It’s that time of the year when it’s time to look back on the year gone by. For journalism, one issue has dominated – the Leveson inquiry.

Lord Justice Leveson reported just before we went to press but we had time to look at the main issues and for our renowned media commentator Ray Snoddy and our general secretary Michelle Stanistreet to give their take on what this major inquiry means for us and our industry.

The NUJ won a major victory from Leveson in the report’s backing for our call for a conscience clause for journalists, meaning that they should be able to opt out from anything they fear is unethical. This is now being considered by newspaper editors, though they haven’t yet fully backed it. The NUJ will continue its campaign of the last several years to make sure it happens.

It’s also been a momentous year for me as I’ve been off for most of 2012 and some of the year before after adopting my lovely daughter Anastasia. In that time The Journalist has been brilliantly edited by Eddie Barrett, and assisted by Barrie Clement, to whom I’m enormously grateful.

Eddie will continue to help in the production of The Journalist so I hope we continue to produce magazines as good as he delivered.

I hope you enjoy this one and Happy Christmas and New Year.

Christine Buckley
Editor
NUJ demands conscience clause for all contracts

Newspaper editors are now ‘considering’ the NUJ’s call for a conscience clause in journalists’ contracts.

Michelle Stanistreet, general secretary, hailed the Leveson report’s backing for the clause as an important victory for the union after years of campaigning.

In his report Lord Justice Leveson said he was “struck by the evidence of journalists who felt that they might be put under pressure to do things that were unethical or against the code. I therefore suggest that the new independent self-regulatory body should establish a whistle-blowing hotline and encourage its members to ensure that journalists’ contracts include a Conscience Clause protecting them if they refuse.”

John McDonnell MP, secretary of the NUJ’s cross-party parliamentary group, got the prime minister’s agreement that the newspaper industry should open talks with the union on creating a conscience clause.

Michelle said: “If journalists are to be able to refuse assignments they feel breach their code of conduct, it is vital that they have contractual protection against being dismissed. The industry – both the PCC and the Society of Editors – has repeatedly refused to bring in a conscience clause, despite the Home Affairs select committee backing the NUJ’s campaign as long ago as 2003.”

The conscience clause in the NUJ’s final submission to Leveson reads: “A journalist has the right to refuse assignments or be identified as the creator of editorial which would break the letter or the spirit of the code. No journalist should be disciplined or suffer detriment to their career for asserting his/her rights to act according to the code.”

The NUJ has met ministers and editors over plans for a new regulator. The union wants a co-regulatory body comprising the broader public, the industry and working journalists through the NUJ.

Union given key role in inquiry

The union was given core participant status in the Leveson inquiry after first being turned down for such a role.

The NUJ had appealed against the earlier decision arguing that matters of ethics and press standards were at the heart of what the union does.

Core participants in the inquiry included newspaper editors and the victims of phone hacking such as Gerry and Kate McCann, the Dowler family, Hugh Grant and Steve Coogan. Core participants had the right to submit questions to the inquiry’s counsel to put to witnesses and were eligible for funding for legal costs.

The inquiry’s rules said that core participants had to have “played or may have played a direct and significant role in relation to the matters to which the inquiry relates” among other stipulations.

Devil may be IN THE DATA

New data protection measures suggested by the Leveson report could compromise investigative journalism, the NUJ’s Irish secretary Seamus Dooley fears. Mike Jempson, director of the MediaWise Trust warned: “Leveson appears to be saying that journalists should lose their conventional protections, and may be required to disclose any data they gather on request.”

Seamus said the Irish Supreme Court has upheld the protection of sources as a constitutional right.
That’s Iliffe... at the top

The tax authorities have caught up with newspaper group Iliffe Media – now part of the newly-launched Local World conglomerate (see Northcliffe Sale Triggers Consolidation Fears, page 7) – for a scheme to hide profits of £51.4 million and stop journalists securing a wage increase.

A tax tribunal heard that from 2003 to 2005 Iliffe – which publishes 38 weekly and daily titles – had assigned to its parent company Yattendon Holdings the unregistered newspaper mastheads used by its subsidiaries, which were then charged as a lump sum payment, to downplay its successful financial position.

A 2003 memo from Yattendon finance director Tony Morton said: “What we would like to do is to be able to reduce reported profits in the newspaper subsidiaries, since the levels of profit become common knowledge and could lead to union claims.”

Barry Fitzpatrick, NUJ deputy general secretary, the union’s national negotiator at the time, is demanding answers from Iliffe. He said: “We are appalled by these revelations which bring into question whether our members can trust anything that this company says during negotiations, particularly as we are now in talks over a ‘transfer of undertakings’ as our members move to work for Local World. I am writing to Graham Harra, HMRC’s director general for business tax, said the tribunal decision was “an important ruling against a marketed avoidance scheme. We will continue to challenge artificial arrangements such as this in the interests of the vast majority of businesses and people who choose to play by the rules.”

NEW LEADER AT TUC

Frances O’Grady, an NUJ member, takes over as the new general secretary of the TUC in the new year. The first woman ever in the role, Frances takes over from Brendan Barber who has retired after nearly 10 years at the head of the union organisation.

Frances, who moves up from being TUC deputy general secretary, became a member of the NUJ when she started work in the press office of the T&G at the start of her career.

Interview pages 14-16

PA urged to save regional lobby service

The all-party NUJ Parliamentary Group backed an early day motion urging the Press Association not to end its regional lobby press service, which would cost four journalists’ jobs.

PA’s “Lobby Extra” package provides a House of Commons service for 15 regional titles. The service is viewed as vital because many regional papers – including the Liverpool Echo, Manchester Evening News and the Express & Star – no longer employ staff lobby correspondents.

John McDonnell, secretary of the NUJ parliamentary group, said: “This service provides a vital link between the public and Parliament. It provides information to readers about what is happening at Westminster and the contribution of their local MP.

“Staff cuts in the local and regional press already mean that courts and councils are not being covered.”

in brief...

LEBDEV LOOKS FOR MORE BACKING

Alexander Lebedev has been trying to find a backer to support his plan to bring the independent titles and London Evening Standard to profitability for the last couple of years. The Russian billionaire has held occasional exploratory meetings with parties he considers might be interested in taking a minority stake in his UK print ventures, but there have been no formal talks.

EMAP SPINS OFF BUSINESS TITLES

Emap has split off its media titles into a new business led by Conor Dignam, a former editor of Broadcast. The move comes ahead of an expected management buyout.

Dignam was managing director of the media brands Broadcast, Screen International and shots – which cover TV, film and advertising respectively. The new business is called Media Business Insight.

JOURNALISTS ARE TARGETS

The targeting of journalists has become a trend the editor of The Guardian has told the Committee to Protect Journalists. Alan Rusbridger spoke after receiving a lifetime achievement award from the organisation.

He said that bravery was increasingly part of being a journalist and that the occupation is often a dangerous one.

NEW NEC MEMBER FOR LONDON

Journalists in London have elected David Crouch of the Financial Times to a vacant seat on the NUJ national executive council.

He secured 634 votes, with Adam Bowen of the BBC winning 310 votes and Mark Whitehead of PR and Communications branch getting 242 votes.

NEW DATES FOR NUJ UNION TRAINING

A new schedule of trade union training for NUJ members who want to get involved in union activity is at www.nuj.org.uk.
Critical talks on job cuts at The Guardian

Crisis talks are continuing at The Guardian as the deadline runs out for the company’s voluntary redundancy scheme and management threatens up to 90 compulsory redundancies by the end of next month.

Barry Fitzpatrick, NUJ deputy general secretary, said: “We are at a critical stage in negotiations with The Guardian.

“Moving to a compulsory redundancy scheme would cause irreparable damage to the newspaper and its whole culture, and we’re determined to avoid that trauma.

“The Guardian has never imposed compulsory job losses in the past. To do so now would be the industrial equivalent of jumping off a cliff and we are doing everything possible to stop that happening.

“The NUJ has identified possible savings which could be made to help the company through its current financial difficulties, and we believe that with goodwill from management the crisis can be resolved.”

“We believe that it is vital for the paper to retain its unique character, with niche coverage of a whole range of areas which loyal readers expect. Otherwise, weekend editions of the paper, in particular, could become little more than the wrapping around cruise brochures and the like.”

About 35 journalists have opted to take voluntary redundancy under the current scheme, which is due to end this month. An estimated 100 journalists have left The Guardian over the past two years.

