

theJournalist

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Figuring out coronavirus

Lies, damned lies and statistics



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It was clear from the start of the coronavirus crisis that journalism would take a bad hit. Advertising virtually collapsed and newspaper sales dropped dramatically as the economy contracted and our way of life changed out of all recognition.

But it is only now that the scale of the damage is beginning to emerge. Now the job retention furlough scheme is moving towards its end, employers are cutting jobs. Sadly, thousands of journalists will lose their jobs and much news will be less diverse and detailed as media organisations centralise their editorial processes to save money. Details of the cuts are on our news pages.

The NUJ has been working hard promoting its news recovery plan to reinvigorate the media industry post pandemic. If Google and Facebook are subject to a special tax and other measures are taken the prospects for the media would be a lot more promising.

Meanwhile, some journalists have been using the lockdown to boost their skills with online training. In our features, Jenny Sims looks at some of the courses on offer. And some journalists have had new skills thrust upon them as they have grappled with the huge amount of statistics involved in the coronavirus story. In our cover feature Neil Merrick looks at how news reporters have shaped up to the data challenge.

We also have our regular pieces including our technology page and arts for online enjoyment.

Here's hoping for a strengthening of our industry soon.

Christine

Christine Buckley
Editor

[@mschrisbuckley](mailto:mschrisbuckley)

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Editor
journalist@nuj.org.uk
Design
Surgerycreations.com
info@surgerycreations.com
Advertising
Melanie Richards
Tel: 07494975239
ads@journalistmagazine.co.uk
Print
Warners
www.warners.co.uk
Distribution
GB Mail
www.gb-mail.co.uk

NUJ
72 Acton Street
London WC1X 9NB
info@nuj.org.uk
www.nuj.org.uk
Tel: 020 7843 3700
Manchester office
nujmanchester@nuj.org.uk
Glasgow office
nujscotland@nuj.org.uk
Dublin office
info@nuj.ie
ISSN: 0022-5541



Cover picture
Peter Grundy

The Journalist's polyfilm wrapping is recyclable at carrier bag recycling points in supermarkets.

Coronavirus triggers huge job losses across the media

THE MEDIA is being hit by one of the worst ever sudden bout of job losses because of the effect of the coronavirus crisis. Thousands of posts are being lost.

The BBC alone is cutting more than 1100 jobs (see page 5) and newspaper groups, magazines and book publishers are accumulating hundreds of redundancies.

The cuts are coming fast and furious as employers prepare for the Government's job preservation furlough scheme to end in August. The losses are hitting young and old alike and some journalists are faced with small severance payments despite many years of service.

Reach, the publisher of the Daily Mirror, the Express, the Daily Star and many regional



PAT STOCKLEY

newspapers, is to cut 550 jobs. Consultations over the job losses were ongoing as The Journalist went to press. The company plans to centralise its operations, bringing together national and regional teams in a move that it says will avoid duplication of work. It has said it needs to cut costs because of falling revenues.

The Guardian is cutting 180 jobs across all its operations amid the expectation that its revenues will fall by £25

million this year. Of those cuts, 110 jobs will go in commercial and other operations and 70 from editorial.

Newsquest is making a small number of job cuts across its regional titles. NUJ members have complained of poor statutory terms with one journalist who had 31 years' service being offered severance of just £10,000.

Midlands News Association is cutting 90 jobs overall with 14 going in editorial at the Wolverhampton Express and Star and Shropshire Star.

Magazine and book publishing have been badly hit by redundancies with significant losses at Emap, Haymarket, Bauer, the Dennis collective, Conde Naste and Harper Collins.



NUJ members have complained of poor statutory terms with one journalist who had 31 years' service being offered severance of just £10,000

inbrief...

NEW RISE IN TRADE UNION MEMBERSHIP

Union membership has increased for the third year running, according to the TUC. The latest figures show that 91,000 more people joined a union, taking the total to 6.4 million. Much of the recent rises have been driven by women members. There are now more women trade unionists than at any time since 1995.

POLLY CURTIS IS PA MEDIA'S NEW MD

PA Media has appointed Polly Curtis, the former HuffPost UK editor in chief as its new managing director. Curtis joins from Tortoise Media, where she was a partner and she has also held senior roles at The Guardian. She will be responsible for the strategic and commercial development of the group's news agency.

NUJ EXTRA VIRUS HELP EXTENDED

NUJ Extra, the union's welfare charity, is extending its support for members affected by the coronavirus until August. Chris Wheal, chair of the trustees, said: "Government support is scheduled to end in August. We intend to match that, making final payments for July and August."

Legal challenge for forgotten freelances

THE NUJ has stepped up its campaign for all freelances to have equal access to the UK Government's income support schemes with a legal challenge. The union says that the Self Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has excluded large numbers of freelance

workers and is therefore discriminatory.

The NUJ also argues that the Treasury has failed to explain the circumstances (if any) in which workers for publicly-funded employers can get support via the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

A pre-action protocol letter sent by

the union to the Treasury argues that the SEISS is unlawful on a number of grounds including that it is discriminatory and irrational and that under certain conditions the scheme violates the European Convention on Human Rights.

Unanimous vote for strike at Bullivant

A BALLOT of NUJ members at Midlands-based Bullivant Media Limited resulted in a 100 per cent vote for strike action and action short of a strike.

The Bullivant Media Limited NUJ chapel was formed in June and includes all 17 editorial staff. The ballot is part of a dispute over pay, jobs and working practices.

It follows deductions in salaries over three months,

growing workloads with fewer staff, and the increasing use of divisive working practices and performance data.

The company runs weekly free papers and websites including the Coventry Observer, Leamington Observer, Rugby Observer, Stratford Observer, Solihull Observer, Redditch Standard, Bromsgrove Standard, Worcester Observer and Evesham Observer.



Recognition win at broadcaster Al-araby

The union has won recognition at the broadcaster Al-araby. The deal covers approximately 80 NUJ members who work at the Arabic language station which launched five years ago.

Paul Siegart, NUJ broadcasting organiser, said: "The NUJ will be negotiating on pay and conditions but we will also be able to ensure our members have a say on a range of other issues."

Violence and intimidation against journalists is on the increase

CONCERN is growing over increasing physical attacks and threats against reporters and photographers covering protests such as the Black Lives Matter demonstrations. There have also been reports of journalists suffering verbal abuse on the streets as they attempt to report the coronavirus story.

'Serious threats have been made against specific journalists, including reporters in Northern Ireland who have been subject to intimidation from a loyalist group. The journalists received huge support from politicians of all parties and groups across the region after the NUJ lobbied them for action.

'In Cumbria Amy Fenton, chief reporter and NUJ MoC at the Mail in Barrow, was forced to leave her home because of threats against her and her young daughter. The harassment followed Amy's report of a court case which is now sub judice under the Contempt of Court Act. She said she had received more than 100 threats of death and physical harm.'

In mid July, the first meeting was held of the National Committee for the Safety of Journalists. The committee was first announced in July 2019 by the then secretary of state for digital, culture, media and sport Jeremy Wright in response to

growing international concern about the treatment of journalists. Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary, is a member of the committee.

During the Black Lives Matter protests, there were also reports of police officers behaving aggressively towards photographers, which the NUJ raised with the National Police Chiefs Council.

Far-right counter demonstrators to the Black Lives Matter movement are thought to have been the perpetrators of violence against reporters and photographers at some protests, including breaking a photographer's nose and grabbing mobile phones from reporters filming the violence.

The aggression towards journalists was such that some media organisations advised their staff not to try to seek interviews or engage with protestors.

The NUJ is seeking government support for the International Federation of Journalists' draft UN Convention on the Safety and Independence of Journalists and other Media professionals.



JESS HURD



The aggression towards journalists was such that some media organisations advised their staff not to seek interviews or engage with protestors

Story Behind the Picture, page 21

Tax move to support hard-hit French media

THE NUJ has praised the French government's decision to introduce tax credits for subscriptions to newspapers and magazines.

This is one of the measures that the NUJ is calling for in its news recovery plan, which outlines a series of measures to help media

organisations survive the coronavirus crisis.

The NUJ's plan is one of many initiatives from journalists' unions around the world and from the umbrella organisation the International Federation of Journalists.

The French measure

includes a one-off deduction of up to €50 (£45) for households subscribing for the first time and for at least 12 months to a newspaper, magazine or online news service.

Meanwhile, the Scottish Conservatives have launched a newspaper recovery plan

to support the long-term future of the industry. The plan was drafted following an online meeting with the NUJ's Edinburgh Freelance Branch.

The scheme looks to support local and regional journalism through additional funding streams,

and national media with additional Scottish government advertising expenditure. It also includes rates relief and a journalism foundation, which will invest in local journalism, innovative media projects, new star-ups and investigative journalism

Police apologise to the No Stone Unturned journalists

THE UNION has claimed a victory for investigative journalism following the publication of the full judgment quashing the arrest warrants issued last year against the No Stone Unturned journalists Trevor Birney and Barry McCaffrey. The police have also apologised to the pair.

The case concerned the circumstances in

which the police can use the ex parte procedure in the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1989 to obtain a search warrant in respect of journalistic material. Under the legislation, it is usual practice that journalists are issued with a production order and journalists can then challenge this request in an open court.



BONZO / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

BBC to cut more than 1,100 jobs in huge savings drive

THE BBC is to cut 1,120 jobs in its national news operation and across regional news in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Some 520 jobs are to go in national news and 600 in regional output, of which 450 are in England. The Andrew Neil Show, launched last September, is one of the high-profile casualties along with the Victoria Derbyshire Show, which was cut earlier this year.

The BBC anticipates that it will lose £125 million from commercial operations because of the impact of the coronavirus crisis on its revenues. It has already had to make £800 million in savings during the current licence fee period, including £80 million in the news department.

