.

Eadie then decided to pursue a career in journalism, joining the female-dominated secretarial course at Roscommon Vocational School, "sitting in the back row learning shorthand and typing".





His journalism career began in 1950 at the Roscommon Herald. He worked across the west and midlands covering courts, politics, and community events.

On hearing of the advances made by the NUJ in the national wage round of 1947, Jim decided to apply for union membership to the now defunct Athlone & District Branch.

He was admitted to membership on April 1, 1951, but not without a dispute. At first, he was refused admission to the branch on the grounds that he was only a probationer. The logic was that the union was for permanent staff and, if they took on probationers, they would have to defend them if they were not taken on permanently.

It was an experience that shaped him and, as a full-time union official, Jim was always committed to the welfare of young recruits. He was especially alive to the use of union rules to unfairly restrict entry to the profession.

It was Jim's girlfriend, Bridie Reynolds, a secretary at the Roscommon Herald, who encouraged him to apply for jobs with the national press.

On March 17, 1956, the young couple had boarded the excursion train to Connolly Station, Dublin. As they stood outside Wynn's Hotel on Lower Abbey Street, Reynolds noticed Independent House and

prodded Eadie to call in and look for a job. It worked and he secured a job with the Irish Independent, Sunday Independent and Evening Herald as a group reporter.

Leaving Roscommon, he could afford to marry Bridie on June 17, 1958. She remained a constant presence throughout his life, often attending NUJ conferences and events.

It did not take long for Jim to make waves as a reporter. As part of the Oireachtas press gallery, he had to join the pool system, whereby journalists from different titles took turns at shorthand reports of parliamentary debates, providing carbon copies to colleagues.

Jim broke ranks by recording the contributions of backbenchers and independents, such as radical Jack McQuillan and Noel Browne "because they were saying interesting things", enraging senior parliamentary reporters who obeyed the convention of not reporting such politicians.

In time, he joined the Indo chapel committee and was later elected father of chapel – his first step in his NUJ representative career.

Always interested in education, Jim was directly involved in moves to establish the first full-time journalism course in Ireland at the College of Commerce, Rathmines. He chaired the Irish Committee of

the National Council for the Training of Journalists.

A natural contrarian, Eadie was always uncomfortable with the idea of unions becoming too close to powerful figures. This extended to branches and he staged a very public protest at the presence of controversial minister for justice Seán Doherty at an NUJ dinner in Roscommon organised by the West of Ireland and Athlone & District Branches. Given Doherty's record, Eadie's action was understandable.

However, when education minister Donagh O'Malley used an NUJ event to announce a significant breakthrough in Irish education policy, Eadie was by his side. O'Malley spoke at a dinner in Dún Laoghaire on September 12, 1966 organised by George Viner to announce free access to second-level education.

A former NUJ president, the late Eddie Barrett, loved recalling long, enjoyable car trips around Ireland with Jim carefully working out a negotiating strategy. Another former president, Barry McCall, believes he did not always get the credit he deserved for his pioneering work, which McCall describes as "akin to that of a missionary venturing into hostile territory."

Section 31 of the Broadcasting Act 1960 presented a challenge to the NUJ. Jim strongly opposed it

and press censorship generally and had no difficulty with the NUJ policy against section 31, despite the opposition of leading members of Dublin broadcasting branch.

He also played a courageous role in representing members in Northern Ireland during the Troubles.

Jim retired as NUJ Irish secretary on July 1, 1994. During his tenure, membership in Ireland increased from 788 to 3,456 – testimony to his diligence, organising abilities and capacity to work with and inspire others. He served four terms on the Irish Congress of Trade Unions executive.

In retirement, Jim was instrumental in setting up the Senior Citizens' Parliament and the NUJ retired workers' committee.

While in hospital, Jim received NUJ visitors with enthusiasm. Typically, he minuted medical consultations and carefully considered every utterance.

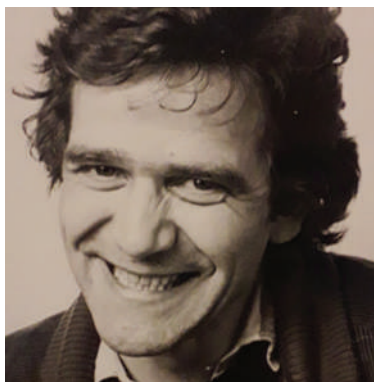
Union members formed a guard of honour at Kiltarnan Cemetery Park as a remarkable chapter in the history of the NUJ in Ireland ended.

Jim is survived by Bridie and their children Deirdre, Caroline, Colm and James.

Ní fheicfidid a leithéid arís.

We will not see his likes again.

**Séamus Dooley**



## Syd Richardson

Syd Richardson, who has died at the age of 82, was bound for a career in journalism from the tender age of nine when he discovered how to make the national headlines.

He and his 13-year-old sister Millie triggered a police hunt after they embarked on an epic journey from Hitchin to the Isle of Lewis.