Barry Fitzpatrick warned: “While we hope this dispute can be resolved through negotiation now, if management moves to impose compulsory redundancies we will certainly be balloting NUJ members for industrial action.”

BBC solidarity defends Asian Network jobs

Determined action by journalists at the BBC has won job security for five NUJ members at digital radio station Asian Network who were threatened with the sack as management seeks to make compulsory redundancies at Asian Network and similar threats facing journalists elsewhere under the BBC’s so-called Delivering Quality First cutsbacks programme.

The NUJ is now preparing for the possibility of industrial action to defend colleagues in Scotland, the World Service, World Service News and News where compulsory redundancies are threatened for next spring as management seeks to make staff pay for the financial crisis caused by icence fee freeze negotiated by former director general Mark Thompson. It has been reported that newsroom rotas cuts at BBC Scotland are causing stress for journalists and other staff.

FAIR PAY CAMPAIGN AT NEWSQUEST

Ending the Newsquest pay freeze for journalists is a major campaigning priority for the NUJ in the coming year. The group is one of the biggest in Britain and Ireland, with more than 200 newspapers, magazines and trade publications.

Trainees on Newsquest weeklies earn as little as £7.52 an hour, and many work a great deal of unpaid overtime. Most staff have endured an almost constant pay free over the past four years, with real wage values plummeting compared to rising living costs.

NUJ members at Newsquest’s York and Bradford NUJ chapels have already taken industrial action to back up their demand for fair pay. The York journalists were actually docked a full day’s pay for attending a ten-minute meeting.

Bob Smith, Bradord NUJ father of the chapel, said: “Our members are sick of being strung along with tales of the company’s poverty while they are experiencing real poverty at home.”

in brief...

BBC PENSION SCHEME CHANGES IN BALANCE
A High Court decision on the legal challenge by the NUJ and the Musicians’ Union to the BBC pension scheme is expected in the new year.

The unions have questioned the legality of management’s decision to limit annual increases in pensionable salary to one per cent.

BUILD NEW HALL RELATIONS
The NUJ is hoping for a good relationship with the BBC’s new director general Tony Hall, general secretary Michelle Stanisstreet said when the appointment of the corporation’s one-time news chief was announced.

The union will be asking Hall, who takes over the BBC top job in March, to call a moratorium on cuts in the service and to halt the management assault on frontline journalism.

STOPPING BULLYING AT THE BBC
An inquiry into bullying and intimidation at the BBC has been launched by the NUJ.

Nine years ago an NUJ survey on the issue found that broadcast journalists suffer more bullying than any other sector of the media.

NOT WAVING BUT DROWNING
Journalists’ average income has declined in real terms over the past decade, according to an NCTJ study.

Average pay (not enjoyed by many) now stands at £27,500 a year, compared to £32,500 in 2002. But to keep pace with inflation the average should be £30,815 by now.

RAISING COST OF COURT CONTEMPT
Proposals from the Law Commission could increase substantially the fines facing media organisations found in contempt of court.

A review by the commission suggests penalties for publishers endangering fair trials - which tend currently to be reckoned in tens of thousands of pounds - could be based instead on a percentage of the company’s turnover.
**in brief...**

**KEEPING EL PAÍS JOBS AND REPUTATION**
Strike action against job cuts at the leading Spanish newspaper El País last month secured almost total support from journalists demanding movement on negotiations about significant restructuring at the newspaper.

Nearly 150 jobs are threatened in the restructuring, and EFJ general secretary Stephen Pearse warned this would damage journalism at the newspaper.

**JOURNALISM SUFFERS IN JOBS CRISIS**
Journalism is a victim of the current international jobs crisis, the European Federation of Journalists declared, citing job cuts at the BBC and elsewhere as thousands of journalists across Europe lose their jobs or employment security.

The EFJ was endorsing last month’s Day of Action against austerity measures, supported by the NUJ.

**LOBBY UN TO PROTECT JOURNALISTS**
Journalists across the world were urged to write to UN secretary general Ban Ki-Moon urging him to consider drastic action for protection of journalists by all governments.

The call came to mark last month’s International Day against Impunity – to end the culture in many countries where crimes against journalists are ignored.

**HANDS OFF PORTUGAL’S RTP**
Portuguese journalists are resisting government moves to privatise RTP, the country’s public broadcaster.

Sindicato dos Jornalistas declared that privatisation, even partial of the country’s public broadcaster.

**ISRAEL AND HAMAS FIGHT WITH TWITTER**
Israel and Hamas’s armed wing the al-Qassam Brigades both began deploying social media following Israel’s attack on Gaza.

The move, with both sides using live Twitter feeds to give their side of the conflict, opened a new chapter in the use of social media in warfare.

---

**NUJ helps free Greek editor**

Leading NUJ member Jim Boumelha was a key witness in the Greek trial that freed magazine editor Costas Vaxevanis, who had been charged with breaking his country’s privacy laws by publishing the names of 2,000 suspected tax evaders.

Jim, a member of the union’s NEC, is also President of the International Federation of Journalists. He was the first person to testify during the trial and was cross-examined about what constitutes public interest and ethical journalism.

After the Athens court acquitted the editor, Jim said: “This is a great victory for Greek journalists and their unions. Despite months of fighting massive job losses, cuts in salaries and pensions, and appalling changes to labour laws to weaken collective rights and undermine union organisation, our unions remain strong and are leading the fight against austerity. Now they are the ones defending press freedom, upholding the right of Greek citizens to know, standing up for independent journalism and against the slide into authorities deterring journalists from contributing to public discussion to issues affecting the lives of citizens.”

Vaxevanis had published the so-called Lagarde list, named after IMF Head Christine Lagarde who originally passed it to the Greek authorities. The government had been indicated by the list. The publication of the list by Vaxevanis’ Hot Doc magazine resulted in the journalist being charged and brought to trial with data protection offences just days later.

His acquittal coincided with strike action by journalists at Greek public broadcaster ERT. The strike was also linked to media freedom concerns. Among other demands, the unions have called for an end to government interference and censorship within public broadcasting.

The Athens public prosecutor is appealing against the acquittal.

---

**DON’T TALK ABOUT THE PRESIDENT**

Political censorship by the management of the Ukraine National News Agency has been condemned by the International Federation of Journalists after website editors were reportedly instructed never to use the name of the country’s President Yanukovich in a critical context.

Two journalists at the agency were fined about €20 each for posting an article entitled ‘Bankova Picket: Yanukovich was given a shoe with a Christmas tree’.

“We are stunned by this example of blatant censorship of critical journalism,” said Jim Boumelha, the President of the NUJ.

---

**Backing for jailed Turks**

Support for 76 imprisoned Turkish journalists has been expressed by the NUJ in an international campaign to secure their release. Some of the journalists, jailed under Turkey’s wide-ranging anti-terrorism laws, are on hunger strike.

The all-party NUJ parliamentary group tabled a motion at Westminster condemning the jailings, and calling for urgent legal reforms in Turkey to protect press freedom. It pointed out that Turkey now holds more journalists in prison than any other country.

A delegation led by NUJ deputy general secretary Barry Fitzpatrick delivered a letter of protest to the Turkish embassy in London calling for charges against the imprisoned journalists to be dropped.
Northcliffe sale triggers consolidation fears

The union is warning of the long-term dangers of the sale of Northcliffe Media and Iliffe News and Media to Local World, a group headed by former Trinity Mirror chief executive David Montgomery.

Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT) sold its titles for £52.5million and will have 38.7 per cent shareholding in Local World. DMGT said: “Local World will become one of the UK’s leading regional newspaper publishers, online content providers and local advertising platforms, with more than 107 print titles and 60 websites.

DMGT will contribute more than 80 titles to the new venture, with another 36 coming from Iliffe News and Media.”

The Iliffe family, owners of Tatton Group, will have a 21.3 per cent stake. Trinity Mirror has bought a 20 per cent stake but will not be putting its regional papers into the business.

NUJ deputy general secretary Barry Fitzpatrick said: “Once again huge swathes of our media has changed hands with little transparency and, some could say, by stealth. The increasing consolidation of regional press under fewer and fewer owners is a cause for concern.

“Local World said it has a vision to create comprehensive content for local communities.”

Experience shows that large groups lose contact with local communities as they close local offices. We want to hold Local World to its word to protect news coverage for local communities, and guarantees that revenues will not be lost in the switch from print to online.”

Tindle offers £250,000 bonus

Bonuses totaling £250,000 are being paid to staff at Sir Ray Tindle’s fleet of local newspapers. But the cash is not to be divided equally, with payments ranging from £125 to £400 depending on the profits at each publishing centre.