Before the coronavirus crisis, the

corporation had planned to cut 450 jobs in national positions but it has now added another 70 to the total. It then put those cuts on hold in recognition of the importance of news during the pandemic.

Of the national post closures, 120 were identified in January and a further 150 in July when the total was increased, leaving 250 still to be specified.

The corporation wants the regional cuts to contribute towards the savings planned during this licence fee period, which ends in 2027. This means savings of £25 million will have to be made in England by 2022.

Paul Siegert, NUJ national broadcasting organiser, said: "All through Covid-19, the BBC has shown its worth time and time again, with staff going the extra mile to keep services on air. Now the reward for many of those hard-working journalists will be the threat of redundancy."



All through Covid-19, staff have gone the extra mile. The reward for many of those hard-working journalists will be threat of redundancy

Paul Siegert
NUJ national
broadcasting organiser

JESS HURD

inbrief...

TIM DAVIE IS NEW BBC DIRECTOR GENERAL

The BBC has appointed Tim Davie, currently chief executive of BBC studios, as its next director general. He will take over from Lord Tony Hall in September. Davie has been a BBC executive for 15 years and, before that, had senior roles at PepsiCo and Procter and Gamble. He was acting director general during the Jimmy Savile scandal before Lord Hall's appointment.

IVENS REPLACES ABELL AT THE TLS

Martin Ivens, a former editor of the Sunday Times, is replacing Stig Abell as editor of the Times Literary Supplement. Abell has left after four years to take up a role as executive editor at News UK's radio and podcast division Wireless. Abell was launch director for Times Radio and co-presented the breakfast show.

BLOG TELLS STORY OF JOURNALIST PIONEER

NUJ member Michael Herbert has created a blog to highlight the work of Madeline Linford (1895-1975), the first woman journalist on the Manchester Guardian, who worked there from 1913 to 1953. In 1919 and 1921 she reported on hunger and disease in Austria and Poland. <https://madelinelinford.wordpress.com>

Celebrity pleas win reprieve for Inside Out

AWARD-WINNING current affairs series *Inside Out* has had a semi-reprieve after petitioning from well-known people including Sir Lenny Henry, Stephen Fry,

Benjamin Zephaniah, Ken Loach, Samira Ahmed and Edwina Currie.

Staff had been told to stop working on the autumn series pending a review. But, after a

letter from 100 high-profile figures asked the BBC to save the series, a new current affairs show will be produced in six regional hubs. However, 29 jobs will still be lost.

The union also welcomed the news that Sunday Politics, which had been cut to one national programme during Covid-19, will return to its regional slots.

BAJ backs away from sweetheart deal

THE BRITISH Association of Journalists (BAJ) has withdrawn from a sweetheart sole recognition deal with the broadcaster Iran International following a concerted campaign against the agreement by the NUJ. The NUJ will now resubmit a recognition request to the Central Arbitration Committee.

The BAJ won the deal with Iran International in July, despite the overwhelming number of journalists there being NUJ members who were fighting for recognition.

The NUJ received reports of pressure being put on staff to join the BAJ. This created great concern especially as many of the journalists depend on their job and their employer for their visa to live in the UK.



New editor starts at Evening Standard

Emily Sheffield has become the new editor of London's Evening Standard with George Osborne moving to the role of editor in chief.

She started in journalism as a graduate news trainee at the Guardian before spending five years at the Standard. She has been a columnist for the Standard since 2018 and is also the founder of female-led digital news brand ThisMuchIKnow.

Irish government pledges to look at the media's future and finances

THE NUJ has welcomed the inclusion of a commission on the future of the media in the proposed programme for the new Irish government but added this was 'long overdue'.

Séamus Dooley, NUJ Irish secretary (pictured), said the union warmly welcomed a commission and called for immediate steps to deal with both the financial crisis in the broadcaster RTÉ and difficulties in the struggling regional newspaper sector.

He said: "The NUJ has long been campaigning for a strategic review of the media industry in Ireland. We welcome the positive tone of the programme and the recognition of the need for a diverse, media sector."

"As part of our rescue plan for the industry, we have called for all areas of media policy to be transferred from the Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment to a department covering arts, culture, heritage and the media. This would be similar to the model that existed from 1993 to 1997 under Michael D Higgins [the current Irish president and former arts and culture minister]. We hope that this proposal will be considered in government formation talks."



NUJ

However, the union is concerned about a lack of urgency on the part of the outgoing government in dealing with the financial crisis in RTÉ.

The original Commission on Public Service Broadcasting was announced last December by Richard Bruton, minister for communications, climate action and the environment, with a report promised by September 2020. Despite the appointment of a chair, no meaningful work has started. This means that, in the meantime, RTÉ is prevented from selling land or taking strategic decisions to address its worsening finances.

Dooley said: "A broad-ranging commission should draw on international best practice, including funding models for assisting media organisations and journalists without compromising editorial independence."

"There is also a need for urgent financial assistance for the ailing newspaper sector. Regional newspapers are on the brink of collapse and a

package of short-term measures is needed in order to protect local journalism. The scale of the threat cannot be overstated. Unfortunately, there is not time to wait for the report of the proposed commission."



Regional newspapers are on the brink of collapse and a package of short-term measures is needed to protect local journalism

Séamus Dooley
NUJ Irish secretary

Reporter wins award for abuse investigation

RODNEY EDWARDS, deputy editor of County Fermanagh weekly the *Impartial Reporter*, has won the Regional Press Awards Weekly/Sunday reporter of the year award for his work into historic child abuse.

Edwards spoke to scores of victims

of abuse going back several decades after one of them walked into the newspaper's office in Enniskillen.

As the issue became public knowledge following the long-running coverage by the *Impartial Reporter*, about 70 people came

forward to report that they were victims.

Abuse is said to have taken place in schools, care homes and houses and was an unspoken issue.

The police service of Northern Ireland has been investigating the

claims and made a number of arrests.

Earlier this year, the *Impartial Reporter* said the issue was being treated more seriously following the resumption of the Northern Ireland devolved government at Stormont.

Student awards honour Bob Norris

THREE journalism students at colleges in the Solent area have won a new award set up in memory of a champion of journalists' rights.

Gemma Wardle at Highbury College, James Connolly at the University of Portsmouth and Jordan Wood at Solent University won the Bob Norris Award for Achievement. Awards go to one student at each of the three main journalism training institutions in the area.

The scheme was setup by the NUJ's Solent

branch in tribute to the late Bob Norris, their former chair and a cherished colleague.

His widow Pauline Norris, a former journalist and Solent NUJ chair, said: "Bob encouraged hundreds of students throughout the UK to achieve the highest standards to the best of their ability."

Norris spent the early years of his career on the Hampshire Chronicle before working tirelessly as NUJ assistant general secretary.



A vision of less profit and more investment



The New York Times may show a way, says **Raymond Snoddy**

Now is hardly the best time to think about different models of funding newspapers and journalism in the midst of cruel job losses and with the dangers of more to come after the furlough scheme is phased out.

But Mark Thompson, former director-general of the BBC and for the last eight years chief executive of the New York Times, has some interesting things to say on what the way forward should look like.

Perhaps they're more ideas for later once the current crisis calms down, if it does in the foreseeable future.

The reason British newspaper owners and executives should listen to Thompson is that he has presided over a remarkable period of growth in New York.

Not every paper can be the New York Times or match its weight or reach but digital subscription revenues there are running at more than \$800 million a year and digital subscribers have passed the 6 million mark and are rising.

The paper President Trump likes to call the 'failing Times' is the opposite of that.

Perhaps most telling of all in the midst of a very severe Covid-19 outbreak in the US, the paper is still hiring journalists rather than letting them go and adding to its large pool of software engineers.

The New York Times executive believes that too many newspapers are still trying to operate on what he sees as the traditional business model.

This, Thompson believes, involves trying to make a big profit every year and then nursing your way through

economic downturns by shedding jobs and hoping for better times to come.

Instead, the aim should be to, in effect, limit profitability, in order to invest more not only in journalism but also in the marketing and packaging of that journalism to build a regular subscriber base.

He points to the way that Netflix founder Reed Hastings continues to invest billions of dollars a year to build subscribers.

Netflix is not the newspaper business and has massive debts, and talk of investing more in newspapers seems quaintly theoretical in the face of the current near-existential threat to many small titles, never mind some bigger battalions.

Lockdown only came on March 23 and, before Covid-19, there was a life – and there will be after one after the pandemic, although it may be a different world.

It is now clear that, historically, in what passed for better pre-pandemic times, newspaper owners did not invest enough to build a long-term sustainable future and have often been too fast to axe journalists' jobs.

It seems almost crazy to suggest it now with the UK economy in its current state but, when the worst is over, a way must be found to invest more in journalism.

Journalism, after all, is the product newspapers and broadcasters sell even though in the case of the BBC it is financed by the licence fee.

Neglect or squeeze the journalism and, ultimately, you lose not just a role but eventually also a business.

Back in the harsh world of what is now Reach, publisher of the Daily

Mirror and the Daily Express as well as local and regional titles all over the UK, 550 jobs (12 per cent of the workforce) are being cut.

This is in response to unprecedented trading conditions with revenues in the quarter to June 28 down by 27.5 per cent – print off by 29.5 per cent and digital down a mere 14.8 per cent.

Reach is not the first company to dress up job cuts as a quest for greater efficiency and the avoidance of duplication.

There is an element of centralisation involved with production about to be concentrated in a fewer locations.

For local and regional papers, ending localness is a counterproductive business step.

With Thompson in mind, perhaps Reach could perhaps use the period of consultation as something other than a box-ticking exercise and review the number of journalists it actually needs for a sustainable future.

The BBC needs to save £25 million – as a result mainly of director-general Lord Tony Hall's licence fee settlement with the government and the postponement of most over 75-year-olds having to pay the licence fee. Against such a financial background, cuts are inevitable. It is more difficult to see how ripping the heart out of local radio and regional current affairs with the loss of 600 jobs fits the BBC's social purpose and reason for a licence-fee funded existence.