The previous summer, they had been on a family holiday to Tolsta in the north of the island, and they enjoyed it so much they decided to make a return visit – without informing their parents.

They set off with sixpence three farthings and a bag of stale buns, and proceeded to outwit all the staff they encountered on the train to London and the overnight express to Inverness. They even tricked their way onto the ferry to Stornoway.

Not long after they made it to their grandparents' croft, they were besieged by disbelieving reporters who all wanted to know how they had done it.

"We were treated like minor celebrities," said Syd, who soon decided journalism was the life for him. He was indentured to Hertfordshire Express Newspapers when still a teenager.

I met Syd on the Cambridge Evening News in 1972 where it was obvious that he commanded the respect of everyone in the office.

As father of the NUJ chapel, he made it clear to the management that the union meant business on a range of issues. Small wonder that the chapel soon established a national reputation for its militancy, including a demand that it should have a say in the appointment of the new editor.

He didn't stay in Cambridge for long. He didn't stay anywhere for

long. That childhood trip had seeded a wanderlust that took him to a host of provincial and national newspapers, including The Telegraph, The Times and the Financial Times, where his sub-editing and layout skills were highly prized.

His restless spirit also took him to Dublin, Canada and the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong, where he quickly became a popular mentor to the young Chinese staff on the business desk.

If you asked Syd to name the newspapers he had worked on, you quickly discovered that it was easier to ask him which ones weren't on his CV.

His mode of transport was also a talking point. Close friend Ray Williams describes how, during a spell of casual shifts on the Observer, he would "rattle down the M1 in a shaky old Messerschmidt three-wheeler bubble car with his white-knuckled pillion passenger clinging on for dear life in the back".

Syd's journalistic skills were exceeded in the second half of his career only by his ability to hoodwink bosses into believing he was at least 10 years younger than he was.

After returning to the UK and following more stints on national broadsheets, he moved north with his beloved wife Beverley and worked for a variety of periodicals.

After all those years, he described his ideal newspaper as one featuring the best of the Financial Times and Private Eye.

His skills extended way beyond reporting and the subs' desk. He would never be defeated by a challenge, restoring windows and fireplaces as well as rebuilding walls at their house in Knaresborough.

He was also in his element maintaining the tandem he and Beverley rode majestically through the Yorkshire Dales.

Syd died after a short illness. He leaves two sons, Neil and Ben, who followed Syd into journalism. His middle son, Iain, predeceased him. Their mother, Joan, was Syd's first wife. He will also be much missed by his granddaughters Ella, Aine and Hazel.

**Allister Craddock**



## Rob Richley

Former newspaper journalist and lifelong member of the Newspaper Press Fund and NUJ Rob Richley has died aged 71.

Rob was born in Hammersmith to journalist parents. He went into journalism inspired by his father Noel, who was a Press Association chief news editor.

He trained on a weekly newspaper in west London but a desire for adventure saw him buying a horse and a gypsy caravan to travel around England for three summers. His love of driving horses never faded.

Rob settled in Norfolk where he spent six years restoring a 500-year-old farmhouse. He worked as a journalist and later chief reporter for the Eastern Daily Press (EDP) in Norwich.

In the autumn of 1986, he landed a coup to cover the hunt for two teachers who had gone missing while on a cycling holiday in Brittany. He persuaded the EDP editor to send him with a photographer to France to cover the story and distribute hundreds of posters in French, printed by the paper, to unearth clues to their disappearance. The couple were later found bound and murdered in a cornfield.

A life-long member of the Labour party, Rob had socialist principles – his sense of fairness and diplomacy made him a brilliant union negotiator as father of chapel on the paper.

In 1989, he met Philippa when she joined the EDP as features editor, by which time Rob was picture editor.

They shared many happy times in Norfolk before a move to London. Rob worked as a reporter on the Mail on Sunday and also on

the Today newspaper as a feature writer. In 1991 and 1992, journalism took him to Albania and Bulgaria for the Sunday Times and other publications, where he wrote about the ailing state of the schools, the healthcare crisis in hospitals and neglect in children's orphanages.

In 1992, he took a trip through Jordan and then to Israel to report about Palestinians building their own health service in the West Bank. During that same trip, Rob proposed to Philippa.

They were married in 1992 in Hampstead and, a year later, left London after falling in love with the Somerset Levels.

They set up a business, Westword, producing newspapers and magazines mainly for the public sector. Rob also started writing for the Observer on environmental issues – his favourite subject. He carried out these successful assignments for three years with photographer David Mansell, who became a life-long friend.

Their son Fabian came along in 1995 and Philippa and Rob juggled baby and business.

Never one to shy away from a fresh challenge, Rob used his media skills in 2010 to support young people on a two-month project to capture life on their Bristol estate on film.

Rob also loved gardening. When journalism and PR began to pall, he jumped at the chance to join a friend in her gardening business in 2012. Two years on, he set up on his own and developed a thriving enterprise. He worked until a terminal diagnosis forced him to give up last summer.

Over the years, his passion for the environment and love of trees helped found a local green group and he led the creation of two woodlands and an orchard.