Barry Fitzpatrick, NUJ deputy general secretary, said: “I have been pressing Sir Ray for several months, with the support of our chapels, for at least a lump sum payment before Christmas.

“In the past Sir Ray has always defended the pay freeze in his group by claiming that he has never made a journalist compulsorily redundant, and that he could not pay an increase unless he did it throughout the group.

“We would argue that this is a much needed cost of living payment and therefore should be the same for everyone.” The Tindle group has launched 17 local titles since the start of the current recession.

Book success for NUJ student member

Sheffield University’s department of journalism studies are celebrating the success of third year journalism student Amy Durrant, whose first book has been nominated for a major literary award.

Amy, an NUJ member, had her debut novel Prisms published in July by key US house Rainstorm Press.

The book, which has been released as a paperback and an e-book, has now been nominated for the 2013 London Book Award.

The novel tells the tale of two parallel worlds which are ‘wastelands of corruption’ and a 17-year-old girl’s fight against the political system.

In brief...

Austerity fuels workplace stress

UK workers’ health is affected by stress due to the economic climate and fears of job loss, according to a TUC survey. The top safety concerns cited in the TUC’s tenth biennial survey this year were stress, bullying and harassment, problems relating to heavy workloads and overwork, and violence and intimidation.

Scots circulation continues to fall

The decline in national newspaper circulation in Scotland continued over the past 12 months.

The Sunday Mail’s circulation dropped by more than 20 per cent to 308,350 copies a week. The Scotsman and Scotland on Sunday, owned by Scotsman Publications, suffered drops of 14.74 per cent and 17.47 per cent respectively.

No Scots opt-outs from Freedom law

Action by the Scottish government to close loopholes in the nation’s Freedom of Information amendment bill is being urged by CFoIS, the Campaign for Freedom of Information in Scotland.

CFoIS says the law must address the increasing number of public services that are moving outside of information legislation through the use of private contractors and bodies such as housing associations and voluntary bodies.

Birmingham site gets new look

Trinity Mirror’s Birmingham Mail is the first of the group’s regional titles to use its new website with a new content management system.

Others are due to follow in the next few months, with sites featuring built-in live blog technology, better presentation of picture galleries and video and a new hyperlocal section.

Action in the newsroom

The Kentish Gazette’s is to feature in the Channel 4 drama Southcliffe, due to be broadcast next year. The Gazette’s team were all filmed as extras.
Too many courses, say editors

There are too many journalism courses compared to the number of jobs available to young people entering the media industry, according to a survey for the Society of Editors. Nearly a quarter of editors said aspiring journalists should actively avoid media studies courses. Many editors felt 100 wpm shorthand should be compulsory for new journalists, and they identified other key skills as news sense, proficiency in interviewing and news writing and media law. They considered that aspiring journalists should study politics, history and English language. But more than three-quarters thought an undergraduate degree was not essential.

NCTJ hief executive Joanne Butcher complained of the number of bogus courses offered to students. “It is a disgrace to see so many young people completing expensive courses and passing bogus qualifications that just don’t provide them with the vocational skills they need to get jobs or qualifications that editors have any faith in. We owe it to them to expose this scandal,” she said.

Reflecting the campaign spearheaded by the NUJ to emphasise the importance of ethical standards in journalism, she said journalism ethics would be brought ‘centre stage’ in the NCTJ curriculum. “Following recent research and much soul searching, we have concluded that far greater emphasis must be placed on ethics in the industry’s journalism training and qualifications,” she said. “There is agreement across the industry that journalistic ethics matter a lot so that readers and audiences trust the information they are being given by the media.

PA Equal Pay Claim SUCCESS

The union has won a backdated pay rise worth £8,000 a year for a journalist working for the Press Association. The equal pay complaint was set in motion with a grievance lodged with NUJ support. Negotiations with management then centred on recognition of additional skills acquired by the union member as part of a new job role.

NUJ negotiator Laura Davison said: “The union will support members who can show that there is an unjustifiable pay gap between them and another employee of the opposite sex.”

Unpaid internships a media scourge

Advertising unpaid internships should be made illegal, the union has told the Low Pay Commission. While low pay in the media industry is a wider problem than people realise, working for nothing is also becoming a worrying trend, NUJ general secretary Michelle Stanistreet told the commission.

An NUJ submission said: “Competition to get into what is seen as a glamorous industry, at a time when jobs are scarce, has bred a new phenomenon: the unpaid intern. This practice continues to exploit dreams and exclude new talent, undermining the diversity of our profession. Employers in the media should be warned we will continue to take on those who seek to exploit young people and newcomers to the industry. We cannot have a situation where only those who can afford to work for nothing are given a chance to get a break in the industry.”

The union said advertising unpaid internships should be made illegal. The submission said: “Unpaid ‘internships’ have become the scourge of the industry. Legislation should ensure the NMW is afforded to interns to enable them to enforce their right to pay without the requirement.

Many editors felt 100 wpm shorthand should be compulsory for new journalists

Many editors felt 100 wpm shorthand should be compulsory for new journalists, and they identified other key skills as news sense, proficiency in interviewing and news writing and media law. They considered that aspiring journalists should study politics, history and English language. But more than three-quarters thought an undergraduate degree was not essential.
Weighing up union gains

It’s been over a year since the NUJ fought for a voice in the Leveson inquiry as a core participant. When it came to report day, the NUJ team reading the embargoed copy was scanning the 2,000 page document for one main issue – mention of the NUJ Conscience Clause. After years of campaigning for the right for journalists to have contractual protection against dismissal if they refuse to carry out an assignment they believe would breach their code of conduct, it was a red letter day to see this being supported by Leveson.

Within hours, John McDonnell MP – secretary of the NUJ’s cross-party parliamentary group – had secured agreement from David Cameron that the industry should immediately engage with the NUJ on getting the Conscience Clause implemented. After the editors’ gathering of the families over bacon butties, it looks like they will ‘consider’ implementing the Conscience Clause but it’s by no means a done deal yet.

A major blow was Leveson’s silence on the vital role trade unions play in our workplaces – he wanted an answer at the outset to the inquiry to the question Who Guards the Guardians? The NUJ gave him one – you let union’s organise and give members the collective strength to tackle issues together, whether it’s on pay and conditions, bullying or on quality, ethical journalism.

When Rupert Murdoch faced questions about bullying at his titles, he simply said: “Why didn’t she resign?” As Lord Leveson had to point out, “I think the problem with that might be that she needs a job.” This underlines just why journalists need the independent voice and protection that the NUJ offers them.

Of course, he other big issue that generated so much heat in advance of publication – not least directed at the NUJ (with a Sun leader column dubbing me the most dangerous trade union leader in Britain!) – was the issue of regulation. Apparently, the NUJ was set on unleashing Stalinist state stooges to run our press, turning us into Zimbabwe or Iran at a stroke. Of course, this is crazed nonsense. The NUJ absolutely does not back state control or statutory regulation of the press and its content. In fact, the union backs independent regulation of the press – independent of the industry and of government.

As in Ireland’s Press Council, the NUJ wants to be part of the new independent body set up – to create a co-regulatory body where the industry bosses do not dominate, and where the public and journalists are properly represented. That’s why we’re arguing for participation in any new independent body. If the successor to the PCC is to mark a genuinely fresh start with real independence at its heart, it should be created with the broadest set of participants from the off.

Whilst many are arguing for full implementation of Leveson’s findings, there are deep areas of concern that the NUJ will be resisting robustly – notably changes to Police And Criminal Evidence Act, the Data Protection Act, and off the record briefings. Such changes would restrict the ability of journalists to work properly, to investigate, and truly to protect their sources. Journalism needs more of this work, not less – these are the real threats to press freedom contained within the Leveson report, not changes to bring about a regulatory system that is genuinely independent, is accountable and has teeth.
Spinning out of control?

Christopher Price looks at the implications of the rise and rise of public relations.
 Rookie hand-wringing has been a report from the US claiming that public relations practitioners now outnumber journalists by four to one. Thirty years ago, the figure was 1:1 to 1.

With the seismic shifts in the media in recent years, few can be surprised by this figure. And what does it matter anyway? A lot, says Roy Greenslade, the veteran media commentator. On his Guardian blog, he wrote: “What we’re talking about here, as we chart the rise of PR and the simultaneous decline of journalism, is an assault on democracy itself.”

