

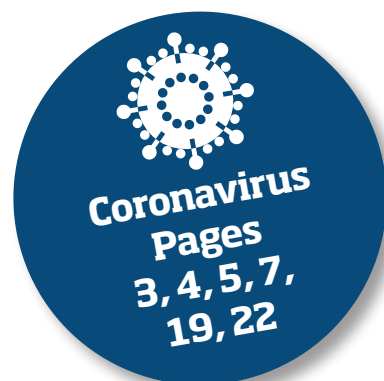
theJournalist

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Global energy glutton

Media must practise what it preaches



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The world of work is unrecognisable from just a short time ago. The coronavirus has closed vast areas of employment and made many people financially insecure despite the support packages offered by the Government.

In journalism, freelances have been particularly hard hit but staff who have been laid off or have suffered pay cuts are also facing hardship.

These are very challenging times for the future of the media and some print titles are ceasing for the duration of the pandemic. But right now we need professional journalism and a great amount of news more than ever. TV news audiences have rocketed, and the BBC has put on hold its plans for 450 job losses so it can maintain top quality, plentiful news coverage.

This is also a challenging time for the NUJ as more members turn to it for help and advice. The union has closed its offices but is very much open for business from our various remote locations. In this edition you'll find details of where to go for help, reports of the specific impact on publications and comment on the crisis, along with other news and features from our industry.

Here's hoping for an early end to this dreadful situation and wishing everyone stays safe.

Christine

Christine Buckley

Editor

[@mschrisbuckley](mailto:mschrisbuckley)

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

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Gary Neill

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Snoddy
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Newsquest and JPI Media put some journalists on furlough

NEWSQUEST and JPI Media have laid off a significant number of staff and are using the government's coronavirus job retention scheme, which funds 80 per cent of the pay of employees on enforced leave. Newsquest has not ruled out laying off more staff at a later date.

Newsquest has also cut pay for all workers. From the start of April, it implemented a 15 per cent wage cut on those earning more than £18,000, including those working part time or pro rata.

JPI Media, which publishes the Yorkshire Post and Scotsman among other titles, is putting about 60 journalists on furlough and is cutting the salaries of those who continue working by up to 15 per cent. The impact on sales staff is greater with 250 posts affected because of the downturn in advertising.

Chris Morley, Newsquest NUJ national



coordinator, said: "Clearly, there are massive changes around us brought on as a result of Covid-19. But Newsquest's harsh and knee-jerk response came without warning to staff struggling with their important work in incredibly difficult circumstances."

Fed Bedendo, Newsquest NUJ group mother of chapel, said: "At a time when we are working harder than ever to keep the public informed and demonstrating how vital local journalism is, this comes as a real kick in the teeth."

"Staff are working from home, facing extra expenses for electricity and heating bills, and some of us already face hardship due to other household members losing trade."

"Newsquest is taking part in the #ThereForYou campaign urging communities to pull together, yet this is the support their staff are receiving – an attempt to cut their wages."



At a time when we are working harder than ever to keep the public informed and demonstrating how vital local journalism is, this comes as a real kick in the teeth

Fed Bedendo
Newsquest NUJ group
chapel mother of chapel

inbrief...

BIG ISSUE PLEADS FOR SUBSCRIBERS

The Big Issue could be closed permanently unless it can secure enough subscribers, its founder has said. Vendors, who are homeless or vulnerably housed, stopped selling on the streets in March to obey social distancing rules. The magazine's founder Baron Bird said it needed 60,000 subscribers to survive.

JPI SUSPENDS SEVEN PRINT ISSUES

JPI Media suspended 12 local print titles following a big drop in advertising and concerns over home deliveries because of social distancing rules. Seven paid-for newspapers, one magazine and four free papers in Bedfordshire, Sussex and the North-East stopped printing at the end of March. The related websites are continuing.

HOME DELIVERY FOR EVENING STANDARD

London's Evening Standard began delivering to some homes as footfall in the capital slumped because of coronavirus. The Evening Standard usually distributes 800,000 copies a day, with more than half of those handed out at railway and tube stations. It aimed to distribute 500,000 copies to homes in 26 areas in travel zones two and three in London.

Lay-offs and job threats at Irish titles

JOURNALISTS have been laid off at Iconic Newspapers, which publishes 20 regional papers in Ireland. Iconic, led by Malcolm Denmark, is taking up the Irish government's wage subsidy scheme for companies affected by coronavirus.

Seamus Dooley, NUJ Irish Secretary, said: "Given that the announcement had been signalled in advance, and against the backdrop of Malcolm Denmark's circular, this move came as a devastating bolt from the blue." He

said there had been no consultation.

Celtic Media had planned to lay off journalists before the wage aid plan was announced, triggering a call from the NUJ for a crisis forum involving the government and other groups.

NUJ still operating but delegate event deferred

THE NUJ'S biennial delegate meeting, which is attended by hundreds of representatives from NUJ branches, has been postponed because of the coronavirus.

The event, which was due to take place in Southport in April, was postponed by the union's emergency committee.

In the absence of a delegate meeting, the current national executive

council and other bodies will remain in place until the end of the rescheduled meeting.

All NUJ offices – London, Manchester, Glasgow and Dublin – were closed when the government advised people to work from home where possible and meetings have been held by video or conference call.

However, the union's work continues by email, phone and video.



City AM hiatus as commuters vanish

Most staff at City AM have been put on paid leave and the digital edition of the financial free newspaper has been halted. City AM, which is distributed in central London and at stations, stopped its printed edition in March. Staff who are still working on the website will be paid 80 per cent of their salary, the same as the Government scheme for furloughed workers.

Unions take a lead in securing financial support for workers

THE NUJ, other unions and the TUC were quick to lobby for protection for workers as the coronavirus pandemic unfolded and have been instrumental in influencing the Government's response to the health crisis.

Unions successfully argued that the British and Irish governments should provide money to keep workers in jobs amid a massive decline in business. While whole industries have shut down overnight such as hospitality, the arts and sports, journalism has been particularly hard hit by the decline in advertising as much of normal life has closed down. Newspapers have halted their print editions, especially those that relied on free distribution at train stations and in central city locations. Journalists covering sport and the arts have also seen their work disappear.

