

the Journalist

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Watch all about it

Journalists turn to TikTok

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Welcome to the last edition of The Journalist of 2022. And what a turbulent year it has been. War came to Europe for the first time in many years and as we now head into winter, Russia, repelled by the Ukrainian fightback, is callously targeting the energy network.

The UK government was engulfed in controversy over ministers' behaviour during the Covid social restrictions and went on to dispose of two prime ministers.

Covid restrictions, especially those relating to travel, finally lifted and life returned to normal.

Inflation spiralled to levels not seen for a generation, putting unbearable pressure on many people's household budgets.

Industrial disputes have also spiralled amid an effort by unions to improve pay, amid soaring costs.

Our industry has faced cuts, especially at the BBC, and pressure on pay just at the time that people want more impartial, well-resourced news.

And we saw the monarchy change following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

All of the major events that have shaped 2022 have shown the value of impartial news and on the ground reporting, whether it has been from the frontline in Ukraine, exposing the Downing Street parties, covering the huge event of the Queen's funeral or telling the personal stories of the cost-of-living crisis.

Wishing everyone a quieter and more prosperous New Year.

Christie

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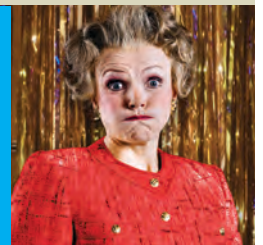


Cover picture
Michel Streich



Ray Snoddy
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Fears mount over BBC plans to share content on local radio

CONCERN is growing about the BBC's plans to share content across local radio, a move which critics fear will lead to the death of local services. The BBC plans that local radio stations share common content after 2pm each day. About 48 jobs are expected to go in what the union has described as the greatest risk to local radio since its launch in 1967.

As *The Journalist* went to press, MPs on the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee were due to hear evidence from BBC executives about the cuts. Before the hearing the chair of the committee Julian Knight said: "The planned cuts to programming have provoked genuine disquiet in communities up and down the country, where BBC local radio stations play a key role in providing local information that is increasingly unavailable elsewhere."

NUJ reps at the BBC have signed a motion of no confidence in the corporation's managers.

A letter from the union to Tim Davie, BBC director general, says: "Local radio is celebrating its 55th birthday, but the proposal to share output after 2pm is potentially the beginning of the end. Local radio is successful because it's local. People in Norfolk tell us they don't care

about stories from Suffolk, they want stories about the community on their doorstep."

Debates in both houses of parliament demonstrated huge cross-party support for local radio and opposition to the plans. MPs and peers said BBC local radio was "a lifeline for news and education, mitigating against rural isolation and supporting people's rural mental health", a "great incubator for new talent" and "one of the crown jewels of our public-sector broadcaster".

Paul Siegert, NUJ national broadcasting officer said: "The key to its success over the past 50 years has been its localness. When it stops being local, it loses its unique selling point. The very essence of the service is that it is of the community and has a distinct local identity."

In Northern Ireland the BBC has decided to end the popular Radio Foyle breakfast show as well as stopping regional daily bulletins. Seamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, called the plans 'a betrayal of the people of Northern Ireland' and 'an attack on the very essence of public service broadcasting'.



inbrief...

SALES RISE AFTER QUEEN'S DEATH

Newspaper sales rose by an average of two per cent month on month in September after the death of Queen Elizabeth II, fuelled by demand for souvenir editions and historic front pages. The biggest rise was at the FT, probably driven by economic uncertainty that month, at eight per cent. The Mail on Sunday and the i saw sales rise by five per cent.

JAMES DYSON FAILS IN LIBEL ACTION

Businessman James Dyson failed in a libel claim over a Channel 4 News story about alleged abuse at a former supplier's factory after a judge ruled the broadcast was 'not about him'. Dyson and two subsidiaries of his company sued over the story broadcast in February this year, which centred on a Malaysian company making Dyson vacuum cleaners.

FREEMAN GOES TO THE SUNDAY TIMES

Long-time Guardian columnist Hadley Freeman has left the paper and will start at the Sunday Times in the New Year. Private Eye reported that she had told editor Kath Viner that she no longer fitted in. She will write a column and features at the Sunday Times.

Open up courts, MPs demand

A REPORT by the cross-party parliamentary Justice Committee has called on the court system to do more to support open justice in the digital age, including helping digital platforms report on court decisions.

It said: "The decline of print media has resulted in court proceedings being less visible to the public and digital media has so far failed to fill this gap. Many regional titles have shut down and those that remain are no longer

able to employ dedicated court reporters, meaning it is harder for people to see how the justice system operates in their area.

"Barriers in the court system are making it difficult for journalists and members

of the public to follow court proceedings. The quality of publicly available information can often be poor and basic data about court proceedings unavailable."

The committee called for a single digital portal where the media and public can access full information.

Orwell prize is open for young journalists

THE NUJ and the Orwell Society are inviting young UK journalists who are studying for a qualification or starting out on their career to enter for the next year's Orwell Society/NUJ Young Journalist's Award.

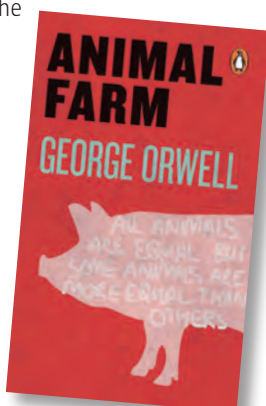
Winners in each of the two categories will receive £1,500 each and student winners will get NUJ membership. The runners-up in each category will receive £500. The two winners and two

runners-up will also get a three-year membership of the Orwell Society.

George Orwell, famous for his political novels such as 1984 and *Animal Farm*, was a member of the NUJ because of his journalism for *Tribune* and other publications.

Check the full criteria for the award at www.orwellsociety.com/bursary.

Entries are invited until March 30. Good luck!



Journalists edge ahead in trust list

The amount of people trusting journalists has risen according to the Veracity Index Ipsos study. Journalists still rank among the least trusted professions, but are ahead of politicians, estate agents and advertising executives. More than 1,000 people were surveyed and 29 per cent trusted journalists, making them the fifth least-trusted profession. In 2020 journalists' ranking was 23 per cent and in 1983 it was 19 per cent. But TV newsreaders, who were separately ranked, won 58 per cent.

The top three roles were nurses (89 per cent), engineers (87 per cent), and doctors (85 per cent).

Video shows routine attacks on journalists while at work

JOURNALISTS' increasing fears for their safety while doing their jobs have been highlighted in a video produced by the union as part of its campaign to improve protection for journalists.

The video shows interviews with journalists who have experienced hostility for their work or been the victims of misogyny or racism.

The NUJ launched the video alongside a safety toolkit for mobiles on November 2, the day the International Federation of Journalists and other groups mark the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes against Journalists. So far this year 62 media workers have been killed while working.

Last year, the Home Office and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport found that four out of five



journalists had suffered threats and violence at work.

The journalists interviewed for the NUJ video included a reporter in Belfast, Steven Moore. At his newspaper, the Sunday World, all reporters have been threatened by a loyalist paramilitary group.

Rana Rahimpour (pictured) from the BBC Persian service spoke about how she and her colleagues had been victimised by the Iranian authorities. She was subjected to a social media



slur when a photo of her head was superimposed on a Playboy cover and circulated.

The BBC's Monika Plaha and The Guardian's Joseph Haker (pictured) have experienced racial attacks and Kate Cronin, a court reporter, said she had suffered worse abuse because of being a woman.

She said she always knew which stories would attract the most abuse once they had been published. Photographers Jason

N Parkinson and Andy Aitchison have been caught up in protests.

Parkinson has had protestors turn against him and Aitchison was arrested after sharing images of people protesting against conditions in a barracks where asylum seekers were being housed.

The police took his phone and camera memory card and he was held in custody for several hours. Kent police returned his property and apologised after the NUJ intervened.

The union's safety toolkit is available as an app and gives information, advice and links to resources: www.journalists-safety.tools

View the video on YouTube and the union's website at <https://tinyurl.com/3e75kz7t>



At his newspaper, the Sunday World, all reporters have been threatened by a loyalist paramilitary group

Glasgow NUJ calls for FoI change

THE NUJ'S Glasgow branch has committed to campaign to defend and expand the right to Freedom of Information in Scotland.

The move came ahead of MSP Katy Clark launching a consultation on a member's bill seeking to amend the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act.

Branch members voted to support the bill and branded Scotland's Freedom of Information laws as "not fit for purpose".

Journalist and former MSP Dorothy-Grace Elder, who proposed a motion on the subject to be submitted to the NUJ's national delegate meeting, said: "There are

continuing serious problems for journalists and the public over the Scottish Government's secretive attitude to FoI in Scotland.

"Paid government officials of certain departments are empowered to decide on handing over material requested by journalists and others.

"This is utterly unacceptable, and so is the trend to censor and redact names of departments and units as well as the total removal and protection of officials' identities."

In 2018, the Scottish information commissioner ruled that Scottish ministers breached Freedom of Information laws by de-prioritising requests from journalists.

In 2020, the Scottish Government sought to extend the deadlines for responding to FoI requests, using the Covid-19 pandemic as a justification.

If passed at the union's national delegate meeting in April, the motion will instruct the NUJ national executive to "oversee a renewed campaign to defend the right to freedom of information in Scotland and across the UK".

Close disability pay gap, say unions

THE NUJ has backed the TUC's call to close the widening disability pay gap. TUC analysis shows that disabled workers are now earning £2.05 less per hour than those without disabilities, compared to £1.90 in 2021. There is a pay gap of 17.2 per cent, and workers with disabilities take home £3,731 a year less than those non-disabled workers.



The gap is even bigger for disabled women. Non-disabled men are paid on average 35 per cent more than disabled women. That equates to a huge £7,144 a year.

Natasha Hirst, NUJ vice-president and disabled members rep on the national executive council, said: "Unless employers are mandated to report on the disability pay gap, it will remain too easy for them to ignore their duties to support disabled workers."

Police told to follow NUJ advice after arrests at oil protests

AN INDEPENDENT police review has called for a force to follow NUJ guidance on journalists covering disputes. The review followed the arrests of journalists who were covering the Just Stop Oil protests and it concluded that police powers were not used appropriately.

The review by Cambridgeshire constabulary recommended that Hertfordshire police officers complete a joint NUJ and College of Policing training package on interacting with the media.

The review had been requested by Hertfordshire chief constable Charlie Hall, following intervention from the NUJ and widespread public anger over the arrests



SOPA IMAGES LIMITED / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

of journalists Tom Bowles, Rich Felgate and Charlotte Lynch in November.

The union had condemned the arrests and raised concerns about police officers disregarding requests from journalists to show their press cards. It called upon the National Police Chiefs' Council to ensure such

incidents were prevented in the future.

In considering proportionality, the review said it:

Believed that the [policing plan used] almost exclusively endorsed arrest as the only intervention available to this approach did not differentiate between people and did not

consider the balance of rights (no distinction on activity).

Police powers were not used appropriately...There is evidence to suggest the potential for the arrests to amount to an 'unlawful interference' with the individual's freedom of expression under Article 10 (of the European Convention on Human Rights).

Commanders are obliged to make professional judgements based on information and experience. The direction to arrest was given to officers and no alternative was considered or captured within a plan/log. The interactions of officers all suggest that arrest was the likely outcome regardless of the information obtained.

inbrief...