The report’s authors, media academics Robert McChesney and John Nicols, concur, decrying the threat to free speech and lack of plurality brought by the PR ‘juggernaut’.

The study also claims that 86 per cent of press articles in the study area had originated from PR sources or corporate press releases. Nicols told a US media conference earlier this year that, ‘the future is not ‘Big Brother’ is watching you,’ the future is, ‘You will be watching Big Brother.’

Their radical solution involves parts of the media having access to funding in order to preserve their independence and support scrutiny in those areas of society that are disappearing from the media radar screen, such as public sector reporting. They argue that the flight to online publishing has no workable business case and that the traditional link between the press and advertising is now irreversibly broken.

It’s hard not to sympathise with these arguments. In the autumn, two stalwarts of the English-speaking media have been dealing with the crisis engulfing the traditional press.

In the US, the iconic current affairs weekly Newsweek ceased as a print publication, moving to a purely online version. Meanwhile, rumours circulated yet again that The Guardian was preparing to become a solely online publication. The paper denied this – as negotiations continue with the NUJ on another round of editorial redundancies at the loss-making daily.

And in a surprise twist, Boris Johnson used a recent Telegraph column to lambast The Guardian – except the London mayor’s attack was aimed not at the Leftie daily’s politics but at the prospect of an online-only version.

“Take it online and you lose all political impact; you lose the vital editorial marshalling of the often excellent journalists and cartoonists and photographers into a single daily statement, a single product – and everything gets lost in the morass of Google news,” wrote Johnson. “We will always need a real and not a virtual Guardian.”

Ironically, by seeking to be just a web site, The Guardian – and to some extent Newsweek – will be forced to further embrace one of the causes of the growth in the PR industry – the 24-hour news cycle. Because with that has come an almost inexhaustible demand for content, a hunger that a diminishing number of journalists are finding it hard to feed, while PR firms are more than happy to oblige.

Content provision for clients is now a major part of a PR firm’s workload. That supply is becoming increasingly sophisticated as PRs look to place client stories and news editors seek content that can more easily be checked and passed for publication. This lack of filtering and scrutiny is the enemy of professional journalism, argues Greenslade.

Oiling this process are the newswire agencies, such as PRNewswire and Globalnewswire. Previously available to news distributors, such as Reuters and AP, these purveyors of corporate information now offer PRs sophisticated tools to give their press releases more editorial persuasion, relevance and hence acceptance by news desks with space to fill.

Vital too are forward editorial diaries – now an everyday PR tool. Once the preserve of trade magazine web sites and prized by in-house press officers, they have become important weapons in the armoury, matching client marketing plans with web sites’ editorial strategy.

Then there are the new kids on the block – the digital agency. Powered by the new generation of mobile devices, these agencies use the likes of Facebook, Twitter and other social media, to initiate PR and marketing strategies that hardly bother with the media at all. They are also helped by developments in marketing technology tools that use metrics, gathering different types of data to measure and then deliver to a clients brief.

So, do all these developments underpinning the 4-to-1 statistic really threaten democracy and plurality?

It’s important not to underestimate the diversity of the online media. From influential blogs, forums, web sites, tweets and other social media, the vitality of the online conversation is astounding. True, it may not have the...
authority of existing offline news brands, but in the new media world voices are being heard that would previously have been silent.

Among these are the public information sites – from local authorities to central government to welfare organisations to flight times, the amount and availability of information has never been greater or easier to access.

Then there are the means by which the internet is accessed. Devices are getting smarter, sleeker and more sophisticated as networks get faster, as with the arrival of 4G in the UK. Information is being delivered more quickly, more efficiently and more intelligently than ever and this trend will continue to evolve.

So those, like Johnson, who decry the lack of plurality through the decline of old media need to reboot their computers and get out into cyberspace to witness the new media revolution.

Finally, the arguments of the old guard always start from the premise that all PR is bad PR. Sure, some PR is lousy, some pushy and some too biased. But as someone who has been at a senior level in both journalism and PR, in my experience they subscribed to the cynical view that the provision of information seen through the PR lens, or orchestrated by a PR agency, was in any way tainted.

PR will continue to grow and flourish. Journalism will continue to adapt. The media will continue to evolve into a more inclusive and engaging entity.

Plurality may be seen to be declining in the printed press, but has not disappeared. It’s simply re-invented itself for the digital age.

Christopher Price is a former Financial Times writer and a former partner at College Hill Associates
It’s been refreshing to be able to report some of the better news about the struggling media industry recently. The ebooklet I co-authored on ‘New Ways to Make Copyright Pay’ tells the upside of the digital revolution that helped to erode journalism’s financial foundations, featuring the pioneers and potential new business models emerging out of the chaos.

FREELY AVAILABLE TO UNION MEMBERS VIA THE NUJ WEBSITE, THE BOOKLET IS A SERIES OF CASE STUDIES OF MEDIA START-UPS BY JOURNALISTS AND WRITERS ATTEMPTING TO PUT THEIR WORK ON A NEW FINANCIAL FOOTING. THE PROJECTS DEMONSTRATE WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED WHEN ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT MEETS COMMITMENT TO QUALITY: REPORTING ABOUT AND FOR LOCAL COMMUNITIES, IN-DEPTH FEATURES FOR WHICH THERE ARE NO MAINSTREAM OUTLETS, AND SPECIALIST COVERAGE SERVING DISADVANTAGED GROUPS. THEN THERE ARE THE ENHANCED BOOKS AND iPAD MAGS WHICH MARRY GRAPHIC SPLENDOUR WITH EDUCATION AND INFORMATION, AND THE KINDLE SINGLES THAT ENABLE THE ENTERPRISING JOURNALIST TO CONNECT DIRECTLY WITH HER READERSHIP.

As a body, instead of indicating a clear direction for the future, these disparate case studies highlight a series of puzzles and contradictions.

One of the most obvious is what they suggest about advertising. Echoing the conventional wisdom that the advertising model is broken, BestStory co-founder Warren Perley, featured for his pay-as-you-go experiment in long-form journalism, insists that the way forward lies in new ways of persuading readers to pay for good material.

Another entrepreneur is making a success of a new magazine entirely funded by what could be called hyperlocal advertising. Filton Voice, a monthly print magazine serving a suburb of Bristol, has been profitable since its first issue in October last year. It now pays the founder-editor Richard Coulter a pro-rata salary which is comparable with his earnings as a staff journalist.

In other areas, the jury is out. Choosing an unproven format in the hope of cross-sales – the strategy pursued by author Simon Winchester in publishing an enhanced version of his book Skulls ahead of the physical edition – may or may not prove commercially worthwhile. But in a world where readers’ expectations are growing, it may be something that has to be tried.

Then there are the surprise successes, such as bestselling Kindle Single Dakota Christmas, and the pay-what-you-want sports magazine The Blizzard. The stories behind both publications confound the idea that a business plan and a couple of years of unpaid grind are preconditions for profitability. Yet neither case yields a template-style guide to deliver the same outcome: the digital age has not yet abolished that mysterious ingredient called luck.

Meanwhile, it’s increasingly important to watch how the power and money is getting distributed. The story of the Huffington Post – unpaid bloggers making Adrianna et al a small fortune a few years later – warns about espousing the free culture too readily.

Having followed the quest for the new sustainability for three years, one question emerging for me is: where are all the women? I can discern no single reason for this, but one thing is certain: if we want the brave new digital world to be as good as the good old days, we are all going to have to keep our wits about us.

‘Help Yourself: New Ways to Make Copyright Pay’ by Tim Dawson and Alex Klaushofer is now available on the NUJ’s website: www.nuj.org.uk
Barrie Clement meets the new TUC general secretary – the first woman leader in its 150-year history, and a member of the NUJ

Frances O’Grady arrived in the media world with all the right instincts.

On her first morning in the press office of the Transport & General Workers’ Union (T&G) her first act was to fill in an NUJ application form. Her second was to make tea.

Less auspicious was that she inadvertently unplugged all the computers when she put the kettle on.

Unfortunately press officer Andrew Murray was in the middle of rattling out an urgent press release. “I was on secondment in the press office in preparation for setting up a magazine for women members of the T&G,” says Frances. “It wasn’t a great start.”

Great start or not, Frances went on to join the staff at Congress House and on January 1 she will become the first woman general secretary of the TUC in its 150-year history. She will also be its first leader to be a member of the NUJ.

“I would much prefer to be the twentieth female TUC general secretary than the first. But it is a great honour and I have been stunned by just how encouraging people have been,” she says.