Not sure whether Mark Thompson would approve.

An interview by Raymond Snoddy with Mark Thompson will appear in InPublishing out on August 7

“The aim should be to limit profitability to invest more in journalism and also in the marketing of that journalism to build a regular subscriber base”



Learn while

There are plenty of opportunities online to hone existing skills and develop new ones – as well as to help you cope and plan. **Jenny Sims** takes a look

Since the coronavirus lockdown, online courses to help journalists update or learn skills and help them prepare for a new future have flourished.

Yes, it is hard, with job losses, redundancies, projects and commissions for freelances cancelled or dried up. Yet enforced social isolation has offered time for people to take stock of their lives and careers and consider change.

Never before has so much varied training been offered by so many organisations, particularly the NUJ and its sister unions in the Federation of Entertainment Unions (FEU). Some of this is free.

The FEU's deal with the BBC Academy allows freelance members of the FEU, the NUJ, the Writers' Guild of Great Britain, BECTU and Equity free access to its online courses.

The use of Zoom and virtual training have broken down geographical barriers to NUJ

training throughout the UK and Ireland, opening this up to members wherever they live or work.

Opportunities abound not only for polishing professional skills and acquiring new ones but also, thanks to the wellbeing webinars, to cope with the problems of loneliness, isolation and stress resulting from Covid-19, as one of the case studies shows.

<https://www.nuj.org.uk/work/training/>

Copywriting

COPYWRITER Hannah Abbott's two-hour webinar for the NUJ could turn out to be a game-changer for some of the freelances who signed up for it.

Introductions revealed we worked in every part of the media: newspapers, magazines, broadcasting, digital, and public relations and comms.

We knew we had transferable skills. Covid-19 had made us hungry to know how to apply them to new areas.

Abbott whetted our appetites with tales of copywriters being better paid, having more freedom and better lifestyles.

She may also have flattered us, saying: "I think journalists make the best copywriters."

We may not all have wanted to switch careers,

but everyone wanted at least to add another string to their bow.

Because of Covid-19, a young sports reporter and commentator had no live sport to cover. The food and wine writers faced a similar problem with no restaurants to review, and the travel writer could not travel.

A few were looking for a change of direction and lifestyle, to give up news shifts and commuting and be able to work from home.

A successful PR with international clients wanted to engage in projects in her local community. A science journalist who had been

writing for a website and become good at headline writing because he was paid per click realised his was a copywriting skill and thought he would enjoy it.

Abbott, a former newspaper and magazine journalist, said switching to copywriting had helped her enjoy a slower pace of life that was also more lucrative and fulfilling.

"Looking back, it seems crazy I would be paid £150 for a double page spread. Now I can charge five times that for a similar spread in a brochure. Good clients pay you well, on time, because they value what you do for them," she said.

So, how do you become a good copywriter – and a

successful one? Abbott's top tip is: "Have the right mindset. Write to be effective, not impressive. It's about getting good results, getting people to act on what you've written, to do or buy something. If it sounds like writing, I will rewrite it."

What's the difference between journalism and copywriting? Journalism focuses on the facts and the duty to inform and hold people to account. Copywriting focuses on emotion.

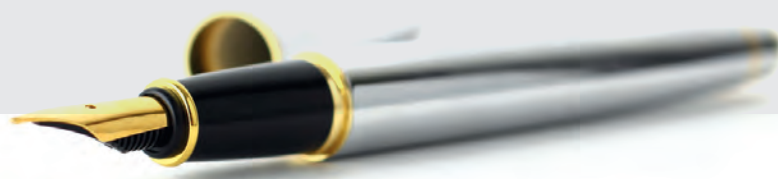
"When I trained, it was all about the five Ws: who, what, where, when and why? Copywriting is about the three Ps: problem, pain, predicament. Identifying problems and giving solutions."

How do you get started? Lacking a portfolio or a qualification does not necessarily put you in a catch-22 situation.

Abbott's tips include: think hard about the work you have done and where it was published. Research competitors. Adapt the skills you already have; for example, interviewing experience enables you to obtain a good briefing.

There are steps to get off the ground during lockdown. On day 1, spread the word you're a copywriter and open for business. Offer a discounted launch rate. On day 2, decide on a business name and register the domain for your website.

The webinar also gave a wealth of detailed advice about finding clients, pitching and managing business and resources. It was well worth the time – and the money.





in lockdown

Launch a podcast in only one day

I SIGNED up to the NUJ podcasting course with social media trainer Dan Mason, partly because I thought it might help my campaigning work with the National Pensioners Convention on digital inclusion.

I had seen his promo video, 'Always wanted to but never had the time?' with its promise of working as a group then getting a post-course toolkit, and I took the bait.

My fellow journalists on the course wanted to promote their work, their causes or themselves.

Mason pointed out that podcasts are a great way of doing all these things and can also "increase traffic to your website, sell a product or service and lead to a regular stream of income".

Before the course, we had to download the latest free version of the Zoom app. We

were told that to create our podcasts we would need a fully charged smartphone (iPhone or Android) or iPad, with a charger, earbuds and microphone.

Podcast subscribers are probably the most loyal audience online because it is

personal, says Mason. However, podcasting takes time, investment and practice. Research through listening to the style, content, editing, music and delivery of several podcasts in our chosen genres would not be wasted.

We analysed why we wanted to launch a podcast, who our audience was, style and title.

I don't know whether On the Shelf, A Woman on Wheels, NUJ Podcast, The Generation Game or Lifting the Veil on Muslims in the Media will have been launched by the time this

article is published. These titles were chosen on the day.

We learned about equipment, microphones, editing software, plus how to edit recordings, create an episode, make a trailer (should be short and snappy) and send it to Anchor, a podcast platform.

Finally, we had to think about our launch: "Shout about your podcast. Get everyone you know, friends, family, to share the link, leave a review. Get testimonials."

Mason deserves one himself: "It was a challenging day, but an exciting one. A great course."



Wellbeing and humour in isolation: reflections and rethinking your future

THE BLURB read: "Working alone doesn't suit everybody and we're all running the risk of lockdown fatigue. Yet from isolation comes inspiration."

HERlarious - Comedy, Wellbeing and Confidence for Creatives promised: "We will give you some strategies to plan the life we want to lead when this is all over."

Host Lynne Parker, award-winning producer and founder of Funny Women (who would normally be preparing for the Edinburgh Fringe at this time) ensured it did what it said on the tin.

The one-hour workshop was run jointly by WEConnect

International (a women's business social enterprise) and Funny Women, who recognise: "Wellbeing is paramount for personal and business survival."

Trainer Jo Carnegie, author, advice columnist and journalist specialising in wellbeing and workplace loneliness, focused on putting work/life boundaries in place.

With 20 years' experience of lone working, she was happy to share tips on how to enjoy it: "Have a routine, set working hours, get out of the pyjamas, get dressed, put on lipstick."

Her next tip was: "Stop using tech and start talking."

Picking up the phone "can save time and help you build relationships".

People should accept loneliness is normal and build up a support network or 'tribe'.

Finally, "don't be a corner shop (everything low value) - be a gourmet deli (offer quality that is valued)".

Tracey Barr, an independent business strategy consultant, encouraged us to Get Your Mojo Pumping, kicking off with aphorisms such as Jim Rohn's "Your life doesn't get better by chance. It gets better by change".

Her favourite, by an

unknown person, is: "The next chapter of your life has not yet been written. You hold the pen. Write the story you want to read."

It is no surprise that Barr regards Covid-19 as "a great opportunity to take stock", and has a two-step plan.

Step 1 is 'review and reflect'; think when we've been happiest, what we were doing, where we were and who we were with. Then, reflect on what we would have done differently."

Step 2 is 'restart and reinvent' and to consider what success looks like, what would make us happier and richer, and what we want to get out of the next chapter of life.

Whatever this is, after Covid, there's no going back to normal.



Number crunching is central to covering coronavirus. How are journalists making stories from statistics? asks **Neil Merrick**

Dazed by the data

Statistics are playing a key part in reporting the coronavirus pandemic. Covid-19 death numbers were published daily from late March, while data showing how we eat, work and travel in lockdown appears on a regular basis. In April, with most shops closed, the Home Office even boasted that shoplifting was down.

What have journalists learnt during in months about the validity of statistics and their importance to major stories?

Ed Conway, Sky's economics editor, says it can be overwhelming if not surreal to be faced with so much data. Along with other journalists who were not used to focusing on health, he initially found it unpleasant to report deaths.

"None of us wanted to do death numbers," he says. "I was a bit hesitant going on TV. I didn't want people to think I was an epidemiologist." Yet, along with other journalists, Conway sought to get beneath headline stats.

Presenting charts and other graphics on Sky News, there was a tendency to 'bounce around' and engage the audience. "But the numbers behind what I was saying were so awful," he says.

There is also the question of which data is most valid. From April, the Office for National Statistics began producing alternative figures to those at daily press briefings, which come from NHS England and devolved governments.

ONS figures are published weekly and count deaths where

the death certificate mentions Covid-19, even if it was not the main cause. Government figures, meanwhile, were belatedly updated to include care homes.

International comparisons are available from a range of sources but can be fraught with controversy as not all countries count deaths in the same way. At first, the government provided handy graphs showing the UK's total was lower than elsewhere. But these graphs were dropped after UK figures rose and became among the highest.

Caelainn Barr, data projects editor at the Guardian, says the challenge has been making sense of stats and flagging up when they fail to present a true picture. This means trawling through data from a range of agencies that may appear days apart. "It's a mess and it's frustrating," she says.

