

the Journalist

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LABOUR CORRS STRIKE BACK

New dawn for industrial reporting

with strike
breakers threat
pay deal to
end strikes
in walkout
WEEK OF
STRIKES

NHS strike
poses threat
pay deal to
end strike
and St
er staffing levels on wards
s planning joint walkouts

NHS trusts, including in London, Cam-
bridge, Oxford, Brighton and an Essex
trust, have agreed to meet the NUJ's
demands for a 10% pay rise and a
commitment to no compulsory
strikes. The agreement was reached
after a series of meetings between
the union and NHS management.
The NUJ has welcomed the agreement
as a significant step towards
resolving the dispute and ensuring
the continuity of NHS services.

over its
staffing
NHS
action
It
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Access all the latest NUJ news and views by scanning the QR code here or by visiting www.nuj.org.uk



As we went to press, NUJ members working for BBC local services in England were again protesting about programming and job cuts. Their fight has gained a lot of support including from Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood, so let's hope the BBC soon recognises the value of local news that is genuinely local.

Of course, the NUJ isn't the only union to be striking amid disputes over pay, conditions, and the future of services. Over the past year we've seen the greatest number of strikes for many years.

And that surge has led to a revival in something close to my heart – industrial reporting. I covered the beat for The Times and met some great union people, visited many seaside conference venues, grappled to make arcane composite motions headline news, and worked with some of the best colleagues. So, I'm glad to see the return of the bad boys and girls, although as Josiah Mortimer explains in our cover feature, things are a bit different now.

We also have a tribute to one of the most recognisable faces among industrial correspondents in the 80s and 90s with a lovely obituary of ITN's Giles Smith by Michael Crick.

Elsewhere we have coverage of our delegate meeting, a look at reporting climate change, and a spotlight on Manchester. And not forgetting our feedback pages – please do get in touch! journalist@nuj.org.uk

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Cover picture
Alex Williamson

Escalation in action to keep BBC local services local



BBC LOCAL news programmes in England were taken off the air in a two-day strike by NUJ members protesting about cuts to services on June 7 and 8. The walkout, which involved hundreds of journalists, marks an escalation in action following a one-day strike in March on Budget Day.

NUJ members are concerned about the impact

of the cuts in reducing bespoke local services. The BBC is aiming to increase 'shared programming'.

At the same time, BBC local journalists have overwhelmingly expressed no confidence in the corporation's senior management. A survey of members found that only seven per cent of journalists have confidence in senior

leadership, with 93 per cent indicating they no longer have confidence in the team.

Meanwhile, Rolling Stone Ronnie Wood has lent his support to the campaign to keep BBC services local. Backstage at the Royal Albert Hall, where he was performing with Rod Stewart in a tribute to Jeff Beck, Ronnie posed with a message to 'Keep BBC Local

Radio Local'. He has said he is a fan of local radio, and a regular listener, and wants to help reverse the decision to cut local shows.

The photo was tweeted by the DJ Nicky Horne, who has been highlighting the fight on behalf of local radio presenters.

NUJ national broadcasting organiser, Paul Siegert, said: "The turnout today shows just how strongly NUJ members feel about this dispute. They believe passionately in local radio and know if the current plans are allowed to go ahead it will lead to its demise. Local radio has existed for over 50 years and should be at the heart of public service broadcasting and be at the heart of what the BBC stands for. The reason it has 5.7 million listeners a week is because it's local. Local journalists, covering local news and events. BBC bosses should not be allowed to destroy that."

inbrief...

BBC VERIFY AIMS TO BUILD TRUST IN NEWS

BBC News has launched BBC Verify, an initiative to build audience trust by showing how journalists know what they are reporting is true. The BBC says Verify will be "a team of investigative journalists, a brand and also a physical area in the newsroom". BBC News chief executive Deborah Turness said 'Verify would produce 'radical transparency'.

NEW EDITOR FOR THE EVENING STANDARD

Former British GQ editor-in-chief Dylan Jones is the new editor-in-chief of the London Evening Standard. Jones left GQ in 2021 after 22 years in the job amid a global merger of editorial teams at publisher Conde Nast. The Standard has been without a full-time editor since October 2021 when Emily Sheffield left after 15 months.

ROTHERHAM PAPER HAS NEW OWNER

National World has bought regional newspaper Rotherham Advertiser and B2B publisher Insider Media. It said the deals, together with three other acquisitions that have taken place in 2023, would "more than compensate for the recent downturn in advertising sales that has impacted the whole sector".

N Ireland election reports hit

MORE than 200 NUJ journalists working for the BBC in Northern Ireland went on strike for a day in May to oppose cuts to Radio Foyle and the restructuring of broadcasting in the region.

The action disrupted news

coverage of the local council elections in Northern Ireland which had been held the previous day. The BBC's plans for TV programmes to cover the results of the elections on BBC Northern Ireland and programmes on BBC Radio

Ulster and BBC Radio Foyle had to be cancelled.

NUJ assistant general secretary Seamus Dooley said the union recognised the impact of striking on a significant news day and that the decision wasn't taken

lightly. He said the move reflected the frustration of NUJ members over the cuts to services.

Several months ago, a meeting organised by the NUJ against the BBC cuts at Derry's Guildhall attracted more than 250 people from all parts of the community.

Vice gives minimum terms

JOURNALISTS at Vice UK have been offered only statutory redundancy terms, with many having to leave with almost nothing, since the company filed for bankruptcy and sought a buyer.

Vice has agreed a sale to a consortium of its lenders, on

condition that it remains open to higher bids.

The NUJ chapel said it is, "devastated and shocked that not only are dozens of colleagues been placed at risk of redundancy, but that the company is only prepared to offer the bare minimum of

statutory redundancy pay to those affected. Throughout this process, the company has shown little regard for the personal circumstances of many of our colleagues affected, such as staff who are on maternity leave or pregnant, and many who are on lower salaries with less career experience.

"Vice seems determined to send the message that it is profitable and will emerge financially healthy from the Chapter 11 bankruptcy. This process should reflect that."



Cadwalladr appeals

Investigative journalist Carole Cadwalladr has applied for permission to appeal against a £1 million costs order in her libel battle with businessman Arron Banks. The order said she must pay 60 per cent of Banks' legal fees (£559,667) and her own costs (£512,870). She was ordered to pay the costs in libel damages from a TED talk she gave in 2019. Banks sued claiming her comments caused serious harm to his reputation and, in March, the Court of Appeal ruled against her, agreeing the continued publication of the talk had caused harm to his reputation after April 29 2020, when the National Crime Agency said he hadn't broken the law.

Action demanded after Scottish police detain magazine journalist



L to R: Conrad Landin, Simon Barrow (delegation leader), Ann Coltart, Dorothy-Grace Elder

SCOTLAND'S trade union movement is demanding action from Police Scotland after a journalist was 'harassed' and 'treated like a criminal' by police officers while reporting on a story.

Conrad Landin, a journalist at New Internationalist magazine, was stopped, questioned and detained by two police officers after interviewing offshore oil workers outside Aberdeen International Airport's helicopter terminals. Officers questioned him over the content of his articles and suggested he was not free to leave until his details had been checked against the national crime database.

At the Scottish Trades Union Congress in Dundee, Landin, an NUJ delegate, said: "The UK press card, which I presented immediately when asked to identify myself, is officially recognised by the National Police Chiefs' Council as proof that the holder is a bona fide newsgatherer.

"Presenting my press card should have been the end of the matter. Instead I was treated like a criminal, untruthfully told I was breaching airport by-laws – I wasn't – and, when I complained to the police, I waited more than a year for a response that essentially said they'd done nothing wrong."

The motion, agreed unanimously, commits the STUC to supporting the NUJ "in campaigning against the harassment and intimidation of journalists carrying out their duties in the public sphere".

It was seconded by the GMB, whose delegate Hailey Maxwell said: "Our movement – and our society – need free, independent press and it is important for us to recognise how the criminalisation of journalism and the suppression of trade union activity are linked."

The STUC will now write to Police Scotland asking it "to publish all guidance and policies given to officers regarding interactions with members of the press while on duty; and to raise concerns regarding officers harassing and intimidating journalists, and the lack of transparency and effective remedy when journalists complain about such incidents".

*A veteran campaigner and former MSP has condemned the Scottish Government for the 'poisonous' freedom of information (FOI) regime in Scotland, which she branded a 'swamp of secrecy'.

Dorothy-Grace Elder's comments came as the STUC passed an NUJ motion calling for FOI rights in Scotland to be strengthened.

NUJ delegate Dorothy-Grace said: "As a journalist and as a voluntary campaigner for chronic pain patients for 22 years, in both roles I've seen how the swamp of secrecy has engulfed Scotland. It's poisonous."



I was treated like a criminal, untruthfully told I was breaching airport by-laws and waited more than a year to be told they'd done nothing wrong

Conrad Landin

Young Orwell/NUJ winners

AN OPINION piece addressing the complex challenges of maintaining a Welsh identity in modern Britain, entitled *Yesterday's Past, Tomorrow's Future*, took one of the top prizes in the Orwell Society/NUJ Young Journalists awards.

The awards recognise the writing of promising

students of journalism or working journalists aged 30 or below. This year proved to be the toughest competition yet, attracting a record number of entries.

Entrants must write a review or column and say how their work has been influenced by the author and journalist George Orwell.

The winner of the column category, Gwenno Robinson (pictured right), an undergraduate at Pembroke College, Cambridge, said: "I'm over the moon to have won! It's going to provide valuable financial support for me to hopefully pursue a career in journalism in the coming years."

Joshua Korber Hoffman, a postgraduate of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, won the review category for *Women Talking: the Blurred Lines of Forgiveness and Revenge*, a review of Sarah Polley's Oscar-winning film.

He said: "I am delighted and honoured to be awarded the prize. I hope my review encourages people



to watch the film, and that the film is taken to reaffirm the value of philosophy in the mainstream."

Super-branch set up for south west

ALMOST 1,200 members of the NUJ living in south-west England have formed a super-branch.

The intention is to revitalise union activity across the region.

Existing branches covering Bristol and the counties of Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall have been abolished.

The union's national executive committee (NEC) agreed to a trial merger for a year, which began with the branch's inaugural meeting on 15 May.

It followed lobbying by the region's most active branch, Bristol, which was being assigned most new applicants for membership, wherever they lived. Recent joiners came from Gloucester and Truro, 200 miles apart,

although some applicants were also referred to Bournemouth and Dorset.

Members across the area were polled by Tim Lezard, outgoing NEC member for the south west, and his successor, Paul Breeden. Those who replied expressed a clear interest in belonging to a larger group.

The branch meets on the second Monday of the month. If you want to get involved, contact chair James Garrett at james.g.garrett@btinternet.com.

Members attended the union's first in-person policy-making biennial delegate meeting for five years

Union subscriptions to rise by 5% annually in the next two years

NUJ SUBSCRIPTIONS will increase by about five per cent next month with the same increase in 2024, after more than two-thirds of the union's delegate meeting – a required margin for motions on subs – backed the move.

There was also a commitment to hold a special conference in the autumn to discuss issues affecting members and potential members' on low pay.

Chris Frost (pictured), on behalf of the national executive council (NEC), told the meeting in London that while it was 'unpalatable', the union needed to increase subs to fulfil its functions. He said that costs had grown so income needed to rise too. He acknowledged that members were experiencing difficult times, which was why the rise would be below the inflation rate.

Neil Ward, from Dublin Press and PR branch, said the union could not expect its own people to do more with less and that the increase in subscription was an 'investment in our future'.

Opposing the rise, Emma O'Kelly, chair of Dublin Broadcasting branch, said that even current rates were a barrier to recruitment, especially as other unions had lower subs rates. She spoke about a member at RTÉ who had to take additional part-time work to make ends meet and added that the NUJ's finances were in good shape.

Yvonne Deeney, from Bristol branch, said that the union had lost many low-paid members. She asked if it could look at cutting costs and look at subs paid by members on higher salaries.