But isn’t it an indictment of the union movement that she has been preceded by 19 men? “I think my election has confounded those who want to stereotype us as macho and spoiling for a fight. It makes it harder for people to put us in a particular box.

“I hope it encourages people who thought it wasn’t possible, to stand for election as a rep or an official; to put themselves forward and to have a go.”

Frances has certainly ‘had a go’. As the single mother of two children – now grown up – she managed to carve out a successful career. When the children were growing up she spent her life charging between work, home and school. Most of the time she was – as she puts it – ‘knackered’.

But she was always destined to be a committed trade unionist. “I suppose you might say that I heard trade unionism discussed at the kitchen table when I was a child,” says Frances.

Born in Oxford in 1959, she was one of five children in a working class family. Her maternal granddad was a painter and decorator from Dublin – a ‘ragged trousered philanthropist’ as fellow Dubliner Robert Tressell might describe him.

When her grandfather came to Britain, however, his status as a tradesman was not recognised and he could only find work as a labourer, ‘like so many other people from Ireland’, as Frances says.

“He was a self-educated man who read loads of books. He believed in the old brand of trade unionism; about sticking
up for people and having a vision of a better society.”

Her mother worked in shops and for the NHS and her father, a T&G shop steward, was employed on the production line at Cowley’s massive car plant.

Frances passed the 11-plus and went to Milham Ford, a local girls’ grammar school, which became a comprehensive within a year of her joining. She was keen on drama and liked to draw. (She still draws people ‘on the quiet’).

At the age of 17 she got a snapshot of how the privileged live by taking a part-time job in the kitchens of an Oxford college – an image that has never left her.

Frances went on to Manchester University to read politics and modern history and in her late 20s got a job in the research department of the ‘family’s union’, the T&G.

At Transport House, Frances covered a range of industrial and equality issues. She was among those who successfully campaigned for a national minimum wage and to retain the Agricultural Wages Board which sets pay and conditions for farm workers. The board is currently under fresh attack by the Tory LibDem coalition which is conducting a ‘consultation’ on its future. So far the government has not dared to touch the minimum wage.

Frances is a trade unionist to her bones. “It’s about winning fairness, about people sticking together. The relationship between bosses and the people who work for them is an unequal one – even when the boss is reasonable. It evens the odds up.

“I feel very strongly about low pay. Lots of us campaigned in favour of the minimum wage when all employers’ organisations were absolutely against it.

“They forecast the end of modern capitalism; they said it would destroy millions of jobs. It is now one of the most successful and popular policies introduced post-war.

“I am an idealist, but also somebody who wants to do a job. The minimum wage makes a practical difference to people’s lives and the lives of their children. It puts money into people’s pockets.”

One of France’s first jobs at Congress House was to set up the Organising Academy which
was an attempt, as she says, to ‘revitalise the trade union movement’. Its main focus is to build organisational capacity and run effective campaigns.

“We are trying to get unions to think bigger, to reach out to a new generation of workers who might not know what a union is for,” she says.

Frances has been a member of the Labour Party since she was 16. “I want to see a very different economy and society. I want people to live in a society where employees and their families get a fair chance – and we’re a long way from that.”

Frances declares her self as an optimist who believes that Labour will win the next election. “I think Ed Miliband’s agenda does have resonance with working people. It’s no good trying to redistribute wealth through services and benefits alone. Why should taxpayers subsidise employers paying less than they can afford to pay through the benefits system? Why shouldn’t we require employers who can afford it, to pay the Living Wage?”

“Ed Miliband has had the guts to stand up to the vested interests. His instincts are bang on. He was the first to stand up to the banks and to Rupert Murdoch. He called it right on a number of key issues.

“He has recognised that living standards have been falling since 2003 and he realises that it is an issue that has to be tackled, that it is not sustainable.

“Big business is sitting on £750bn in cash which companies are not investing in plant and equipment and they are certainly not investing it in pay. Business confidence is low because consumer confidence is rock bottom. We need to get demand growing again. Nearly 70 per cent of GDP depends on household expenditure. If people aren’t spending, businesses go bust and jobs disappear. We might have emerged from a double dip recession, but there’s an awful long way to go”

Despite her loyalty to Labour, Frances understands the need to engage with government of whatever stripe.

“Trade unionists are pragmatists. We hope for the best, but prepare for the worst. It’s our responsibility to represent working people who ever’s in power.”

Frances met David Cameron and George Osborne ahead of the general election in 2010 and has held regular unpublicised meetings with Business Secretary Vince Cable since.

“We are not kidding ourselves. We know access is not the same as influence, but it is important to keep the doors open.”

So what’s Frances’s ‘big project’?

“It’s the bread and butter issue of living standards. That’s what needs to change. The single most important reason why real wages have declined is that the coverage of collective bargaining has declined. It will require the support of a new government to expand the influence of trade unions at work.

“Otherwise working people are going to continue to suffer from the concentration of wealth in a few hands. Profits are increasing while wages are shrinking. Growing inequality is not just a problem for trade unions, it’s a problem for the country.”

If that is the big challenge for the country, the big challenge for unions is to halt the decline in membership.

“We have to get better at communicating. We’ve got some genuinely brilliant communications staff in unions given the limitation on resources, but collectively we need to avoid the temptation of talking to ourselves. Eight out of ten workers in the private sector are not union members. We must talk to those people.”

She believes the movement’s ability to communicate has not been helped by the fact that the press in the UK is in few hands and is overwhelmingly ill-disposed to unions.

And she believes the revelations at the Leveson inquiry were genuinely shocking. “It has got to the stage where there needs to be some form of regulation. The PCC has lost credibility – if it had a great deal in the first place.

“Reforms are clearly required, but we have to be careful. Nobody wants to see a tame press. In fact we want to see a more investigatory press.

“The concentration of ownership has been the root cause of some deeply unhealthy behaviour. Abuses naturally follow when individuals have too much power. It has made the case for stronger trade unions.”

**BACKGROUND**

**Born:**
November 9, 1959, Oxford. One of five children.

**Educated:**
*Millhamford School.*
Originally a grammar school which became a comprehensive.

*Manchester University.*
BA Hons in politics and modern history.

*Middlesex Polytechnic.*
Diploma in industrial relations and trade union studies.

**Family:**
Mother a shop worker and NHS employee.
Father was a production line worker and a shop steward for the Transport & General Workers’ Union (now general union Unite) at the Leyland car plant in Cowley. Frances has two adult children and lives in north London.

**Personal interests:**
A fan of drama and live music, especially post-punk New Wave. Frances is also an amateur artist, specializing in drawing people rather than landscapes.

**Career:**
1982 Frances joined the research department at the Transport & General Workers’ Union where she specialized in equality and general industrial issues. She worked on successful campaigns to stop the abolition of the Agricultural Wages Board and for the introduction of a national minimum wage.

1994 She was appointed as TUC campaigns officer and was involved in initiatives on equal rights for part-timers and the fight against low pay.

1997 Frances launched the TUC’s Organising Academy. As well as driving recruitment campaigns, the academy set out to attract a new generation into the union movement.

1999 She was appointed head of the TUC’s organisation department, remoulding local training and education projects into a unified national structure.

2003 Frances became TUC deputy general secretary and led the team which won an industrial agreement with the Olympic authorities, guaranteeing on-site minimum standards. Frances has also led on industrial policy and has been a member of the Low Pay and the High Pay Commissions.

On January 1, 2013 Frances will become the first female general secretary of the TUC since it was established more than 150 years ago.
Q&A

Rory Cellan-Jones is the BBC’s technology correspondent

What made you become a journalist?
To escape turning into the accountant that most of my friends at university had become. To travel the world, right wrongs, and get shot at. Instead I went to Leeds and Cardiff and then became a business journalist in London.

What other job might you have done?
I once aspired to be a barrister, but would probably have ended up as a rumpled old teacher.

When did you join the NUJ and why?
At the BBC in Leeds in 1982 because that is what you did in those days.

Are many of your friends in the union?
Most of my generation of BBC journalists are in the union.

What’s the most rewarding thing about your job?
My colleagues in more ‘serious’ areas such as economics mock me as the guy who plays with gadgets – but what I find rewarding is coming across brilliant companies and inventors whose ideas could change our lives.

...and the most frustrating?
Covering technology for a broad audience often means explaining complex subjects in simple terms, and cutting through jargon. What’s frustrating is interviewees who believe plain English is dumbing down – and editors who think that anything even mildly technical will be beyond our audience’s comprehension.