PAY DEAL AGREED AT AL JAZEERA ENGLISH

The union called off strike action at the broadcaster Al Jazeera English after a 4.5 per cent pay offer to members for the years 2022 and 2023. NUJ members at Al Jazeera English had voted 96 per cent in favour of strike action following a protracted dispute over pay.

RECOGNITION AT AFP AGENCY IN LONDON

The NUJ has been recognised at the London bureau of the global news agency Agence France-Presse (AFP). The AFP chapel reps said: "This agreement is testament to a major membership drive that rapidly enlarged our chapel, to now cover a majority of our editorial staff. NUJ headquarters played a critical role, and we will use our new leverage to campaign resolutely on pay and conditions."

FIRST MARY MAHER BURSARY BEGINS

The legacy of NUJ member of honour Mary Maher was recalled at a ceremony in Dublin when the first bursary in her name was inaugurated by The Irish Times. Dublin City University student Katie Mellett is the first recipient. She will have tuition fees paid and be offered a fixed-term contract on graduation.

BBC man attacked in China

CHINESE police attacked a BBC journalist in Shanghai and arrested him while he was covering anti-government lockdown protests.

Ed Lawrence was detained and held in custody for several hours.

The corporation said: "It is very

worrying that one of our journalists was attacked in this way whilst carrying out his duties."

China said Mr Lawrence hadn't presented his press credentials.

Video coverage on social media showed several police officers grabbing

Mr Lawrence and pinning him to the ground. The BBC said he was beaten and kicked and handcuffed.

The BBC said it didn't receive an explanation from the Chinese government but was told by officials who released him that he had been arrested for his own good in case he caught Covid.

Gary Younge honours Claudia Jones

GARY YOUNGE, the Guardian journalist and professor of sociology, gave the NUJ's 20th Claudia Jones lecture in memory of the pioneering journalist.

His lecture, the first in-person event for three years, was titled "Who Let The Dogs Out? What racism tells us about news values and what the news doesn't tell us about black people."

Gary praised Jones' role in making space for others. He said: "There has to be an understanding in a time when there are more opportunities now for black journalists than there ever has been, of a responsibility to keep that space open and to make more space. Because none of us would be here without that space."



'Gleeful' Croxall taken off air

BBC presenter Martine Croxall was taken off air for nearly two weeks in October and November after managers decided she had breached impartiality rules during an edition of The Papers with 'gleeful' comments about the Conservative Party leadership race. There were concerns she showed bias after Boris Johnson pulled out of the leadership contest. During the programme, in which journalists and experts look at how the main stories of the day have been covered, she said:

"This is all very exciting, isn't it?" adding: "Am I allowed to be this gleeful? Well I am."

Cost of living crisis is hitting freelance workers the hardest

ALL IMAGES: JESS HURD

THE TUC is to launch an urgent campaign to highlight the plight of the ever-increasing number of freelance workers.

Part of this initiative will be to draw attention to the hypocrisy of news organisations that call for the decent treatment of workers, while ‘financially abusing’ their own freelances.

A resolution proposed by NUJ vice-president Natasha Hirst and passed unanimously by delegates pointed out that inflation was hitting Britain’s 4.2 million freelance workers the hardest.

The TUC’s ruling general council was instructed to consult with all relevant unions on how to mobilise, represent and lobby on behalf of self-employed workers who do not have a statutory right to union recognition.



In a highly personal address to congress, Natasha, a photojournalist, decided to go freelance because she thought it would give her more control over her life.

“Ironically, being my own boss means that in many situations I have less power and fewer rights than if I’d stayed in employment,” she said.

Natasha added: “A few

years ago I fled domestic violence and it decimated my career. I was homeless, very nearly bankrupt and, with PTSD, unable to work for quite some time.

“That’s an incredibly frightening situation to be in when you are self-employed.

“It’s a very difficult one to get out of too. I genuinely don’t know how I would have rebuilt my career or my life

without my union.”

The NUJ resolution pointed out that the rates paid by most news platforms had stagnated or fallen over the past decade.

On some publications – the Radio Times, for example – rates had not changed in a decade. The Daily Telegraph had cut pay to features contributors by almost 30 per cent over the past 15 years. The Sunday Times had more than once imposed across-the-board reductions in freelance rates.

“Before the pandemic, and before the cost of living crisis, the situation with freelance rates was already a race to the bottom,” Natasha told delegates. “Freelances who just about kept up with their living costs before now can’t and we are losing them from the industry.”



Ironically, being my own boss means that in many situations I have less power and fewer rights than if I’d stayed in employment

Natasha Hirst
NUJ vice-president

State targeting of reporters criticised

THE TUC denounced global attacks on journalists who are being targeted by governments and others seeking to suppress press freedom.

In a resolution proposed by the NUJ, congress condemned the murder in Brazil of environment journalist and NUJ member Dom Phillips, who had received death threats for his campaigns

on behalf of indigenous Amazonian people.

The motion also expressed horror at the death of Shireen Abu Akleh, an Al Jazeera journalist shot dead in Palestine, while reporting on Israeli military action.

Moving the resolution, Pierre Vicary (right), NUJ president and BBC World Service journalist, said

reporters accept the dangers of working in war zones, but the union would not accept journalists being targeted by bad governments and malign vested interests.

He said the ability to report on developments in Iran had become harder since parts of the BBC’s Persian Service had been closed.



Public broadcasting defended

NUJ delegate Chris Frost poured scorn on the Conservatives’ ‘lunatic’ proposals to privatise Channel 4 and ‘effectively defund’ the BBC.

Seconding a motion passed unanimously by congress, Frost, who chairs the NUJ’s ethics council, said: “It would be foolish to allow public service broadcasting to be taken into private ownership simply to give the rich another chance to benefit at the expense of the rest of us.”

The resolution commits the TUC to campaigning against the plans, which Frost said were wrong in principle because of the role played by public service broadcasting in the cultural life of the UK.

Get together and act, unions told

SHARON GRAHAM, general secretary of the Unite union, issued a call to arms to the union movement and the Labour party in a barnstorming speech to congress.

"We must be ready. We know what the government has in store for workers. They will make workers and communities pay again," she told delegates.

"We are already seeing the biggest squeeze on incomes in generations. We will not allow them to put one hand in our pocket and the other up our back. Not this time."

Co-ordinated industrial action was fundamental to ensuring workers and their communities would not be made to pay for the government's economic crisis, she said.

"The flame flickers anew. The rebirth of the trade union



movement has begun. But we must be serious about winning," she urged.

Graham proposed a motion that committed the TUC to "actively encourage, facilitate, organise and support" a united campaign of coordinated action.

The TUC's general council was instructed to convene a working group of unions in the public and private sectors

to plan and coordinate disputes over pay and jobs.

Graham urged the Labour party to be radical: "I say to Labour: do not stand on the sidelines playing it safe... Be bold, be on the side of workers. Stop apologising and stick up for workers because there is already a very loud voice for the rich and the business lobby – it's called the Tory Party."



We will not allow them to put one hand in our pocket and the other up our back. Not this time

Sharon Graham
Unite general secretary

in brief...

RMT'S LYNCH RECALLS LABOUR INACTION

RMT transport union leader Mick Lynch won overwhelming backing for his union's motion that called for stronger collective bargaining and employment rights. He praised Keir Starmer's backing for a new deal for workers, but reminded congress that the last Labour government had failed to lift anti-union laws.

ONE IN SEVEN GOING WITHOUT MEALS

A TUC poll published at congress found that one in seven people are skipping meals, rising to one in four in some constituencies. Birmingham Ladywood has the highest number of people going without food, followed by Dundee West, Glasgow and Rhondda. More than half the population are cutting back on fuel.

TUC WORK PRAISED BY BLACK LEADER

Patrick Roach, the first black leader of education union NASUWT, told conference that the TUC's anti-racism taskforce had helped to create lasting change across the labour movement by establishing black members' networks, encouraging the appointment of anti-racism reps and carrying out research into societal racism.

NHS contract staff have worse pay and rights

UNISON'S general secretary Christina McAnea highlighted the low pay of staff working for the NHS, especially those who are employed by private contractors.

She described a hospital picket line in Blackpool early one morning

in the wind and rain, where most of the strikers were cleaners, catering staff or porters working for private company OCS.

"They don't get full NHS pay and leave and, even during the pandemic when they worked on Christmas Day,

they only received the usual pay rate."

She said that the situation for those employed directly by the National Health Service was not much better with a quarter of NHS trusts setting up food banks to help staff amid the cost of living crisis.

Starmer pledges to scrap anti-union laws



IN A KEYNOTE address to congress, Labour leader Keir Starmer said he would repeal legislation that makes it harder for workers to take strike action.

In particular, he would 'tear up' the 2016 Trade Union Act under which unions are required to secure a 50 per cent turnout in ballots for a strike vote to be valid.

He would also reverse legislation pushed through by the present administration'. The government plans to change the law to force transport unions to maintain 'minimum service levels' during industrial action.



O'Grady: kick out 'rotten' Tory government

BRITAIN needs a general election now to kick out the 'whole rotten Tory government,' TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady told conference. O'Grady stressed that ditching former prime minister Liz Truss was not enough. "We don't trust the government with our economy," she said. The outgoing leader said she was proud to have led the TUC since 2013, but was ready to 'pass the torch' to her deputy Paul Nowak, who takes over in January.

Lorraine Mallinder talks to Zahra Joya about running a news agency in exile

'I have a big job to do for my people'



Zahra Joya is a force to be reckoned with. Airlifted out of Kabul last year after the withdrawal of international troops from Afghanistan, the founder of Rukhshana Media, a news agency reporting on women's lives, has had one hell of a year.

From a tiny hotel room in London, the 30-year-old journalist battled in exile to maintain Rukhshana's operations, managing a team of undercover journalists in Afghanistan. Her work has won awards from Time magazine – which named her as one of its women of the year – and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

International attention from the awards has proven to be a double-edged sword. Joya welcomes the focus on Afghan women crushed by Taliban oppression. But the family she left behind now find themselves in greater danger than ever before.

Now housed in London, Joya has had trouble sleeping, fearing reprisals for her parents and siblings, who have fled to Pakistan and are continually moving to avoid detection. "All the time, my mind is busy. I find it difficult to relax, to sleep," she says.

"I ask myself: 'Why are you doing this if your family might be arrested?' The most important thing for me is the safety of my family. Because of my journalism work, my family is in danger. It is absolutely heartbreaking."

Back in 2020, when Joya set up Rukhshana with her personal savings, recruiting female journalists from around the country, she believed Afghanistan's best days were yet to come. Nearly two decades since the US-led invasion, the country had changed beyond recognition, making

huge progress on women's rights and media freedoms.

"Nobody in Afghanistan ever imagined Kabul would fall and the Taliban would come back overnight," says Joya. "It seemed impossible."

She is still struggling to process what followed – the chaos of those terrifying days at Kabul airport, where she was airlifted out by the UK government, along with her three sisters, her brother and her niece. Within days, the Taliban had surged back to power.

Joya's life in Afghanistan spanned the first phase of Taliban rule and that dawning of a new era of optimism. Born in Bamyan province in the central highlands, she was spared the worst of the regime. As a member of the Hazara community, an ethnic group with relatively liberal values, she received an education – though she had to disguise herself as a boy to attend school.

She was known as Mohammed. Every day, she would dress in a boy's outfit and walk two hours to school, and join her male peers in games of football. To this day, she is grateful for her parents' courage of conviction.