Membership of the NUJ among the lower paid has fallen over the pandemic crisis by three per cent.



All photos by Jess Hurd

Conference also instructed the NEC to amend the rules to allow those aged under 25 joining for the first time, asylum seeker members switching to refugee member status as well as temporary members, to pay a fee of one third of the grade 1 rate for their first year of membership.

In July, grade 1 rates will increase by 85p then by £1 in July 2024. Grade 2 rates will rise by £1 in July and again next year. The rates for grade 3 will go up by £1.50 in July and next year. This will take grade 1 monthly rates to £17.85 (€21) this July and £18.85 (€22) next year. Those on grade 2 will pay £22 (€27.25) then £23 (€28.75), and those on grade 3 will pay £30.50 (€36.75) this July and £32 (€39) next year.

Members were experiencing difficult times, which was why the rise would be below inflation

**Chris Frost
National Executive
Council**

Role for younger members

THE CONSTITUTION of the equality council is to be changed to include a seat dedicated to a member aged up to 30.

The council's remit will also be extended to include campaigning for the rights and welfare of young and early career members. The

council will be able to co-opt a student member.

Sara Lewis from the equality council said that last year it ran two workshops for young and early career members.

She said: "The response was incredible, with a wave of people

signing up within days of the first one being announced."

Clearly, our members aged 30 and under are interested in the union and want to get involved, but it can take years to be well known enough so that people will elect you to office, especially on the equality council where seats are always hotly contested."

She said the average age on the equality council was well over 40: "Under 30s are conspicuous by their absence, yet there is a maxim in equality work – not about us without us. How can we help them break through this barrier? By having a dedicated seat on the equality council for members up to the age of 30, elected only by their own age group."

Praise for the union's safety work

THE UNION'S efforts to combat the abuse of journalists and ensure their safety was praised in a composite resolution.

The motion committed the union to continue its safety work and to look at establishing a press freedom tracker based on

those in the US and Canada. These create a database that monitors and reports on violations in real time (including arrests of journalists, seizure of equipment, assaults and police interrogation), creating comprehensive data that can underpin campaigning work.

Darach MacDonald of Derry and North West Ireland branch applauded the union for its speedy response in acting on the abuse of journalists, often women, in Northern Ireland, who he said are subject to toxic, misogynist abuse and threats.

He warned: "These threats can too often become reality."

Make revealing the ethnic pay gap a rule, says sidelined journalist

AN ASIAN journalist at the BBC told delegates that she lost out on promotion to less experienced white colleagues until the NUJ intervened on her behalf.

Saadeya Shamsuddin (pictured on the left) said covert racism was a huge problem. She said: "No-one was calling me the P-word. But I was seeing white colleagues being given opportunities that I wasn't getting and twice in six months I was passed over for promotion."

"This experience was not uncommon – the TUC's landmark survey revealed more than 120,000 workers quit their jobs because of racism – and my brothers and sisters are tired from having to prove racism is rampant."

Saadeya's case was taken up by the union, her complaints about the promotions were upheld, she

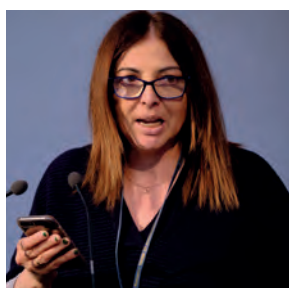


was moved to a managerial position and her editor no longer works at the BBC.

She was sharing her experience while proposing a successful motion, to instruct the union to prioritise lobbying for mandatory reporting of the ethnic minority pay gap and for the industry to put in place robust policies to combat racism.

Seconding the motion Raj Ford (above right), also worked for the BBC.

She said: "I work for an employer which thinks it's OK to use the N-word in full on a TV report that went out on



the BBC in the West Country. It was only challenged when black and Asian colleagues objected to bosses."

She added: "This lack of understanding, knowledge and sensitivities is everywhere across the workplace."

She also referred to the TUC survey, which gave examples such as the British Indian woman who was told she was overlooked for a job because the company did not want front-facing staff wearing 'funny clothes'. She felt too intimidated to make a complaint.

Ford said: "It's important

to support workers from minority ethnic backgrounds. Take their experiences seriously and act.

"Unions have an important role to play in encouraging workers who've experienced racism to report the behaviour and to have the courage to stand up against it."

Leoni Robertson, speaking for the national executive council, said the government had published ethnicity pay reporting guidance for employers but had not made publishing it mandatory.

She had discussed at the BBC: "They say it is too complicated – but it isn't. When you have a gap of 15 per cent, something must be done. "There is a serious problem about progression and retention. We are seeing black and ethnic minority staff leaving because their salaries are not high enough."



I was seeing white colleagues being given opportunities that I wasn't getting and I was passed over for promotions

Saadeya Shamsuddin

President speaks of abuse

DELEGATES carried a motion committing the union to helping tackle domestic abuse, highlighting the fact that it disproportionately affected women.

Natasha Hirst, the new NUJ president, told delegates that she was a survivor of domestic abuse.

She said: "Nine years ago, I was living in a women's refuge and was unable to work for almost three years. It was the NUJ which helped me to rebuild my life and get my career back on track."

The motion means that the union will now work to encourage

employers to adopt domestic abuse policies and provide chapel reps and branches with the tools to put these in place, including advice on steps to take should a member disclose abuse.

Anna Hervé, national executive council books' member, described arriving at the London Books Fair with a black eye and cracked ribs to

be met with a 'well-meaning' silence from colleagues who did not know how to react.

She said: "Working practices such as working from home is making it worse."

"The NUJ should be pushing employers, branches and chapels and asking: 'What are you doing about domestic abuse?'"



Want The Journalist in print? Opt in!

MEMBERS will no longer receive print copies of The Journalist automatically after a motion calling for print to be the default delivery was defeated. However, they can still opt to receive print copies.

Moving the motion, Paul Breeden of Bristol branch said the magazine provided a vital link between the union and its members and was a tangible benefit. He also congratulated the magazine for

having been commended in the TUC communications awards.

However, Natasha Hirst, for the national executive council, said that while the magazine was 'fantastic', sending print copies to everyone by default would be expensive. She said no one would be denied print if they chose it.

If you would like a print copy, please choose it in your options on MyNUJ on the website or email journalist@nuj.org.uk.

'Mothers' and 'fathers' laid to rest after union terminology vote

THE TRADITIONAL terms used for NUJ workplace reps – mothers and fathers of chapels (MoCs and FoCs) – are to go in favour of chapel chair or rep. The original titles were created shortly after the union was formed in 1907.

A call to replace the titles with others that better reflect modern society was backed by 61 to 45 votes.

Proposing the motion, Behrang Tajdin (pictured) of the BBC's Persian service and the NUJ's equality council said that it would form 'a small step towards making the NUJ even more inclusive'.

He said: "We want, we need more young people to join the union, to actively participate. Unfortunately,



many are not familiar with the role of trade unions and, when they hear terms like mother or father of chapel, they may find these gendered terms archaic, inaccessible and part of the language of an

exclusive club from a bygone age, rather than a modern, inclusive body dedicated to fighting for them."

He said that non-binary members would be reluctant to put themselves forward for MoC and FoC positions.

Other delegates echoed Behrang's argument about younger journalists, saying the titles put them off.

But the traditional terms had sizeable support and delegates also argued that reps could already call themselves chairs or reps if they preferred.

Séamus Dooley, assistant general secretary, said the union should not discard such titles based on a 10-minute debate on a century of

history. He said he had been proud to be an FoC.

Martin Shipton, from Cardiff and South East Wales branch, also said he had been proud of the title FoC, because it meant there was a 'nurturing' element to the role. He said there should be consultations with chapels before such a decision was made.

Anita Halpin, of the PR and Communications branch, said that if the titles were to be debated, it would make sense to look at the word chapel too. She said that it came from historic printing work organisation; religious chapels were seen as safe meeting places for workers at times when worker organisations were banned.

in brief...

CALL TO TACKLE AGE DISCRIMINATION

A motion from the 60+ council instructed the union to continue campaigning against age discrimination and provide career support for older workers. Data from the Resolution Foundation last year showed there had been a 312,000 rise in the number of inactive working-age adults since the start of the pandemic, of whom 91 per cent were aged 50-64 years.

CAMPAIGN FOR NIGHT WORKER RIGHTS

Delegates backed a campaign to champion the rights and conditions of night workers, including the right of older people to opt out, breaks for naps, canteens and shorter shifts and increased pay. Adam Lindsey of BBC London branch said night shifts were most likely to be worked by people who cannot refuse them.

MAKE INFOGRAPHICS ACCESSIBLE TO ALL

A disabled members' council motion called for the union to highlight accessibility of visual digital journalism and offer guidance on improving it. Johnny Cassidy of the BBC London branch said that, while infographics and interactive charts were useful, the downside was that not everyone, including those with sight loss, can read them.

Praise for Reach members

MOTIONS applauded NUJ members at Reach for winning a better pay deal through last year's strike action. The group-wide action had helped achieve £2 million for lower-paid members and had provided a successful recruitment opportunity for the union.

Chris Morley, the NUJ's Northern and Midlands organiser, said: "I particularly want to thank those freelancers who showed solidarity by not making themselves available to strike break on that day. Your sacrifice was noted and appreciated."

Delegates passed a composite motion instructing the national executive council to put pay at the centre of campaigning this year and next and to use the dispute as a case study in NUJ recruitment materials.

Another successful motion expressed dismay at the hundreds of journalists' jobs at risk of redundancy at Reach.

Home working can be costly

A MOTION to alleviate the financial burden on the increasing number of journalists required to work from home since the pandemic was proposed by Roger McKenzie (pictured right) from the newspapers and agencies industrial council.

He said: "Many of our members were struggling to make ends meet before Covid. They are now struggling to keep bread on the table and a roof over their heads."

He said that employers were too often pushing costs onto members.

Conference passed the motion instructing the national executive council to campaign for increases in working-from-home payments in line with the costs of living, and to gather information on any such allowances in existence.



Call for transparency over salaries

Cristina Lago of the equality council called for openness over pay, commending the NUJ's pay campaign and its support to branches. She said: "Not disclosing salary or rates in adverts and expecting applicants to negotiate pay, often during a job interview, can perpetuate unequal pay between women and men, and continue widening the ethnicity and disability gaps."

The council's motion criticised the lack of transparency around salaries, which often advertised only as 'competitive'. Conference instructed the NEC to campaign for salary transparency.

It was good to get together at a 'real' meeting, says **Cristina Lago**

Celebrating our in-person meeting

My first delegate meeting (DM) took place during the strange times of the pandemic.

Although NUJ officials made an outstanding effort to ensure this virtual conference was fully accessible and ran smoothly, the remote meeting took away all the excitement that comes from sharing a room with many trade unionists ready for debate. I remember how bizarre and soulless it felt to address delegates through a webcam from my empty flat.

Judging by how early people started arriving at the TUC's Congress House on the first morning of the two-day meeting in April, I think most of us were waiting anxiously for the comeback of the 'real' DM – you could almost touch the joyful buzz filling the room before conference formally kicked off.

My first address to DM was scheduled for the morning of the first day: I was to move a motion on behalf of the equality council on pay transparency in job adverts. This motion was the first to be unanimously passed, prompting the president to humorously ask if we had reached the parallel universe of uncontested motions.

Indeed, many motions were passed unanimously – but a few sparked ferocious debate. One was number 93, instructing the national executive council to replace the title mother/father of chapel with the term chair of chapel. While queuing at the left-side lectern, which was reserved for supporters, another delegate, a young woman, and I shared our surprise at

the strong opposition from some members. Surely introducing a more inclusive term (while respecting the decision of those who wanted to keep using the old ones) in the union's dictionary would be widely supported by DM?

The outcome was truly Brexitesque – 61 in favour, 45 against. I think this shows work is still to be done to persuade members that changes like this are positive and necessary not just to keep up with the times but also to ensure we speak to the new generations of young journalists who represent the future and survival of the NUJ. We can cherish our proud history while also writing new chapters.