What is the worst place you’ve ever worked in?
None of the newsrooms I’ve inhabited has been that salubrious. But that has never mattered – it’s the teams that count. I’ve only been really miserable many years ago when a couple of managers seemed to think that bullying was the way to get a good programme on air.

And the best?
The team that launched Working Lunch in 1994 made it a very happy place – we were doing something new that much of the rest of the organisation thought was mad and we pulled together to make it work.

And the worst ones?
I’m still embarrassed that my first strike was over the introduction of computers to the BBC newsroom – we said they’d never catch on...

What advice would you give someone starting in journalism?
Do some – and see if you like it. These days online tools make it easy to get your work out there in a way which wasn’t possible when I started.

Who is your biggest hero?
Allan Little, who I think is a brilliant, understated writer with a marvellous voice who has been at the frontline of so many international conflicts over two decades without losing his humanity.

And villain?
I won’t name names – but any number of people who do not seem to understand that, for all its faults, the BBC is an institution without which this country would be immeasurably poorer.

Which six people (alive or dead) would you invite to a dinner party?

What was your earliest political thought?
I’m a BBC correspondent, I don’t have political thoughts.

What are your hopes for journalism over the next five years?
That it will find a way of getting people to pay for it.

And fears?
That it won’t.

What one thing would you most want to change in the next 12 months?
My typing speed. I’ve never moved beyond two fingers...

How would you like to be remembered?
As the oldest man to cover technology for the BBC.
Simon Creasey reports on skills that can help journalists protect colleagues in war zones

American photographer Michael Christopher Brown has twice been wounded while working in a combat zone. The first time he was shot in the leg by Colonel Gadaffi’s forces in Libya. The bullet went through his calf muscle, but missed nerves, arteries and bone. The second time, in April 2011, Brown was walking with rebel fighters down a street in the Libyan city of Misrata, when a mortar landed on the pavement 60 feet in front of him, blowing the soldier walking ahead of him off his feet.

Brown received four pieces of shrapnel in his shoulder, arm and chest, and lost nearly half the blood in his body, with one piece of shrapnel almost severing an artery. He had no war zone insurance, wasn’t wearing any safety gear and had no medical training. Nor did the group of photographers travelling with Brown, which is adequate medical attention in the first few minutes.”

Junger says that the problem is further heightened among freelances, with many war correspondents lacking the financial resources to undergo expensive hostile environment training courses that media organisations offer to members of staff as standard.

“Freelances comprise the vast majority of frontline reporters – without them war zones would be virtual black holes of information – and yet they are the most under-served of the entire journalistic community,” he says.

To redress the balance Junger created the non-profit Reporters Instructed in Saving Colleagues (RISC) with the aim of arming war correspondents with the type of medical skills and equipment that might have saved Hetherington’s life. The three-day training course covers medical techniques to treat common injuries in combat settings, including bullet and mortar wounds, burns, and blunt trauma. It also provides advice on travel medicine, including heat- and cold-related dangers, food preparation and water disinfection. War correspondents who complete the course receive a comprehensive first aid kit – comparable to what combat medics carry in the field – and a field guide, which they are expected to carry with them on assignment.

On the first course were photographers, film-makers and writers, including Brown. Almost all were seasoned war correspondents, according to Lily Hindy, deputy director at RISC.

“We do not introduce inexperienced people to

Simon Creasey reports on skills that can help journalists protect colleagues in war zones

RISC REPORTERS INSTRUCTED IN SAVING COLLEAGUES

Julia Thomas

in the hostile environment, in the way that typical hostile environment training courses do,” says Hindy. “This allows us to stick to medical skills and to keep it to three days rather than five. We also want to make sure that we are training the people who need this most – those who have made conflict reporting their career. Though we are now reserving one or two spots on each course for people who have reporting experience in conflict areas, but may not have actually seen outright combat – who are dedicated to conflict reporting and will in all likelihood be in danger in the future.”

In the autumn the RISC held a course in New York and next year it plans one in London, which has already received almost 150 applications. A further programme is planned for the Middle East to reach freelances covering trouble spots like Syria. The short-term goal is to train 125 freelance combat journalists by the end of next year.

RISC offers the training free, relying on donations from media organisations including ABC, CNN, National Geographic, Getty Images.

The hostile environment, in the way that typical hostile environment training courses do,” says Hindy. “This allows us to stick to medical skills and to keep it to three days rather than five. We also want to make sure that we are training the people who need this most – those who have made conflict reporting their career. Though we are now reserving one or two spots on each course for people who have reporting experience in conflict areas, but may not have actually seen outright combat – who are dedicated to conflict reporting and will in all likelihood be in danger in the future.”

In the autumn the RISC held a course in New York and next year it plans one in London, which has already received almost 150 applications. A further programme is planned for the Middle East to reach freelances covering trouble spots like Syria. The short-term goal is to train 125 freelance combat journalists by the end of next year.

RISC offers the training free, relying on donations from media organisations including ABC, CNN, National Geographic, Getty Images.
and Conde Nast/Vanity Fair, in addition to the almost $18,000 it received in response to a GlobalGiving fund raising drive, in September. Feedback from attendees of the inaugural course has been overwhelmingly positive, with trainees reporting that they feel much more confident about returning to conflict zones and taking care of themselves and their colleagues.

Brown, for one, feels that had he undergone the RISC course prior to visiting Libya things may well have turned out differently. "Although I was injured and in shock, these skills could have been of great use to my colleagues and I in Libya," says Brown. "If we had known more, things may have been different."

And that's ultimately what Junger was aiming to achieve when he decided to establish the course. "Unfortunately there will always be more Tims, and if we can spare even one family what Tim's family went through, I will feel like we succeeded," says Junger.

For more information or to make a donation, visit www.risctraining.org
Music
Glastonbury Festival
June 26-30
Tickets for everyone’s favourite, Glastonbury Festival 2013, which will be supporting Water Aid, Oxfam and Greenpeace, sold out in record time. But festival boss, Emily Evis, took to Twitter to confirm that tickets for the Worthy Farm bash will go on resale in April to give those who missed out due to technical problems a further chance to buy. Headline acts announced include U2, Coldplay and Beyoncé. To register for resale tickets go to: www.glastonburyfestivals.co.uk

Eric Clapton
UK dates
May 9 through to May 26
Legendary guitarist Eric Clapton, renowned for his charity work including his Crossroads Centre in Antigua where individuals begin a journey of recovery from the effects of alcohol and other drug dependencies, returns to the stage to celebrate his 50th year as a professional musician. Dates are Dublin 02, May 9, Belfast Odyssey Arena May 10, Birmingham LG Arena May 13, Manchester Men Arena May 14 and London’s Royal Albert Hall May 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26.

After signing with the Yardbirds in 1963, Clapton has played and fronted numerous bands, recorded an abundance of albums, received critical acclaim and accolades and performed countless worldwide shows. These concerts mark his return to the stage after spending 2012 in the studio working on a new album to be released in early 2013. www.ericclapton.com

Jake Bugg
UK tour
Feb 7 – 28
A new name on the block but getting plenty of critical acclaim and plaudits from the likes of Noel Gallagher and The Stone Roses. 18 year old Jake has been pegged as an East Midlands Bob Dylan. His New Year tour starts in Edinburgh on Feb 7 and currently runs...
George Croz
The Big No
Various venues throughout December 2012 until August 2013
George Croz was one of greatest satirical artists of the 20th century. A co-founder of the Berlin Dada group and revolutionary in the 1920s, he made hundreds of drawings depicting the vices and injustices of capitalist society, many published by the left wing publisher Malik Verlag.
www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Books
Danny Baker
Weidenfeld & Nicolson. £18.99
Journalist, comedy writer, radio and TV presenter and screenwriter, Danny began his career in a record shop after dropping out of school in London’s Deptford. He co-founded the fanzine Sniffin’ Glue which led to an offer from the NME followed by a varied broadcasting career. This charts his colourful childhood and career: the highs and lows and everything in-between, including his recent struggle with cancer.
www.orionbooks.co.uk

Confusion to Our Enemies: Selected Journalism of Arnold Kemp (1939 – 2002)
Journalist, comedy writer, radio and TV presenter and screenwriter, Danny Baker
This charts his colourful childhood and career: the highs and lows and everything in-between, including his recent struggle with cancer.
www.orionbooks.co.uk

BUCKINGHAM HOUSE BOOKS
He’s behind you
Are you going to forget politics for the festive season and give the kids a treat? Remember, you still get to boo the baddy or the buffoon. Whether it’s a lead character masquerading as someone else, men dressed as women, sexual innuendo or a load of mess. Remind you of something? Take the family and try to enjoy yourself. Here’s a collection of pantos around the UK:
www.biggantoguide.co.uk

PANTO GUIDE

Out Stories
M Shed Studio, Bristol, February 2 - March 2, 2013
Entry: Free

A groundbreaking exhibition revealing the secret histories of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people across the city of Bristol. Until the late 1960s, the great majority of LGBT Bristolians led to be very discreet and many led double lives. The exhibition will feature their stories, from the everyday to the outrageous and look at what has changed in the last four decades. The exhibition coincides with LGBT history month in the city. Three Bristol senior schools will be involved in the exhibition, complementing work already underway as part of the Stonewall Education Champions project.