"In our community, women still have their own rights," she says.

Under the US-backed regime, the Hazara prospered. Joya studied law at university, later discovering her passion for journalism.

"We passed through 20 years of freedom, building a life," she says. "Before, there was no freedom, no technology. But we got educated, started to rebuild."

By 2021, the nation had started to believe in a better future. At least, that's what Joya thought before the US, against all logic, decided to pull out.



Because of my journalism, my family is in danger. It is absolutely heartbreaking



Beneath the grief, the anger and the frustration, there's a genuine sense of puzzlement. To many Afghans, the US's abrupt exit simply does not add up.

"They came in 2001, they said, We are here, we will stand by you," says Joya. "Why did America leave everything behind? They signed the agreement without the ideas of the Afghan people. Our rights and freedom were a political game."

For now, all Joya can do is keep reporting. Employing a team of mostly female journalists in Afghanistan, who report on issues such as corruption, domestic violence, rape and murder, she has become the world's leading voice for the women she left behind.

"Honestly, for me, I feel journalism is a responsibility," she says.

From her new home, shared with the five family members who came with her, she is running her news agency on a shoestring, dependent on dwindling donations and aware that the desperate predicament of Afghanistan's women is fast fading from the world's memory.

"If I want to run a news organisation in the UK, we have to open an office, buy furniture, equipment and computers," she says. She is looking to create a board for Rukhshana, to bring together people with experience on Afghan affairs, women's rights and sex equality.

"I am outside my country, but I am sure I have the right to be in this community of journalists," she says.

"I have a big job to do, not only for myself but for also my people."

Bogus tale of progress does not fool us all



BBC taking the 'local' out of local radio,, says **Raymond Snoddy**

The BBC has a nasty habit, when faced with government-imposed cuts, of choosing the wrong targets and then duplicitously dressing the decision up in a positive light.

It's all about the forward march of technology and, supposedly, in the best interests of listeners and viewers.

There was a spectacular example of this in 2016, when the BBC imposed swingeing cuts on the programme budgets of BBC Three as it axed the service as a broadcast channel.

It was probably the first channel in history to go voluntarily online only.

The manoeuvre was positioned as the wave of the future. The young were all going online and that was where to take the channel to find them.

There was the usual spending on a logo that looked very much like the old one and, to no one's surprise, BBC Three lost the impact and attention it had enjoyed as a broadcast channel.

The reverse ferret was completed this February when BBC Three returned to the airwaves – further evidence that linear television is far from dead.

With the BBC's local radio 'overhaul', it's a case of *deja vu*.

The wrong target has been selected, the proposed execution has so far been cack-handed and unfair and, once again, a damaging manoeuvre has been shamelessly dressed up as reflecting the onward march of online technology.

Was it really less than two months ago that local radio presenters were basking in national limelight as they were praised for a series of robust if short round-robin interviews with Liz Truss, briefly prime minister of the UK?

In her first public outing since the disastrous mini-budget, Truss was

asked where she had been for the previous four days and why, when given the keys to the country, she had trashed the economy.

The young presenters did not bring Truss down, but it was widely noted they had done a far better job of holding an errant prime minister to account than their more famous, better paid 'superiors' in London. There was some evidence the big beasts of the political interview programmes may have toughened their approach as a result.

All those local presenters are going to be made redundant and will apparently have to apply for their old or newly framed jobs. The BBC should be ashamed of making such modestly paid, hard-working journalists do this.

The heart of the plan is a bizarre move towards more programme sharing, which accelerates from 2pm onwards during the week and at weekends.

Local programming at all 39 stations in England will remain fine and dandy from 6am to 2pm during the week. Then, suddenly, after lunch this is judged no longer necessary and 18 afternoon programmes will be shared.

The sharing intensifies between 6pm and 10 pm when the number of programmes drops to 10, with the same number on Saturday and on Sunday mornings.

There will be a one all-England programme from 10pm during the week and on Sunday afternoons. There is absolutely nothing local about that.

The overhaul, involving the loss of 48 jobs, is part of a new strategy to focus on online content and £19 million will be redirected towards online multimedia productions. An unknown number of freelance journalists could lose shifts.

There are so many logical flaws in this surge towards being a 'modern

digital-led' broadcaster, it is difficult to know where to start.

So the BBC is going to be a modern, digital-led broadcaster only after 2pm?

The proposals ignore the fact that the strength of local radio, with 5.8 million regular listeners a month, is its very localness, something that differentiates the BBC from its more centralised commercial radio rivals.

BBC local radio also provides a lifeline for the over-55s in rural areas – arguably the very group least likely to be adept at online and multimedia services.

In making reforms, there is usually an inverse relationship between the chances of success and the level of complexity.

Most job losses are coming from the closure of documentary series *This Is England*; 11 investigative teams will be set up across the country to focus on local issues across TV, radio and online. Programme sharing will lead to 139 fewer audio teams jobs but there will be 131 more roles for local news services.

It sounds like a wheeze straight out of *W1A*.

The plans have even upset the government, which has expressed concern and disappointment – although this is a bit rich given it has frozen the licence fee for two years.

It's still the old story of the BBC disguising cuts in services and possibly overall finance for local radio with a bogus narrative of modernisation which ill serves a loyal audience.

The BBC board should review this plan before most of the moving parts of BBC local radio in England are tossed arrogantly in the air.

It will be a lot harder to repair the damage to local radio than conceding that an online-only BBC Three had been a huge mistake.

“ A damaging manoeuvre has been shamelessly dressed up as reflecting the onward march of online technology ”

Dundee

Ruth Addicott finds out what it's like to work as a journalist in Dundee

Situated on the east coast of Scotland on the banks of the River Tay, Dundee has long been known as the City of Discovery and is as proud of its seafaring past as its reputation for innovation. As the birthplace of The Beano, it is the undisputed home of comics and has a long history of journalism.

Family-owned publisher DC Thomson has been printing newspapers in the city since 1886 and owns local dailies The Courier and Evening Telegraph and a portfolio of magazines including The Scots Magazine, The People's Friend, Platinum, My Weekly and Shout, all of which are based in Dundee. DC Thomson refuses to recognise the NUJ.

The city was named the 'coolest city in the UK' by GQ magazine in 2018 and was fifth in a list of 'worldwide hot destinations' by the Wall Street Journal.

Dave Lord, editor of the Evening Telegraph, moved to Scotland from Devon when he was young. He started with DC Thomson in 2000 as a reporter in the Perth office, covering The Courier, Evening Telegraph and Sunday Post.

"Dundee has changed enormously and so has the journalism industry," he says. "The city now has technology at its heart – video gaming is huge locally – and things like a £1 billion waterfront regeneration, featuring the V&A museum, have made a huge difference."

The V&A Dundee, designed by Kengo Kuma, opened in 2018 and is the only V&A museum in the world outside London. Dundee is the birthplace of the Scottish video games industry and the world-famous Grand Theft Auto. It is also due to host Scotland's first Eden Project in 2025.

Although the city has its problems, such as poverty, poor attainment, drug addiction and high crime rates, Lord is

optimistic and says Dundee is "the best place to be a young journalist right now".

He says The Courier and Evening Telegraph are embracing a digital-first, subscription-based model and a focus on quality journalism that is 'a million miles' from the clickbait approach adopted elsewhere.

The Courier was named news website of the year at the Scottish Press Awards in September. Reach has also upped its coverage with the launch of Dundee Live, although it does not have a Dundee office and the reporters work from home.

Scottish nationals, such as the Reach-owned Daily Record, also cover Dundee but no longer have an office in the city. The knock-on effect is that print journalists who have left DC Thomson have had to leave the area to find work.

Dundee is Scotland's fourth largest city and has attracted journalists from all over the UK and abroad.

Business journalist Maria Gran moved from Norway and writes for The Courier and Evening Telegraph.

"The weather is warmer here and it rains less than in Bergen where I worked before," she says. "I like that the business community is very tight knit and eager to share news with us. It's easy to form connections with people in the patch."

Gran says it is similar to working on her local paper in Norway, the difference being that there is no overtime pay in Dundee. "You wouldn't get away with that in Norway," she says.

In terms of broadcasting, BBC Scotland and STV News both have studios and news crews in the city. (The BBC employs six journalists and STV has eight.) Tay FM and Tay 2, owned by Bauer, also have studios.

Louise Cowie, senior reporter at BBC Scotland, has been a journalist in Dundee for 20 years. She began her career at Wave 102, then Radio Tay, before STV where she was a reporter, presenter and producer.

"Dundee sits within a great news patch," she says. "Many of the journalists who work in the area have done so for a long time so there is great rapport and camaraderie between us,



Take pride and get personal

Know your worth

Photographer Chris Scott says photographers need to be more educated about usage and licensing. "Photographers here are quite desperate, they're

prepared to do a job and give everything away, they don't research things like licence fees," he says. "We should be taking pride in our work and companies should know better with regards to usage."

Be nosy and persist

Richard Neville, former editor of The Courier, says there are good jobs in newspapers and online, but journalists have to work hard to get good stories. "Be genuinely inquisitive," he

says. "Don't just accept what you are told. Question everything, look for motivation and be persistent."

Meet in person

Freelance Dawn Geddes, advises journalists to "go out and meet people", whether they are newspaper and

magazine editors or people attending networking events arranged by organisations such as Creative Dundee or Women in Journalism Scotland. Look out for online freelance groups such as the Angus Writers' Circle which Geddes says is "a great source of support".

even if we do work for different news outlets."

Cowie has covered all sorts of stories from high-profile crime and huge job losses at NCR and Michelin to the G8 Summit at Gleneagles and, more recently, the Queen's death. But it's the funny stories that stand out. "A report I did on Pilates classes involving pygmy goats gained a lot of attention," she recalls.

So what is Dundee like for freelancers?

Dawn Geddes, a freelance journalist, copywriter and culture blogger, was born in Dundee and moved to the nearby commuter town of Carnoustie as a child.

"I've been working in Dundee most of my adult life," she says. It has always been known for its jute, jam and journalism, but since the opening of the V&A, it's become a real cultural hub, and now has two world-class museums and a stellar theatre, thanks to the Dundee Rep.

Geddes freelances mostly for DC Thomson and has built up strong connections. "Although I work from home, I've been able to meet all of my editors in person, which is hugely advantageous," she says.

Dundee is cheaper to live in than many cities and has good transport links. The train takes just over an hour to get to Edinburgh and there are flights from Dundee to Belfast and London.

As well as being home to two football clubs, the city has a large student population. The University of Dundee (renowned for its cancer research) was named 'the cheapest place to be a student in the UK' in 2021, and offers a master's degree in comics and graphic novels, while Abertay University is a 'global hub' for computing and gaming, according to Alastair McCall, editor of The Sunday Times Good University Guide.

"Journalism has always been at the heart of Dundee and there is no sign of that changing."

Richard Neville,
director, **Neville Robertson Communications**

"One of the things I love most about Dundee is its rich art and cultural side."

Felicity Clifford,
reporter, **STV News**

"It's an amazing place, amazing people, incredible history and definitely somewhere that's growing."

Chris Scott,
photographer

"It's an innovative city and it feels like it's always changing - for the better."