The NUJ has also been vocal in getting help for freelance and self-employed workers and a similar help package to the job retention scheme was set up in the UK and Ireland a little time after the job retention programme was established. Freelance journalists including photographers have seen their work disappear overnight as media organisations grappled with uncertainty and events which are usually covered were scrapped.

The NUJ also successfully pressed for journalists who are covering coronavirus developments to be classed as key workers

along with NHS staff, supermarket and food distribution employees and others in key activities. Key workers benefit from receiving childcare and schooling amid the current school shutdown. Oliver

Dowden, secretary of state for digital, culture, media and sport, tweeted about the key worker classification: "Public service news across TV, radio and print has never been more important than it is right now."

The union is updating information frequently as the Government announces new measures. Visit the website – www.nuj.org.uk – to find out the latest; for help in how to access assistance; and for health and safety guidance as well as other support: If members have further

questions they can email the relevant NUJ departments or the 'contact us' section of the website.



2020 GETTY IMAGES

Other useful points of contact are:

The TUC – www.tuc.org.uk

The Health Service – www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

The UK Government – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>

The Health and Safety Executive – www.hse.gov.uk

The Irish Government – <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/be74d3-covid-19-pandemic-unemployment-payment/>

Irish Congress of Trade Unions – www.icte.ie



Public service news across TV, radio and print has never been more important than it is right now'

Oliver Dowden, digital, culture, media and sport secretary

NUJ Extra offers help to members

NUJ EXTRA, the union's charity, has offered help to union members whose income has been hit by the effects of coronavirus and it has also asked for members who are earning to donate to the charity.

The trustees said: "We

have received a statutory warning letter that the value of our investments has fallen by more than 10 per cent, by more than £300,000. Despite this, we are gearing up to support those affected by Covid-19 and the economic shocks

surrounding it. We anticipate awarding an unprecedented level of grants in the current financial year. We will help those directly affected and who lose money as a result, those who contract the disease or who have to

self-isolate because of it. We will also consider applications from those who do not contract the disease



but who lose significant income from the economic impact of Covid-19 and the response to it – this is a significant variation to our normal policy."

To apply or donate please go to <https://www.nuj.org.uk/news/nuj-extra-response-to-covid-19/>

Fighting for freelancers in the eye of the storm

IN MANY ways, freelance journalists are in the eye of the coronavirus storm because for some their income has disappeared virtually overnight.

The NUJ's freelance department will be running a comprehensive survey of how the pandemic has affected freelance journalists in

due course. If you want to contribute your experience now, please email freelance@nuj.org.uk

There are many different types of financial help that freelancers can access but the process can be complicated. The freelance department has compiled a guide to the new help

available from the Government including the taxable grant worth 80 per cent of their average monthly profits over the last three years, up to £2,500 a month and existing benefits such as statutory sick pay and universal credit. <https://www.nuj.org.uk/news/covid-19-update-from-the-nuj-s-freelance-office/>

BBC halts 450 job losses to help its crisis coverage

BBC News has suspended plans to cut 450 jobs amid the demands of covering the coronavirus pandemic.

The job losses were announced in January as part of an £80 million cost-cutting plan. Programmes that were due to be hit included BBC Two's Newsnight, and BBC Radio 5 Live.

The job cut delay came shortly after the BBC said it was postponing the end of the free TV licence scheme for all over-75s because it was important that everyone should be able to access news during the health crisis.

Lord Tony Hall, director general, told staff: "We haven't got the resource to plough ahead with those plans at the moment, so we'll come back to that at some point. But for the moment we just want to make sure you are supported, and you've got the resources to do

the job that you and your colleagues are doing amazingly."

Some programmes, such as Politics Live and Victoria Derbyshire, have been taken off air to prioritise coronavirus coverage, and several radio networks are sharing news bulletins. The BBC is operating a core news service during the pandemic.

Question Time is on at the earlier time of 8pm on Thursdays and, like Radio 4's Any Questions, is broadcast without a live studio audience and guests sit apart from each other in line with the social distancing guidelines.

Fran Unsworth, BBC director of news, told staff: "Like many organisations we are unable to have all our staff on site due to the coronavirus outbreak. We are therefore making some changes to what we do to streamline our output to ensure we can work with fewer people and protect the staff who are at work."



For the moment we just want to make sure you are supported, and you've got the resources to do the job

Lord Tony Hall

JESS HURD

inbrief...

ASSANGE BAIL REQUEST REFUSED

Wikileaks founder Julian Assange was refused bail after applying because he said he was vulnerable to a coronavirus outbreak in jail. He is being held in Belmarsh prison ahead of an extradition hearing. District Judge Vanessa Baraitser said: "As matters stand today, this global pandemic does not of itself yet provide grounds for Mr Assange's release."

DEPP CASE AGAINST SUN POSTPONED

Johnny Depp's libel claim against The Sun over allegations that he was violent and abusive towards his ex-wife, Amber Heard, has been postponed due to the coronavirus crisis. Depp is suing the tabloid's publisher, News Group Newspapers, and its executive editor Dan Wootton over an article in April 2018 that made the allegations.

LEAP IN VIEWERS FOR TELEVISION NEWS

TV news channels are seeing a big jump in audiences because of coronavirus coverage. In mid-March the BBC News Channel recorded its biggest weekly audience since 2015 - a 70 per cent increase on normal viewing. Channel 4 News said its audience had nearly doubled in 10 days.

Egypt expels reporter over corona research

EGYPTIAN authorities forced a Guardian journalist to leave the country after she reported on a scientific study that said Egypt was likely to have many more coronavirus

cases than have been officially confirmed.

Ruth Michaelson, who has reported from Egypt since 2014, was advised that security services wanted her

to leave immediately after her press accreditation was revoked.

On March 15, she reported on research by infectious disease specialists from the

University of Toronto as well as public health data and news stories that pointed to Egypt having a higher rate of coronavirus cases than the government's estimate.

Claim that free press may have helped halt pandemic



REPORTERS Without Borders (Reporters Sans Frontieres) has said that the coronavirus pandemic might have been avoided and thousands of lives saved if China had a free press.