There were plenty of outcomes at DM that I believe should be celebrated. These ran from the overwhelming support for motions opposing cuts to the BBC and putting pressure on the government to stop pernicious strategic lawsuits, to the expressions of solidarity with refugees and workers struggling in the cost-of-living crisis, among many others.

Natasha Hirst, disabled activist and an ardent campaigner on domestic abuse, was elected president of the union – an appointment that I strongly believe will reinvigorate us and inspire many young journalists from all walks of life to join the NUJ.

Despite all the above and many other great things happening at DM, I found it



ALL PHOTOS: JESS HURD



extremely disappointing that the only news to reach the national press about it was a grossly distorted account of the debates surrounding motions 38 and LNM 21. I and others who spoke in favour of trans people's rights were referred to in the Daily

Telegraph as 'hijacking' the union "into being part of the agenda to silence opposing views in the press". I think this is sad and worrying not only because it was a misconstrued and partial account of what was debated but also for our lack of ability to promote the positive outcomes of our biennial gathering.

Regardless of that bitter post-conference note, I can say without hesitation that I thoroughly loved being a delegate at this year's DM and participating in the union's democracy. I couldn't feel prouder about the NUJ and being a trade unionist. It moved me immensely to see how colleagues from my branch and other delegations were quick to help when asked for support – that feeling of comradeship is worth everything.

In between the hustle and bustle and intense business of those couple of days, I also had the chance to catch up with old friends and make many new ones. Some of the best memories happened of course during the evening celebrations. For all of this and much more that I can't fit on this page, I look forward to meeting everyone again in Blackpool in 2025.

It moved me immensely to see how delegates were quick to help - that feeling of comradeship is worth everything

Heritage media better for advertisers



Online bubble is beginning to burst, says **Raymond Snoddy**

Nick Manning, co-founder of Manning Gottlieb, is the nearest thing we have got to an advertising and marketing guru and recently he came to a very significant conclusion.

Manning proclaimed that the online advertising bubble had burst.

We are now, Manning argued, at the end of a two-decade long era when online advertising exploded, driven by consumers embracing personal computers and smartphones and by the mainly mythical attraction of cookies.

He was writing in the context of the once-mighty Vice Media filing for chapter 11 protection against bankruptcy while it reorganises and refinances.

The company was once worth up to \$6 billion (£4.87 billion). A lot of investors, including Rupert Murdoch, have lost a lot of money.

This came hard on the heels of BuzzFeed closing down its news operation with the loss of 15 per cent of its staff. Since its stock market float in 2021, BuzzFeed has lost 94 per cent of its value.

The two companies were emblematic of the new wave of journalistic endeavour that was supposed to represent the future, in marked contrast to traditional media and in particular its archaic habit of shipping newsprint around the country on trains and vans.

Original journalism is expensive and Vice and BuzzFeed found that, as online advertising declined, an advertising-funded model tied to Google and Facebook suddenly did not look like a great idea any more.

There was also growing scepticism in the advertising community about how effective it was to rather carelessly use algorithms to throw loads of money at

online in the hope that something would stick.

Many of the targets didn't exist, some numbers were opaque and there were growing questions over trust.

Such matters are about to get a whole lot worse because of artificial intelligence.

In recent weeks, there has been another kind of explosion – the rapid launch of news websites almost totally untouched or supervised by human hand, some containing misleading and even dangerous medical information.

By the end of May, around 150 of these sites trying to suck in advertising revenues had been identified.

From his perspective, Manning's main appeal now to advertisers is that they should go for "quality messaging, effectiveness and creativity".

Yet at the heart of the troubles of companies such as Vice and BuzzFeed there is a greater if somewhat obvious truth – so obvious it could be easily overlooked: the much-maligned mainstream media has not only survived but in some cases is prospering.

In general, newspaper managements were slow to realise the full consequences of the internet. Hundreds of jobs have been lost as a result and parts of the local press have been hollowed out.

Yet even in some of the worst cases – such as the collapse of the once-mighty Johnston Press into administration – there is considerable hope.

Minus its extravagant debt, Johnston Press is now modestly profitable again and its flagship titles, the Yorkshire Post and The Scotsman, are lively papers producing good journalism.

The big winners have been papers providing information that readers will subscribe for – from the New York

Times and the Wall Street Journal to The Financial Times and The Times.

Looked at with any sense of historical perspective, it is remarkable that with the exception of The Independent (happy and profitable as an online-only publication), all the UK's national newspapers have survived in print and online, some rather better than others.

But might not the bursting of the online bubble hit heritage news brands along with everyone else?

Up to a point, but they have a number of important advantages.

They have long-established, often century-old brands. People already know what they stand for and what they are likely to get.

One of the great weaknesses of online start-ups is the amount they have to spend on advertising to cut through the overwhelming noise of the internet and create their brands.

Perhaps of even greater significance for traditional media are Manning's advertising recommendations. Existing media, including commercial television, is a perfect venue to display quality messaging and, indeed, creativity.

Above all else, it can offer advertisers effectiveness both online and in print.

Study after study show readers spend more time with established brands and that this is particularly true for print.

There is also the all-important issue of trust. Advertisers can be confident their messages will not appear next to hate crime, fake news or climate change denial – at least not generally.

We can all hope that Vice News will rise again, continue with its distinctive journalism and that BuzzFeed will find its own way of prospering in future.

But we now know that heritage media is not going to go anywhere anytime soon.

Original journalism is expensive and an online advertising model tied to Google and Facebook suddenly did not look like a great idea any more

Manchester

Ruth Addicott finds out what it's like to work in a northern powerhouse

R

eporting on Salford in the 1980s wasn't for the faint-hearted. But for Neal Keeling, who covered the patch for 18 years for the Manchester Evening News (MEN), it was a valuable grounding.

"Salford in the '80s and '90s was a tough place – totally different to now. It shaped me," he says.

Now chief reporter at the MEN, Keeling has covered and broken some of the biggest stories in Manchester in the past 40 years, including the death of Greater Manchester chief constable Michael Todd in 2008 and the murder of notorious gangland figure Paul Massey in July 2015.

"That was quite chilling because I'd spoken to him in April," he says.

One of the biggest frustrations for Keeling now is not always having the time to follow up leads.

"There's a story I've had my eye on since September involving alleged corruption, a big institution and a particular individual," he says. "To get that story, I'd need to be taken off everything I do for a week, maybe even two weeks, and I'd have to drive all over the country to find people who have got the balls to speak to me – and the MEN aren't going to give me two weeks to work on one story. It is frustrating because I know if I had the time, I could crack it."

The MEN, known as 'the national of the north', was founded in 1868 and is published by Reach, which is in the process of making widespread redundancies.

The MEN is read by more adults in the UK than any other regional news brand online, covering Manchester as well as neighbouring Oldham, Rochdale and Salford.

Keeling describes it as an 'insatiable machine to feed' – which in some ways benefits the police as virtually every press release gets published – but he is constantly on the look out for more.

"I'll send them 10 questions because I want a better story. I don't want their GMP version of the story – I want my version," he says.

Further afield, are the Lancashire Telegraph in Blackburn, the Rochdale Observer, The Bolton News, The Sentinel and The Oldham Evening Chronicle, which has been in existence since 1854. The Manchester Weekly News, dubbed 'Britain's biggest free weekly', closed in August 2022.

Apart from two world famous multi-billion-pound football clubs, the draw for many journalists is MediaCityUK in Salford Quays – one of the largest HDTV programme making facilities in Europe. The BBC (also affected by cuts) has had a base there since 2011, producing BBC Breakfast, Match of the Day, Blue Peter and North West Tonight. It is home to BBC Sport, BBC Radio 5 Live, 6 Music, BBC Radio Manchester and the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra.

ITV also has a large base, producing programmes such as Coronation Street, The Voice, I'm A Celebrity and ITV News Granada.

Bauer Radio is located at Castle Quay and Global has a newsroom at the XYZ building in Spinningfields.

Kath Grant, secretary of the NUJ Manchester and Salford branch (which has around 1,000 members), says the main problem is that many young journalists go straight into freelancing because staff opportunities are not there.

Digital start-ups such as The Mill and Manchester Meteor are hoping to fill a gap. The Mill was set up in June 2020 for people who want local news without pop-up ads or clickbait. It produces a mix of long-form journalism, shorter news reports and analysis and employs a small team of staff writers which founder Joshi Herrmann hopes to eventually expand.

Greater Manchester has four universities offering journalism courses – the University of Manchester,

COLIN MCPHERSON

Find your niche and be bold

Find your speciality

Photographer Andy Barton advises photographers to find a niche: "We don't have the political news cycle like in London, but we have an abundance of

sports and music to work within."

Meet and move

Neal Keeling, chief reporter at the Manchester Evening News, believes in meeting

face to face ("you always get more") and advises journalists to start on a local weekly. "Learn your trade, move up to a decent sized paper, then get on one of the big regionals in Manchester,

Liverpool, Newcastle or Birmingham," he says. "Once you've done that apprenticeship, do what you want."

Ask - and ask again

Peter Murray, senior lecturer in multimedia Journalism at Manchester Metropolitan

University, advises students to 'be bold' and to build up contacts in the city and the region. "Don't be afraid to ask questions; read, write and record as much and as often as you can," he says. "If you get the knock-back, move on and ask someone else."

Manchester Metropolitan University, the University of Salford and the University of Bolton.

Peter Murray, senior lecturer in multimedia Journalism at Manchester Met, says: "Our stats for ex-students finding graduate-level jobs within 12 months are pretty good – off the top of my head, around 70% – but they're not all going into journalism."

Murray says the city's lively music, sport and cultural scene is a big attraction, the drawbacks being rising housing costs.

Freelance Ian Leonard moved to Manchester from Liverpool and supplies news, features and celebrity stories to nationals, magazines and online markets.

He found it competitive and thinks it helped that he covered news and had good contacts: "I did struggle for several years and wondered if I'd be better pursuing an alternative career. In recent years, the work has been steadier and I've learned to work a lot smarter."

As well as getting better at spotting opportunities, he has become more resourceful with his time, not trying to cover too many stories. He also believes more opportunities have opened up as more freelances have dropped out due to rates. "Each year, given inflation, I'm effectively taking a wage cut in real terms, which is staggering," he says.

One advantage is the tram; if he has a court job in the city centre, he can hop on a tram instead of paying parking fees.

Helen Pidd is north of England editor for The Guardian, which has an office on Deansgate (she lives out towards the Peak District). She has covered everything from the Manchester Arena bombing to Reynhard Sinaga, the UK's most prolific rapist.

"I've done magazine pieces about hosting a Syrian refugee in my home and shadowing Christian Wakeford, the Bury Tory MP who defected to Labour last year. All sorts."

"I still believe in the MEN. Who else is going to hold people to account, scrutinise the councils, scrutinise the cops?"

Neal Keeling, chief reporter, Manchester Evening News

"There's political intrigue because of Andy Burnham. The cultural and sports sectors are strong – there are plenty of stories."

Helen Pidd, north of England editor, The Guardian

"It's a great city, very friendly and diverse. A lot of people who come to study end up staying which speaks for itself."

Kath Grant, secretary, Manchester and Salford NUJ branch

She says the best thing is the people – it's easy to get people to talk and have a laugh. "Sometimes, Manchester has an inflated opinion of itself, which can get a bit irritating. Its motto is 'we do things differently here', but often they don't. It trades a bit too much on its past. I find the references everywhere to Joy Division, The Smiths, Oasis etc a bit tedious after a while, however much I might like the music."

The music and culture scene is reflected by the vast number of independent publications (such as Flux, Salt, SEEN, Yuck, Crack, Now Then Manchester, Glossy and STYLEetc). Many are online, some are in print and, as in most cities, rates vary.

The Cheshire Magazine is the largest luxury lifestyle title for the north west of England. There is also Lancashire Life.

Prolific North is an independent publishing and events company, covering news and jobs for the media, digital and creative sectors. Insider Media publishes North West Business Insider magazine.