Dawn Geddes,
freelance journalist,
copywriter and
culture blogger

Photographer Chris Scott was born in Dundee, left aged 16 and moved back when he was 38. He took up photography 10 years ago and now has a 1,000 square ft studio and a successful business. He has worked for magazines and nationals including the Daily Mail, The Independent and The Times, and does press for the V&A and Eden Project.

"Dundee used to be the sort of place you'd walk in with a leather jacket and come out with an anorak," he says. "It was a tough old city. I think mindsets have changed and people who have got out and then come back have added a lot of value to the city. I think people are more open."

The biggest downside, according to Scott, is the drug problem. Dundee has the highest number of drug deaths in Scotland. "It's something that needs to be tackled," he says.

"I also think investment in our city centre has to be taken seriously. We've got this amazing V&A and Eden Project, but the city centre is boarded up. You've got your usual coffee shops, betting shops and thrift shops, but we need a lot more diversity in regard to independent trading."

Richard Neville, former editor of The Courier, now director of PR agency Neville Robertson Communications, agrees: "The city has its challenges and there are more lively places to live, but it has a spirit that kind of grips you and a new and developing sense of worth and purpose."

"The city is finding its feet again and undergoing a real renaissance in terms of culture, creativity and economic development. It just needs to keep the energy going."

So what's the best advice for journalists thinking of moving there?

"Don't wear a Rolex while asking for directions after 7 o'clock at night," quips Scott. "I'm joking - the city is very welcoming. Just come in, be yourself and you'll be accepted very quickly."



David Stenhouse highlights the work of the John Schofield Trust

Broadening the intake into journalism

This year has offered a stark reminder of the risks that journalists take reporting from the frontline. Many have risked their lives – and some have lost them – covering the war in Ukraine.

One of the charities working hardest to support young journalists in the UK is named in memory of a journalist who was killed covering another war in the heart of Europe.

John Schofield was just 29 when he was killed on August 9 1995 while reporting on the civil war in Yugoslavia for BBC Radio 4's The World Tonight. He had also worked at Channel 4, and was known to be a talented, hard-working, popular journalist. His death sent shockwaves through the industry.

In the aftermath of his death, his widow Susie received letters from his bosses telling her that her husband had been destined to be a star of the future. He had gone to his grave never knowing how highly he was rated by those he worked alongside. She resolved to create a charity that would support young journalists with advice, encouragement and professional support.

Today, John's memory lives on in journalism through the work done by the charity set up in his name.

The John Schofield Trust offers a helping hand to those who come to journalism with talent and determination but without the connections that so often open doors.

Each year, the trust welcomes applications from broadcast and multimedia journalists with between two and five years' experience. It

particularly welcomes applications from those who come from backgrounds that are under-represented in the media.

Those who are selected become fellows of the trust and are matched with senior fellows who volunteer to mentor them for 12 months. Over the years, the trust has worked with some of the best-known names in British journalism, and fellows of the trust include Channel 4 presenter Ayshah Tull and Lewis Goodall, presenter of the hit podcast the News Agents.

Every year, the NCTJ report into diversity in journalism shows how far we have to go in making the profession representative. The trust does its best to push the dial towards fairness of access and representation.

In 2022, 43 per cent of journalists were privately educated but 57 per cent of trust fellows went to a non-selective state school. Some 13 per cent of UK journalists come from non-white ethnic backgrounds while 31 per cent of trust fellows are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

On every indicator, from social class to disability, the trust selects and supports journalists who are underrepresented in the industry.

The trust characterises its approach as broadening 'the pipeline of talent'. It gives an opportunity to those whose talents are too often overlooked, but when fairly included, add to the richness and robustness of British journalism.

The formula seems to work, and its services are more in demand than



Top: John Schofield; above: Daisy Hughes and her journalist father Mark; she raised £1,870 for the trust in his memory

ever. This year, applications rose by 32 per cent.

As a small charity, the John Schofield Trust relies on donations, generous volunteers and a few grants from foundations. In the last 18 months, the trust has benefited from two unexpected bequests.

In January 2021, it was contacted by the family of the football journalist Dave Evans, who died on Christmas Day 2020 aged just 54. Evans had a rare gift for supporting and encouraging colleagues who were starting off in the industry and his family chose the John Schofield Trust to receive donations in lieu of flowers at his funeral. They also persuaded his employer Archant newspapers to donate his long-service payment of £500 to the trust.

Then, in December 2021, Daisy Hughes raised £1,870 for the trust from a 114-mile sponsored walk in memory of her journalist dad Mark. She contacted us after he died in October 2021, and explained why she chose the trust.

She wrote: "He and my mum both worked with John Schofield at Channel 4 Daily, and he was so passionate about journalism and improving accessibility, so I think this would be a cause very close to his heart."

If improving accessibility to journalism and supporting young journalists is also close to your heart, please contact the trust at info@johnschofieldtrust.org.uk or find out more about our work at <https://johnschofieldtrust.org.uk>.

David Stenhouse is chief executive at the John Schofield Trust

On every indicator, from social class to disability, the trust selects and supports journalists who are underrepresented in the industry



We've been **helping** **journalists** through tough times for more than 150 years.

...If you're struggling because of the pandemic,
energy price hikes, the increasing cost of living
or because life has dealt you a blow...

...We're here.

Advice
Support
Financial Assistance

Scan to see if you could qualify for cash support
or go to journalistscharity.org.uk for more info.



Journalists' Charity

Supporting journalists nationwide

Don't quote me on that

James Fair on the tricky issue of interviewees wanting to approve their words

Earlier this year, I received an email from someone I had interviewed for a piece I'd written for a US-based environmental news website. My feature, the expert told me, would be "a classic puff piece" and "an example of the garbage peddled by the government to dupe both the public and journalists alike".

They had not seen the article – it had not even been sent to my editor – so how could they know anything about what I had written? Had they hacked into my computer? Acquired powers of telepathy? No – I'd agreed to show them their quotes as a condition of them speaking to me.

Some older hacks (having started in 1990, I suspect I am one of them) will recoil at the idea of allowing interviewees to approve quotes but it's something I come across increasingly in my work as a wildlife conservation and environmental journalist. It emanates mainly from scientists and academics, who tell me they are concerned about making sure the nuances of their research are not misrepresented.

My now quite irate scientist was also threatening to (and eventually did) contact my commissioning editor, someone I had not worked with before. The only course of action open to me was to take out their quotes and, after a fair bit of tweaking here and there, the piece was published and my commissioning editor was pleased. Rest assured, it wasn't a puff piece or peddling government lies.

But it made me think – should I have ignored this expert's demand that I let them see their quotes?

I've worked as a journalist for more than 30 years, and this is definitely a growing trend.

I would be hard pressed to pinpoint when it began, but it was certainly after the advent of email, which I was using by 1996. But even with email – which allows for almost instantaneous, hassle-free communication – I don't remember every interviewee suddenly jumping up and down and demanding to see what they had been quoted as saying.

In 1999, I started working for a BBC magazine and, over the years, there was what I would describe as a gradual assimilation into editorial thinking that interviewees should be shown their quotes if requested. I think this stemmed, at least in part, from a fear that someone would complain we had breached impartiality rules the BBC is obliged to adhere to if we got something wrong.

Since I went back to being a freelance in 2018, I have accepted that some people I interview will want to review their quotes before publication. This is never copy approval and it does not involve sending them the entire feature but what they said with some context if I consider it necessary.

In my email, I normally say something along the lines of "I will guarantee to correct anything you consider to be inaccurate or a misrepresentation of what you said and will consider (but not guarantee to make) other requested changes." I usually point out that quotes may have been selected to be colloquial in tone to make their research or the point they are trying to make more accessible to lay readers.

I think this approach has largely paid off. I

have gained the trust of scientists who previously did not know me, and – until now – I've only ever had to make extremely minor tweaks to quotes. But it, has to be said, in most cases I'd rather not do it and, as with the example I've given, it can backfire.

What do others think? My US-based editor at Mongabay was unhappy that I had shared the quotes with the expert and told me I should have consulted him before doing so. I have never been told this by any editor here in the UK, and it feels like a cultural difference.

"At Mongabay, we're getting tons of these requests to see quotes, and it's on the agenda for an upcoming editorial team meeting, so that we can harmonise thinking on it and formulate a policy to deal with it," he told me in an email.

I then opened the debate up to the Twitterati, and a few interesting things came to light. I pointedly invited scientists to respond. Why wouldn't you give interviewees the chance to see what they were being shown to have said – it can only lead to greater accuracy, was the consensus. "We all battle to think on our feet sometimes and communicate exactly what we mean," said one. "I can't see any downside of sharing the quotes and even allowing us to refine [them]."

There are some people you would never show quotes to – politicians, for one, and campaigners, too. I don't do celebrity interviews and don't know the protocols on that but, instinctively, it feels wrong to give people who are accustomed to being interviewed the opportunity of retracting something they have said. On the flip side, you might think the opposite with someone who rarely speaks to journalists.

I also contacted some people I'd consider experts in this field – lecturers in journalism. While it was difficult to generalise, there was certainly agreement that journalists should start from a default position of not giving any editorial control to people they speak to. But all those I contacted recognised there would be times when you might want to make an exception.

Paul Wiltshire, senior lecturer at the University of Gloucestershire, said he has always allowed some kind of copy approval when writing about bereavements, and that journalists might want to consider showing a part of the article to an expert when writing about “really complicated financial or scientific stories – though this can be a minefield, too”. Well, he is right about that.

Jane Bentley, course director of magazine journalism at Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Culture, said their advice to students was “Say no!” and that “sources should trust you are good at what you do... and won't misrepresent them”. Again, it is hard to disagree with any of that. In real-life stories, she pointed out, the ‘readback’

Showing quotes: things to consider

- What is the interviewee's motive in reviewing their quote – is it to check accuracy in what is a complex subject area or is it to make sure they haven't said anything off message? If it's the latter, perhaps you should decline.
- Should you contact your commissioning editor or seek advice from someone in your editorial team before agreeing to a request from an interviewee to look at their quotes?
- At what point in the interview did they request to see their quotes? Was it when they agreed to speak to you? Was it right at the start of the interview or at the end? Especially if it's the last of those, can you find out if there is anything they have said they are worried about and can you alleviate their concerns? Sometimes, I go over what the interviewee has said and suggest what I may use as a quote.
- Can you agree some basic ground rules on when you are prepared to show the interviewee's quotes to them?
- Do you show the quotes only, or do you also show some of the context in which they are being used? Some context seems fair enough, but as little as possible would be wise.
- What do you do if your expert becomes difficult once they have seen their quotes? That's where having got the approval of your commissioning editor might be handy, because you can then discuss with them what your response should be. As ever, having a good working relationship with an editor will be vital at this point.



method is typically part of the process.

“We do say if a story is very tricky and has specifically difficult numbers, jargon or issues (ie personal health, medical issues), then it is acceptable to run parts of copy past a source to check on accuracy,” she added. “But never the whole piece for approval, and they have no sway over the content and tone.”

Matt Swaine, senior lecturer and course director of Cardiff's International Journalism MA – and who (full disclosure) was my editor when I worked at the BBC-branded magazine – made similar points: “When I was on [outdoor activities magazine] Trail, I might have shown someone a quote or checked something they had said after I'd written a piece if there was a life or death element to the story.”

Dr Felicity Mellor, senior lecturer in science communication at Imperial College, made what I thought was a good point about why some professional groups may be pushing harder to see quotes before they are published.