In June, a Guardian analysis pulled together stats from seven sources to show that deaths in the UK had exceeded

Figures into words

THE PANDEMIC is not always doom and gloom. With flights grounded and fewer people commuting to work, air pollution fell significantly at the start of lockdown compared with Spring last year.

"Air pollution plummets," announced Radio Exeter, while Leeds Live hailed the

"staggering impact" on air quality. Birmingham Live identified the drop in air pollution as one of eight positives - along with home workouts and TV box sets.

The air pollution story originated from the BBC shared data unit, a team of four journalists based in Birmingham, who analyse

government and other data and send stories to local media.

Pete Sherlock, assistant editor at the unit, says its reporters try to highlight more unusual data-based stories that are not always picked up by nationals.

"We look at how coronavirus and lockdown is affecting local communities," he says.

Papers and broadcasters

are sent not only a story but a full 'toolkit', with quotes and source material such as graphs and charts.

For the air pollution story, the unit analysed raw data from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as no statistical bulletin was available.

The unit is part of the BBC's local news partnerships scheme set up with regional publishers, which includes

local democracy reporters.

During the pandemic, the unit has reported on visits to GPs, live music and online gambling.

The gambling story stemmed from Google figures showing people's leisure habits during lockdown.

"We have to be clear about our data sources," says Sherlock. "Journalism is only as good as the sources it reports on."



50,000. It also produced figures showing 'excess' deaths (over and above the norm) in 11 countries.

Before Covid-19, Barr's team generally worked on long-term stories. Not only has coronavirus meant a faster turnaround, but also statistics have become the spine of stories rather than underpinning them. This is unlikely to change for some time. "The [full] economic impact has yet to come," she says.

Dave West, deputy editor at Health Service Journal, says data for Covid-19 deaths has generally been transparent. Testing is another matter, with the Department of Health and Social Care switching between a target for completed tests, then testing capacity and, eventually, including tests that were posted but not carried out.

Health secretary Matt Hancock was twice chastised by the UK Statistics Authority for the way his department appeared to manipulate figures. "There was intentional sleight of hand in relation to testing," says West.

HSJ is used to reporting health data and has compiled figures showing Covid-19 deaths (based on NHS press releases) well before the government's daily totals. "We were the first publication to note there was a spike in the West Midlands," West says.

A map showing the number of deaths in hospitals around the country, also based on NHS data, was regarded by readers as particularly helpful in the early months of the pandemic.

Figures showing how people travelled less and worked from home during the first months of lockdown were important in creating the impression that social distancing was observed. "If people read what others are doing, they're more likely to comply," he adds.

Professor Jennifer Rogers, a vice-president at the Royal Statistical Society, is more concerned. "It's a really confusing time for journalists and the public," she says. "We are seeing lots of data from different sources and there hasn't been a

proper discussion about what data we should trust."

At local levels, the media is perhaps keener to flag up positive news, such as the number of patients leaving hospital having recovered from Covid-19. The Portsmouth News reported how, while the city's death toll was high, it was not as high as that of other UK cities with a similar density of population.

Online surveys by the paper since lockdown are showing how life is slowly returning to normal, and it is covering residents' thoughts on shops reopening and other lifestyle changes. "A lot of our focus has been on people and what they're doing to get through this," says editor Mark Waldron.

Both JPI Media and Reach have stats units that feed stories to local newsrooms. Lauren MacDougall, content editor at Kent Live, says statistics provide a "source of authority" for news that is appreciated by readers. In a large county, this means delving into district-level data provided by the ONS rather than large hospitals; she would like to see the media given local R (reproduction) rates.

Some hospitals are keener than others to provide data on deaths and other issues. "It's difficult to get consistency from hospital to hospital," says Andy Worden, editor of London Live. "People want to know whether their local hospital is somewhere they wish to go for treatment."

Stories showing how many people recover from Covid-19 are especially popular on social media, providing figures are available. "Some hospitals are happy to give out figures every week," says Worden. "Others want to save them for board meetings."

So, are journalists and statisticians performing well during the pandemic? Ed Humpherson, director general at the Office for Statistics Regulation (part of the UK Statistics Authority) says yes, although proper understanding of data by a wide audience depends on that data reaching the public domain.

"Journalists across the sector appreciate the sources and the relationship between daily and weekly figures. I think journalists have done a really good job. Over time, the way data is presented has got better and better," he says.

Fact or fiction?

JOURNALISTS have been operating in a 'territory of uncertainty' during the pandemic but the overall quality of reporting has been high, says Tom Phillips, editor of fact-checking organisation Full Fact.

While there are examples of misreporting, journalists have generally become more cautious and better at explaining statistics. "In plenty of stories, they have pushed back and asked for extra data," he says.

Among stories flagged up by Full Fact for not giving an accurate picture are:

- A Telegraph report saying roughly half of UK adults were being 'paid by the state', which included pensioners as well as people who were furloughed.

- Reports by three nationals in May stating about 19 million people in Britain had recovered after contracting coronavirus. None made clear that the figure had come from statistical modelling not tests, although this was partly down to a University of Manchester press release.

- An Express story that said diabetes was linked to

one quarter of Covid-19 deaths. NHS data showed about a quarter of people dying from Covid-19 also had diabetes, without pointing to any direct connection.

Fact-checking organisations have not been as busy during the pandemic as might be expected. Regardless, adds Phillips, journalists should be aware of the effect of poor-quality reporting during a public health crisis.

This means checking the source and reliability of data and asking what may lie behind surveys or stats that arrive in the newsroom. "Figures are not purely neutral things," he says.

Fair reporting and transgender trials

Rachel Broady on how guidelines can help but also present their own problems

When Karen White was sent to prison in 2018, the Daily Star wrote “she was in jail on remand charged with three rape offences on a woman”. The Telegraph reported “she was accused of pushing her hips and penis against another prisoner”. The Mirror reported White “insisted she was not attracted to females and had erectile dysfunction”.

White is male bodied, identifies as a woman and was temporarily placed in a women’s prison. White’s crime of rape, under UK law, is defined as when, without consent, “he intentionally penetrates the vagina, anus or mouth of another person with his penis”.

Such a complicated news story creates difficulties for reporters seeking to fairly and accurately report on transgender issues. While there are guidelines available to journalists, they can bring their own complications.

The Editors’ Code of Practice is seen by many as the foundation stone of UK press self-regulation. The Independent Press Standards Organisation (Ipso) applied the code in developing its guidelines which, it states, are “designed to support editors and journalists who are researching on transgender issues”. The guidelines conclude that an individual’s gender identity and sexual orientation must not be referenced unless genuinely relevant to the story. It also states the press must take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading or distorted information and that everyone has the right to respect for his or her private life.

Ipso received complaints about Metro’s coverage, which had the headline ‘Prison Service apologises for sending transgender rapist to women’s prison’. Complainants, Ipso writes on its website, believed “the article discriminated against transgender individuals and was trying to stir up a moral panic that transgender people are deceitful, violent and sexually predatory”. Press coverage elsewhere had referred to White as a ‘transgender prisoner’, ‘trans predator’, ‘transgender person’ and ‘transgender rapist’.

Many questions arise from the coverage. Must journalists avoid suggesting White had been deceitful, violent and sexually predatory? Was being transgender relevant? Did using the judge’s description of ‘predator’ risk contributing to a moral panic? Did journalists risk breaching privacy guidelines by mentioning White’s genitals? Were pronouns accurate or necessary?

The Ipso guidance does not provide all the answers a journalist might need when navigating such a complicated

and emotional case. On its website, Ipso states that ‘an individual’s gender identity must not be referenced unless genuinely relevant to the story’. Gender identity, however, is not defined. Trans Media Watch, an organisation that informed the guidelines, does not offer a definition. Stonewall, recommended as a resource by Ipso, states that ‘gender is largely culturally determined and is assumed from the sex assigned at birth’. NUJ guidelines on LGBTQ+ reporting suggest “transgender people are those for whom their current gender identity differs from that declared at birth, whether or not they have later undergone surgical gender reassignment”.

The different approaches can mean accuracy is hard to achieve and offence difficult to avoid. Trans woman Debbie Hayton, a teacher who has written on the issue and her experience for, among others, the Morning Star and London



Evening Standard, said: "What is gender expression or gender identity? Who has a gender identity? There is a received wisdom and received truth without any proper discussion. The [Ipso] guidelines have been informed by a narrow group of lobbyists who share a common ideology – that we all have an innate gender identity, and that gender identity trumps biological sex."

Legally, if an individual is granted a full gender recognition certificate they will, from the date of issue, be considered to be of their acquired gender in the eyes of the law. Researching this detail could help with reporting standards, according to Katherine O'Donnell, a journalist who was made redundant by The Times then lost an employment tribunal after claiming discrimination and unfair dismissal amid a "toxic environment for trans people". For O'Donnell, the issue of reporting is about media institutional culture and of understanding legislation.

"Revolting as I find her crimes, yes, I do think that even White should have female pronouns used in reporting," O'Donnell says. "Trans people don't choose to be trans; we are a slice of humanity all the way through from the best to the worst, just like everyone else. Beyond that, I think that reporters and editors should absolutely be alert to and aware of when a story is being used to further the political ambitions of non-transparent and unaccountable groups and individuals."

"What was particularly evident in the reporting on the White case was that weight and legitimacy was being given to 'concerns' that fail at the most basic levels of scrutiny. When a reporter cannot ask themselves 'is this what the law actually says?' and then find out, it is a huge failure of journalism and a failure that is compounded when editors either don't check for themselves or print it anyway because it sustains their own and readers' prejudices."

White was still legally male when jailed and, while concerns about reinforcing prejudices and discrimination through journalism are legitimate, what about the impact of news reports on White's victims?

Nicola Williams, of campaigning organisation Fair Play for Women, says: "The penis is commonly understood to be a male sex organ, both scientifically and in everyday language. What's more, if the penis was used in a sexual assault, the

phrase 'her penis' is likely to be offensive to the victim who has clearly experienced a male-type crime. When a newspaper presents misleading information regarding the sex of a perpetrator, it distorts public perception of the societal reality that most sexual and violent crime is committed by the male sex."