Andy Barton started out photographing raves and gigs for ticket companies and has lived in Manchester for 20 years, working for national and international outlets. He says the city is seeing a surge of development not seen since after the IRA bombing, but adds "it comes at a cost as landlords push up rates, resulting in the longstanding business being driven out of the creative areas such as the Northern Quarter, making it difficult for independent start-ups to follow in their footsteps".

Aside from the threat of AI-generated work, Barton says the main issue facing photographers in Manchester, like elsewhere, is rates not keeping up with inflation – agency rates have decreased and editors want images for credit only.

Rates aside, Manchester will always be a magnet. It tells it like it is and has a creative spirit and energy that refuses to die. As George Orwell, who did a stint at the MEN, once said: "Manchester is the belly and guts of the nation."





Fall and rise of the labour hacks

Is industrial journalism making a comeback? **Josiah Mortimer** investigates

It was a fitting exit for an industrial reporter. In 1986, Barrie Clement was sacked during the Wapping printers' strike. Not for any journalistic transgressions but for the sin – in the eyes of Rupert Murdoch's Times – of refusing to cross striking print workers' picket lines.

The Wapping dispute was a blow not just for Britain's unions but also for industrial reporters – the dedicated dozens of correspondents whose job it was to cover trade unions and strike action. Within a decade, their numbers had withered to just a handful. We all know the story. Within 20-odd years, union membership fell to half its 1980s levels, following a spree of anti-union legislation and historic defeats for the movement.

But could this year's wave of industrial action, with nurses, postal workers, teachers and more walking out, mark the point labour reporting kicked back into gear?

Heyday

To find out, we have to look back to the heyday of industrial reporting. All the quality papers had industrial reporters during the 1970s and 1980s. The tabloids had two or three apiece, while the Financial Times had a hefty suite of five.

"That's the seriousness with which it was treated – and a reflection of how much was going on. A lot of the time we were strike reporters. There was a hell of a lot of industrial action," Clement tells me.

They had clout. 'Labour corrs' and political reporters were on a par in the space they got in the paper during the high watermark of industrial action from Edward Heath to Margaret Thatcher. What made industrial correspondents, now a hugely diminished rump, so influential? When unions were powerful, so too were their watchers.

The Labour and Industrial Correspondents Group had about 40-50 members in the 1980s, including press and

broadcasters. As with all groups of journalists, there was competition.

"Fellow industrial reporters were rivals-come-colleagues," veteran labour journalist Kevin Maguire tells me. He and Clement both have fond memories of the group, although both also admit that "overwhelmingly, it was a boys' club for drinking beer", as Clement says.

But they understood their role. Unions were a large part of people's lives and identity, shaping how they were treated in the workplace in a way that has diminished since.

Need for nous

JOHN MILLINGTON, press officer for the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) has worked in union comms for more than a decade.

He has witnessed the surge in reporting on unions over the past two years – powered not least by leader Mick Lynch's now legendary broadcast appearances during the national rail dispute.

Sadly, though, he believes the quality of analysis on unions in legacy media has not improved. A case in

point: The Telegraph recently suggested that 40,000 rail workers on strike were doing so to "bring down capitalism".

But even critical newspapers' journalists in the past had an exceptional knowledge of unions and offered them a fair shout, he argues. That expertise and balance is thinner on the ground now, he believes.

However, he is optimistic about the emergence of industrial reporters in digital media who have a "thirst for knowledge" and want to

understand workers' motives for striking.

Millington points to social media-focused outlet PoliticsJoe, plus the growing number of left-wing outlets such as Novara Media, Left Foot Forward, and Tribune.

"All these have de facto industrial correspondents who are becoming experts in that field. They're providing a depth of knowledge," he adds.

While he is cynical about whether traditional media will invest in industrial reporting, he thinks independent digital outlets offer it a "bright future".

Voice for workers

"It wasn't just about pay, but identity too," says Maguire. "Much of the media was in London, but we were getting out, going to Liverpool, Bristol and wherever else. Without that, we were denying a voice to working people."

During the miners' strike, the papers wanted to know what was going on with unions "sometimes to a greater extent than politics", notes Clement. It's not hard to see why. The 1984 miners' strike, starting not long after Clement joined The Times, was the biggest news of the year. Thatcher took on the National Union of Mineworkers and won, then Murdoch took on the print unions.

Clement and the two other labour specialists on the paper were fired for refusing to cross the picket lines. They spent a year freelancing: "We worked for people like the Confederation of British Industry, ironically." They had strike pay but the businesses' club, together with other sources of income, funded the rest of their resistance.

Decline and fall

While some industrial corrs weathered the storm – the three Times labour reporters moved en masse to The Independent – the rot had set in. Following the years of anti-union legislation, news organisations became less interested in trade unions, shorn of front pages showing rubbish bags lining the streets or coal miners being chased on horseback.

Thatcher, it seems, had killed the beat. Unions had not, of course, stopped mattering. Their influence remained in that the majority of workers were protected by union-won contracts. But news space for industrial reporters thinned. Over the course of the 1990s, the industrial correspondents group shrunk to a mere handful then fizzled out entirely.

The impact on coverage for working people was marked. Kevin Maguire, associate editor of the Mirror, covered unions while many labour-focused colleagues were being laid off. "You didn't have the street theatre of strikes in the same way. Unions were being written off."

Much coverage of unions was by business correspondents. "There are some very good business corrs. But they are more likely to see things through the eyes of a fat-cat chief executive," Maguire believes.

He also laments the loss of personal relationships between journalists and trade unionists. Many union leaders were happy to talk to even right-wing newspapers' labour reporters. Media outlets' listeners and viewers have 'lost out' now.

That may be starting to change. New forms of media, from podcasts to left-wing blogs, have facilitated a quiet resurgence in industrial reporting over the past two years. It has come at a good time: 2022 saw more working days lost to strike action than any time since Thatcher's premiership, as staff at Royal Mail, rail companies and legions of private sector firms joined picket lines. This year could yet surpass that as NHS, teacher and civil service strikes ramp up – with the biggest day of coordinated action in decades taking place as Jeremy Hunt presented his spring budget.

The newcomers

Polly Smythe was appointed to cover unions for Novara Media because the P&O sackings in 2021, after the socialist outlet realised it had not been able to cover the dispute in full. Smythe, like other industrial reporters, has found it a 'real challenge' getting to know Britain's 150-odd-registered unions.

Never mind the bollock

THE GOLDEN BOLLOCK,

an award given to industrial reporters for the 'most wrong' story of the year, was a highlight of the labour reporters' calendar in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Barrie Clement won the award three times at TUC Congress and described the tradition as 'great fun'. The winner decided who the next 'bollock holder' would be.

The award, a literal representation of a reporter 'dropping a bollock' (i.e. messing up big time) was once offered to political reporters but was deemed too self-deprecating for the more 'precious' hacks, Kevin Maguire laughs.

Clement's 'best bollock' was when he wrote a story saying that the dock workers' leaders would call off a strike the next day – and they did not.

He wrote another piece the following week

explaining why the dockers feel they must fight on.

The next day, the dockers called off their strike.

The award's current whereabouts are sadly unknown.



You didn't have the street theatre of strikes in the same way. Unions were being written off

"Each union and their cultures are so different. There's a real gap in knowledge. The literature on unions up to the 1980s is incredible. But industrial reporting declined with the decline of unions, so there are big gaps," she says.

Smythe notes press officers now hold a tighter sway over who can talk to the media. Officials' and members' caution over this has made it harder to cover issues such as Unison's internal conflict or pressures in the University and College Union.

Smythe is not alone. The BBC returned to labour reporting in making Zoe Conway employment correspondent last October. On a smaller scale, Left Foot Forward, which I used to edit, has hired a trade union reporter in Hannah Davenport, another young female journalist breaking the previous perception of labour correspondents as male and stale. At Byline Times, union reporting is in my contract.

Also changing the face of the beat are Taj Ali, a young, working-class journalist at Tribune, freelancer Ella Glover and The Bureau of Investigative Journalism's Emiliano Mellino. They form part of a loose group who share tips and support each other. Funding remains tricky. Smythe's role is paid for by Europe's radical Rosa Luxemburg Foundation, but funding runs out in a few months, as does Hannah Davenport's, provided by the Barry Amiel and Norman Melburn Trust.

We are yet to see non-progressive outlets hire labour reporters but perhaps this is only a matter of time. The recent strike wave was a wake-up call: unions are still here. And they really do still matter.

Obituary Giles Smith, former ITN industrial correspondent, Page 25

Green, real and

Neil Merrick looks at how journalists can help keep the climate crisis in the headlines

It is the most important issue in the world – so how can journalists ensure stories on climate change reach the widest possible audience? Since the Cop26 summit, held in Glasgow in 2021, most UK media has continued to deliver prescient warnings over the future of the planet.

Journalists recognise it is important to avoid climate fatigue from bombarding people with bad news. This means creating a narrative of interest to those more concerned with day-to-day problems, such as the cost-of-living crisis.

Justin Rowlatt, the BBC's climate editor, has noticed a sea change in how the media reports climate issues. With a few exceptions, most now accept the severity of the problem and believe something needs to be done.

"Virtually all media organisations realise they need to find ways to give the story the prominence it deserves," he says. "We can't sugar the pill but we can talk about the efforts being made around the world to tackle it."

Along with articles about melting glaciers, journalists are likely to report on cathedrals with solar panels, the growth in green jobs and how frequently councils cut grass verges.

"It's important that we present the remedies as well as the problem itself," says Fiona Harvey, environment editor at The Guardian.

Earlier this year, a study by media consultancy Firstlight found one in four UK adults were sceptical about climate warnings, partly because they felt overwhelmed by the language or jargon used in news stories and climate campaigns.

"It's important to talk about benefits to communities," says Sarah George, senior reporter at Edie, a website aimed at sustainability and environment professionals but with a growing audience that includes students.

There is a balance to be struck, says George, between spelling everything out each time and producing overly complex stories that assume too much prior knowledge. "Most people think they know what climate change is, but they're not so sure about net zero or the Paris agreement," she says.

According to a government figures, 83 per cent of the population is fairly or very concerned about climate change. Only half claim to know much about net zero, yet stories about green or renewable energy frequently refer to the UK target of achieving net zero emissions of carbon and other gases by 2050.

Vicky Allan, environment writer at the Herald, which is based in Glasgow, aims to avoid using jargon. The problem comes when presenting pros and cons in climate stories, such as the effects of wind turbines on marine life. "It does not

always produce a snappy soundbite," she notes.

Cop26 saw journalists descend on Glasgow from all over the world. Since then, Allan has gone from being a general features writer to an environment specialist, trying to ensure that climate stories remain high up the news agenda.

"Part of my role is to stand up for the environment," she says.

Parts of the media are upping the stakes and using more powerful images and vocabulary. Four years ago, The Guardian said it was dropping photos of polar bears (appealing though they are) in favour of human interest images showing the reality of climate change. The paper also began referring to the climate crisis or emergency, plus global heating.

"We no longer talk about climate change or global warming," says Harvey. "They sounded gentle and unthreatening."

Consumer stories show the part individuals can play, such as driving electric cars or buying clothes made from recyclable fibre. While such articles might seem to play down the wider responsibility of big business and government, they take climate issues into the home and address lifestyles.

"It's been my focus for some time to give people a handle on how to tackle the problem," adds Harvey.

Rowlatt agrees: "It's important people understand the risks and dilemmas that climate change poses so they can take decisions about their lives."

It is hard to believe that, not so long ago, the BBC and other media felt the need to invite a climate change denier (usually former chancellor Nigel Lawson) to argue global warming was not a problem.

Studies by the Carbon Brief website, which focuses on climate science and energy, show right-wing media that had been sceptical about climate warnings changed their positions in the years leading up to Cop26. By 2021, papers such as the Sun and Express were campaigning for green energy.

However, the energy crisis is changing that, says Leo Hickman, a former Guardian journalist who has edited Carbon Brief for eight years. Papers have reverted to supporting oil and gas, he says. Climate change deniers or delayers are being welcomed back to opinion pages.