“I think the highly charged, high-stakes social media environment is the most likely explanation for caution amongst interviewees, such as scientists, who feel obliged to talk to the media even though media appearances are not central to their professional activities,” she said.

It's up to every journalist and the publications they write for to decide their policy on letting interviewees see quotes. First and foremost, you need to consider whether it will potentially improve or impair the article and, perhaps, also how it may affect your relationship with the interviewee. In the final analysis, have a policy and stick to it.

TikTok is running more news content, reports **Neil Merrick**

15

seconds of fame

So, here is the news (according to TikTok). A goat is singing in a church, a girl is dancing with her grandma and a guy is cutting his hair in a swimming pool.

Great, but where is the real news? Well, that can be trickier to find, but if you dig deep enough, there is a serious side to TikTok – and some familiar faces.

Channel 4 provides video clips (or TikToks) about Ukraine and Iran, while BBC economics editor Faisal Islam is showing how supermarket prices have risen during the past year by sorting through his groceries. Victoria Derbyshire's account is largely based on the BBC presenter reading news updates from what appear to be different rooms in her house.

Are journalists making the most of TikTok, and what opportunity does the platform provide for reaching new, presumably younger audiences?

Chris Stokel-Walker, author of a book on TikTok and a lecturer in journalism, thinks much of the media was slow off the mark. "Nobody has figured out how to present journalism on TikTok in an intelligent way," he says. "They tend to do journalism-adjacent stuff."

A study in June by Press Gazette showed just two UK media organisations (the Daily Mail and Sky) had more than one million TikTok followers, although ITV News and The Sun were making up ground.

In July, Ofcom reported TikTok was the fastest growing source of news for UK adults. But it is used for news by only seven per cent of adults, compared with 17 per cent for Twitter, 23 per cent for the BBC website or app, and 35 per cent who watch ITV.

News on TikTok is frenetic, with presenters staring you in the face for a few minutes, normally with visuals or graphics in the background. There is little time to draw breath, let alone reflect on what you hear or see. In short, it is hard to see why anyone who follows the news elsewhere would rely on TikTok.

That is not the point, says Stokel-Walker. TikTok is for people who generally avoid current affairs but want "to learn about the world through osmosis".

It is definitely not News at Ten. "People present in a much more personable way than a news anchor," he adds. "It's more of a peer than the voice of God sat behind a desk."

Between February and October, Channel 4 News increased its TikTok following roughly tenfold to more than 250,000. Based on users' comments, most appear to be under 25, says Mojo Abidi, a multimedia producer at Channel 4.

Abidi, who joined Channel 4 from ITV in early 2022, believes news brands need to recognise TikTok's potential if they are to expand in a digital world. "It's very important to reach a younger audience," she says.

News is presented in a serious but attention-grabbing way, with a strong emphasis on foreign affairs. Some stems from Channel 4's FactCheck team, while presenters from the nightly TV programme occasionally turn their reports into TikToks.

Abidi recognises it is virtually impossible to tell the full story in a couple of minutes, saying it is better to be snappier, give an overview and leave people to look into a subject more deeply if they wish. "It's aimed at people who are on the go," she says.

Kassy Cho, a trainer and audience strategist for social media, believes media outlets are wary of TikTok due to its reputation for dance challenges rather than news bulletins.

"You don't need to create comedy content," she says. "Young people are interested in the world."

A good TikTok depends on attracting people's attention with the strongest fact or quote, telling them a story that retains their interest to the end, and using examples of how it affects them or people they know. So, much like old-style journalism.

Presentation is key, even more than in traditional broadcasting, especially when other TikToks may be a quick scroll away. "TikTok is a platform where people focus on faces and personality. The vibe is very much of the moment," adds Cho. "It's like a friend telling you a story, or something they discovered about the world today."

Sophia Smith Galer, once of the BBC, and now at Vice World News, has a personal following of more than 400,000, way ahead of most UK nationals. Her TikToks are mostly light in tone but carry a serious message.

TikTok, she says, shares the same restrictions as traditional media when it comes to short formats – limited time and

7%

**of adults use
TikTok for news
and the platform
is the fastest-
growing news
source in the UK,
according
to Ofcom**



Tok

pressure to provide good visuals. But these are surmountable. “Any story can work with the right treatment and attention paid to the target, digitally native audience,” she says.

The key to her success, she adds, is her close relationship with followers: “I’ve been able to experiment, try out different formats and work on it daily. It has helped me build a community around my reporting.

“At the beginning, it meant I could get my reporting and ideas out, bypassing editors or commissioners who didn’t share my values in serving younger audiences.”

After a slow start, the BBC has set up a three-strong TikTok team. It includes Ana Guerra-Moore, who works from her home in Gateshead, taking stories from around the BBC and applying a creative touch so they become TikToks.

Guerra-Moore, who previously worked for local radio and BBC Online, says it is vital that news TikToks are created by experienced journalists, so they combine the lighter feel with authority and professionalism.

Like Channel 4, the BBC runs ‘explainers’ on what is behind the news. “We never assume knowledge,” she says. “It’s important to break everything down so it’s as understandable as possible.”

TikTok presenters need to be approachable and conversational. “We try to keep our tone the same as the BBC’s, but ever so often, it’s appropriate to have some fun,” she adds.

TikTok’s algorithms make it unpredictable. While most video clips carry a date, it is not uncommon to be confronted with stories that are days if not weeks old. For this reason, the BBC’s news headlines TikTok is deleted every 24 hours.

Away from major broadcasters and a few nationals, much of the UK media is still dipping its toe in the water. Only a handful of regional titles appear to use TikTok, but the Manchester Evening News boasts a growing number of followers, with many of its TikToks revolving around crime.

ALICE ANDERSON



Mojo Abidi making a TikTok video about people queuing to see the Queen’s coffin for Channel 4 news

Making TikToks is easy, says Abidi. The app demonstrates how to film yourself speaking to camera and make videos.

Do news teams have the time and resources for more social media? Cho points out: “A TikTok does not have to live on TikTok alone but can be cross-distributed across all the platforms.”

So, while media organisations may be groaning under the pressure of supplying news online, in print and through social media, maybe it is time to give TikTok a chance. Just don’t make a song and dance about it.

Views go vertical

SIT UP straight! Thanks in part to TikTok, journalists are filming more news in vertical or portrait format, rather than holding phones and other devices horizontally.

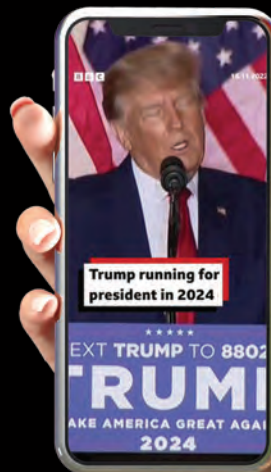
Sophia Smith Galer of Vice World News says vertical video has changed how people view media on a range of platforms, including Facebook and YouTube, which have launched their own portrait-format reels and shorts.

“There is no going back,” she says. “News outlets that are not using

vertical video have lost claim to a significant audience share they may never win back.”

Filming vertically should come naturally, as that is the way we generally hold phones. But how are things shaping up in terms of results?

Ana Guerra-Moore, part of the BBC’s TikTok team, admits vertical video has its limitations. The team sometimes need to stretch film sent to them by other BBC departments so it can be used in vertical format.



While traditional landscape-format views are out of the question, images can be presented as slides, says Kassy Cho, a journalism trainer.

Vertical filming may be a challenge for people who are used to horizontal or square formats, such as on TV or websites. Our natural instinct is to see the world around us horizontally, through our own eyes.

But, ultimately, social media and the devices we carry in our pockets will ensure that our videos are upright.

“It makes sense if people are spending more time on phones than on laptops,” says Cho.

Cut costs and save on tax

Ruth Addicott advises on pinching the pennies when it comes to spending and tax

With increased energy bills, the cost of living climbing and more people working from home, how can journalists cut back on costs? Many self-employed journalists lost income and contracts during the pandemic, which led to a build up of credit card liabilities and tax bills. While HMRC extended some deadlines, a lot of freelancers have found themselves worse off following a change in tax rules.

Many freelancers on regular contracts did not qualify for payments under the self-employment income support scheme after finding their employment terminated and long-standing agreements cancelled overnight.

This has had a knock-on effect, explains Barry Kernon, accounting and tax consultant at HW Fisher: "Following changes to tax rules in 2021 known as IR35, a number of employers declined to pay self-employed journalists without deducting tax and many were forced into PAYE engagements, without necessarily getting rights as an employee."

The change has also meant that some journalists can no longer claim expenses.

While employed journalists are only allowed to claim a tax allowance of £6 per week 'on strict conditions', self-employed journalists can claim a percentage of home costs.

Self-employed freelancers working from home can claim a portion of the rent or mortgage as well as household bills including gas, electricity, water, phone, broadband and council tax. The percentage depends on the layout of the property, number of rooms, space used for work and how many days per week is used etc.

The cost of office items including a desk, chair, laptop, printer, ink, mobile phone, lamp and plants can also be offset against tax, along with train, bus, parking, theatre, concert and museum tickets 'depending on relevance'. There is also a flat rate for using a bike.

Costs for an eye test, prescriptions, dental treatment or a new suit for a job interview cannot be claimed for (except for a uniform or protective clothing).

As for travel, self-employed

journalists can either claim a mileage allowance of 45p per mile (for the first 10,000 miles, 25p thereafter) or claim actual business car costs including depreciation in the form of capital allowances. Employed journalists can also claim these mileage allowances against any car expenses paid by their employers.

Then there's subsistence – the additional cost of food incurred while working away from home.

"HMRC will allow what is described as 'reasonable subsistence' – there is no fixed amount specified in the legislation," says Kernon. "This applies to the self-employed. If employees receive a subsistence allowance from their employer, the excess above what HMRC consider

Cash points: advice and a warning

Keep good records

Self-employed journalists should keep a full record of all income received and be able to identify any amounts that are not taxable, such as birthday gifts. Keep records of expenses including receipts as well as bank and credit card statements.

Employees who receive freelance income of over £1,000 in a tax year have to declare this via self assessment.

Report by the new rules

As well as the annual tax return, as of April 2024, all self-employed people earning over

£10,000 pa will be required to file quarterly tax submissions digitally as part of the government's Making Tax Digital initiative.

Prepare for the near and distant future

Tax consultant Barry Kernon advises getting accounts in order early and having separate bank accounts for business transactions.

"A safe way of storing money until it is needed is to buy premium bonds," he says.

He suggests saving for retirement, via pension plans, ISAs, property or other investments and ensure lasting powers of attorney are in place. He also advises making a will.

If you're caught out as an employee

Some freelance contracts include indemnities that mean if you're treated as a freelance but if HMRC conclude you're taxable as an employee, you could have to pay employer's national insurance contributions – an extra 15 per cent tax.

"A common scenario is when HMRC visit an office and find more people there than are on the payroll," says Kernon.

"An inquiry ensues and the status of all freelances is checked and may be challenged.

"Where people are doing identical work at adjoining desks, for example, one being employed and the other being self-employed, HMRC will argue they should both be treated as employees."





reasonable will potentially be taxable.”

One of the most common mistakes journalists make is assuming that reimbursed expenses can be ignored because they match the amount spent.

“Reimbursements represent income for income tax and VAT purposes and must be declared as such,” says Kernon. “They count as turnover in deciding whether the compulsory VAT registration limit has been reached. The expenses that have been reimbursed may not all be allowable for tax purposes. For example, entertaining is never allowed as a tax deduction for the self-employed. Employed journalists are generally not in the same position because their employers suffer the tax disallowance as they cannot claim entertaining as an expense.”