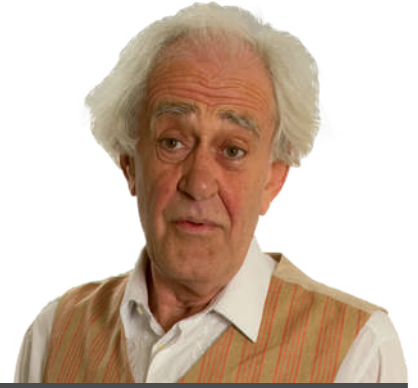
Rob was chair of governors at his son's first school where he helped plant trees and improve the environment. He was also one of the founding board members of Wedmore Community Power Co-operative set up in 2013.

He is survived by wife Philippa and son Fabian.

**Philippa Richley and friends of Rob**



# Why I was ashamed to be a trade unionist



Demands by strikers lack ambition, says **Chris Proctor**

**W**hen all those strikes were going on at the end of last year, I was ashamed to be a trade unionist.

That is a hard thing for me to write. For one thing, I'm never sure if the 'trade' is singular or plural. I have my trade but I'm in favour of unionism as a broader concept. So it might be 'trades'.

Anyway, I'm disgusted, and bordering on enraged.

You see, I spent most Saturdays of my youth making a disturbance in central London. Marching side by side (if there were as many as two of us), we roared slogans at surprised tourists. Favourite was the call-and-response ditty:

"What do we want?"

"Everything."

"When do we want it?"

"Now."

Those were aspirations a person could support with enthusiasm. We're not taking any crumbs from the table. Oh, no. We were after the cake. And the bakery.

Which is where the shame comes in – from comparing these lofty ideals with the wimpish demands of the strikers of 2022. What were their demands? Their rallying cry? Their objectives?

Nothing. They weren't asking for an improvement in their standard of living. Not even a bit. They were happy to tread water, matching wages with inflation. Yes, they said, we don't want more. We'd just like the same.

The same, for god's sake! How terribly embarrassing. We could be mistaken for Conservatives with this kind of aspiration.

And, incredibly, faced with this no-improvement demand, employers were outraged and refused.

"You say you want nothing?"

"That is our claim, yes."

"Well you can't have it."

Union leader Campbell Christie once told me about when, during an international conference, he was sharing a room with an armed fugitive Panamanian liberationist who spent hours chronicling the struggles of his homeland. Campbell squirmed. His union wanted war service to count in full for pension calculations for senior civil servants.

I know how he felt. His roommate sought national liberation; he only wanted a tenner a month. It didn't feel he was being sufficiently ambitious.

Well, it was ambitious compared with the strikers' demands before Christmas. Without insisting on pay decreases, we couldn't have asked for less.

On the positive side, this appeared achievable – and could have even chalked up an unlikely victory for the TUC, who could, with a bit of luck, have got it backdated.

My shame led to outrage when the smug rich started lecturing nurses about wage levels. Cabinet minister Oliver Dowden says £30K is quite enough for healthcare workers, while he pockets £70K for being chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on top of his £85K plus staff and vast expenses for being an MP.

And Mishal Husain can talk down to nurses as she trouses £275,000 for helping present Radio 4's Today programme. And don't get me started about Rishi Sunak, who has an income even Rebekah Vardy couldn't spend.

I was almost lured into liking Sunak when I thought he was supporting the strikers. He piped up with, "It is my duty to take action to protect the lives and livelihoods of the British public."

Excellent, I thought. Top man. But then it emerged Sunak believes that if you carry a union card, you cease to be a member of the public. You become more alien than a Ridley Scott film. So 'the public' actually means 'anyone who lives here who I like'. That doesn't include you.

It was also remarkable how quickly – and radically – our national media changed its mind. The Daily Mail once led the applause for 'ambulance driver Covid heroes' who risked all to save others. paladins, every one.

Fast forward to strike threats. Ambulance drivers have become 'contemptible'. They 'use the lives of sick patients as a bargaining chip in pay negotiations'; they are the sort who refuse 'life-saving cover'.

Conducting this U-turn was difficult enough for our industry without an accompanying upsurge in demand for adjectives. This came about because editors generally believe that you mustn't repeat yourself (too) often.

So, if ambulance workers are 'contemptible', rail workers will have to be something else. 'Odious', maybe. But then what about nurses? They'd be upset to be left out. 'Callous' proved popular. Driving examiners were merely 'bigots'. But this still left words needed to cover postal workers, teachers, bus drivers, Border Force officers, highway workers and baggage handlers. The search continues.

In the interim, I remain ashamed at the lack of ambition of strike claims. As the government and the media are going to label us all as lunatic crypto-revolutionists whatever we do, why not stick to the 'everything/nor' formula? In fact, I'm in favour of revising the time span for delivery to 'last week'.

**The Daily Mail led the applause for 'ambulance driver Covid heroes'. Fast forward to the strike threats and they have become 'contemptible'**

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WORKER  
NEEDS A  
UNION**

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