In March, the Daily Mail ran a story on warnings by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change at the bottom of page 10, beneath a page lead about a pensioner being attacked by a potted geranium. A Mail editorial accused climate campaigners of using 'hysterical language' and hair-raising predictions that would not come true.

"You see ebbs and flows," says Hickman. "At times it seems like two steps forward, one step back."

The media as a whole has not thought climate reporting

83%

More than four out of five people are fairly or very concerned about climate change



relevant

through fully, with its many angles, he adds. Climate once came under specialisms but now pervades almost all areas, including sport. Some of Carbon Brief's 20 journalists have science rather than media backgrounds.

"It trips reporters up when they are new to the beat," he says. "We must work out ways to engage and inform audiences."

Journalists need to understand climate science to recognise greenwashing, which is when wild claims are made about activities that, on closer inspection, are not as environmentally friendly or effective as they appear.

At Edie, says George, readers increasingly see themselves not as activists but as 'activators'. Balanced reporting means exploring solutions proposed and giving opinions. "People have questions about the solutions," she adds. "There are so many emerging that it's impossible to do all of them justice."

Greenwashing may also arise in offsetting, where polluters plant trees or take other steps to compensate for the carbon they put in the atmosphere. In Scotland, says Allan, there has been a rush to buy land for offsetting but no firm evidence this will help to achieve net zero. Linked to offset is carbon pricing, where companies in effect pay for polluting the atmosphere.

"The future of climate coverage is likely to be less about the science of climate change and more about accountancy," says Allan.

As long as journalists come up with imaginative ways to report on climate, there seems little likelihood of it falling down the news agenda.

"It's a story that we are going to be covering for decades and decades," says Hickman."

Climate jargon buster

- **Climate change:** shifts in climate caused by the warming or heating of the planet.
- **Carbon capture/storage:** the use of technology to capture carbon as it is emitted so it does not enter the atmosphere.
- **Carbon footprint:** measurement of carbon emissions linked to a particular activity, product or individual.
- **Carbon pricing:** payments made by polluters to cover the cost of emissions.
- **Decarbonisation:** eliminating or cutting carbon emissions through switching from fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) to renewable energy.
- **Greenhouse gases:** gases that cause heating of the atmosphere, including carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.
- **Greenwashing:** dubious claims made by private companies and governments that a product or activity is environmentally friendly.
- **Mitigation:** actions to prevent, reduce or slow climate change. Differs from climate adaptation, which refers to measures for coping with the impact of climate change.
- **Net zero:** amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases put into the air, less those taken out. Differs from zero carbon, where no emissions are produced.
- **Offsetting:** compensating for carbon emissions by planting trees and other actions that help reduce carbon in the atmosphere.
- **Paris Agreement:** commitment by nearly 200 countries in 2015 to reduce emissions and thereby limit rises in global temperature.
- **Renewable/clean energy:** energy - such as solar, wind and tidal - that is generated from natural sources and does not lead to emissions of greenhouse gases.
- **Retrofitting:** improving the energy efficiency of an existing home or building.
- **Sustainable development:** development that meets social or economic needs and protects the environment, so helping future generations.



ADOBESTOCK

The very idea of televising parliament horrified some MPs, says **Jonathan Sale**

WESTMINSTER WAVELENGTH

On the face of it, June 9 1975 was for the House of Commons a quiet day. A dip into Hansard's record shows it began with 'Oral answers to questions – industry', the question being whether secretary of state Tony Benn was going to dismiss the chairman of British Industry, to which he replied: "No, sir; I do not intend to dismiss Sir Monty Finniston." It was good to have this point cleared up so that the House of Commons could move on to the calm waters of the White Fish and Herring Subsidies Scheme.

Yet the House of Commons was making history on that summer afternoon. Its speeches, transmitted on Radio 4's medium wave, marked the launch of broadcasting from parliament. And about time too, it might be said.

The delay was not the fault of the broadcasters. Lord Reith had been keen on the idea ever since the foundation of the BBC in 1922. It was the fault of the hon members who should by rights have been addressing not only the other hon members but also the waiting microphones.

A majority of parliamentarians seemed to be yearning to keep their own words as close to their chests as in the good old days before 1738 when nothing in the chamber could be reported. Until then, reporters, bizarrely, were banned from taking notes and thus at the mercy of their memories.

The postwar Attlee government could boast many wonderful achievements but setting up parliamentary broadcasting was not one of them; the 1948 report on the subject declared the whole idea was 'harmful'. Things looked promising in 1950 when microphones were installed during renovations in the chamber but, unfortunately, they were not turned on.

Professor David Henry, author of *The BBC: a People's History*, points out that as late as the

1960s, a majority of MPs were still unhappy about letting in microphones or cameras: "Some feared they'd be caught napping." As indeed they were. MPs also worried that broadcasting would be a shame as it would spoil the club-like atmosphere; others thought this would be a plus, welcoming in voters rather than excluding them from the Westminster clubhouse.

Over the decades, it was always the prime ministers who dug in their heels and hit the off switch.

In 1964, a select committee of the incoming Labour government began to think about televising the Commons. Its modest recommendation was to have a trial period with

screen only, although MPs would make the final decision. (The Lords had already decided to take this radical step but got no further than a three-day trial.) Political paranoia soon put paid to that, triggered by another Monty, not Finniston but Python, whose Flying Circus was feared to be absolutely typical of the sort of satirists who, given half a chance, would extract snippets of speeches to mock the speaker and, indeed, the Speaker.

Told that this could 'certainly' happen, Harold Wilson retorted: "That certainly wouldn't be allowed." The House clearly agreed, to judge by the thumbs of the hon members being turned down in the 1972 vote.

TV influence and 'family silver' sale

More than 60 years after Lord Reith floated the idea of live parliamentary broadcasting, the BBC overcame opposition by politicians and began its radio transmissions from the House of Commons in June 1975.

This trial service was made permanent in April 1978, on the day before the House of Lords began its own experimental radio broadcasts.

When it came to allowing in cameras, the Lords beat 'the other

place' to it, persuaded by its former leader, Lord Soames, that colour television was now "the most important and influential medium of communication - and certainly one not to be ignored if we wish attention to be paid by the general public to our business in this House".

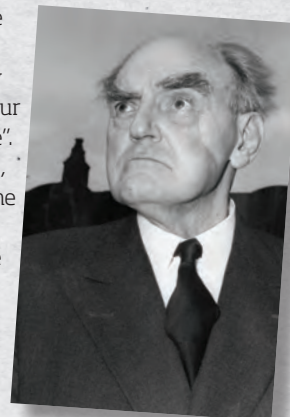
On January 23 1985, the very first day of the experimental TV transmission from the Lords, Soames's case was proved by a fellow Tory, ex-PM Harold Macmillan.

Now, the Earl of Stockton, SuperMac made a speech slamming Thatcher's economic policy - which is still remembered as the devastating one about "selling off the family silver".

Macmillan said: "The sale of assets is common with individuals and states when they run into financial difficulties. First, all the Georgian silver goes, and then all that nice furniture that used to be in the saloon."

The temporary broadcasts of the Lords were made permanent soon afterwards.

The effectiveness of television broadcasts was further proved by the late Simon Hoggart of *The Guardian*, who wrote at the time that many of the Noble Lords (now ex-MPs), had been commonly believed, until seen on TV, to be dead.



The last of the Monty Python TV series went out in 1974 – and the first parliamentary broadcast wouldn't take place until 1975. Coincidence or conspiracy theory? You decide!

It didn't help that in 1974 there was a major setback to the whole idea of cameras in the chamber when the BBC broadcast the state opening of parliament, which caused MPs to complain about being half-blinded by the strong lights. The noes had it, the noes had it.

But only for a time. The 'ayes' in Wilson's party turned up the volume and it became a cross-party issue. Tory backbencher Brian Batsford and Liberal leader-in-waiting David Steel pointed out that TV already had its big feet in the political door by presenting its own studio discussions to which they could invite anyone they wanted and thus produce their own 'secondhand accounts'. Shouldn't MPs be sending their own wise words as a firsthand account directly to the public?

The more technologically alert among the politicians realised that radio did not require souped-up lighting, just microphones, so the dazzling problem was sorted.

On February 24 1975, the Commons voted that the mikes but not cameras could be switched on. As indeed they were, on June 9, first in a temporary way then permanently.

There were some complaints. The minuscule size of the box for the radio commentators meant that the cheek of the Beeb's commentator was jammed hard – a mere 18 inches – against the jowl of his IRN counterpart. Listeners who had tuned in for Radio 4's afternoon play were far from thrilled to be offered as entertainment instead 900 dense words on 'European Community (industry ministers)' and the other oral answers mentioned above.



However, even the right-wing press gave the launch a big hand, enthusing over not only the first broadcast but also the lefty minister whose words had opened the show.

'Big Benn is the star of the air!' enthused The Sun, while the Telegraph declared 'Benn a hit in radio Commons'.

The whole atmosphere in the chamber became, like the microphones, electric. George Thomas, the man sitting in the speaker's chair, had not been a fan but changed his mind: "Members who had been silent since I had been elected speaker suddenly came to life. It was as though the dead had been restored to life and found a new aggressiveness."

Also given a new lease of life was late-night Radio 4 programme Today in Parliament, which was described as 'the Hansard of the Air' – without the boring bits. The placing of microphones in another place soon meant that we could lend an ear to the lords and ladies, after which both houses opened themselves to the pitiless scrutiny of television cameras.

We now take the Westminster broadcasts for granted – but they have been with us for only a few decades. Before then, the electorate had to squeeze into the limited seating to witness their elected members in action.

Although nothing can quite touch the thrill of looking down from the press or public gallery, it has to be admitted that millions more of us get a better grip on the action from radio loudspeaker or TV screen: the Falklands debate on a (highly unusual) Saturday morning sitting; Thatcher's confidence vote that destroyed the Labour government; Geoffrey Howe's "taking away the bat and ball" resignation speech which in turn finished her.

Racing at the speed of light from the Houses of Parliament, Tony Benn's words about the non-dismissal of Sir Monty 48 years ago are, as any astronomer will tell you, at this moment speeding past planets 48 light-years away. Any aliens there picking up these signals that left us in June 1985 will be exclaiming joyfully that they have found intelligent life among the earthlings. At least, I hope that's what they think. They may just roll their eyes at each other and sneer, "Order! Order!"

The Student Publication Association conference is a time of opportunity and celebration, says **Rory Buccheri**

Empowering the next generation

The annual Student Publication Association (SPA) Conference and Awards took place in Glasgow - its first time in Scotland - at the end of March. Turnout was the highest in the SPA's history, with 220 delegates from universities in the UK and Ireland.

The SPA is a national charity that represents student journalists and university publications by offering training opportunities, support and advice, and by hosting regional and national awards.

"SPANC23 was a brilliant event, where we got to celebrate the best of student journalists," said SPA trustee Aubrey Allegretti. "Student publications are the lifeblood of campus communities."

The two-day event took place at the universities of Glasgow and Queen Margaret, and was hosted by the city's student publications, The Glasgow Guardian, G-You and Qmunicate. The delegates enjoyed a weekend packed with opportunities, talks and chances to network with peers and journalists.

Speakers included Journalist of the Year Pippa Crerar from The Guardian, Nick Stylianou from Sky News, freelancers, career changers and MPs.

Panel topics spanned advice on pitching, alternative routes into journalism, using data to bring stories to life and reporting from the frontline. Practical workshops, led by PA Training and News Associates, included covering a police press conference and writing breaking news. They were great for building both confidence and practical skills.

"There are things the uni curriculum doesn't cover, so hearing practical advice from people who do this every day as their job is the most empowering part of it," said student editor Isabelle Hampton-Zabotti.

Worthy of mention were the arts and culture reporting panel, led by women, trans and gender minority panellists from Scottish media outlets (including Rachel Davies, and Eilidh Akilade from The Skinny), and the 'How to make your features sing' talk, an interactive panel led by freelance and staff feature writers Juliet Rix, Jem Collins and Alice Hinds from The Sunday Post.