What about meeting a contact for coffee? Or interviewing a celebrity over lunch? “The coffee can’t be claimed back,” says Kernon. “But the lunch could be if the celebrity is providing a publishable interview at the same time.”

So what else can journalists do to cut costs when working from home?

Emma Lunn, a personal finance journalist, suggests keeping only the room you work in heated.

“Turn off the radiators in the other rooms and just heat the room you’re in,” she says. “It’s cheaper to do this using gas central heating (if you have it), rather than plugging in an electric heater as these are expensive to run.

“If you can be flexible about which room you work in, pick the room that is naturally the warmest as it will be cheaper to heat. If you have a microwave, air fryer or slow cooker, use these for cooking instead of your oven - they have much lower running costs.”

Freelance journalist and editor Georgina Fuller has also found ways to manage after living without central heating for the past 10 years. After moving out of a flat in London to a house on the edge of the Cotswolds, then finding out how much it would cost to install central heating, she decided to do without. She has now adopted a strategy of relying on electric blankets, an old woodburner and “dressing like *The Lady in the Van*”. She has also turned it into a source of income and been commissioned to write about it.

“When I’m working from home in the deep dark depths of winter, I mainly just heat the room I’m working in for an hour or so in the morning with an electric heater then rely on a

heated or weighted blanket for the rest of the day,” she says. “I use a children’s blanket because it’s just the right size to wrap around my legs.

“The fact the rest of the house is so cold encourages me to stay where the warmth is and, I’d like to think, might even make me a bit more productive.”

Jon Rudoe, co-founder of online cost-of-living champion *Nous.co* advises turning the heating down one degree, which would take 10 per cent off the overall energy bill (£355 for the typical household at the current cap). Setting the boiler flow to the right temperature can be worth five per cent or £175 for the typical household. Switching off standby and turning off appliances can also save about three per cent (just over £100 for the typical household). And set a timer – four-minute showers can cut three per cent off a household bill.

Rudoe points out it’s not just energy where journalists can make savings:

“Many people have unused subscriptions to TV/music platforms, or are paying too much for their mobile, broadband or TV because they haven’t renegotiated since they came out of contract or, worse still, have moved on to the floating variable rate on their mortgage when they could remortgage to a cheaper fixed deal,” he says.

Other advice is to avoid credit cards and ‘buy now, pay later’ schemes and take out only the amount of cash you are prepared to spend.

Alongside earning from side sidelines from ghostwriting, garage rental and Airbnbs to becoming a swimming and running coach, journalists are finding ways to save.

NUJ member Chris Wheal joined a collective to bulk buy solar panels and his office runs for free during daylight hours.

The solar panels and some insulation work meant that in June, he was told his gas and electric bill was dropping from £156 to £147 a month.

“We also get just over one month’s worth back in feed-in-tariff from the solar panels each year,” he says. “We’re mean as hell on consumption though. We have lines marked on the kettle so we only boil enough water for the exact number of cups of tea and the shower has an app so you can see how much water you have used – that speeded up the daily wash, I can tell you.”

HW Fisher will be running a free online advice session on February 7 2023. Visit freelanceoffice@nuj.org.uk to reserve a place HW Fisher also provides NUJ members with a free tax helpline on 020 7874 7846



Many are paying too much for their TV, mobile or broadband as they haven’t renegotiated since coming out of contract



Jonathan Sale finds little festive cheer in the first Yuletide supplement

'TIS THE SEASON TO BE GLOOMY

Here is a festive greeting from December 23 1848. In the first Christmas supplement of any publication, the second paragraph of the front-page editorial in the weekly *Illustrated London News* (ILN) brings us joyous tidings: “To many, Christmas is a time of sorrow.” Well, thanks a million – and a happy Yuletide to you too, Santa! “The man hard buffeted by the world, who has struggled during a whole year to make both ends meet” – a category which many readers must have thought that, now you mention it, could well have included them – “dreads the examination of his affairs, which he surely knows will prove that all his efforts have been in vain.”

“To him,” continues this purveyor of bad cheer, “Christmas is but the remembrance of distress and the shadow of approaching calamity.” To put it another way, as does the handy little verse which follows, the skint fellow is facing the threat of being ‘crushed’ by ‘Ruin’ with a capital R and ‘doom’ (only a lower-case d but by now that’s not much consolation). To put it yet another way, “Christmas comes robed in terrors.”

Taking up half of the same front page, the dark, moonlit drawing captioned ‘Carol singing in the country’ is executed so closely in the style of a Victorian melodramatic novel that it might well have been titled ‘While a mad axeman lurks behind the churchyard gate’.

Yet there is a bright side which would have been eagerly seized upon by readers reflecting that they had just shelled out the then considerable sum of one shilling for a magazine which would make them look up the time of the next stagecoach to the white cliffs of Dover to hurl themselves down to the waves below.

“Yet even such a man” – that’s the Ruined and doomed fellow above – “may, if he pleases, find consolation at Christmas, not only by forgetting the perplexities of his position for the one day.”

This, of course, being the joyous 24 hours when “The palace and the hall rejoice.”

Furthermore, “the workhouse shares the universal feeling of the occasion” (though maybe not quite so much). To crown it all, “The cell of the prisoner can be irradiated by such hospitable sympathy as roast beef and plum pudding.” Let’s hope so.

After this, the reader is cheered by a harmonious piece on the ‘History of carols’. Uncharitably but correctly, the article declares that many a Yuletide ditty is ‘rubbish’. For example, a Latin poem by a Bavarian versifier may have been wonderful in the original Bavarian but had been translated into English only ‘after a fashion’.

Another product of an off day, this time by English lord and poet Leigh Hunt, appears in the supplement. His Christmas chant, which includes the lines ‘And the mistletoe which Molly Hopes will make ‘em still more jolly,’ is unlikely to have featured in his lordship’s collected works.

“I’ve always been somewhat ambivalent about Christmas,” says Alex Finer, who was special projects editor in 1986 of the by-now monthly ILN after a career grafting in the ‘more robust’ *Sunday Times* and *Evening Standard*.

“There are a limited number of articles that can be written about Christmas. It was tempting to repeat the features, changing only headlines, and pictures. Most stories were suitably reverential and fully within the Christian

Christmas by numbers

THE WORDS ‘Christmas number’ may cause the spirits of a commissioning editor, who has to fill it with newish material, to plummet to well below floor level, but Yuletide is the gift that keeps on giving for circulation managers.

The Audit Bureau of Circulations states: “There is an ABC rule that says a publication has to individually specify any issues that vary by more

or less than 10% from the average.”

This certainly applied in the case of last year’s Christmas edition of *Radio Times* – in a good way.

For the last six months of 2021, this bible of broadcasting clocked up average weekly sales of just under half a million copies. The Xmas issue achieved a soaraway sum of above 1,300,000.

Over the same period, BBC Good Food averaged over 200,000, then its Christmas issue sold almost 300,000 copies.

TV Times averaged 109,000 throughout the year until it hit more than 376,000 as a Christmas present for the publishers.

The vital statistics of *Cosmopolitan* also saw a striking uplift: average sales for the year’s nine issues were under 140,000, while the festive figure for December was within striking distance of 170,000, which was second only to that of its July/August double issue.

Sadly, the publication which in 1848 kicked off the whole idea of the Christmas number in the first place has no ABC figures for last December or any other month. The *Illustrated London News* is no longer with us.



CLASSIC IMAGE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



tradition – it's not a time to be offensive."

Since the 1848 Yuletide offering was the first of its kind, there was no chance of it repeating an earlier year's contents. In 2022, a quick flick through the 16-page supplement to see how the Victorian editor made the most of this virgin territory leaves us mostly impressed by the illustrations (13 large pix plus a page of small sketches) once one gets past the gloomy carol singers.

The rest of the artwork comes brilliantly off the page as much as if it had been commissioned for a Charles Dickens novel (*Dombey and Son* had just finished its partwork publication, with *David Copperfield* waiting in the wings).

A half or whole page is given to joyous woodcuts of mothers and children rustling up festival fare in vast bowls. Happy fathers invite the neighbours in to stand under the mistletoe. Grandchildren and grandparents gather round the fire. A laughing pig decorates the border of one cheery engraving.

The 40s were a good time for periodicals – the 1840s, that is. *Punch*, on whose staff I toiled for two decades, was launched in 1842. The *ILN* was founded a year later by a man who had made his fortune in the laxative business.

It hit the Victorian zeitgeist; my father used the early issues to provide his university students with background to the novels they were studying. (When I started moonlighting with the odd freelance piece for the *ILN*, he remarked that the periodical was clearly going downhill, which I took to be a joke.)

Having gone quarterly, the *ILN* went to the Great Sub-Editor in the Sky in 2003, a year after *Punch*. The two iconic magazines shared an identical lifespan.

The crucial bit of *The Illustrated London News* was 'Illustrated', a word that occurs in 15 of the Victorian titles assembled in the British Library's collection, such as *Illustrated London Life*, which seems to have lasted only from 1843 to, well, 1843 – mid March to late August.

These journals didn't exactly launch photojournalism, with photographs not being much of a thing in those days, but they did have wood engravings, often topical (comparatively speaking) and based

on artists' hurried sketches.

After being for most of its life a weekly, the *ILN* went monthly, with a separate Christmas number making up an end-of-year 13th issue.

I was never in the actual Christmas supplement. My piece on horror movies appeared in the normal December issue. Were there doubts about using it for the Christmas special?

"Quite possibly," says *Finer* now. "It may well have been insufficiently saccharine."

There was something timeless, not to say time-warpish, about an *ILN* Christmas supplement. The 1848 seasonal offering includes 'Christmas at Windsor', a full-page sketch of the

royal family admiring a Christmas tree which, it has to be said, was less wooden than they were. The 1989 equivalent issue boasts 'Queen Victoria's happy Christmases' on its cover.

Nothing says 1840s like the title of a piece by the rector of St Bride's, the Fleet Street church: "Hush the noise, ye men of strife". Yet that appeared in the 1980s – 1986, to be precise.

Surprisingly, the last piece in the 1848 supplement was a page of bogus small ads that I would have been delighted to have commissioned when I was features editor of *Punch* – and extremely proud to have written – in 1988.

You may decide if this following ad was either the wackiest or the silliest sentence you have come across in a month of Sundays. Whether it amused Queen Victoria is not known.

Either way, it makes up my final paragraph: "John Smith – if the person of this name, lived in London during the winter of 1846, will apply to Mr Brown of Liverpool, he will hear of something he don't like."