Sky journalist Sonia Poulton has been threatened and lost work from commissioning editors following her reporting on the subject.

Poulton says: "Reporting, particularly of a serious crime, should be drawn from biological reality, not gender identity. Women do not have a penis and a statement that includes the description 'her penis' is farcical and makes a mockery of a serious reporting issue. Trans men and trans women should never be referred to as just woman or man in reporting – be that print or broadcast. It is entirely inaccurate and misleading. The 'trans' exists for a reason and should be used."

Fair Play for Women, which describes itself as 'a campaigning and consultancy group which raises awareness, provides evidence and analysis, and works to protect the rights of women and girls in the UK', is challenging the Ipso approach. It argues that Ipso "is wrongly conflating the meaning of sex and self-declared gender identity and is permitting gender identity to be presented as if it were an individual's sex. This approach means the public is being misled on the occasions when an individual's sex is relevant and important to the story."

Like Hayton, Fair Play for Women argues that "evidence suggests that Ipso is giving undue weight to minority and contested definitions promoted by special interest groups, rather than mainstream definitions understood by the majority of the public".

The Ipso analysis of the complaint refers to White as 'she' and Ipso rulings on transgender reporting have found complaints upheld and have dismissed them.

The White case reveals the difficulty for journalists: definitions, pronoun preferences, legislation and references to sexed body parts all bring conflicting ways to navigate the subject. As journalists continue to navigate a difficult subject, without consistent guidance the problems arising around accuracy and avoiding discrimination are likely to continue.

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If the penis was used in a sexual assault, the phrase 'her penis' is likely to be offensive to the victim who has experienced a male-type crime

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Ipso findings

Trans Media Watch

versus The Sun Privacy and discrimination. 2015. Breach. After a Rod Liddle article about blind transgender MP Emily Brothers, The Sun accepted a comment made was 'tasteless'. The Sun reviewed its editorial processes and decided all copy on transgender matters would be approved by its managing editor before publication.

Elan Cave versus Spectator Accuracy and discrimination. 2016. No breach.

An opinion piece headlined 'It's dangerous and wrong to tell all children they're 'gender fluid' named Cave and commented on the use of the non-gender-specific pronoun per (meaning person). Ipso concluded it was essential to approach the subject of an individual's gender status with care and sensitivity but columnists were entitled to express themselves.

Bee versus The Sunday Times. Accuracy. 2018. Breach.

An article headlined "Ladies' loos at City landmarks may open to trans women" did not accurately explain the current rights of transgender women under the Equality Act, and had stated that the City's toilets were not currently open to trans people.

Belcher versus The Times Accuracy/discrimination. 2018. No breach. Belcher complained about a comment piece headlined "Suicide should never be a political weapon". The Times article referred to comments made by Belcher on an increase in trans suicides and

said its columnist was entitled to report on the publicly available comments.

Bergdorf versus The Times Accuracy. 2018. No breach. Bergdorf was the subject of an article headlined "Children won't find role models in Playboy" after being appointed NSPCC's first LGBT+ campaigner. Bergdorf argued it was inaccurate having given only one editorial interview to Playboy.

Mike Hill versus Spectator Accuracy. 2018. Breach. An opinion piece headlined 'The march of trans rights' misrepresented the contents

of the Allsorts Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit. Ipso ruled that a correction was an appropriate remedy.

Lewin versus Mail Online Privacy. 2018. No breach.

An article headlined "Outrage as transgender child groomer who is 'legally female' is put in women's jail leaving inmates terrified" revealed Lewin's pre-transition male name. Ipso concluded the article raised concerns about Lewin being moved to a women's prison so the information was relevant

www.ipso.co.uk

Written in the STARS

Jonathan Sale on how newspapers improved their fortunes with astrology columns

An editor phoned his paper's astrologer to tell her that she was fired.

"But I had no idea this might happen!" she cried.

"That," declared the editor, "is why I'm firing you."

It's a story I tell sometimes – but about two different editors, so my memory may have let me down. I'd be delighted to hear from the editor in question or, indeed, the astrologer.

However, here is a real astrological fact: the creation of the first of the newspaper horoscopes that we know today – by Mystic Meg, Russell Grant etc – was inspired 90 years ago this month by the birth of Princess Margaret. This factual nugget was omitted from *The Crown* series but, in astrological circles, the hope is that it could be worked into a not-yet-written episode as a flashback.

Of course, the Queen's younger sister never cast horoscopes herself – though Mystic Marge would have been a great byline – but by being born on August 21 1930, she fortuitously filled a gap in the market. John Gordon, the editor of the *Sunday Express*, was faced with the problem of turning 'not another royal baby' into a joyful-sounding feature. He came up with the wheeze of asking an astrologer to describe what lay in store for the new royal progeny.

The star of the stargazers, was Cheiro (pictured on facing page) and he had already turned his gaze on to Mark Twain and Winston Churchill, but he was busy on another job (or planet). Fortunately, his assistant, RH Naylor, was up for the job and the result on Sunday August 24 was 'What the stars foretell for the new princess'.

Naylor's stellar prediction for the baby born under the sign of Leo (July 23–August 22) was that her life would be 'eventful' and, what with Margaret being a princess and everything, this

could have been filed away into the back of a drawer marked 'No shit, Sherlock'. However, Naylor went out on a limb a little in declaring that the Leonine lady would grow up to show a 'scorn of restraint'; this was one way of putting it, as I learnt when I was a sub on *Queen* magazine (later *Harper's & Queen*) where the editor was a chum of the right royal raver.

Where Naylor really placed his head on the block was in predicting that "events of tremendous importance will come about near her seventh year" and, indeed, they did: she was that age when her uncle Edward abdicated. Of course, no one knew in 1930 that an event

predicted for circa 1936 would in fact come true but the piece as a whole went down so very well with readers that Gordon asked Naylor for more top tips from the celestial movements.

One of Naylor's next predictions was for a date so soon after publication that it promised to make or break him. It was also a literally explosive topic, a horoscope warning that "a British aircraft will be in danger between October 8th and 15th". That month saw the crash in flames of the airship *R-101* with the death of most of the passengers.

OK, it was a bit early, on October 5. Also, a large balloon filled with inflammable gas was always an accident waiting to happen. But Naylor's reputation soon soared into the stratosphere and Gordon gave him two weekly slots, one of which was for major events such as the above. The other strand was the breakthrough: while celebrity horoscopes themselves were not new, *Your Stars* gave predictions relevant to *Sunday Express* readers.

At first, it was confined to people whose birthdays occurred in the week of publication; later, Naylor devised predictions that applied, as is now the practice, to everyone. The zodiac, the celestial circuit along which the sun, moon and planets appear to travel, had been divided into 12 'signs' by the stargazers of Ancient Greece and Babylonia. However, there having been no Ancient Greek Gazette or *Sunday Babylonian Babbler*, it was left to Naylor to deliver the astrologer's dozen.

"This was how the modern horoscope came into being," wrote Craig Brown in *Ninety-Nine Glimpses of Princess Margaret*, his highly praised

Star check: what's in store for Librans

"IF YOU'RE fancy free, a last-minute weekend event is where you'll meet The One," promised Mystic Meg of *The Sun*, adding hastily, "although you may not realise it".

She was one of the six horoscopes I read on the same day to see what was in store for us Librans (September 3–October 22).

Oscar Cainer in the *Daily Telegraph* assured me I wasn't responsible for an unspecified "source of friction" and

added kindly: "You're not to blame. In fact, you've behaved impeccably... no one's perfect."

The *New York Post* star person clearly spotted the same conflict: "The more someone tries to talk

you out of doing something you have been planning for quite some time, the more likely it is that they are hoping your efforts will fail." But the stars are not standing for that: "You must not let that happen."

Russell Grant in the *Daily Express* is equally supportive: "The more energy, emotion and passion you put into your creative goals, the more you will get out of them." Very true. "Your efforts will pay off."

The *Daily Star* (an apposite title, in this context) is in total agreement: "The more energy, emotion and passion you put into..." Hang on, that sounds familiar.

No wonder – it's by Grant too or, as they put it, not quite accurately in the circumstances, "our very own Russell Grant".

So to the *Mirror*: "The more energy, emotion and..." Let me guess, that's our very own Grant too.

Same publishing group, same celestial bodies. Nice to get some harmony in the heavens.



VICTOR WATTS / AAMMY STOCK PHOTO

Looking
back to:
1930



HULTON ARCHIVE

biography. “Nearly 90 years on, the horoscope is quite possibly the most formidable legacy of HRH the Princess Margaret.”

It being the 19th century, there was at the time an astronomer royal but sadly no astrologer royal. Yet Naylor’s article gave him this unofficial status, to judge by the 28,000 letters that were soon flopping through the letterbox every week. This was despite his predictions of happenings that did not happen.

“Hitler’s horoscope is not a war horoscope,” stated a confident Naylor in the late 1930s. “If and when war comes, not he but others will strike the first blow.”

The erroneous Naylor compounded his error by his suggestions for the possible flashpoints for the Second World War: “the Mediterranean” and “the Near East”, both of which were unhelpfully vague locations, and “Ireland”, which was neutral in the eventual conflict.

Yet more baffling were the reasons why the nations should be at each other’s throats: “1) The childless marriage; 2) The failure of agriculturalists to understand the ways of nature and conserve the fertility of the soil.” Even back in the 1930s, readers might have pondered over 1) which particular childless couple would have caused the guns to go off. As for 2), the best retort is that the Dig for Victory



RUE DES ARCHIVES / P/NOE

campaign was probably less a factor than the invasion of Poland.