The M Shed exhibition will be followed by a smaller version in Bath, Yate and Weston-Super-Mare. www.mshed.org
HAVE A PINT FOR US, PETE

I read your feature Been Down The Pub? with a mixture of nostalgia, annoyance and envy.

I have nothing against Pete Laizenby - he clearly knows from experience how to get a great story, and is good at it. It’s just that I found him off the mark with regards to the likelihood of reporters nowadays being allowed out of the office to make contacts. As a local reporter with eight years experience, it makes me want to weep at how off the mark he is.

When I started at my Newspuset-owned paper, we were encouraged to get out there, and I absolutely loved that aspect of the job. But ‘budget cuts’ and increasing fear for our jobs (which in my case turned out to be well-founded) meant we were basically allowed out for death-knocks. That was it.

Ridiculously, very few council meetings, and even fewer public meetings were sanctioned – you can forget meeting your contacts.

I ended up taking annual leave or using my evenings (unpaid of course) to get along to things my contacts asked me to. I’d have rather used my own time than never seen them.

The sad thing is, good managers would have applauded reporters with that much enthusiasm.

But there just aren’t many of those managers around now.

Anna Faro
Essex

Financial crisis not covered well enough

Members of the Nottingham NUJ branch felt the coverage of the delegate meeting (DM) in The Journalist did not reflect the depth of feelings about the union’s financial crisis, the Jeremy Dear affair, or the closure of the training department.

As so much is invested in the importance of DM, and the fact it was a rule changing DM, our treasurer Allister Craddock wanted to read more about the debates that took place at Newcastle rather than an article about going to the pub or another Spy in the Sky.

For instance, Michelle refers to DM as being a ‘lively gathering’ but there’s no real hint of that or even the arguments put forward by the supporters of the Alternative Plan.

Allister and members of my branch thought the coverage did a disservice to the events which took place, particularly as DM will now only be held once every two years, although the next one will be in 18 months time.

Diana Peasey
Chair, Nottingham NUJ branch

Don’t forget the plight of the Cuban Five

In the 1990s, Geraldo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, Fernando Gonzalez, Antonio Guerrero, and Rene Gonzalez accepted a Cuban government assignment to gather information about hostile paramilitary groups in Florida. There’s a history of violent attacks in Cuba and against supporters of the Revolution in the US. The Five were arrested by the FBI in 1998 and convicted on charges including acting as unregistered Cuban agents, possession of false documents and conspiracy to transmit US defence information.

Geraldo was convicted of conspiracy to commit murder based upon his unproven responsibility for the Cuban government’s 1996 shooting down of two planes flown over Cuba by the anti-Cuban government Brothers to the Rescue, disregarding repeated Cuban government warnings. Hernandez continues serving his sentence of two life terms plus fifteen years.

Rene was released from prison in October 2011 and is serving three year’s ‘supervised release’. The US refuses to allow him to return to Cuba.

There’s an international protest movement and trade unions in the UK, including the NUJ, have passed resolutions demanding the release of the Five or have affiliated to the Cuban Solidarity Campaign.

Please contact the CSC for information: office@cuba-solidarity.org.uk or 020 8800 0155.

Larry Herman,
Joint Secretary, London Photographers’ Branch (Personal Capacity)
despite the current economic climate and despair in so much of the media industry. About 40 per cent came from outside the M25 and even the UK... which deserves noting. The gender balance was encouraging too.

Information from the event has been posted on the LFB website – www.londonfreelance.org – as well as the main NUJ site.

It was a privilege to be part of that event – and be reassured that, despite the rapid technological evolution of publishing, good-old fashioned journalistic skills are still needed (if by different buyers) and still have a place in the world and, while being different, the future is far from being as bleak as some would have us believe.

Adam Christie
NUJ vice president (Job share)

What is art? And is it in Chipping Norton?

Is Brian Sewell one of us? Even if he isn’t perhaps he can be prevailed on to start a discussion on ‘What is art?’ It could be published later as a booklet – all proceeds to journalists charities? Are Steve Bell’s cartoons crude or do they reflect life and disgust at the Chipping Norton set? And respect for the Crucifixion?

Surely people realise that such debates have a long history? Why do people contribute as if these hoary old questions had just been discovered or mattered?

Who will reach for their Edmund Burke (on the sublime), Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, Ruskin or perhaps Plekhanov’s ‘Art and Social Life’?

On Christianity: apparently more people now visit IKEA on a Sunday than go to church. But the problem with Christianity always has been that it is intolerant.

That and its appalling doctrines like ‘original sin’ which derives from the Christian New Testament and the fathers of the Church, not the Old Testament as it has no place in Judaism or Islam. Captain William Golding used it as a theme to his awful book ‘The Lord of the Flies’. I often wondered how he treated his crews? I bet he was a right bastard.

Martin Spellman
Freelance
Book Branch

Non NUJ rate photography in The Journalist

I am shocked that The Journalist frequently uses iStock images. Along with Alamy, this is a picture library offering images at way below NUJ rates undercutting genuine professionals.

This month’s centre spread comes in at £30 in contrast to the £235 NUJ suggested rate for such a spread.

One might say this saves our union money but it would be hypocritical undermining our ethics and solidarity. If our own union doesn’t abide by its own rules, principles and guidelines how can we stand together? I find it deeply undermining and I hope that in the future you will refrain from using iStock and non NUJ photographers’ images.

Furthermore, I think there is not so much a need for debate, as it should be clear how we stand with our rates and principles, but for a re-emphasis of our values so that we can stand as one and together in these difficult times for our profession. Instead of seeing under-rate images in the pages I would welcome a clear reiteration on this subject within a future issue of

The Journalist which would communicate a unifying and encouraging message for all members.

Timm Sonnenschein
Freelance Photographer
Birmingham

The Journalist will continue to use material from photo libraries, to which NUJ members submit images. Like other trade union publications, we need a wide variety of images for good page design. And as our recent survey showed, the majority of readers believe that the magazine has good page design. It is our practice to pay ‘NUJ rates’ for all commissioned images. The Journalist hires and pays writers and photographers as well as it is able to. But the magazine has a tight budget and this has just been cut as part of the union’s drive to maintain financial viability. We cannot spend money we don’t have.

Christine Buckley,
Editor,
The Journalist

STEVIE BELL

THE OWNERS
Rachel Beer was a trail blazer and a woman before her time: the first ever to edit a national newspaper.

In 1894, she bought and edited the Sunday Times, and two years later, when her husband – owner and editor of the Observer – fell ill with tuberculosis, she filled his place and edited both rival newspapers for five years. Over 90 years would pass before another woman – Eve Pollard (Sunday Mirror) and Wendy Henry (News of the World) – would take the helm of a national newspaper. It is still a rarity today.

Beer’s breakthrough is astounding, considering the times she lived in: women were still denied the vote, had limited access to education, and intellectual activity was thought to cause them nervous breakdowns.

In an interview for the Sketch, Beer declared that she would be an editor first and a woman afterwards. Enchanted by her intellect, wit and sense of humor, the reporter concluded that ‘in the hands of its lady editor, the Sunday Times will be no mere new toy of a pretty woman, but a power to be wielded with wisdom and discretion’. Beer did the actual hands-on job, interviewing and writing 3000 words on different subjects for her leaders.

She was elected vice-president of The Society of Women Journalists. At that time, the Society had 200 members out of a total number of 660 lady journalists, who were restricted to the so-called ‘women’s sphere’, reporting on the latest frocks, frills and society gossip. Beer adamantly refused to limit herself, and fearlessly raised her voice on foreign and domestic matters, often controversially.

Her gender barred her from the Press Gallery of the House of Commons; she could not rub shoulders with politicians, generals and tycoons, and was deprived of the tips and connections to which male editors had ready access in the all-male clubs. But she cleverly turned her weakness into strength: since she owed them nothing, she could be outspoken, and maintain her independence.