HISTORICAL IMAGES ARCHIVE / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

by **Mark Fisher**

arts

Books >

Capitalism in the 21st Century: Through the Prism of Value
Guglielmo Carchedi and Michael Roberts, Pluto Books

Today's phenomena such as artificial intelligence and cryptocurrency may be hard to get your head around – but this does not mean they are resistant to Marxist theory, argue the authors.
<https://tinyurl.com/2798o65b>

How We Struggle: a Political Anthropology of Labour
Sian Lazar, Pluto Books

The professor of social anthropology investigates how people strive to

improve their working conditions. She considers both organised movements such as trades unions and strategies adopted by individuals everywhere from agriculture to heavy industry.
<https://tinyurl.com/2c7wmyvt>

Insulting behaviour... and other misdemeanours
Wynford Hicks

A memoir by the NUJ life member who was a radical student activist, worked in magazine journalism and was vice-chair of London Freelance. His books include *English for Journalists*, *Quite Literally* and *The Basics of English Usage*.
<https://tinyurl.com/2cuxavkv>

Exhibitions >

Henry Moore: Drawing in the Dark
St Albans Museum and Gallery
 Until April 16



His abstract sculptures are a part of the landscape, but how many know of Henry Moore's drawings? The son of a miner spent a week sketching at Wheldale Colliery in 1942, producing the 100-odd drawings displayed in the appropriately subterranean Weston Gallery.
<https://tinyurl.com/242rc3nv>

Spain and the Hispanic World
Royal Academy of Arts, London
 January 21-10 April 10

This offers a historical survey of Spanish culture from Giovanni

Vespucci's World Map of 1526 to Joaquín Sorolla's study for his *Vision of Spain*. Also on show are masterpieces by Goya, Velázquez and El Greco.
<https://tinyurl.com/24jnmfro>

Festival >

Up Helly Aa
Lerwick, Shetland
 January 31

Nearly 50 squads of guizers have been preparing for the annual torchlit procession and the burning of a galley. Throughout the day, the Jarl Squad will be touring local halls before spectacular evening activities.
<https://tinyurl.com/26mlwg8t>

Film >

Till
In cinemas
 From January 13



In 1955, a 14-year-old African American boy from Chicago was murdered by two white men in Mississippi. They had forced him to strip naked and beaten him before the fatal shot. In Chinonye Chukwu's film, Danielle Deadwyler plays the mother determined to find justice for her son.
<https://tinyurl.com/29bbg23z>

Music

Fabio Biondi
Concert Hall, Reading
 January 11
King's Place, London
 January 13

When the world went into lockdown, the Sicilian musician challenged himself to record the complete solo violin works of JS Bach. Now, you can hear him performing some. In Reading, there is a pre-show talk by journalist Stephen Johnson.
<https://tinyurl.com/2anlft4w>

Theatre >

Birds and Bees
Crucible Studio, Sheffield
 January 25-February 11

Playwright Charlie Josephine recently caused much excitement – and some controversy – with *I, Joan*, a non-

In depth >

From high kicks to politics

It has been quite a year for politicians on stage.

In January, we had Derby Theatre's *The Palace of Varieties*, which celebrated the life and times of Dennis Skinner.

In March, journalist Tim Walker dramatised the battle between Theresa May and Gina Miller in *Bloody Difficult Women* at London's Riverside Studios.

The following month, Newcastle's Northern Stage paid tribute to Red Ellen, aka Ellen Wilkinson, the minister who brought us free school milk.

In August, you couldn't move for Boris Johnsons at the Edinburgh Fringe, not to mention a version of Melania Trump who had somehow got left behind in the White House.

Even with such precedents, it was hardly inevitable we would get a musical tribute to Betty Boothroyd, the first female speaker of the House of Commons.

Yet that – or something like it – is the festive alternative at Manchester's Royal Exchange, where Maxine Peake and Seiriol Davies are romping their way through a celebration of this daughter of Dewsbury.

The idea is not as eccentric as it sounds. Or, at least, only as eccentric as the biographical detail that Boothroyd's first foray into public life was as a Tiller Girl. She toured the country with the

high-kicking dance ensemble from 1946 to 1952 before a foot infection prompted a switch to politics.

The daughter of union activists, she entered parliament in 1973, representing West Bromwich. Her election to speaker 30 years ago was significant not only because of her sex but also because she was a

member of the opposition. "Elect me for what I am, not for what I was born," she told the House of Commons.

The conceit of *Betty! A Sort of Musical* is that the amateur Dewsbury Players have decided to put their limited theatrical talents to lauding the achievements of the 92-year-old life peer. With props left over from their production of *Miss Saigon*, they give a spirited if wobbly account of a woman who stayed true to her values.

Tongues may be in cheeks but the affection for Boothroyd is real. "It's about a woman who happens to be political, but it's more about her humanity," Peake told the Guardian.

Royal Exchange, Manchester
 Until January 14
<https://tinyurl.com/24cc957l>



binary retelling of the Joan of Arc story at London's Globe. This play is about the perils of going viral online.

<https://tinyurl.com/299spheW>

Sylvia
Old Vic, London
January 27-1 April

Sylvia Pankhurst was a founder member of the Independent Labour Party, an anti-fascist campaigner and a suffragette. Her radical spirit is celebrated in a hip-hop, soul and funk musical by Kate Prince and Priya Parmar, with Beverley Knight in the title role.

<https://tinyurl.com/2baak7a2>

The Lehman Trilogy
Gillian Lynne Theatre, London
From January 24

After a Tony Award-winning run on Broadway, the National Theatre



production returns. Stefano Massini's play, directed by Sam Mendes, is the epic study of a banking dynasty from their arrival in the US to the world's biggest financial crisis.

<https://tinyurl.com/2xmxyc7s>

Comedy
Janey Godley: Not Dead Yet
Scotland and London, February and March



Back on the road after recovering from cancer, the "woman who wouldn't die or shut up", has developed a hilarious sideline in video voiceovers showing what's really on politicians' minds.

<https://tinyurl.com/2azlc7jf>

Spotlight >

Silent twins film

Investigative journalist Marjorie Wallace could scarcely have known the impact *The Silent Twins* would have.

Published in 1986, her book examined the case of identical twins June and Jennifer Gibbons who had turned their back on the world, communicating to no one but each other using their own private language.

Following an outbreak of delinquent behaviour, they were confined to Broadmoor psychiatric hospital for 11 years.

Soon after their

release in 1993, Jennifer died, leaving a 'war-weary' June both heartbroken and feeling a 'sweet release'.

Something about this strange true-life tale - and the detail of an investigation by Wallace in the *Sunday Times* - struck a chord.

It has been made into TV documentaries, several stage adaptations, an opera by Errollyn Wallen and a song by the Manic Street Preachers.

The latest incarnation opens in UK cinemas after praise at the Cannes Film Festival. Directed

by Poland's Agnieszka Smoczyńska, *The Silent Twins* stars Letitia Wright and Tamara Lawrance as the Welsh sisters whose families were part of the Windrush generation.

As well as examining their social isolation and fraught family relationships, it takes an interest in their fantasy life. Both were prolific writers and Smoczyńska sees them as creative artists in a desperate struggle to communicate.

The film also gives a bit part to Jodhi May who appears as Wallace herself.

In cinemas from December 9

<https://tinyurl.com/2a49gmva>

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TechDownload

Chris Merriman on technology for journalists

byte size...

RADIOS FOR POWER CUTS

Although the chance of power cuts this winter is fairly remote, the National Grid is advising us to be prepared, so here are a few suggestions. The BBC is already getting ready for it, so it's time to dust off your battery-powered radio or buy a new one. The Roberts 993 has an 80-hour battery life for £19.99 and, for DAB, there's the Roberts Play 10 for £39.99. Both are from Currys. <https://tinyurl.com/3j565d4p>; <https://tinyurl.com/mvw6anzw>

AVOID THE FLAT BATTERY ANGUISH

Because I use medical equipment at night, I need to make sure I can survive a blackout! GoalZero makes a range of battery backups. Away from power cuts, they're a great investment as a fantastic travel companion. There are newer models but, whatever you go for, they're great for backup power at home, and are perfect to pack when you're away on assignment. www.goalzero.co.uk

FLICKERING LIKE REAL CANDLES

When I think 'blackout', I think candles. While it's lovely to have real flames (and they do help heat a room), there are lots of places where candles aren't allowed or aren't practical. So why not LED candles? A pack of 48 cost £15 on eBay but lots of places stock them. They run off a watch battery and make a lovely alternative to naked flames. They even flicker like real candles. <https://tinyurl.com/2yxwawut>

SMOOTH OPERATOR

These days, journalists are increasingly expected to provide multimedia content as well as words, not to mention channels to maintain.

A gimbal is an invaluable part of your toolkit as it allows you to make smooth, non-juddery video footage even if you don't have the steadiest hands.

This Zhiyun Smooth 5 gimbal holds and links to a smartphone and lets you do steady shots on the go, making it easier to film selfie material.

With the help of the app, it lets you create smooth pans, zooms and slo-mo and time-lapse shots at the touch of a button. I've had bad experiences with



gimbals in the past, but I mastered this one within 10 minutes. A tripod is included, and accessories such as a magnetic fill light are available separately, or as part of a bundle.

It is a real boon for both accomplished video journalists and beginners who need to upskill. Plus it's great fun to play with, which helps.

The Smooth 5 is £159.99, or get all the accessories bundled for £209.99. <https://uk.zhiyun-tech.com/products/smooth-5>

> Portable plug-in clothes dryer

I often used to have to throw damp clothes into a suitcase on the way to a job, and getting them dried later was never fun.

The Aerative is, essentially, a coathanger with a heated fan that allows you to hang your clothes and dry them almost anywhere where there's a plug socket.

The arms twist round so you can also use them to dry out wet shoes.

I can see this becoming a constant companion on my various travels around the

world – turning up in fresh, dry clothes is a big deal when you're rushing to that big interview appointment.

Grab one for £69.99. www.aerative.com/products/aerative-portable-clothes-dryer

COFFEE PODS WASTE LESS

Greener caffeine

I'm often wary about capsule coffee machines – some of them produce waste that is hard to recycle. That said, they boil just the right amount of water, saving energy and keeping costs down. The L'or Barista Sublime machine uses recyclable pods, including XL pods for making two cups at once, is Nespresso compatible and looks very pretty on a worktop. You can also buy a reusable pod and fill it with coffee to cut waste even further. Get it from L'or for £89.99 and you'll get a selection box of 100 pods showcasing the L'or coffee range, too.

<https://tinyurl.com/yw48vj7k>

Silent (and comfortable) night

Journalism and sleep deprivation seem to go hand in hand, so these items are a match made in heaven. Soundcore's A10 sleep earbuds are the smallest I've seen and are comfortable to wear all night. They block sound brilliantly but also let you listen to lullabies (or podcasts) in cracking sound quality.

They detect when you're asleep and stop playback. For sleep mode, you can choose from a range of white noise and natural sounds. Even when connected to your phone, they won't disturb you with notifications or calls.

While not strictly tech, the Dagsmejan sleepwear range is designed to maintain the best temperature for sleep, and they're possibly the most comfortable jammies I've ever worn. There are tops, bottoms, nighties, masks and more.

A10 earbuds are £156.99. Nightwear prices vary but our review set cost £210. <https://tinyurl.com/5aymxtp3>; <https://dagsmejan.co.uk>



Starting Out

Tom Pashby found success took confidence, tenacity and a lot of luck



I didn't set out to become a writer or a journalist. I started writing for publications during my undergraduate degree for the student newspaper (unpaid, of course) as a way to promote a student society I had started.

The editor of the paper had rebuilt it and was excellent at encouraging me to keep writing for it. She's now regional editor for a set of local newspapers.

Since then, I have written for national newspapers including *The Times* and the *i*, and now have a day job working as a journalist.

I only realised I was good at writing in my last job, when I kept getting asked to write content and copy edit, and to provide strategic communications advice to other staff. It was during this job that I started my freelance writing career. I had written a fair number of articles for publications aimed at students and climate activists, but I wanted to start getting paid for my time and to raise my profile as a writer.