Given wrong calls of this magnitude, how come horoscopes have survived in newspapers for eight decades? “People believe they have been told something specific to them but, when you look very carefully, you find it could apply to anyone,” declares Julian Baggini, one of the few freelance philosophers who has been the answer to a University Challenge question. His hobby is “debunking nonsense – and horoscopes are a very easy target”. He adds: “It can be

reassuring to believe there are forces beyond your control: it’s not all up to you.”

Despite the setbacks, Naylor carried on for a decade and a half, during which time many papers also hired their own in-house soothsayer. A considerable proportion of readers might not believe heavenly bodies actually influenced their personality or fate but couldn’t resist the occasional squint at the horoscopes anyway.

Newspaper horoscopes, which have to compress the workings of fate into a few sentences, are sometimes described as ‘entertainment’ by serious astrologers; the late Patric Walker, the astrological sage of the Mail on Sunday, studied the A-Zodiac of the trade for six years under Queen magazine’s soothsayer Celeste (whose copy I used to subedit in a baffled way).

Walker also carried out private consultations of the sort that require the precise time of birth to pinpoint the position of the heavenly bodies influencing life and circumstances. (‘Horoscope’ derives from the Greek for ‘hour’ and ‘watch’.) My partner remembers that many moons ago she consulted him to be told “You are in for a difficult journey.” She was indeed; when she was travelling in Italy, her train was held up – by an earthquake on the line.

Coincidence? Or does the answer lie in the stars?



TechDownload

Nicholas Fearn on technology for journalists

byte size...

TAKING A SHINE TO A CHEAP LAMP

If you're looking for a smart, stylish lamp for your office, I'd recommend Groov-e Apollo. This USB-powered lamp is full of high-tech features, including three LED light modes, touch control, wireless smartphone charging and a speaker to play music via Bluetooth. Lightweight, adjustable and available in black and white, the lamp looks great in any modern office. It is also pretty affordable at £29.99.

www.groov-e.co.uk

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Dubbed the "Netflix for apps", Setapp provides Mac users with more than 180 apps for one subscription. Tools for writing, editing and project management include Ulysses (a writing and blogging programme), Timing (time management), Be Focused, (a writing app that aims to prevent distractions) and 2Do (task tracking). At \$9.99 per month, it's a bargain.

www.setapp.com

WRITE, SKETCH, RECORD, ORGANISE

Notebooks are a journalist's best friend. If you are on the lookout for a good note-taking app, check out Notebook from Zoho. As well as jotting down and organising notes, you can sketch, record sound, make checklists, upload files of all kinds, scan documents and handwrite using the Apple Pencil. Available on iOS, Android and desktop, it is free to download and doesn't have any adverts. Notes will sync across various devices.

www.zoho.com/notebook/

A GOOD CALL

Apple phones are popular with a lot of journalists although, with some models costing £1,000, they can be expensive. Despite this, the second generation iPhone SE offers plenty of bang for your buck.

Starting at £419, the handset packs a 4.7-inch Retina HD display, Touch ID fingerprint recognition, the same chip that powers the iPhone 11 Pro, a 12-megapixel camera and 4K video recording. It is also water resistant.



In terms of design, the new iPhone SE is made out of glass and aluminium. One downside, is it looks identical to the older iPhone 8, but that's not exactly surprising given that it is a budget iPhone.

The second generation iPhone SE comes in three colours: black, white and red. As for memory, the handset is available in 64GB, 128GB and 256GB.

There are discounts available on Apple products for NUJ members, too.

www.nuj.org.uk/about/membership-benefits/apple-store; www.apple.com/uk

> Stick-on trackers locate lost items

Misplacing or losing something valuable is infuriating, whether it is your trusty dictaphone or your smartphone. With Sticker from electronics company Tile, you

can locate anything quickly. Sticker is a small Bluetooth tracker that can be attached to almost any product through an adhesive back.

If you lose something in your house or office, you can ring it.

If you lose an item outside, you can discover its last location on a map.

Should you misplace your phone, you're able to reverse call it.

Stickers have a range

of 46 metres. They are waterproof, and have a three-year battery life.

A pack of two Stickers costs £34.99, while four cost £54.99.

They are available at Amazon, John Lewis, Curry's and Argos.

www.thetileapp.com

TALK, WRITE, PRIVATE

Keep it confidential

When it comes to speaking to sources for sensitive stories, a secure messaging app such as Signal is incredibly useful. Free to download, this private messenger service comes with end-to-end encryption as standard. Whether it is a message or call, everything is encrypted. You can send and receive messages, make voice and video calls, as well as add GIFs, audio, video and files to messages. Signal runs on multiple platforms, including Android, iOS, Windows, MacOS and Linux.

www.signal.org

A STAND AGAINST STRAIN

Laptops are an integral part of a journalist's life, but staring at a screen for hours on end with poor posture can cause neck and shoulder problems.

You can solve this by investing in a laptop stand. If you're looking for a stylish, high-quality option, look no further than the Twelve South Curve for Macbook. It is made out of one piece of metal and has non-slip silicone grips.

With this ergonomic design, you can raise a Macbook 6.5 inches off the desk to avoid musculoskeletal strain. When it is paired with a keyboard and mouse, it feels as if you are using a desktop computer. The stand also looks great next to an external display.

amazon.co.uk, £54.99



arts

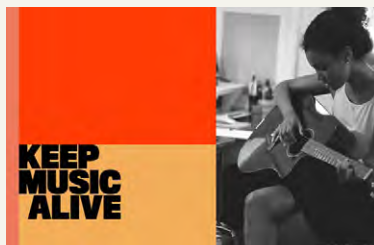
by **Tim Lezard**

Music >

Musicians are under the financial cosh during the Covid-19 crisis, and the Musicians' Union estimates its members lost £21 million in income between the start of the crisis and the beginning of June.

Its new **Keep Music Alive** campaign (<https://tinyurl.com/y89l52h2>) is calling for "an equitable, sustainable and transparent model for royalty distribution in the streaming era".

Keith Ames, editor of *The Musician* and an NUJ member, tells Arts that streaming services (which pay an average of £0.006p per play) "wouldn't pay for a loaf of bread, let alone a mortgage".



NUJ life member **Raphael Callaghan** has sent in his latest CD, *BLUE LIES*. The former newspaper sub combined a journalism career with playing acoustic blues for 50 years. His summer tour dates have been cancelled but he hopes to hit the road in November. You can buy his album at <https://tinyurl.com/y89l52h2>.

Comedy >

Comedians are doing their best to entertain us online but, without live audiences, even they admit they lose their edge. That doesn't stop them, though. Check out who's doing what and when at <https://tinyurl.com/y9mmwfk8>, updated daily.

Film >

Cinemas are starting back in business now following their lengthy closure with many large chains reopening gradually. Here are a couple of films due out in September.

Dame Judi Dench stars as below-average medium Madame Arcati in Noel Coward's *Blithe Spirit*. Invited to a novelist's house to conduct a seance as research for his new book, she accidentally summons the spirit of his first wife, riling his second wife, who can neither see nor hear her.

The second is *The Beatles: Get Back* – a documentary shot in early 1969 for the following year's *Let It Be*. Drawing on



unused footage, it aims to challenge the old film's suggestion that the band members didn't like each other.

You don't need a cinema to see *The Big Meeting*, Daniel Draper's documentary about the Durham Miners' Gala. It would have been easy for him to focus on the big names, but it's all the better for telling the story of the day through the eyes of ordinary punters. A powerful pageant of workingclass pride, a set piece of passionate political theatre and a stirring story of solidarity and defiance, it'll warm your heart. You can buy the film on DVD or pay to watch it on Vimeo via <https://www.galafilm.co.uk/watch>.

And you don't need a cinema to enjoy *Lockdown Cinema*, which is showing films celebrating trade unions and workingclass life. Backed by Ken Loach, the films – the full programme has yet to be released – can be rented online. Follow @lockdown_cinema on Twitter for details.

Books >

I doubt Madame Arcati could have predicted just how prescient *It's The Media, Stupid* (<https://tinyurl.com/y9mmwfk8>) would become. Take this, from the book's preface: "There were signs during the election that Boris Johnson and his adviser Dominic Cummings ... would move against those sections of the media they deemed recalcitrant or too critical."

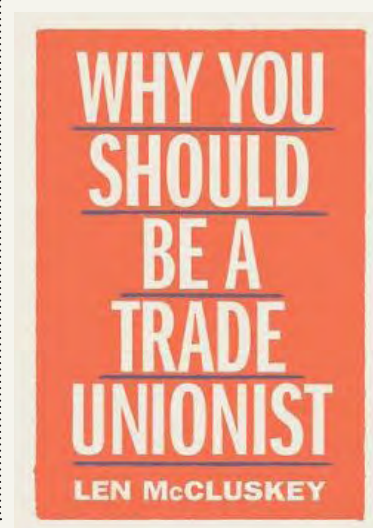
Perhaps even more important now than when it was published, it features contributions from academics, journalists and trade unionists.

Also prescient is Len McCluskey's book *Why You Should Be A Trade Unionist* (<https://tinyurl.com/ybcqfnzn>). As unions, including the NUJ, witness a surge in membership, this short part autobiography, part



history and part polemic sees Unite's general secretary make the case for collective organisation.

NUJ freelance member Brandon Broll has wasted no time writing a book about coronavirus. Entitled *Still-life of a Pandemic*, his five-part poem tells of a father's short, fatal journey after contracting Covid-19 as healthcare workers try to save him. You can buy the ebook at <https://tinyurl.com/y7dx599l>; all proceeds go to the World Health Organisation.



Spotlight >

Theatre: the show must go online

The arts have taken more of a pasting from coronavirus than Dominic Cummings.

The UK theatre scene is struggling, with reports that 70 per cent of performing arts companies will be out of business by the end of the

year and more than 1,000 theatres are at risk of closure. Thousands of entertainment workers have lost their jobs.