The organisation has used evidence from a variety of studies and reviewed events in the early days of the outbreak in Wuhan province during December and January to make its case.

China ranks 177 out of 180 on RSF's World Press Freedom Index. The ruling Communist Party controls and censors news media in the country.

Dialling into the Old Bailey

Journalists have been able to phone into Old Bailey hearings for the first time.

Most court hearings are being held remotely, by phone and video conference. The Old Bailey made the decision following an application from journalists at the BBC, the Press Association and Evening Standard.

New jury trials have been halted, with partially heard cases continuing under new social distancing measures.



AMIE LORRIMAN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Local Democracy Reporters speak of work pressures and uncertainty

LOCAL Democracy Reporters (LDRs) have raised concerns over a lack of opportunities to use new skills, pressure to meet targets and being used as staff cover.

The BBC-funded journalists, who work with 'host' news organisations and cover local authorities and other public bodies, were at an NUJ meeting organised to share experiences and concerns.

The BBC is reviewing the scheme, which funds 150 journalists. The existing contracts are due to be re-tendered in the spring or early summer.

The LDRs were told by NUJ officials that they had been advised that their jobs would be protected, even if the contract went to another employer.

However, there is uncertainty over how the scheme is operated, particularly by employers,



and how it will develop.

LDRs outlined their concerns:

- Some said they were being put under pressure to get online hits and meet targets by their host newspaper
- Some are being directed by their host newspaper to cover certain stories
- Some were being used to fill already vacant reporting posts.

- Host newspapers were not putting out stories within the agreed deadline of 12 hours and many were not promoting articles on social media.

- Some LDRs were expected to put up their stories on the host paper's content management systems and social media.

- Despite having had video training, the reporters had few or no opportunities

to use the skill.

However, in general, the LDRs said they enjoyed their role and could see the value their work was adding to local journalism.

Andy Smith, NUJ newspapers and agencies organiser, told the meeting: "There appears to be a huge variation in the way managers understand the scheme.

"We can help through the group chapels in providing a collective voice in our discussions with the employers and help iron out these problems."

The NUJ is applying for union recognition on behalf of LDRs but, so far, the big three publishers have not agreed to this.

An application has been made to the Central Arbitration Committee for recognition at Newsquest.

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There appears to be a huge variation in the way managers understand the scheme

Andy Smith
NUJ newspapers and agencies organiser

Bread and Roses leaves the Chapel bar

THE BREAD and Roses pub and theatre venture has left the NUJ's Chapel bar after a year of running the King's Cross venue.

Bread and Roses, which

runs an eponymous pub and theatre in Clapham, south London, is operated by the Workers' Beer Company, owned by the Battersea and Wandsworth TUC. It has a

stage at the Glastonbury festival and the Workers' Beer Company runs bars at various festivals.

It had wanted full-time use of the lower floor of the

NUJ's headquarters but this was not compatible with the union's needs for the building.

The lower floor was used by Bread and Roses for

theatre and venue hire as well as by the NUJ for meetings and events.

Talks have begun with another potential operator of the bar and restaurant, which were created when the offices were refurbished.

Australian news agency closure a 'wake-up call'

AUSTRALIAN Associated Press is to close in June after 85 years in operation, putting 180 editorial jobs at risk.

AAP's chairman Campbell Reid said search engines and news stories being published free of charge by social media had forced the closure.

The Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance



criticised the Australian government for failing to protect the news agency.

Reid said: "The AAP decision is a wake-up call for Australia that the detrimental impact the digital platforms are having on media companies is very real and has now reached a tipping point. That is the reality. No one should kid themselves otherwise."

Call for 25 per cent rise in union subscriptions

THE NUJ'S national executive council (NEC) is seeking increases in subscription rates of between 25 per cent and 28 per cent over two years. There has been no increase for six years.

Its motion to the union's delegate meeting (DM), which was due to be held in April but is now on hold because of the coronavirus crisis, says the rise is needed to "reflect the increase in the cost of living and the challenges facing the union in order for the NUJ to sustain itself as an independent, vibrant campaigning trade union".

Currently, the monthly rates are: £15 (€18) for grade 1 members earning up to £20,000 (€24,000); £18 (€23) for grade 2 members earning £20,001-£29,000 (€24,001-€36,000); and £25 per month (€31) for those earning above £29,000 (€36,000).

Under the NEC's plan, the monthly rates



would rise this year to £17 (€20.50) for grade 1; £20.5 (€26.50) for grade 2; and £29 (€35.60) for grade 3. Next year subscriptions would rise to: £18.70 (€22.5) for grade 1; £22.5 (€31.90) for grade 2; and £32 (€39.20) for grade 3. That is an increase over the two years of 24.6 per cent for grade 1, 25 per cent for

grade 2 and 28 per cent for grade 3 members.

Some NUJ branches want smaller increases, and for higher paid members to pay more. There is also a call for a discounted new joiners' rate.

The last DM rejected a subs increase after the union reported a £200,000 budget

surplus. Those who spoke against a rise warned of the impact on the lower paid.

Changes to subs rates need to be approved by two-thirds of delegates rather than by a simple majority. The next DM may also be asked to change that requirement so only a simple majority is needed in future.



The increase is needed for the NUJ to sustain itself as an independent, vibrant, campaigning trade union

NUJ National Executive Council

inbrief...

PROFITS FALL AT INDEPENDENT

Independent Digital News and Media saw pre-tax profits fall to £2.3 million in 2018-19 from £3.1 million in the previous year. It attributed much of the fall to a boost in its editorial team and product development. Revenues rose by 9 per cent to £27 million.

ALAMY BOUGHT BY PA MEDIA GROUP

Photo agency Alamy has been bought by the PA Media Group, which is attempting to diversify its sources of revenue. Natasha Hirst, chair of the NUJ's photographers' council, said: "While the NUJ welcomes the assurance from PA Media Group that it has no plans to change prices or terms, it will be writing to the new owners seeking a meeting for guarantees around its future direction."

MILLS QUILTS SUNDAY TIMES MAGAZINE

Eleanor Mills is leaving her role as the Sunday Times' magazine editor and the paper's editorial director after 22 years with Times Newspapers. This follows the appointment of Emma Tucker as the new editor of the paper. Mills is thought to have also been in the running for the editorship. She joined The Sunday Times in 1998.