“Contrasted with the average MP, Nero himself was an enlightened philanthropist,” she wrote in 1895. Her leaders seem eerily resonant in 2012: corrupt politicians, gender relations and inequality, wasteful and misplaced public spending.

Circulation did not drop when letters to the Editor were now addressed to Madam, and the readers, most of them male, felt comfortable to converse with her on topics that had been reserved for men.

An extremely rich woman and a leading Mayfair socialite, Beer was part of the ‘one per cent’, but a woman afterwards with the ‘99 per cent’ and campaigned for them. She called for taxing the rich and was an ardent supporter of the working classes’ struggle for better pay and working conditions. Even more than the vote, Beer believed in professional equality and protested against the huge pay-gap between men and women doing the same job.

And still, despite her pioneering-feat, English Heritage finds Beer unworthy of a blue plaque.

Today, half of journalists who cover culture are women. In hard news, only a quarter. The higher one climbs the editorial ladder, their number decreases significantly. Not a huge leap forward since Rachel Beer’s day.

Eilat Negev and Yehuda Koren’s The First Lady of Fleet Street: The Life, Fortune and Tragedy of Rachel Beer is published by The Robson Press.
Recently we saw the demise of the UK’s last analogue teletext service Ceefax, a casualty of the digital switchover.

This sad event prompted a little nostalgia from this once avid teletext user. I am old enough to remember the infuriating ‘pages from Ceefax’ sequence on BBC1 during the daytime, accompanied by bland muzak.

But when my family got a teletext enabled TV, I quickly became a fan of Ceefax page 302 – the football results – and the music pages PlanetSound over on ITV/Channel 4’s Teletext UK. I followed the teletext soap Park Avenue on ORACLE for a while.

Even when the worldwide web took off, teletext was often the quickest for sports results. With the introduction of set top boxes, a digital alternative was provided via the red button on the remote control. But for many teletext aficionados, it was a poor substitute.

The appeal of teletext was its speed and simplicity. Stories were barely more than 80 words, challenging their writers to be brief and succinct. The job of producing content for Ceefax in its latter days became the responsibility of the BBC’s online team whose headlines and intros had to be compatible with the platform’s strict character limit.

The free apps on the Android platform were, in general, more feature rich with options to send them to Dropbox and other services. They were also easy to email and copy onto your computer from your phone’s directory files via USB. I tried the stock app Voice Recordings, Tape-o-Talk and Smart Voice Recorder, and found little to separate them. Sound quality was good, although not as good as Voice Memos on the iPhone, but that may be down to the handset.

I own an Android phone and would consider it as a fall-back dictaphone, but the performance in this test is not good enough to persuade me to ditch my trusty iPod nano.
No need to cross the Rubicon

In the post-Leveson world we can now be confident the Rubicon will not be crossed. Skirmishing will continue for months but unless something goes badly wrong, statutory involvement in press regulation has been avoided. The debates will remain bitter because we are dealing with strongly held principles seldom susceptible to argument.

Publishers and editors under unprecedented pressure have at the eleventh hour scurried about trying to create a truly independent regulatory body with few editors in sight and fines of up to £1 million for errant papers. If would have been better if they had put their best foot forward earlier rather than waiting until the Leveson Report was already at the printers.

So many of Leveson’s recommendations have now been accepted that David Cameron can call off the dogs and announce that an acceptable compromise – at least in outline – has been achieved in the best interests of press, public and politicians.

There will be a recognition and validation body but it will not be enshrined in legislation. Perhaps it could be chaired by the about-to-retire Lord Chief Justice, Lord Judge, who is at ease with concepts of press freedom.

If an independent system were to fail, opponents of statutory intervention would have no arguments left to deploy. A majority vote in favour of legislation is still possible but nothing will happen if Mr Cameron is satisfied with the publishers’ response. In the meantime sit back and enjoy the arguments, and push for some of the good things that Leveson has proposed in the depths of his 2,000 pages and 92 recommendations while condemning the naive and impractical.

Recommendation 46 calling for the new regulatory body to establish a whistleblowing hotline for journalists put under pressure to breach their code should be implemented. Recommendation 47 builds on that by arguing that the newspaper industry and the regulator should consider inserting a conscience clause in contracts, so that journalists will not face disciplinary action if they refuse to break the code.

These would be steps in the right direction in changing the culture of some newsrooms. The law can take care of blatant illegality. Something has to be done to help young people desperate for jobs, who are bullied by newsdesks to ignore codes and go for the sort of intrusive and inaccurate journalism that has brought the industry into disrepute.

Some of the best are leaving journalism because of such pressure before their careers have really begun. Other recommendations should be and are being opposed. Leveson believes that for the police the term “off the record briefing” should be discontinued and replaced by the term “non-reportable briefing.”

Senior officers should log all press contacts and be accompanied by a press officer. In such a world, legitimate information flows will stagnate.

The insistence that journalists’ exemptions from data laws should be narrowed, and damages for breaches increased, should also receive scrutiny.

The key thing is that the integrity of the Rubicon has been preserved and there will be no rush to introduce special legal measures against the press which came to an end with the abolition of the Stamp Act in 1855 – measures that could be easily amended and toughened in future.
**Extra help for members**

For more than 100 years NUJ members and their dependents have been helped by NUJ Extra and its predecessors. Now NUJ Extra needs extra help from the next generation of journalists. We’re asking members to sign up to make regular donations of just £5 a month to continue our good work.

During this time of austerity and cutbacks NUJ Extra must continue the level of support needed by journalists and their dependents.

In addition to helping a small number of long-standing beneficiaries, we also help members in tight spots, sometimes a result of accidents and sudden illnesses. We can help out short-term and provide advice and support to come up with a long-term solution: for instance, we once paid for an advert in a major UK national newspaper to help sell a remote Welsh cottage at a price much above the local estate agent’s suggestion, and we bought a freezer for a member with Crohn’s Disease so she could stock up on special dietary food for when she felt too ill to shop or cook.

Now we need an army of NUJ members to sign up to give £5 a month. You can do this through direct debit or through Payroll Giving. By adding Gift Aid, your £5 would be worth £5.25 to us. It’s easy to do — just go to our website (www.nujextra.org.uk) or contact Lena Calvert on lenac@nuj.org.uk and she will send you the appropriate forms and information.

NUJ Extra has been doing that little bit extra for 100 years. Please, we need you to do that little bit extra now.

---

**Advertisers wanted**

The **Journalist**, the magazine of the National Union of Journalists, is looking for an advertising agency or professional to sell advertising. This would be on a commission-only basis. **The Journalist** is a bi-monthly magazine that reaches more than 32,000 journalists.

Our members work in broadcasting, national and regional newspapers, magazines, public relations, photography, book publishing and other areas. The NUJ represents media professionals in the UK, Ireland, France, Holland and Belgium as well as other countries.

For more information and expressions of interest please email journalist@nuj.org.uk

---

**Accident? An apology won’t pay the bills.**

The NUJ is here to get you compensation for everything your accident has cost you.

Legal help is FREE and you will always keep 100% of the compensation.

You can claim for any accident - at work, on the road or on holiday. Your family is also covered.

To find out more about NUJ legal services call **0800 587 7528**

The availability of NUJ Legal Services is in accordance with NUJ Rules, Legal Assistance Policy and Terms available on the NUJ website on nuj.org.uk. Limited exclusions apply. Accidents outside of the UK are covered where we can pursue the case through the courts in England/Wales. Family members are covered for accidents outside of the workplace.
YOU HAVE A CASE, BUT DO YOU HAVE THE CASH?

WHAT PRICE JUSTICE? The government thinks it knows. £1,200 if you claim for wrongful dismissal. It’s the same for race discrimination.

Even what the government calls a “simple claim”, such as not being paid what you’d earned, could set you back £400.

Experts object, but ministers are still planning fees for most employment tribunal cases.

They see nothing unfair in this. Nothing wrong that someone who has not been paid the minimum wage could have to fork out more than a week’s pay to claim it back.

And nothing wrong in making the costs system ever more complex.

Not only is the government chipping away at everyone’s rights at work, ministers are making it impossibly expensive for many to enforce rights that they would not dare to attack outwardly, such as the minimum wage.

It’s one employment law for the rich, another for the rest of us.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AND DELIVER YOUR VERDICT WWW.STOPEMPLOYMENTWRONGS.ORG