SPA trustee Anttoni James Numminen, who hosted the features panel, said: "There's a huge amount of potential in student journalism so it's great to get these talented people together and support them."

Panellists from various backgrounds spoke about personal experiences of breaking into the industry.

The overall conference kept to its promise to bring diverse voices to the table. From those from working-class, ethnic marginalised and LGBTQ+ groups and journalists with disabilities, each held high the torch of journalism being a field open to all.

The closing panel of 'Finding your feet in freelancing' warned budding journalists against offering work for free in exchange for bylines.

"The business of working for nothing is a big problem in the industry," host Rix pointed out. "If it's good enough to



be published, it's good enough to be paid for." Guest panellists Eve Livingston,

Parisa Hashempour and Dr Kelly Kanayama encouraged freelancers to be persistent and do a timely pitch.

This year, delegates could sign up for one-to-one slots offering advice and CV feedback, and have a free byline photo taken by a professional photographer.

The awards ceremony was a brilliant opportunity to reward the hard work and talent of student journalists. It took place at the Marriott Hotel and had 24 categories, including best sports piece, best magazine design, best student photographer and outstanding commitment, a category named after late media mentor Billy-Dowling Reid.

University of Exeter paper Exposé won best publication award. Collins, an SPA trustee, praised it for raising awareness about student mental health and pushing the university to hold a suicide prevention campaign.

Following the annual general meeting on the last day of the conference, Matt Ward-Perkins was elected as SPA chair, and was accompanied by students in the positions of communications, sponsorship, and training and opportunities. The conference would not be possible without these volunteers.

Allegretti said: "I can't wait to see what next year's hosts do to top what was an incredibly special conference in our 10th anniversary year."

There are things the curriculum doesn't cover, so hearing advice from people who do this every day is the most empowering part

More cash for work done

Katharine Quarmby looks at getting 'ALCS' payments for print or online work

Twice a year, writers and journalists sally forth onto social media to thank the Authors' Licensing and

Collecting Society (ALCS) for its work tracking down what are called secondary uses of our work, and making sure that we get paid for it.

The ALCS estimates its members have been paid more than £500 million over 40 years through the scheme. The March payout is the bigger one, but the autumn one, paid out in September, is helpful too.

If you want to earn from secondary use of your works, you have to become an ALCS member and create a profile on its website, which is straightforward. Each member has to log their contributions of articles, books, scripts, visual contributions – and, crucially, websites and blogs – on the ALCS website.

ALCS membership is free if you belong to a number of other organisations, including the NUJ as well as the Society of Author. Otherwise, there is a one-off joining fee of £36, which is deducted from your first royalty payment.

So how do freelance journalists – whose revenues have fallen off a cliff over the last 10 years – make the most of their ALCS membership? Journals and magazines are automatically in the scheme, but newspapers (and supplements) are not covered; publications need to be based in the UK and you'll need their ISSNs. You cannot claim twice if the same article has appeared both in print and online.

What about the burgeoning number of online news organisations, as so many have migrated to the digital realm and don't have a print outlet?

This is where it gets thorny. Some do have an ISSN, which means you can log your contribution, but some do not. For instance, openDemocracy has an ISSN.

"ALCS is an income source that more freelancers should know about. There's nothing like getting paid extra for work you've already done. I'd recommend anyone who writes for a living to sign up," Julian Richards, openDemocracy managing editor, tells The Journalist.

However, some large digital media organisations do not have an ISSN. This is something ALCS is keen to see change.

Richard Coombes, head of rights and licensing at ALCS, explains: "Some online platforms have adopted the use of ISSNs but by no means all. In the context of collective licensing, the more media organisations that use this kind of identifier the better, particularly in the online environment, as this will enable us to distribute more widely across more titles."

He adds: "Due to the volume of titles involved, we adopt a pragmatic approach to include as many titles as possible that are likely to be used under the licences."

Speaking to editors from different news organisations, I find few understand the benefit of the scheme to freelancers. However, once it was explained, they are enthusiastic.

Peter Jukes, chief executive of Byline, says: "Journalism, the lifeblood of our democracy at a national and local level, has been severely defunded ever since the tech giants siphoned off the bulk of newspaper advertising. I'm always wary of government intervention, subsidies or grants to support journalism because, as we've seen constantly with BBC Charter renewal, this can be used as leverage.

"But the ALCS system is a tried and

tested way of boosting the earnings of writers and artists in line with the work they do, and every news organisation should get an ISSN to help their journalists survive the tough times we live in."

Coombes and the ALCS team are keen to raise the visibility of the scheme and pay out as journalism changes.

He says: "A key challenge is to keep the licensing schemes relevant as much of journalism migrates online."

Andy Smith, senior organiser for the NUJ, says: "Readers of material published online aren't necessarily interested in whether the site they're on could be classed as a magazine or journal but our members writing the articles – and the publishers – should be.

"As digital reuse replaces physical copying and scanning, it is increasingly important that sites that are eligible for ISSNs do have them so that writers are paid fairly when their work is reused."

A key challenge is to keep the licensing schemes relevant as much of journalism migrates online

by Mark Fisher arts

Books >

Wasteland

Oliver Franklin-Wallis

June 22

Simon & Schuster

This contributor to Wired and British GQ asks inconvenient questions about where waste goes. Touring landfills in New Delhi and sewers in the UK, he digs up the dirty truth about our rubbish.

<https://tinyurl.com/2owczpd6>

After Work

Helen Hester and Nick Snicek

July 18

Verso

Has the vacuum of our free time been

taken up by vacuuming? Who accounts for the unpaid labour of the home? Can we break free of the tyranny of housework? Hester and Snicek consider the alternatives.

<https://tinyurl.com/2bpbr6p9>

Ordinary Human Failings

Megan Nolan

July 13

Jonathan Cape

The second novel by this New York Times and Guardian contributor features an ambitious journalist with a scoop involving a dead child – and a suspect who too easily satisfies tabloid prejudice.

<https://tinyurl.com/2zquutq3>

Exhibitions >

Liverpool Biennial 2023

Tate Liverpool

Until September 17

The title of the UK's largest contemporary art festival is uMoya: the Sacred Return of Lost Things, a reference to ancestral and indigenous forms of knowledge and the desire to heal old wounds.

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

A World in Common:

Contemporary African Photography

Tate Modern, London

July 6–January 14

Grouped under the categories of spirituality, identity, urbanism and climate emergency, the photographs show a cross-section of the continent's cultures, past and present.

<https://tinyurl.com/2m6ssxfv>

Michael Rakowitz

Baltic Centre, Gateshead

July 15–May 26 2024

Responding to the theme of conflict, the Iraqi-American artist builds a

forest of trees, hedges, herbs and medicinal plants recalling the Hanging Gardens of Babylon. This project was created with Imperial War Museums and 14-18 NOW to mark the centenary of the First World War.

<https://tinyurl.com/2jy6atfz>

Festivals >

Edinburgh festivals

August 4–28

All life is here, whether you want to see the first Edinburgh International Festival led by violinist Nicola Benedetti, the final Edinburgh International Book Festival led by ex-magazine editor Nick Barley, a first play by novelist Andrew O'Hagan (The Ballad of Truman Capote) or appearances by everyone from comedian Bridget Christie to leader of the House of Commons Penny Mordaunt.

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



In depth >

Romance and resistance

NUJ member Katharine Quarmby is well versed in filing campaigning articles to Private Eye, the Bureau of Investigative Journalism and The Guardian.

But when she started rooting around the story of two destitute girls in 19th-century London, she needed a different approach.

She was able to trace one girl to her own home town in Norfolk and knew both had stood trial for stealing laundry from their refuge.

However, once they had been transported to Australia, their story ran cold.

So, instead, she turned to fiction. Drawing on the research skills Quarmby has perfected as a journalist, The Low Road

is a novel that reinstates forgotten stories, those of often illiterate convicts whose greatest crime was poverty.

"It is the story of what happens to poor people when they can't organise," she says.

"We follow this orphan to the refuge in Hackney

where she meets another young woman and they resist their fate – the very few choices they have.

"If you read the refuge minutes, there was always this line of resistance. They didn't want to be rescued – they wanted workers' rights."

At a time when Britain is slowly facing up to its role in the slave trade, Quarmby says transportation is another symptom of our 'colonial amnesia' that needs to be addressed.

"I would love to see a museum of transportation so we understand our own history," she says. "There are so many people who have transportation roots in the UK and it is a history that has been largely forgotten."

As well as being about politics, The Low Road is a romance.

"It is a love story," she explains. "The story of same-sex experience has been largely ignored but is there in the archives."

"It kept on happening in the refuge – women forming deep relationships."

"Women would commit offences to be booted out of their roles as servants so they could return to the refuge and resume their relationships."

"It was very moving to read about the lengths to which women went to keep those relationships going against all odds."

"It's a story of loyalty and friendship. The book is a balance between love and rights."

The Low Road, Unbound, June 22

<https://tinyurl.com/2g5x3q97>



Galway International Arts Festival

July 17-30

As well as bands including Pavement and Kaiser Chiefs, the big premiere in this year's festival is Druid O'Casey, three Sean O'Casey plays from the founding years of the Republic of Ireland, staged by Garry Hynes in an all-day marathon.

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



Films >

Baato

In cinemas

June 30

Documentary by Lucas Millard and Kate Stryker about a family's annual winter trek from their Himalayan village to the towns where they sell medicinal plants. The building of a highway changes everything.

<https://tinyurl.com/2jyxu5g>

La Syndicaliste
In cinemas
June 30

Ireland's Maureen Kearney was a union leader for the French Democratic Confederation of Labour at nuclear power company Areva. Blowing the whistle over secret deals, she took on the government and business to her personal cost, fighting tooth and nail to bring the scandal to light and to defend more than 50,000 jobs. Isabelle Huppert stars.
<https://tinyurl.com/2hrxjsng>



While We Watched
July 14

Fake news and disinformation plagues a TV newsroom where editor Ravish Kumar (pictured) insists on editorial independence. Vinay Shukla's documentary observes the journalistic

challenges faced by employees at New Delhi Television.
<https://tinyurl.com/2o3on82e>

Radio >
Finding Seaglass
BBC Radio 4
Summer

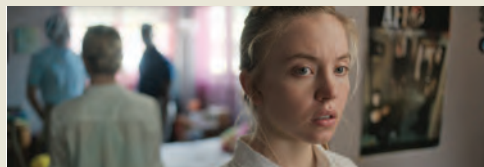
Poet and playwright Hannah Lavery performs her radio drama about raising children with a mixed ethnic background in Scotland, showing history in a new light. Niloo-Far Khan directs.
<https://tinyurl.com/2zuoczbb>

Theatre >
Fun Home
Gate Theatre, Dublin
July 1–August 26

As well as giving her name to the Bechdel test, Alison Bechdel is the graphic novelist whose 2006 memoir is the basis for this Tony Award-winning musical about family secrets. Róisín McBrinn directs the Irish premiere of the show by Jeanine Tesori and Lisa Kron.
<https://tinyurl.com/2z3x84s5>

Spotlight >

Election leak thrill



What was acclaimed as one of the best entries in this year's Berlin Film Festival started as an equally lauded Broadway play.

On stage, it was known as *Is This a Room*. On screen, again conceived and directed by Tina Satter, it is called *Reality*.

The remarkable thing it is the source material. While being welcomed by the New York Times in 2021 as 'one of the

thrillingest thrillers ever to hit Broadway', its script is not a crafted drama but a transcript of an FBI arrest – hesitations, non-sequiturs, redacted information and all.

In 2017, *Reality* Winner was stopped outside her rented house in Georgia by officers investigating the mishandling of classified information.

In the recordings, she initially appears

innocent but, as the FBI questioning continues, varying from the tangential to the intense, her story seems less clear cut.

Played on screen by Sydney Sweeney, Winner was accused of leaking an intelligence report to the media about apparent Russian interference in the 2016 US presidential election. She was sentenced to five years in prison after a plea bargain.