Actors' union Equity points out that the vast majority of performers, stage managers and creative

practitioners earn modest sums, and the loss of income has been devastating.

The union has launched an appeal to help those affected, with 50 British actors filming monologues from their homes during

lockdown to raise money. Watch these at <https://tinyurl.com/y7jndldo> and donate at <https://tinyurl.com/yckxovd>.

You can get your online theatre fix at <https://official.londontheatre.com/get-your-theatre-fix>, which lists

what productions are being shown when. Most of them are screened free, so please consider making a donation.





Sidney Rennert

My father had just been appointed industrial correspondent of radical London evening paper The Star, after several years as parliamentary correspondent.

Then, one evening in October 1960, the editor, Ralph McCarthy, called a meeting of the 100 editorial staff, to tell them that

they had just seen off the very last edition of the paper.

Sidney soon found himself a new, better-paid post on the Daily Sketch, but his left-wing politics did not chime with those of his new editor.

He then settled into a more sedate job in public relations,

editing the house journal of the TI group from a grand office in Bridgewater House, near St James's Palace.

Later, he changed career again, to become an investment analyst in the City. Here, his sharp journalistic mind proved invaluable to his employers. He finally retired when he was 75.

However, he never forgot The Star. He was still organising reunions until he was in his mid-90s, when only three or four survivors remained.

He rarely told anybody that he had begun life as a Jewish boy in Germany between the wars, in a virulently anti-Semitic climate. His father helped Jewish families to escape abroad.

Eventually his parents and sister emigrated to Israel, while he was sent to England 'for a good education'.

He arrived, aged 13, without a word of English. But, after a brief language course in Brighton, he took up a place at a boarding school

– Clifton College in Bristol. As an adult, he spoke without any trace of a German accent.

At 16, he had to leave Clifton to avoid being interned as an enemy alien. He went to London as a trainee journalist on the Daily Sketch,

He also studied for a part-time history degree at Birkbeck College, London University – this was not helped by a bomb that destroyed his flat as well as all his lecture notes.

He moved north to work on the Manchester Evening News, where he met his first wife, before returning to London for his 12-year stint on The Star.

He was much involved in the work of the NUJ in London. On occasion, he would tell me in confidence of the dreadful way some colleague had been treated by an employer. He had a very strong sense of justice.

Jonathan Rennert



Mike McKeand

Mike McKeand has died peacefully aged 84, in Portsmouth Hospital from natural causes. The life-long journalist started his career as a young man in New Zealand, having sailed there from England aged 17 in pursuit of his girlfriend, Ruth. They soon married and Mike went for a job on the Otago Daily Times in Dunedin – presenting his English Prize from Birkenhead School as

proof of his 'talent'. In 1960, with two small boys, he took a job as a reporter working for a young Rupert Murdoch on the tabloid Daily Mirror in Sydney, Australia. He also enjoyed a stint as a showbiz reporter on TV Week. In 1968, he took a six-month sabbatical and returned to England.

At the end of a tour around Europe with Ruth and their three

children, they decided to stay.

Mike took a job as a news sub-editor on the Daily Mirror in Manchester in 1970 and stayed until its demise in 1986, when he was invited to join the Daily Star in London, where many of his old chums from the Mirror in Manchester also landed.

Kind, warm and with a sharp sense of humour, he was loved and respected by all who worked with him. Mike had a love of life, a vast general knowledge – particularly of the arts – and had travelled extensively. He was a calming presence in a newsroom, especially for chief sub editors who could depend on him to sub a story on any subject quickly, accurately and, where appropriate, with his trademark wit. He was a mentor for many of his younger colleagues – both journalistically and in a wider sense.

After retiring in 2010, Mike moved from Clapham, south London, to Bosham near Chichester to enjoy his life-long love of sailing. He was tempted back by the Daily Express for shifts, but this foray

was his last and he quit after a couple of years.

A huge supporter of the NUJ, Mike was awarded Life Membership in 1999. He leaves his wife Ruth and three children, John, Nigel and Jennie.

Nigel McKeand



Story behind the picture

Seeing history made as
Colston was dethroned
By Mark Simmons

The events of the Black Lives Matter march in Bristol seemed portentous and historic even as they were happening. A procession of Bristolians from all walks of life made their way purposefully to the city centre.

I arrived at College Green to find a sea of socially distanced protesters and placards, sober and focused, all facing towards City Hall. It was eerily calm and quiet. There was an air of anticipation before the power of the speeches took the event to another level of seriousness and understanding of what this demonstration was about and what it meant for the black speakers, who had our ears and our hearts.

After the speeches, my plan to get to the front to shoot the march from a vantage point dissolved as I relaxed into and followed the mood of the crowd.

At the bottom of Park Street, I was fortuitously guided by a friendly face to the foot of the statue of Edward Colston, where a ritual unveiling of the covered monument was beginning. Eggs were thrown then an older demonstrator processed around the infamous landmark, anticlockwise, in a deliberate fashion, untying the rope that kept the black shroud secured at the base. People waited in curious expectation, but the placard positioned on the plinth declared 'Colston must fall'.

A small group climbed the statue, removed the cloak and manoeuvred a rope around Colston's neck and scuttled back down. The crowd were excited. I was snapping everything but didn't quite expect to see Colston begin to move and lean. I grabbed a shot and then it was down, history was made and I was there. I got some nice shots of the diverse emotions of the people jumping on and reclaiming the cultural space of our city centre.

After much celebrating, a small group started rolling the dethroned and defaced Colston. He was going back to the sea, where so many poor souls had perished in this shameful and inhuman trade.



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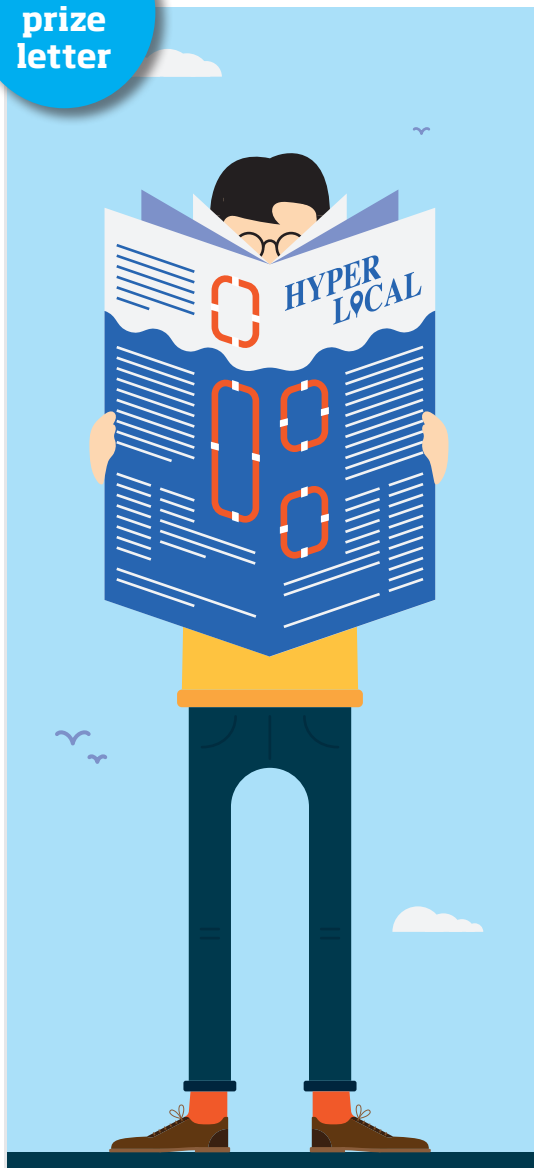


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£40 prize letter

DENIS CARRIER



Relax ad rules to keep hyperlocals afloat

I was interested to read Paul Breeden's comments about trying to get government and public sector ads in hyperlocals and weeklies (Turning to the NUJ, June/July pages 10-11) and Josiah Mortimer's feature (pages 14 and 15) on state support for the media.

For eight years, I've edited south-west London hyperlocal The Good Life, covering the Surbiton area. Our print run (11,500) is four times that of the local weekly, which does receive public sector advertising.

I approached the Cabinet Office to ask that the roll-out of government ads continues to trickle down the chain to us, and was referred to the government's media booking agency. It said that as The Good Life isn't printed every week, it doesn't qualify for public sector advertising. It seems that frequency of publication is the only yardstick – even if that's at variance with Michael Gove's comments in April about supporting local papers.

I've appealed for help from the two MPs whose constituencies my paper covers – foreign secretary Dominic Raab and Liberal Democrat leader Sir Ed Davey – asking them to vouch for my paper, and to try to get this rigid rule relaxed so that influential hyperlocals can stay afloat too. I've also written to Michael Gove asking him to expand government advertising to support hyperlocals at a time when so much business advertising has collapsed.

Full marks to Kingston Council, however, which does recognise the issue, knows The Good Life is doing its bit to publicise local volunteering efforts and services during the pandemic, and has supported the paper with advertising.

I just wish the Government would do the same.

Tim Harrison
Editor, The Good Life

legitimised this with his orchestrated 'move on' message.

If you're not interested in a news story then ignore it. The news is not created solely for you and disagreeing with something doesn't mean it shouldn't be published at all.

Dan Peters
London Magazine Branch

Covid-19 hypocrisy brings journalism into disrepute

In the spring, we saw journalists, film crews and photographers door-stepping Dominic Cummings and accusing him of breaching the coronavirus lockdown regulations. None were observing the social distancing rules, thereby also breaching them.

The NUJ guidance on ethical journalism while reporting on the pandemic states: 'Journalists and photographers will be expected to comply with public health guidelines, for example keeping two metres away from others.'

Journalists are not above the law. Nor are they immune to Covid-19. The NUJ advice is sound. Nobody wants a journalist to contract Covid-19 and die.