Student wins prize for sport injury story

JAMIE BRAIDWOOD, 22, a student at Edinburgh Napier University, won this year's Ian Bell New Writing award for unpublished writers in Scotland aged 30 and under.

His winning investigation was entitled: 'Why isn't football taking concussion more seriously?'

He said: "My piece was part of a wider series of

articles investigating concussion in Scottish sport and was produced for my fourth-year major journalism project at university."

The competition is in

memory of award-winning journalist and author Ian Bell, who died in December 2015. It was set up by his family and the Edinburgh branch of the NUJ.

Cummings 'whacked' over BBC

A GAME of Dominic Cummings Whack-A-Mole kicked off a campaign to protect the BBC. It was coordinated by public ownership campaign group We Own It.

People dressed as the prime minister's adviser whacked popular BBC programmes, including Planet Earth and Eastenders, with a giant mallet. We Own It is calling for the BBC to remain publicly owned and funded.

The Sunday Times quoted a government source saying that ministers were planning to 'whack' the BBC.

The campaign is also supported by the New Economics Foundation and the New Weather Institute.

We Own It director Cat Hobbs said: "If Dominic Cummings gets his way, we'll be left with little more than a Fox News style broadcast media."

Clive Lewis MP, a former BBC journalist, joined the campaign launch outside Broadcasting House.



JESS HURD

Radio station fined over Galloway comments

Talkradio has been ordered to pay a £75,000 fine by Ofcom after the broadcast watchdog found George Galloway broke impartiality rules in three programmes in the space of five months in 2018. Two breaches were over Galloway's comments on anti-Semitism in the Labour Party and the third related to the government's response to the Salisbury poisoning.



MARK KERRISON / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Samira Ahmed's equal pay victory inspires TUC delegates

DELEGATES at the TUC's women's conference in March celebrated the NUJ's victory in winning an equal pay case for BBC presenter Samira Ahmed.

Speaking at the conference, Ahmed said she read the judgment over the shoulder of Michelle Stanistreet, NUJ general secretary.

"It was amazing," she said. "Over 40 pages, my case was so clearly set out and all the things I had been saying were now backed up by a distinguished panel. I couldn't help hugging Michelle."

Ahmed had successfully challenged the BBC over being paid half the amount of her male predecessor on Radio 4 arts show Front Row, and being underpaid in comparison with male colleagues on Radio 3's Night Waves. However, the BBC would not settle a third case – the fact that Jeremy Vine was being paid six times more than she was for presenting Points of View, a similar programme to Newswatch.

"Every man I asked, including Jeremy Vine, told me how much they were paid," she said. It was this cooperation



NATASHA HIRST

that enabled her to pull her case together.

However, without the expert help of the legal team, paid for by her union, and support from Michelle and others at the NUJ, she could not have taken it forward, she said.

"I talk a lot to young journalists about the importance of being a member of a union," she said.

The NUJ was represented at the women's conference by Natasha Hirst, Magda Ibrahim, Ann Galpin and Ann Coltart, who took part in many debates.

Ibrahim brought her experience as a journalist to bear in a motion about girls and knife crime. Seconding an Equity motion, she said: "I work as a night reporter and one of the first jobs I was sent on for my current newspaper was the stabbing of a young teenage girl. The saddest thing about her horrific death was that she had been fatally stabbed through the heart after falling onto a knife she was carrying in her own handbag. This poor 17-year-old's brother told me she was carrying the knife as protection."



All the things I had been saying were now backed up by a distinguished panel

Samira Ahmed

Showing that local news matters

THE NUJ has been campaigning to show that local news matters by highlighting the reasons why communities need good-quality, well-resourced journalism.

The initiative, which follows a similar campaign

two years ago, comes as regional journalism is under increasing pressure because of job cuts and moves to relocate local journalists into central hubs, away from the areas they report on.

The distancing of journalists from their

communities and the issues that matter to them is further exacerbated by the shift to online traffic and click targets.

Reports that often attract the most online interest can be those with the least local importance, such as

restaurant menus and other mundane information.

Seamus Dooley, NUJ assistant general secretary, said: "Quality journalism does not just happen. It requires resources. It requires brave journalists.

local news matters
www.nuj.org.uk

And it demands supportive editors and publishers."

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Turkey charges 20 over murder of Jamal Khashoggi



HANSMUSA / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

TURKEY has charged 20 suspects, including a former Saudi royal aide, over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018.

Former Saudi deputy intelligence chief Ahmad Asiri and Saud al-Qahtani, a former aide to Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, were charged with "instigating a premeditated murder", with the remaining 18 charged with "deliberately and monstrosly killing" the journalist.

Khashoggi was killed in the Saudi Consulate in

Istanbul, where he gone to collect paperwork he needed to marry his Turkish fiancée.

He had left Saudi Arabia in 2017 to go into self-imposed exile in the US, and wrote for the Washington Post. He had been a newspaper editor and editor in chief of a broadcasting channel.

He wrote articles critical of the Saudi government and the crown prince, and had set up a political party called Democracy for the Arab World Now.

Digital news shift is diluting democracy



Click targets push pub menus above politics, says **Martin Shipton**

We are in extraordinary times amid the coronavirus crisis and we have an urgent need for accurate news. This makes the recent words to me from a former council leader in South Wales all the more poignant. He was talking nostalgically about the time when almost everyone bought and read the local weekly paper.

"People took a great interest in what was going on. If there was controversy at the council, they'd have a view, especially if it involved a waste of money. Nowadays, hardly anyone reads the paper and, while it still comes out, it has very little worth reading. No one knows or cares what's going on at the council, unless it's something that puts them directly at a disadvantage."

The days of well-staffed local papers are over. They are the victims of a failed business model that relies on cutting back to survive. But cutting back has increasingly deprived papers of their *raison d'être*.

Instead of the lively reporting of controversy, the weekly papers that once meant so much to their communities are full of bland press releases promoting things for readers to buy and stories that have already appeared in sister daily titles.

It is increasingly the case that weekly papers have no dedicated reporting staff – or, indeed, staff of any kind. Their overheads are therefore extremely low and, while sales have dipped greatly, they are still contributing to company profits.