The film raises questions (but offers no answers) about US espionage law, how whistleblowers are treated (especially women) and the strangeness of real life.

Reality, July 7,
<https://tinyurl.com/2gqrkquh>

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DENIS CARRIER



Good photography is no longer seen as valuable

Further to Bill Batchelor's view that the advent of digital cameras and the internet meant that photography would 'never be the same again' (Your say, April/May 2023), I would suggest that much more than darkroom practices have changed for working photographers.

As a freelance photographer, who began working for local newspapers in the mid 1970s then went on to be commissioned for books, newspapers and magazines, I would argue that the digital camera then the smartphone and social media have seriously changed the way my work is appreciated and valued to the point that it is frequently no longer seen as worth payment.

There was a period of time, in the first part of my career, when photography was regarded as a specialist skill owned by those who had 'done their time' learning how to control a camera to the point where it would do exactly what was asked of it. Even if 'set f8 and be there' was a mantra of many press snappers, most of them could grapple with the rule of thirds, create a shallow depth of field and work in low-light conditions if needed. These days, most smartphones will do much of that for you, and many 'great photos' seen on social media have been nowhere near the rule of thirds or even the focusing ring.

The need for good photography, in my view, has become vastly under-rated and almost redundant as the record-shot mentality has taken over and society generally cares more about what is shown in an image, as opposed to how it is shown – which tended to be the norm when good photography mattered.

It took something of a sea change to set the value of good photography on its downward trajectory and it will take an even bigger one to put it back up on its rightful pedestal.

Stephen Power
Portmagee, Kerry

We changed the piece slightly to give not Terry's spoken words but his meaning. On the morning that my Guardian piece came out, four publishers rang him up, so our effort wasn't wasted.

Jonathan Sale
London

ITVX news is on the air, online and on an app

In 'What happened to ITVX News?' (Tech download, April/May), you incorrectly report that 'one of the promises made was that there would be a 24/7 feed of rolling reports from ITV News – a presenterless ITV News Channel'. The piece adds: 'Given the BBC is effectively largely reducing its UK news channel by stealth, this failure to launch couldn't have come at a worse time.'

ITVX was launched at the end of 2022 and, from day one, a news service has featured in a prominent position on the homepage. This already popular video news service is available on connected televisions, the ITVX mobile app and website. It is something of a first in British broadcasting and, of course, free to access.

We have described the service in official press materials: <https://tinyurl.com/mrxhd9u>.

A team of newly hired journalists creates content 24/7 including an always up-to-date bulletin (whose presenters include our most familiar newscasters), originally commissioned news packages throughout the day and night that are made for ITVX - not programmes - and we also draw on the best of our content from the regions and nations to cover all areas of the country.

Stephen Hull
Head of digital content and strategy, ITV News

Unfortunately the story we ran on the technology page was inaccurate. We apologise to everyone involved in the ITVX news operation for the error and to our readers who rightly expect our reports to be factual.

Christine Buckley, Editor

Keeler letter and Chaucer cheekiness strike a chord

Philippe Bassett's sympathetic letter (Your say, April/May) confirms my impression that Christine Keeler was a more vulnerable character than her co-defendant. Randy Mice-Davies joined Libby Purves in a Thames expedition for a piece we ran in Punch entitled 'Three women in a boat' (I've forgotten who the third rower was) and

her "He would, wouldn't he?" quote, which we put on the spine of the issue, was instantly recognisable.

The next letter strikes a chord – a very minor chord – with me too. Before he had written a word about Chaucer, I was interviewing Terry Jones about his fascination with a handful of lines in The Canterbury Tales. As he was a friend and neighbour, I showed him the piece, in which he was quoted

accurately as saying that the lines didn't make sense.

He immediately told me that his opinion seemed on the face of it to be very cheeky, criticising a major author. What he meant was that today we were missing crucial references in the text and that Chaucer was being satirical.

The mighty battles referred to were in fact massacres and the Knight was not perfect and gentle but a war criminal.

The BBC doesn't seem to know what a region is

Veteran journalists must cringe at the low standard of BBC TV and radio regional bulletins since the merger (massacre?). As I'm sure readers will know, Oxfordshire is a landlocked county, yet we Oxonians are now served up with a regular supply of stories emanating from the coastal counties.

The limit was a piece, I kid you not, about trains on the Isle of Wight.

Peter Deeley
Life member

BBC is mixed up with its channels online and TV

I agree with a lot of Raymond Snoddy's piece on the BBC (April-May), but I thought returning BBC3 to TV was a mistake. Having it online made sense, as it is designed for younger people, who often watch streamed content, rather than programmes when they're broadcast on TV.

What clearly makes no sense at all is putting BBC4 online only, as that channel mainly appeals to people who do watch programmes when they're broadcast on TV. What can the thinking be? Are the plans to close BBC4 just part of a general process of dumping

down, devised by people who can't see the point of historical documentaries, stage plays from theatres, or the excellent foreign dramas we've seen in recent years? Those of us who like dramas in other languages will have to desert the BBC in favour of the Walter Presents strand on More 4.

Sheila Miller
London

Peter healed rifts with song and humour

I feel myself gently chided by the ghost of Peter O'Rourke. His ghost is perplexed at some confusion that crept into his obituary which I wrote, published in the last edition.

This suggested that a sing-song between Peter and Seamus Doooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, followed a sharp disagreement between them at a meeting in Waterford.

Let the record state that, while there were many such convivial gatherings over the years, there was never a cross word between brothers Peter and Seamus. In the haste of my editorial process, a general point about Peter's ability to heal rifts with song and humour was miraculously transformed into an unimaginable disagreement.

In fact, neither had been party to the original disagreement. This involved other members. Then Peter put his voice to use to set the formerly contending parties singing together. The cause of the disagreement is long forgotten. Peter's singing that night is not.

Let us set the record straight and allow Peter's ghost to rest.

Anton McCabe
Derry and North West Ireland branch

Mystery cartoon of harassed news sub

Your April-May cover cartoon of a newsroom prompts me to send this wonderful portrait of a harassed night news sub.

It is signed Wendy Holden and dated 1993 when I photocopied it – but where is it from? The Journalist? If not, perhaps your readers would know. And where is Ms Holden now?

Her cartoon made an excellent illustration for a talk about

newspapers, especially subbing, that I gave to Methodist church groups. She shows the dawn of 'new tech' – the sub has a computer but uses it merely as a stand for his reference books. I just hope he caught his last train.

Stafford Mortimer
Life Member

We've not been able to locate it in The Journalist unfortunately. But hopefully someone may be able to help find this hard-working sub? We were wondering if the creator may be bestselling novelist Wendy Holden, who has included subeditors in her work. If you can help, please email journalist@nuj.org.uk

Congratulations on your best-ever issues

In the 50 years I've been receiving the Journalist or something of its ilk, some have gone straight into the bin.

The current and recent editions are by the far best ever.

So good in fact I look forward to it much more than my bi-monthly copy of Private Eye.

Congratulations all round.

Chris Gill
Life member



STEVE BELL

THE OWNERS





Story behind the picture

Chamber Music on Valentia
By Stephen Power

I first joined the NUJ in 1981, which was around the time I realised that standing in front of world-class musicians with my camera was as good as it got, photographically speaking.

This obsession began with heavy-metal and rock bands at the Royal Court theatre in Liverpool and, over the past 40 years, has embraced many other musical genres including Jazz, classical and even Irish traditional music.

Most publications tend to prefer on-stage images of live performances, and I have certainly done several drum-loads of those. However, my preference is for backstage or sound-check photography, where performers are usually more 'themselves' rather than the personas they want the audience to see.

I moved to Ireland in 1999 and have latterly lived in South County Kerry, including five years on Valentia Island. It is a remote beauty spot, providing a mesmerising view of the Skellig Rocks, made famous by their appearance in Star Wars movies.

It did not take me long to become involved with Chamber Music on Valentia, an annual festival that runs over four days every August and is now in its 10th year. It is organised by pianist Mary Dullea, director of musical performance at Royal Holloway University in London, and her internationally renowned violinist husband Darragh Morgan.

This photo, taken at a rehearsal, shows Mary, Darragh (left) and world-class violinist and conductor Keith Pascoe engulfed in fits of laughter after Mary began playing the wrong piece of music. It is a world away from the serious, sometimes austere impression that they might give of themselves when playing for audiences. That is precisely why I like it, and why I strive to take photos that show the real musician behind the stage performer while they are backstage.



The face of industrial reporting and sailing the boat Nuclear Electric with champion yachtsman Chay Blyth in the Solent in 1992

Giles Smith

From the 1960s to the 1980s, national news was dominated by a corps of journalists who are now almost extinct – the labour reporters or industrial correspondents. In effect, they were ‘strike correspondents’, covering the great struggles of that era, and were more prominent than their political colleagues at Westminster.

Giles Smith was industrial correspondent and editor at Independent Television News (ITN) for most of that time, broadcasting most nights on News at Ten when the programme often got 10 million viewers. He was also involved personally in labour relations as father of the NUJ chapel at ITN, and was a significant figure of the union.

The son of a Buckinghamshire GP, Smith enjoyed being a minor rebel when he attended private schools. Instead of going to university, he did a shorthand/typing course at a local college. That led to an £8-a-week stint on the Harrow Observer, then the Western Mail in Cardiff, where he became industrial correspondent.

The experience of covering Aberfan in 1966, when a huge colliery tip slid down a mountain onto a mining village, killing

116 children and 28 adults, affected him deeply for life. His reporting from working-class communities in south Wales convinced him workers should be properly rewarded.

Smith moved to The Times business news, where he specialised in the motor industry, then had a spell with BBC radio. In 1973, as ITN expanded its labour team, industrial editor Peter Sissons appointed Smith as one of his deputies.

Smith’s agenda over the next 14 years ranged through: OPEC oil price rises; the 1973-74 miners’ strike; Labour’s social contract with the unions; the 1979 winter of discontent; and the steel, coal and printers’ disputes of the 1980s when the Thatcher government eroded union power.

Smith became father of the ITN chapel when broadcasting faced its own troubles. In 1979, the ACTT technicians’ union staged an 11-week strike over pay, and Smith agreed with the editor of ITN, David Nicholas, that journalists should be sent home on full pay rather than breach ACTT picket lines. Smith organised a hardship fund to help technician colleagues who were in need and, when the ACTT secured a huge 45 per cent pay rise, the NUJ submitted its own claim for even more. Smith would recall the face

of the chief ITV negotiator: “I feared a physical assault... But in the end, he just shook his head in disbelief and, a few days later, gave in.”

Smith served as FoC with authority, wisdom and wit. He was “like a pit bull” when agitated, says colleague John Hunt. “He wouldn’t let go.” Yet he was no left-wing radical. “He was from the school of making sure people were fairly treated.” He had the remarkable ability to read the room, Hunt adds. “He knew when enough was enough, and it was time to settle.”

Smith was also a leading figure in the London TV branch, on the union’s broadcasting industrial council and the national executive council. He was “astute, succinct and persuasive in debate”, recalls John Toner, then a young NEC member. Former treasurer John Bailey remembers him as “sensible about spending”.

Smith worked closely with legendary political reporter Vincent Hanna, who led the NUJ at the BBC. The pair cooperated in 1985 when NUJ members in commercial TV joined their BBC colleagues in a one-day strike over the BBC governors’ decision to cancel a documentary which involved former IRA leader Martin McGuinness.

Smith served as FoC at ITN for 14 years, though increasingly needed to delegate after he became sports

correspondent and had to travel overseas. As ITV faced huge financial problems in the late 1980s – ITN especially – the unions could not prevent severe job cuts.

Former NUJ broadcasting officer John Fray has “a lasting memory of Giles lying on the floor trying to get some sleep until the talks resumed. In truth, management never intended to reach an agreement. Instead, they just wanted to exhaust procedure and, come the dawn, they delivered individual notices to those they wanted to dismiss.”