It cannot be right for journalists to make allegations of crime and misconduct on the one hand while committing the same offence on the other. Such hypocrisy is unethical and unacceptable. It serves only to risk lives and bring journalism into disrepute.

Tim Hicks
North Yorks Enquirer

Sports pages illustrate decline of weekly papers

The few remaining readers don't realise why their regional weekly newspaper is largely not worth reading now.

Martin Shipton describes how many papers "have no dedicated reporting staff – or, indeed, staff of any kind" (Digital news shift is diluting democracy, April-May).

I was a subeditor on the South Wales Echo, now part of Reach (formerly Trinity Mirror), then editor of one of the Valleys weeklies in the same group more than 20 years ago. Sports

Cummings saga shows risk of creeping censorship

I was perplexed by the reaction to the media coverage of the Dominic Cummings saga.

Maybe it's fair to argue that Cummings' actions should not have received the amount of coverage they did, but we should always stand by the media's right to scrutinise the

behaviour of those who unarguably wield considerable power and influence.

With the facts of the case so disputed and Cummings hardly forthcoming with information, we would know nothing about any of this without the forensic work of journalists who brought it into the open where it belongs.

We quickly move into dangerous territory when the argument evolves

into claims a story shouldn't be covered at all by the free press.

We've all shouted 'this isn't news' but several of his defenders too quickly opined that journalists shouldn't be interested at all in the 'Cummings and goings' of the prime minister's most senior adviser.

This suggestion borders alarmingly on censorship and Boris Johnson

sections were popular and journalists wrote in them; a few years before, only clubs and readers contributed to them.

Now sport is just taken from Wales on Sunday with match reports on clubs mainly nowhere near the weeklies' areas. One week, a banner line stated LOCAL SPORT but it wasn't! Meanwhile, any Walesonline sports coverage appears just when a club hits problems. And the paper's cover price is £1.30.

Phil Howells
Merthyr Tydfil

Conferring about the news (or not)

We now live in a world with endless digital outlets and 24-hour TV news and it appears that modern wording somehow doesn't always accurately describe what it should.

Many years ago, while working for BBC Radio, a producer politely reminded me the term 'news conference' was a contradiction in terms.

He impressed upon me that the word 'conference' is an extension of 'confer' which means to gather and exchange opinions. So, a 'press conference' is where the media confer or gather for an event/announcement, which sounds pretty straightforward.

As it was pointed out to me, news happens, and a statement or a press release is handed out to waiting journalists at a predetermined venue. News, by definition, does not confer and therefore 'news conference' is an incorrect term.

All broadcast media are now using it when in reality it isn't appropriate even though we all know what it means.

Am I being pedantic or do other wordsmiths with a command of the English language actually care? I'd love to know their thoughts.

Ken Murray
Irish Eastern Branch

Voting system stopped a rethink on Brexit

Antony Collins may be correct when he says a number of pro-Brexit supporters are likely to have voted for the ostensibly neutral Labour at the general election; Francis Beckett may therefore be incorrect to state "more people voted for remain parties than leave parties". (Letters, April/May; Control freaks and Corbyn's catastrophe, February/March).

Nonetheless, if Britain had proportional representation for general elections, the Tory party would not have a Commons majority and we would be heading for a second referendum on Brexit.

Considering the direction of travel, possibly hastened by the Covid-19 crisis, this might well have produced a majority for remain.

Mick O'Hare
London Freelance Branch

'Sympathetic writers' do not help Labour cause

There is now proof that Jeremy Corbyn's team (aka Seamus Milne)

twitter feed

Tweet us your feedback: [@mschrisbuckley](https://twitter.com/mschrisbuckley)



 **Denis MacShane** @DenisMacShane
'All you need is hate... and you could be contributing' from The Journalist in 1977 shows deep roots of racism and how too many journalists kept stoking it. Even today, Tory Spiked crowd dog whistling strong – see attacks on Sadiq Khan cos he protected WSC [Churchill] statue

 **Tony Naylor** @naylor_tony
Tony Harcup, author of What's the Point of News?, has published an article with NUJ on the pandemic and the news: <https://bit.ly/2Ah4BKO>

 **Natasha Hirst** @HirstPhotos
Pleased to see my feature in #TheJournalist on how #photographers have been covering the #CoronavirusPandemic – it showcases some great work and a range of ways the pandemic has been documented

1:55 AM – Jun 21 2020

10:28 AM – May 29 2020

11:46 AM – May 28 2020

wanted a fair hearing for the Labour leader (Control freaks and Corbyn's catastrophe, February/March).

This proof is in an internal investigation into Labour's governance and legal unit in relation to anti-Semitism (leaked to the Guardian in April). This shows that Labour Party HQ staff frustrated attempts to pursue policies that were successful in the 2017 general election.

It says HQ's opposition to the leader's office 'disproves allegations that Corbyn's office had influence over [the general legal unit's] work'. It dismissed the claim in the 2019 BBC Panorama programme of Labour anti-Semitism,

where staff said Corbyn's office had asked to be directly involved in the complaints process.

It tells of anti-Corbyn staffers who were more interested in fighting an internal war than in processing complaints, prioritised spending in right-wing MPs' seats and were disappointed at Corbyn's successful 2017 general election campaign.

The help of 'sympathetic' writers could have something to do with the cool reception given the authors. The article won't help them.

Roy Jones
North Wales

STEVE BELL

THE OWNERS



and finally...

Tinker, tailor, journalist, spy



Chris Proctor wants to add 007 to his NUJ press card

I'm having an argument with the NUJ about my press card. Currently, it says I'm a 'writer'. I want it amended to read 'spy' but membership say this is not permissible. Their argument is that the union doesn't recruit spies. My case is that most industrial journalists were spies until the Berlin Wall came down.

Until the end of the Cold War, the TUC and Labour Party conferences had more Soviet bloc attachés than agenda papers. They all wore suits with shoulders so enormous that two couldn't fit in a lift at the same time. Not strong on epigrams or knock-knock jokes, they were serious and polite folk who always seemed a bit apologetic to be there. We'd all say hello and, lacking obvious chit-chat material, discuss the intricacies of the health and safety report.

Did this make us spies? So it would seem. Last month, the Sunday Times shock-horrored that the late Geoffrey Goodman had been a Czech spy in the 1960s. Goodman was the grand master of industrial journalists: he'd done it all and knew everyone. He'd falsified his birth certificate to join the RAF and fly fighter planes in the war. He'd been a mate of Harold Wilson. He'd worked for the Daily Herald and become assistant editor of the Mirror, which he left in 1986 to co-found the British Journalism Review. Splendid man.

Not according to the Sunday Times. He was a spy. A traitor. An inhabitant of the demimonde of secrets and subterfuge. Cloak and dagger man. Czech agent. So, what did he do?

Exactly the same as the rest of us as far as I can see. I compared his record with my own.

Goodman had no access to secret documents. Check. He wasn't given security clearance by our own spooks. Czech. He was once a member of the Communist Party. Check. He spoke to people employed by eastern European embassies. Czech. He gossiped about politics with them. Check.

If he's a spy, I'm a spy. Why won't the NUJ accept this? I want help drafting invoices to every former Soviet bloc embassy. Until the Times article, I had no idea that passing on well-worn, unclassified, public-domain information made me an intelligence agent. As it does, I've got legitimate claims.

The Cubans owe me a couple of bob. With other solidarity campaign supporters, I have often been to cocktail receptions at the ambassador's house. At one, an employee approached me and, after exchanging the password ('Would you like a mojito?' 'Yes please'), she interrogated me about the then leader of the Labour Party.

'What do you think of Jeremy Corbyn?'

I confirmed that Corbyn was a member of parliament and a bit of a leftie. If I'd known this was technically, or Times-ish, spying, I'd have added: 'That will be a fiver.' But I had no idea of the murky Goodman-ish path I was treading by divulging the Corbyn information. In fact, unwittingly, I 'super-Goodman-ed'. For I was dealing in hard facts. Not him.

It appears, from the Times probe, that Goodman (aka Agent Gustav)

would meet Czechs and 'deliver political gossip over lunch'. I admire the verb 'deliver' in this context. It gives the occasion a menacing and sinister atmosphere. Much better than 'gossiped about politics'.

I had no idea that gossiping about politics – and especially politicians – over lunch constituted espionage. I thought it was what you did. Apparently it's legally treachery if there's a foreigner in the vicinity.

Let me give you an example. If, sitting with Bodger and Carruthers in the 1980s, I had revealed that Archie Hamilton was one of the All-Party Parliamentary Bridge Group, I would be asked to pass the salt, pick up the bill and keep my banalities to myself. Had I made the same observation in the company of a person of eastern European extraction, I'd have found myself up before the beak. Twenty years of hard labour.

And do you know where super-sleuthing Goodman rendezvoused with his broad-shouldered, ill-fitting-suited and staggeringly obvious 'contacts'? In which remote bistro he shrouded his nefarious trysts? In what safe houses he spooked?

According to my Sunday source, the secret meetings took place in the public bar of the Charing Cross Hotel just off Trafalgar Square as well as L'Etoile restaurant, which was moments away from Gossip Central, aka the Gay Hussar. And – his own house.

If he was a spy, he wasn't very good at it. That's why I'll be charging inflated retrospective fees when the NUJ finally gets on the case.

TUC and Labour Party conferences had more Soviet bloc attachés than agenda papers. They all wore suits with shoulders so enormous that two couldn't fit in a lift

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A Press Gazette analysis showed that 91 per cent of UK media companies paid men more than women and 85 per cent of men got better bonuses and it's a similar picture in Ireland. One magazine group's gap was almost 37 per cent. Opaque, unfair pay structures and unlawful sex discrimination are contributing factors. The NUJ negotiates on transparent pay structures, progressive work-life balance policies, better maternity and paternity deals and fair recruitment procedures.

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