These days, in digital-first newsrooms, papers are often seen as embarrassing survivors of a bygone age. A few years ago, a Reach digital executive (when it

was still Trinity Mirror) saw no irony in telling a conference that "the trouble with papers is that they still make money". What the digital executive should have said was that without the group's print revenue, they themselves would not be in their highly paid job.

From the point of view of those who believe in the crucial importance of local news, the changing culture of newsrooms is seriously worrying.

A story is not judged on its own merits but on how many page views it generates. A piece about Wetherspoon's new menu (much the same as the old one) is rated highly because of the number of page views by the large number of people anywhere who, for some reason, have an insatiable appetite for trivia relating to the pub chain.

Reporters are under pressure to get as many page views as they can. Inevitably, this frames the kind of pieces they write.

While people to one degree or another are consuming such material, they are becoming alienated from their communities. A vacuum is created, which is filled by unwholesome material from social media that pushes simplistic and sometimes racist solutions to complex problems. Of course, other factors are involved in the rising influence of far-right narratives, but I believe the decline of well-resourced local papers has played a significant part.

I work in Cardiff for Media Wales, a Reach subsidiary. I have the good fortune to be classified as a print journalist, which means I have escaped the click-chasing imperative that is driving most of my colleagues. We have a talented team, and much high-quality journalism is created by my co-workers. But that is despite the click

imperative – not because of it.

The great majority of my work appears in the *Western Mail*, still styled as the national newspaper of Wales despite circulations that are a fraction of what they once were. Most of my articles concern Welsh politics, which the paper's largely ABC1 readership tend to be engaged with.

The Welsh political class is constantly agonising about the devolution settlement. Questions of funding are very important and determine the quality of public services that can be provided. Austerity has hit Welsh communities hard, some of which are among the poorest in Europe.

Yet pure political coverage without some personal animus is not favoured because it doesn't get enough page views.

Paradoxically, the papers are lasting longer than many of us believed a few years ago, for the reason that digital advertising revenue has not taken off in the way expected.

But papers cannot carry on forever with declining revenues and the worry is that, when they go, the remaining digital offering will be a stripped-down model based on 'breaking news', sport, food reviews and stories tied into the interests of advertisers – with even fewer journalists in employment.

The rumour-mongering and ill-informed speculation about coronavirus spread on social media during this unprecedented crisis show how important the existence of reliable sources of local information is for our very survival.

• **Martin Shipton is Reach NUJ group chapel chair and a member of the union's Welsh executive council.**

Pure political coverage without some personal animus isn't favoured because it doesn't get enough page views

'Giving' a voice to those in poverty can sideline them, says **Gavin Aitchison**



Let people tell their own stories of their hardship

Every so often, I see a journalist online talking about giving a voice to the voiceless, and it always makes me wince.

This is well intentioned but flawed. It wrongly presents marginalised people as inactive and portrays us journalists as some sort of saviours.

Only rarely are those we write or talk about genuinely voiceless. More often, they have been using their voices tirelessly, only to find society (and the media) too inattentive or distracted.

Marginalised people do not need to be given a voice; they need access to an audience. So a journalist's role is not to see themselves as 'giving' a voice to anyone but to ensure compelling voices with important messages are afforded fair and due coverage.

Who are your most vulnerable readers, viewers or listeners – and what is making their message inaudible? What is causing or exacerbating poverty, and who are you speaking to about these issues? On the flip side, whose voices are being drowned out?

Media coverage of poverty is often

flimsy and fleeting. Sometimes, that is down to wilful and cynical distortion but, often, it is because people who truly understand the issues are left out.

In 2016, stirred by antagonistic coverage, some NUJ members took a stand. Research in 2014 found that only four per cent of articles on UK poverty included significant input from people with personal experience of it, so the Manchester and Salford branch worked with Church Action on Poverty and those with first-hand insight to produce a reporting guide.

Its premise was 'nothing about us, without us, is for us'. "The UK media is saturated with stereotypes and misinformation, creating a persistent persecution of the poor," the guide notes. It covers how to avoid and counter stereotypes and discriminatory language.

The branch worked with Church Action on Poverty and the Reporters' Academy to produce a short film in 2017 (search 'nuj poverty' on YouTube), then a discussion event was held at the NUJ HQ. Six people with experience of poverty in Halifax, York and London

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Case studies are sought for preconceived narratives, with little regard for the broader insights an interviewee may bring



were joined by reporters, photographers and NUJ ethics committee members.

Topics discussed included how clichéd stock images skewed public perceptions, painting a narrow and extreme understanding of poverty. We talked also about the lack of diversity in newsrooms (and in many charities), which restricts understanding; the need to identify solutions and causes as well as the nature of poverty; and some recurring, damaging narratives.

Sydney Corley, from York Food Justice Alliance, challenged preconceptions: "Journalists say they print what people want to read – why not challenge them more to read something that challenges what they think?"

Mary Passeri, also from York, recounted positive and negative media experiences, and said: "You shouldn't be making people in poverty feel like they're on trial to prove what they're saying. Of course, fact-check things, but interview more sensitively and sincerely than sometimes happens."

Fundamentally, the speakers with experience of poverty called for deeper relationships with journalists and a more collaborative approach. Too often, journalists seek input only when a story is already written or nearing completion. 'Case studies' are sought for preconceived narratives, with little regard for the broader insights an interviewee may bring.

Deep coverage is not easy – good journalism rarely is. Where journalists have invested time in understanding issues and been receptive to unforeseen stories, people have told compelling stories in greater depth.

Support is available. Church Action on Poverty, Joseph Rowntree Foundation and On Road Media are working with journalists and people in poverty to enable coverage that is responsible, considered and collaborative.

As Diana Skelton from ATD Fourth World, said at the event: "If you are interviewing someone who might never have been asked their opinion before in their life, it's really important to ensure they have the opportunity to influence your narrative. We want to be part of designing stories together."

• **Gavin Aitchison is media unit coordinator at Church Action on Poverty and a former reporter, news editor and NUJ father of chapel at The Press in York.**

Emergency emergency

Jenny Sims explains why she took a first aid course – and how journalists can use their role to help save lives

I confess my reasons for signing up to a first aid training course for journalists were probably more personal than professional.