A friend told me he was about to publish an interesting report on the electricity market in the UK and I used that to secure my first-ever paid article, which was exhilarating, despite it not being a massively significant story.

In 2018, I started an all-party parliamentary group on the role of the House of Lords. This is a fairly niche interest but I have since been asked to write about my opinion on the second chamber.

One afternoon, after a beer, I decided

I'd try to start campaigning in my spare time to reform the House of Lords and, in particular, to remove the hereditary peers – around 90 of whom still have seats in parliament.

After getting six MPs and peers to agree to join my group, I started holding meetings with them and external campaigners and experts to discuss how to move forward.

During this process, I convinced my first national newspaper to let me write about why we should reform the House of Lords. This experience helped clarify for me how critical it is that you need to be the right person to speak about any particular issue.

Before my first article in a national newspaper, it felt like an impossibility. There are no agreed, written rules on how to enter freelance journalism so, as many of us do, I had to guess.

It ended up taking a combination of experience, confidence, tenacity (calling and emailing people a lot) and luck. A heavy emphasis on luck – if certain people had not picked up the phone at the right time, I would not be writing this article now.

It also required commissioning editors to take small leaps of faith in me being a legitimate writer. Most of the journalists who have commissioned me have not met me, so I had to have enough work behind me to convince them that I'm a capable, appropriate writer.

Since those articles on the electricity market and the House of Lords, I have written about the climate emergency,



and my experiences as a non-binary and agender person.

In my day job, I write about issues affecting the environment and sustainability profession. This has been as broad as everything from power generation milestones to solar panels installed on railway stations, to how to recycle disposable vapes (answer: it's difficult).

Recently, I have written extensively about being non-binary and about the barriers faced by people like me.

This is partly because I started a campaign called *Include Mx* – a campaign that celebrates organisations which include the gender-neutral title *Mx* on their forms and encourages others to add the title.

It's fantastic being able to write about these things and to have an audience for it.

Something that some LGBTQIA+ people find is a tension between wanting to raise awareness of our experiences and wanting to work on issues beyond our identities in which we are interested, which for me means things such as the climate emergency and the constitution.

As I write this, I've begun studying for my NCTJ diploma in journalism. I'm hopeful that this will improve my skills as a writer and will help open new opportunities for me to find stories and to bring them to the right audiences while earning a living off it.

“ Before my first article in a national newspaper, it felt like an impossibility

”

@tompashby



Beulah Ainley

Dr Beulah Rosemarie Amy Ainley died peacefully at the age of 77, surrounded by family, on September 4.

Beulah was a well-respected educator, activist, journalist and author who worked tirelessly throughout her life to inspire change, break down barriers and champion equality, diversity and inclusivity. She was a pioneer in the field of race relations journalism. She combined this successfully with being a much-loved wife, mother and grandmother.

Born in St Andrew, Kingston, Jamaica, she attended Allman Town Junior and then Kingston Secondary School, after which she left Jamaica in 1962 to join her mother, Ruby, and younger brother, Errol, in Birmingham, England.

After attending college, her desire to help others soon became evident. She trained as a state registered nurse in Staffordshire General Infirmary from 1970 to 1972 and subsequently as a midwife in 1977.

She later moved to London to work at the Royal Free Hospital where she met her husband Patrick, bonding over their shared love of books.

Beulah's drive to further her education and her love of language led her to resume studying (English and Caribbean Literature) at North London Polytechnic. She graduated in 1981 to work as a journalist and eventual co-editor of the newly founded and trailblazing East End News as well as working within press relations at the Greater London Enterprise Board.

Beulah was a vocal, active and respected member of the NUJ and

played a pioneering role in calling for greater diversity and inclusivity within the British media.

She was a member of the freelance industrial council and the black members' council. In this capacity, she represented the union at numerous conferences and was one of the main proponents for and instrumental in the establishment of the George Viner memorial fund, which is recognised for its vital role in supporting the career development of more than 200 ethnic minority journalists since its inception in 1986.

Alongside her activism and journalism, she resumed her studies in 1986 to undertake a PhD at Goldsmiths College and later graduated from the London School of Economics in 1994.

Her groundbreaking thesis remains one of the most comprehensive studies exploring the representation of black and Asian journalists within the British media, the findings of which were published in her first book *Black Journalists, White Media* in 1998.

Her contributions to improving diversity were recognised when she won a woman of merit award in 2002.

Beulah taught and lectured in journalism and was active in championing those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Her experiences and drive to improve access and opportunity led her to publish the respected *Guide to Race Relations in Further Education* in 2007.

She was also an active governor at Park Primary School, attended by her son Adam, and the Sarah Bonnell School for girls in Stratford, where she was fondly recognised for her passion to help and support others to reach their full potential.

Beulah had a love for life and travelled widely. She had an infectious passion for gardening, cooking, music and reading. She ran and walked numerous middle distances for charities.

Despite her active life, her later years were interrupted by a succession of increasingly serious illnesses, each of which she bravely fought and often overcame with devoted care from husband Patrick, who looked after her at their home in South Norwood where they had

moved to retire. Beulah moved into residential care in 2019 and sadly passed away at the Lakeside Nursing Home in 2022.

She is survived by Patrick, son Adam, daughter-in-law Nadia, her two adoring grandchildren Lydia and Miles and her brother Errol. She will be sorely missed by so many.

Adam Ainley



Martin Warrillow

It is with much sadness that we report the death of regional newspaper journalist and stalwart NUJ member Martin Warrillow on October 16 at the age of just 58.

Martin spent 17 years on the sports desk of the Birmingham Post and showed tremendous fortitude and determination in overcoming a debilitating stroke in 2013, three years after leaving the paper.

Despite the stroke forcing him to relearn how to walk and write, Martin became a tireless champion for other stroke survivors.

After acknowledging that his own situation was as a result of stress, he devoted his time and energy to warning others about the risk factors behind strokes.

This was through a series of talks, as well as his own blog, called *The Warrior*, which he started in 2014, and a monthly podcast.

Martin also helped with research into the causes of strokes and fundraising for stroke survivor charities.

He had started as a sports reporter on the Tamworth Herald in Staffordshire in 1987 after

graduating from Loughborough University with BA Hons in European Political Studies and Modern European Studies.

It was in Tamworth where he was introduced to his devoted wife Carmel as well as Tamworth Football Club.

After just over two years at the Herald, Martin moved to sister weekly title, the Sutton Coldfield Observer, in 1990 as sports editor.

After another couple of years, he moved to the Birmingham Post where he became assistant content editor (sport).

Always a strong union member, Martin was a highly effective NUJ rep for his colleagues until redundancy in 2009 following editorial restructuring.

Shortly after leaving BPM, Martin became editor of *British Naturism* magazine, an 80-page quarterly publication serving the organisation's 11,000 members.

He also created his own company, Martin Warrillow Publishing Services, in the same year, 2010, which he ran until his stroke.

Sam Holliday, best man at Martin and Carmel's wedding in 1990, and his sports editor at the Tamworth Herald, said: "When I first met Martin, he was a quiet individual, but it was amazing how coming to Tamworth transformed him.

"Not only did he find lots of great friends but he also found Carmel.

"He was a very good journalist who wrote well and knew so much about so many different sports. But he also touched so many people in his stroke talks and probably helped to save people's lives without realising it.

"I think he would be amazed and pleased at how much love and affection came his way."

Tamworth FC held a minute's applause at their match against Hitchin Town on Saturday October 22 in honour of longstanding fan Martin.

Tony Collins

In British politics, truth is stranger than fiction



News programmes have been beyond belief, says **Chris Proctor**

All manner of folk from ex-prime ministers to national treasures have been calling for a prominent disclaimer to be shown before episodes of TV series *The Crown*. They want it to be made clear that the programme is fiction. Otherwise, as Judi Dench says, viewers may be misled and assume it is all true.

This mirrors exactly my recent call to Ofcom urging them to provide a disclaimer explaining that certain events contained in TV news reports were, despite appearances, indisputably true.

The need for such a measure became obvious during the popular but flawed Prime Minister Hokey Cokey mini-series. No one, especially overseas viewers, could be expected to know that these shenanigans were factual.

Without guidance, could any outsider believe that the bumbling blond mop-topped public school serial seducer was really the United Kingdom's Prime Minister, First Lord of its Treasury, Minister for the Civil Service and Minister for the Union?

It isn't likely, is it? Have you seen him? And even the name they chose for him doesn't seem realistic. No one's called Boris. It wasn't even in the top 100 boy's names last year unlike Oakley, Albie and Jenson.

And does it appear credible that he catches Covid, shows up at illegal speakeasy soirées, becomes a father (twice), suffers several back-stabbings from old chums and is hounded out of office – only to fly back after a fortnight's Caribbean holiday to announce he might be on the comeback trail?

You think people are going to believe this when it is shown on their screens? It's all clearly beyond belief. Hence my campaign.

Yes, these things really happened. The unlikely bumbler was replaced by a lady with the presence and charisma of a coal scuttle. A woman constantly wearing an expression like a Gogglebox participant watching Dr Pimple Popper. A lady lost. If you saw her down the street you'd offer to give her directions and probably slip her a couple of bob with it being Christmas. But you wouldn't select her as the individual you'd like to see leading the country. It was clearly unrealistic that a major political party would choose her as its star performer.

Any suggestion that my demand for disclaimers was unnecessary was dispelled at that juncture. It was crucial that the public understood that this was not a badly scripted and poorly acted fiction. This was the mother of parliaments in democratic action.

Few of the characters in the news carried conviction. The character who was prime minister overnight on the Thursday obviously had no idea she had won the contest. She curtsied when the prime minister was announced, only to discover it was her.

Then the monarch said she could come and visit her at a real live castle, and she was ecstatic; she packed her autograph book and hot water bottle and hightailed it to Balmoral. Just in time. The removal van was already parked in Whitehall.

Clearly the public needed guidance. Could this be real? Is the chap who dissed the first chap and then got beaten by the Gogglebox lady now going to avoid facing the people who

didn't vote for him so he can become a democratic leader without the trouble of an election? Yes. But just because Judi Dench played M and I worked for Aslef, I believe my pleas were largely ignored.

I stress that I wasn't asking for a ponderous statement at the start of each news show along the lines of, 'Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, or actual events, is entirely intentional as it is all true.'

No. I suggested an unobtrusive and subtle method involving a box on the screen akin to that used by sign language interpreters. Central is a small plump yellow cartoon figure called a Trump. Ten of these lined up means there is no truth in the story at all, and a box devoid of Trumps means the emission is factual. The Tory news story, for its entire musical chairs period, would have all been advertised along bridge lines as 'one no Trumps'.

My concern was that many parts of the ongoing story could not have been identified as factual without assistance.

Can any reasonable person visualise the home secretary putting state secrets on a round robin to her mates? Ministers telling their civil servants to 'cut their own throats'? The former paymaster general, culture secretary and minister for health hopping off to Australia to pursue a career as a professional bug swallower? And what about that Mordaunt lady who turned up from nowhere in a swimsuit saying, 'Our leadership needs to be less about the leader and more about the ship'? Was that why she was wearing bathing togs?

We are veering towards a society that believes there is more truth in Walford than in Westminster. They may be right: but they must be stopped.

It was crucial the public understood this was not a badly scripted fiction. This was the mother of parliaments in democratic action

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