The compulsory redundancies included Smith himself. NUJ colleagues wanted to argue his case, but he feared accusations of special treatment.

He moved back to Wales and became HTV’s reporter for west Wales, living in Tenby.

In retirement, he enjoyed sailing and qualified as a Thames Valley cricket umpire. In early April, returning from an eye test, he stopped for a pint, but collapsed at the bar. Paramedics could not save him. He was 78.

Giles Smith leaves behind his partner Sandra Kiely, his former wife Gladwyn, and three daughters Sian, Georgia and Alex.

Michael Crick
Colleague at ITN from 1980 to 1990



MIKE MCKENZIE

John Story

Photographer John Story, who worked for Cumbrian newspapers for almost four decades, and is remembered as a respected colleague and advocate for NUJ members, has died aged 67.

In his working life, John was well known throughout the whole of West Cumbria – the ever-present newsman with his camera at the ready at the area's many community events and top stories.

Kendal born, he was a photographer with the Barrow Mail for a time before joining Cumbrian Newspapers in the late 1970s. Based at The Whitehaven News offices on Queen Street, he would also provide a picture service to the company's other titles including the Times & Star, News & Star and The Cumberland News.

Former Whitehaven News editor Colin Edgar said: "This is a dreadful shock and I send deepest sympathy to Mandy and the rest of John's family.

"So many readers will have known John. Like every newspaper photographer, he was there for the milestones in people's lives – the first week at school, the school proms, the big wedding anniversaries and those moments of triumph and tragedy.

"He had a knack of chivvying people along to get just the right photo because he had the photographer's eye – he knew what image would catch the reader's attention.

"As a paid-up member of the human race, he would have a grumble when we piled 'just one more job' on him when he already had a to-do list as long as your arm. But when he came back to the office to process his pictures, he would rush to show you the end results, justifiably proud in his craftsmanship.

"May you rest in peace, John. You've earned it."

Long-time colleague and former Whitehaven News reporter Margaret Crosby said: "John was always a pleasure to work with and was highly regarded for his photographic talent and his good-natured interaction with the public – both important factors for the success of a local

newspaper. His loss is deeply felt, and our sympathies go out to Mandy and the family.

"John would be first on the scene when a big story broke, due to his wide network of local intelligence and, in pre-digital days, working to deadlines, would have the film processed, developed, printed and transmitted on to the news editors in double-quick time. He covered every royal visit, hundreds of carnivals, fetes, agricultural shows and sporting events, travelling many miles in the process.

Chris Morley, the NUJ's Northern and Midlands senior organiser, said: "John was a solid and loyal member of the NUJ, having joined in the middle of the long hot summer of 1976.

"I'm not sure if that was what inspired his trade unionism, but John stayed with the union through thick and thin and achieved life membership having completed more than 40 consecutive years.

"Not content with simply being a member, John also took on the role of father of chapel, where he was a strong advocate for his members at The Whitehaven News for many years. Even after stepping away from his excellent press photographer role, John continued his NUJ affiliations as chair of the West Cumbria branch.

"John was in every way respected by his colleagues and the union has lost a fine champion in the region."

Obituary reproduced with permission from The Whitehaven News

HUGH RUSSELL



Henry McDonald

Belfast branch member Henry McDonald, who has died after a long illness, was one of Northern Ireland's leading journalists. At the time of his death, he was political editor of Belfast daily The Newsletter. Previously, he worked for the Irish News, Evening Press, BBC, Observer, Guardian, and Sunday Times. He was author of four non-fiction books and three novels.

He was born in the Markets area, in inner-city

Belfast, one of two children to Thomas McDonald, a labourer, and Florence, a dressmaker. The parents were members of the left-wing Official Republican Movement. Florence was a strong woman of firm, left-wing, anti-sectarian views. Henry inherited those and they framed his journalism.

That is particularly seen in his work with fellow journalist Suzanne Breen to expose the 2005 murder of Robert McCartney. IRA members knifed McCartney to death outside a central Belfast bar. The IRA organised a clean-up of the evidence and intimidated witnesses.

Henry knew the character of some of the attackers as neighbours of his family. His and Breen's work made the murder a major issue.

Henry was always even-handed in his work. Loyalist group the Red Hand Defenders threatened to kill him for his reporting.

As a journalist, he strove to expose the truth. Sadly, in his last months, he fought to access his own truth, seeking disclosure of his medical records.

Henry was educated at St Malachy's College in Belfast. He briefly attended the University of Edinburgh, returning home to attend Queen's University Belfast. He completed postgraduate studies in journalism at Dublin City University.

In his teens, he was part of Belfast's first wave of punks. Punk erupted as a non-sectarian youth culture in a polarised city. For a time, he fronted the band Flea Circus. Thwarted in hopes of musical success, he moved to journalism. He began fulfilling that ambition at Queen's by editing the student newspaper.

Henry always remembered his roots. Some years before his death, he returned to live in his home area. He remained a fierce supporter of Belfast's Cliftonville Football Club as well as of Everton.

He was loyal to, and protective of, people. A friend who was being intimidated by republicans remembers Henry calling at his house in support. He was always ready to assist colleagues while protecting sources.

Henry suffered ill-health through much of his life. That never dimmed his zest for life. Nor could it quench a determination that could be stubborn.

He was enthusiastic for everything he undertook. That made him a ferocious newshound. A friend and fellow journalist's daughter was graduating from the University of Galway on a day of fierce storms. The friend posted on social media that she was attending the graduation. As she waited for the conferring to commence, Henry rang and asked: "Could you give me a couple of pangs on the gales, please?"

He is survived by his sister Cathy, partner Charlotte Bleasdale, children Lauren, Ellen and Patrick, their mother Claire Breen and ex-partner June Caldwell.

Anton McCabe

Spurious, dull and welcomed by bigwigs



Artificial intelligence is a bad choice for the press, says **Chris Proctor**

I don't care for artificial intelligence (AI). For a kick-off, it's artificial. That's not a good start. How often do you hear someone who's been given a present saying, "Oh, thanks so much, it's fake – my favourite! I was hoping for something bogus and unnatural."

I've been wary of AI since the film 2001 scared the pants off me. Now it's poking its nose into our industry. Publishing bigwigs love it: it doesn't get out of bed late, nip out for a fag, take two days off for its mother's funeral or demand a pay rise. Top employee.

But some are overenthusiastic about AI. Such as German gossip magazine Die Aktuelle. One day last month, a journalist dashed into the office of editor Anne Hoffmann to pitch a front-page story.

"I've got a great idea," he said. "What about an interview with former world champion racing driver Michael Schumacher?"

"Excellent. He's been a recluse since a skiing accident almost 10 years ago. How did you make contact with him?"

"I haven't. I thought I'd just make it up."

"In theory, I'm with you, but I'm sorry – I can't let you do that. It's immoral and deceptive."

"But what if I get a robot to make it up for me?"

"That would be fine."

And they ran it. Blaring header; huge, if aged, picture of Schumacher; enticing strap reading 'the first interview'; and, yes, an interview. There were hints that it might not have been completely orthodox: a smaller font mentioned that the story was 'deceptively real'; and, after various verbatim accounts of his family and his

health, there was mention that all the quotes had been produced by artificial intelligence. After all, it's the same thing. In a way. Don't you think?

The Schumacher family didn't. They said it was cobbles, and they would know. They threatened to sue, the spoilsports.

So how come a journalist isn't allowed to make up a story, but her machine is? Why would that be?

It's like that chef Chris Galvin. 'Celebrity' chef I should say, as I don't think you're allowed to be a chef if you're not a celebrity. The two are inextricably linked. Apparently, you need to be famous to turn the gas on.

Anyway, Galvin was beside himself with glee last week when some AI kit called ChatGPT came up with a recipe for seared quail breast. "Impressive," he said. "Bang on for seasonality."

Splendid news for seared quail breast fanciers, then, if not for quails. But why is a recipe made up by a computer more exciting than one slapped together by a human? It's not as if AI is attractive. I know. I've spoken to it.

"What would you like to talk about today?"

"Unexpected debit from account."

"So you'd like to talk about a loan? Is that correct?"

"No. Unauthorised withdrawal from account."

"So you'd like to talk about a mortgage application? Is that correct?"

"Fraud. Fraud. FRAUD."

"So you'd like to talk about your credit score?"

"No, I'd like you to interview Michael Schumacher, you dumb lump of metal."

"Certainly. Par one: my family support me and are standing at my side, Michael told me..."

I struggle to think why anyone would want to insert a machine between a writer and their copy. In every other industry, bosses are anxious to increase profits by cutting out the middle man. In ours, they want to put a middle man in. Or, in fact, a middle not-man.

It's not just me. The bloke who set up Google's AI arm, Geoffrey Hinton, says he's bothered about how it's going, pointing to the 'existential risk' of the creation of a true digital intelligence.

Which means there is currently no digital intelligence and, anyway, it's artificial. Yet publishers happily accept it as authoritative, despite it being dull and spurious. And expensive. I can churn out dull and spurious copy with no outlay on development or research.

Hinton also fears AI will lead to job losses. This will begin by sounding sensible, even jolly, he says. Drudge work – repetitive and tedious tasks – will go. Then one day we'll be told that, after consideration, all our work is drudgery, so we can either be sacked or take up a post oiling the mainframe.

Meanwhile robots will be assessing copy and the squeeze will be on for the press, making me conclude that AI isn't a term, it's a choice. A bad one.

But, hey-ho, got to move with the times. So I pitched an AI exclusive with Lord Lucan to Christine, editor of this magazine. She was keen.

"So, you've been missing since 1974. What have you been up to?"

"I've been doing a lot of hiding."

"Anything else?"

"Riding my horse Shergar a lot."

"He's been missing since 1983."

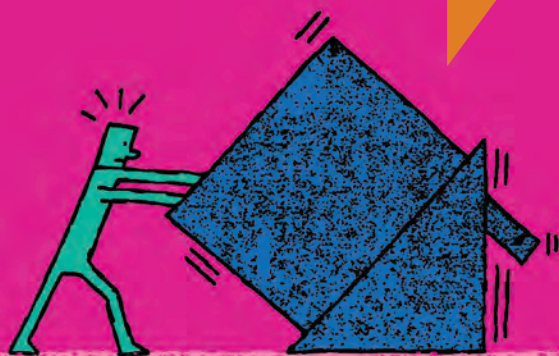
"Yes. I didn't get much exercise for 10 years."

"Can I speak to him?"

"Of course you can! Why not?"

//
So how come a journalist isn't allowed to make up a story, but her machine is? Why would that be?
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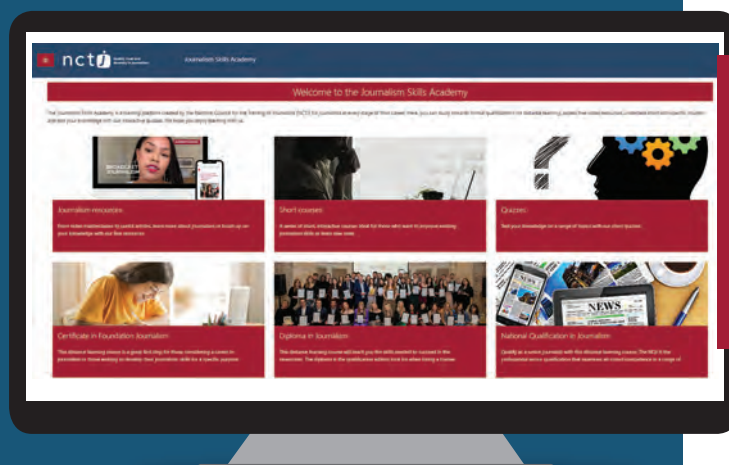
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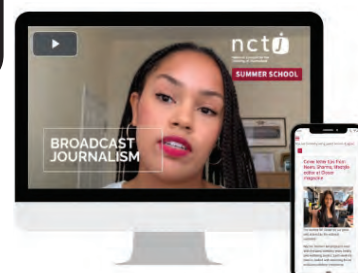
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