Having written too many stories over many years about preventable deaths as a result of anaphylactic shock, I'd become concerned about what I would do, apart from call 999, in a real-life situation if someone experienced a severe allergic reaction.

I'd tinkered with the idea of doing some sort of first aid course, but did nothing about it. Then, when NUJ Training Wales recently offered a one day accredited course, I had no excuse but to enrol.

The email flyer to photographers, reporters and communications specialists suggested "a recognised first aid qualification can really boost your CV and employability". Whether you're a freelancer or staffer, who can afford to ignore an opportunity to upskill and add an extra string to their bow these days? A small group of us were able to take it.

As promised, by the end of the day's hands-on (mostly on a dummy) course in Cardiff city centre, we had learned a significant amount about emergency first aid including assessing injuries, putting people in the recovery position, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), how to use a defibrillator, how to deal with choking, bleeding, poisoning, stroke and heart attacks, and much, much more.

Communications specialist Sheila, by far the most knowledgeable of the group, I suspected of having done the course before. But no, she assured me, she was just a Holby City watcher.

Course trainer Stephan Wilcox, a paramedic with more than 30 years' frontline NHS

experience, shared a wealth of information and anecdotes, gradually built up our confidence and gave us an insight into why people often walk by when they see someone injured or ill – even stepping over them as they lie on the ground.

In some cases, it is simply because they are afraid that if they intervene and inadvertently exacerbate the injury or cause harm, they might be sued.

However, this is highly unlikely, since a parliamentary act has been introduced to protect such heroes and heroines. Unfortunately, the Social Action, Responsibility and Heroism Act 2015 does not seem to be widely known by the general public.

It asks: was the person acting for the benefit of society or any of its members? Demonstrating a predominantly responsible approach towards protecting the safety or other interests of others? Acting heroically by intervening in an emergency to assist an individual in danger?

There's a role here for the media in drawing attention to it, Wilcox seemed to suggest. People might be less

backward in coming forward if they were aware the law is there to protect them should they intervene with good intention. And, maybe, more lives would be saved if they did.

More lives could undoubtedly be saved if they were aware of what to do in a medical emergency such as a serious allergic reaction. In the UK, 44 per cent of adults suffer from at least one allergy.

Having done the course, I feel hugely relieved that at least after calling 999 I now know how to help someone administer an adrenaline injection – and also how to administer it myself (after getting the person's consent) if they are carrying an auto-injector device, commonly called an EpiPen.

This is a brand name; it's the biggest on the market and manufactured in the US. Two other auto-injector devices are available in the UK – Jext and Emerade; pharmacists, nurses and doctors, as well as the media, routinely use or rather misuse EpiPen as an umbrella term.

People diagnosed with allergies should carry two auto-injectors, but many fail to do so. One reason in 2018 was that because of manufacturing problems of EpiPen, there was a global shortage.

However we can help people with first aid treatment, Wilcox drummed into us that accidents and incidents at work and their treatments should always be recorded 'in case of a future event'.

The NUJ's health and safety committee chair Adam Christie is an expert on the legislation that requires employers "to provide adequate and appropriate equipment and facilities for enabling first aid to be given to employees".

He points out that organisations must have suitably trained and qualified people to do that or, if they only have a few staff, an 'appointed person'.

So maybe my course organisers may be right that a first aid qualification can make you more employable

My certificate's in the post, I'm told.

There's a role for the media. People might be less backward in coming forward if they were made aware of the law



The media climate

Media bodies can cut their carbon footprint in several ways, says **Nicholas Fearn**

Whether it is through using technology, sending reporters across the world to cover breaking news or operating numerous buildings in different countries, the media industry is a major contributor to the climate crisis.

As the digital ecosystem has expanded, the way we consume media has changed dramatically. Through smart devices, people can access the day's news, tune in to their favourite shows and watch movies at the touch of a fingertip. According to Andrew Rogoyski, innovation director at Roke Manor Research, technology has a big part to play in the consumption of energy in the media industry.

"The shift to digital and the use of mobile and cloud technologies are core to today's media platforms, especially with the transformative impact of social media. Unfortunately, the demand for energy – the most obvious side-effect of our insatiable desire to consume more and more digital content – is rising year on year. Similarly, the demand for computer devices such as mobile phones, laptops and tablets," he explains.

Rogoyski says that as computer use shifts to the cloud and mobile devices, our total energy consumed may eventually drop or become more efficient. He adds: "The cloud providers are acutely aware of the energy cost of their data centres, resulting in countries like Iceland becoming data centre focal points because they provide geothermal energy and cheap natural cooling."

However, he says, technological developments such as 5G, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning will increase the need for computer power and communications infrastructure. A survey of 200 editors, chief executives and digital leaders by the Reuters Institute found that 78 per cent of them believed it was important to invest in AI to 'help secure the future of journalism'.

"In the race to provide more compelling content for consumers, the media industry will continue to drive demand for energy and for technology products because of these developments," says Rogoyski.

He says more companies are becoming aware of the issues of sustainability as energy and technology costs hit bottom lines and as brand reputations start to reflect environmental standpoints. "Understanding the technology platforms they depend upon, from AI to mobile, today and in the future, is becoming an essential part of everyone's strategic business planning, no more so than in the media industry," he says.

Of course, technology is not the only contributor to climate change made by the media industry. James Longley, managing director of B2B energy specialists Utility Bidder, says: "There's a real issue with news corporations in general. With so much international travel and multiple offices across the world, the idea of a carbon footprint being reduced is a tough one to crack.

"Where a news corporation can crack this is sourcing reporters closer to the action, rather than sending correspondents whenever they have the opportunity. In businesses where air travel is an element of the day-to-day, this can be a real killer. More than 50 per cent of a company's carbon footprint can be burned up with air travel so anything that can be done to reduce this is welcome news."

Change is now happening. Longley says: "In the wake of the issues surrounding climate change in recent years and a turn in the corporate world towards sustainability, it is interesting to see the media taking this seriously. There are many ways in which the media can start to make changes," he says.

"The biggest we would suggest is culture. If each and every strand of the often extended supply chain can be made carbon neutral or at least reduced then, overall, the industry will have a better reputation and will perform better."

Changing production methods and investing in sustainable forms of energy can also reduce environmental impact, he

Even emails harm the environment

MORE than 300 billion emails are sent globally every day. Journalists particularly rely on emails as a primary form of communication.

Although emails seem harmless, they actually contribute greatly to the climate crisis. Writing in *How Bad are Bananas?*: The Carbon Footprint of Everything, Mike Berners-Lee claims that spam emails contain 0.3g of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent), standard emails contain 4g and emails with multiple attachments contain 50g.

Vaughan Lindsay, CEO of ClimateCare, says: "In our rush to stream films, send emails, store data and update our social media posts, we've lost sight of how energy-hungry the digital industry really is. We need to understand that the internet and digital technology involves far more than just the energy required to run our devices. Rather, the storing of data, otherwise known to us all as the cloud, is one of the worst offenders. Far from being invisible, the cloud and the technical components to run it

generate extremely high emissions."

He explains that the communications and technology industry produces over 830 million tons of carbon annually. He tells *The Journalist*: "This means that the energy used in our digital consumption collectively emits the equivalent amount of carbon as the entire airline industry. "Businesses need to take responsibility for their entire carbon footprint in order to achieve a net zero position. This involves everything from business travel, energy use at the office and even their digital footprint. Anything less than that is not a responsible position for a business today."

adds. “On-location film shoots often use a huge amount of energy for the period they set up temporary residence. Measures could be introduced to mitigate this, for example, if the production is able, such as by feeding back into the grid for the time they are on location,” says Longley.

“Sourcing energy is obviously somewhere any corporation down to the smallest of small and medium-sized enterprises can address right away. There are measures you can take to source from sustainable producers of energy or at least maintain some sort of supply chain loop whereby you deliver excess energy back to the grid. A failure to at least investigate these options seems irresponsible.”

With these issues in mind, many media companies are taking steps to reduce their carbon footprint. Nate Camponi, co-owner of Leeds-based production company Hell Fire! TV, says: “We use sustainable practices from the grass roots up. We’ll have a total ban on single use plastics across each production, actively aiming to reduce general waste by keeping as many elements of the production renewable, reusable and digital.

“Where we can, we use LED lighting, use bio diesel for generators and keep Hell Fire!’s carbon footprint as low as we can by employing local crew and supporting the local economy in the north of England. We’re already looking into how each production can plant trees to work towards carbon neutrality and we’re researching how we can donate leftover or unused consumables to good causes.”

The BBC and the Guardian have also set out plans. Over the next two years, the BBC wants to cut its carbon emissions by 24 per cent through using renewable energy, making its buildings and technologies more efficient, and educating staff and its audience. The Guardian anticipates becoming net zero by 2030. Like the BBC, it is working to reduce its carbon footprint and increase coverage of the climate crisis.

Christian Toennesen, senior partner at consultancy Carnstone, says content strategies will have a bigger impact

Carbon emissions calculator

AS THE climate crisis continues to make headlines, it is encouraging to see action taken in the media industry.

In January, the BBC, ITV and Sky collaborated with academics at the University of Bristol on creating a tool to help the industry reduce its carbon footprint.

Drawing on behavioural analytics from user devices and energy consumption data from servers, the DIMPACT online calculator will help media outlets better understand and manage the

carbon generated by digital products and services.

According to the university, it will take the “complexity out of calculating digital carbon emissions” and “enable informed decision-making to reduce the overall carbon footprint of digital services”.

Dr Daniel Schien, senior lecturer in computer science at the University of Bristol, explains why companies find it difficult to work out the carbon footprint of their products and be more sustainable: “Because these

services are provided by a fast-changing, complicated infrastructure that is operated by many separate bodies, media organisations lack the knowledge of how to assess their own footprint.

“This lack of transparency is a real risk in the face of climate change. Based on our research with The Guardian and the BBC, in the DIMPACT project we are constructing an online self-assessment tool that is specific to media organisations. This will, first, enable them to report on their carbon footprints and, second, identify hot spots on which they can focus their attention during environmental design.”

than other measures. He says: “There is obviously an element of getting the house in order so you can’t do the interesting stuff relating to content before reducing the operational footprint.

“The biggest environmental impact of a media company is in its brainprint, which is the intellectual, social and psychological impact on its readers, rather than its footprint – the carbon emissions associated with the production and delivery of its content.”

Inaction on climate change could affect millions, so every organisation needs to do its bit, including media outlets.

Eyes on the town

Thanks to the BBC scheme, local democracy is back in the news, says **Neil Merrick**

When Eddie Bisknell began reporting on local authorities in Derbyshire two years ago, he got used to caustic remarks from councillors who were familiar with press seats staying empty during meetings.

But within a few months, he was part of the furniture, with councillors joking he attended more meetings than they did.

For years, councils in Derbyshire had been subject to little scrutiny. "If there was scrutiny, it was from a distance," says Bisknell, local democracy reporter for the county council and four lower-tier authorities. "Reporters were not in the room face to face with councillors."

But that changed in 2018, when the first local democracy reporters (LDRs) were appointed in Derbyshire and elsewhere under a scheme funded by the BBC and backed by regional publishers. Bisknell is now one of about 150 LDRs in the UK, providing copy for a range of media but based mostly at local papers. He is employed by the Derby Telegraph.

Bisknell stresses that councillors are not afraid of scrutiny. "They'll often ask me afterwards if I want further information," he says.

At the heart of the scheme is a desire that journalists attend meetings and uncover stories that council press officers are less inclined to publicise. NHS trusts, clinical commissioning groups and police and crime commissioners also come under the LDR's responsibility – where time allows.

While their salaries are paid by the BBC, the reporters are recruited by a publisher or other media organisation and under contract to them. Each is assigned a council or group of councils, with most attention given to county and unitary councils (including London and metropolitan boroughs). Stories are circulated to a range of media, including TV and radio, which have equal access to all copy.

Matthew Barraclough, BBC head of local news partnerships, is pleased to see journalists witnessing what happens in council chambers first hand. "Councillors make impassioned speeches and, until recently, nobody was there to hear it."

About 950 media organisations take stories from LDRs. An appraisal carried out by the BBC last September showed that 99 per cent of stories filed by LDRs over a four-day period were used at least once.

Just over one third of LDRs are directly employed by Reach. David Higgerson, its chief audience officer, says the scheme enables journalists to report stories that might escape attention and cover a wider range of committees and panels.

The decline in reporting local government and other

public interest journalism was flagged up in last year's Cairncross review.

"Scrutiny committees are exactly the sort of meetings we need a presence at," says Higgerson. "The whole point of the LDR scheme is to have reporters shed a spotlight on meetings that take place in public."

The distribution of LDRs has caused some anomalies. While two reporters share responsibility for Sheffield Council (see boxes), LDRs in London typically cover three boroughs each.

Barraclough is keen that the workload of LDRs in the capital is examined in a review over the coming months. "I would like London to be much better covered and for more LDRs to attend meetings of district councils in two-tier areas."

Leigh Boobyer, the LDR for Gloucestershire, sees the importance of covering district councils. "They provide the services that are closer to home," he says. "Readers care about their bin collections and whether they could be changed to every three weeks."

Boobyer also has opportunities to work off diary. In 2018, he was tipped off that staff maintaining vehicles at Gloucestershire Constabulary made money by selling tyres online. This was confirmed following an FOI request. "It came through a contact who knew me because I went to council meetings," he says.

More than 30 LDRs are employed by JPI titles (previously

'They know we understand politics'

WHEN Lucy Ashton returned to reporting on Sheffield City Council two years ago, it was as if she had never been away.

"A lot of councillors were the same. Meetings were the same. Even the receptionist," says Ashton, who was political editor of the Sheffield Star until 2010.

Following her departure, the post disappeared, and council coverage dwindled.

The Star would generally send a reporter only to

meetings of the full council and then, perhaps, for only a few main items.

Now councillors are used to seeing Ashton or her colleague Molly Williams, another LDR, at most meetings.

"We have the luxury – if you can call it that – of sitting through a meeting of the planning committee for five hours," she adds.

Another benefit, says Ashton, is councillors who call the paper know they can speak to a journalist who

understands political topics. "We meet them for coffee. It's good to build up a trust and rapport," she says.

Unlike 10 years ago, Ashton is under pressure to provide video and audio for broadcasters that take her copy. It can be difficult to keep tabs on whether this material is used by TV or radio stations.

She and Williams also provide stories for the Yorkshire Post.

"You need to be disciplined and write a story to the length you think it's worth," says Ashton. "Then you let the news editor cut it to a nib or get another reporter to expand it."

own hall

JULIA CLAXTON

'Local people are more engaged'

AFTER Sarah Booker-Lewis, LDR in Brighton and Hove, began reporting on the council's licensing panel, she noted more members of the public were attending too.

"They're quite exciting," she says. "I'm seeing more engagement from people coming along to the events."

Booker-Lewis (pictured right) was working as a tutor with Brighton Journalist Works when the post was advertised two years ago.

Previously web editor at the Brighton Argus, she now sees her stories in up to three papers or websites, plus TV.

While some councillors have been confused to see her byline in more than one paper, they generally welcome the extra attention. In a typical week, Booker-Lewis attends at least three meetings.

Sometimes she will be the only reporter there, but not always. "When it's sexy stuff such as the budget, the BBC sends its political guy," she says. "The Argus may cover a protest, then they go back to the office."

Each Thursday, she sends an 'advisory' to editors in the partnership, informing them

about the meetings she plans to attend the following week, plus other story ideas.

Her direct employer is Brighton and Hove News, an independent website, where

her editor subs her copy before putting it into the BBC system for other media organisations.

Following her appointment, Booker-Lewis

received training from the BBC for radio bulletins and other broadcasting skills. However, BBC South is generally less inclined to use her stories.



Johnston Press). Jeremy Clifford, editor-in-chief at JPI Media, says realisation is growing within local government that reporters are more likely to be present for key decisions. "Councils are under a higher level of scrutiny," he says. "That can lead to some uncomfortable reading for council officers and council leaders."

David Summers, JPI's editorial director in the home counties, says LDRs provide far greater in-depth coverage of council affairs than when different reporters attend meetings on an ad-hoc basis. Most stories are well read. "It's democracy in action, making people aware of decisions that are taken on their behalf," he says.

In better-staffed newsrooms, political correspondents can work off diary, as they have more time to report other news. At last year's general election, LDRs from the Manchester Evening News (MEN) worked with political editor Jen Williams on an extensive profile of voters in different constituencies, including voting intentions.

Sarah Lester, senior editor at the MEN, says the scheme means boroughs across Greater Manchester are covered as well as the city council and mayor Andy Burnham. Five LDRs with responsibility for eight boroughs are based at the MEN. Stories include efforts to stop fly-tipping, planning disputes

Leigh Boobyer pictured below

SIMON PIZZEY



and working conditions at a JD Sports warehouse in Rochdale.

Collaboration with weekly titles that share LDR copy is strong. "We get calls from newspapers asking if we're going to a meeting and planning to file something," says Lester. "The BBC is a soft target, but they have a really good thing here."

Many LDRs are in their first or second post. "It's a stepping stone to a specialism or more senior job in the newsroom," says Higgerson. Others may have covered local government in the past and welcome the revival of political reporting.

Interest in the LDR scheme has come from Canada and New Zealand, both of which have launched their own versions. Back in the UK, an original target of 200 LDRs or more seems unlikely without extra funding.

That will almost certainly not come from the BBC, which is making cuts in journalism. Publishers, says Clifford, would probably want exclusivity with stories if they paid all or part of a LDR's salary.

Maybe the government will step in following Cairncross's call for funding to protect public-interest news. LDRs such as Leigh Boobyer certainly hopes so, along with the councillor in Gloucestershire who once told him: "I don't like everything you write, but I'm really glad you're here."

MARTIN BORMANN'S GHOST WRITERS

Jonathan Sale goes on the trail of reporters who attempted to track down Hitler's second in command

It was like the start of A Christmas Carol: Martin Bormann was dead – to begin with. But, like Marley's ghost, he returned to haunt the living. There should have been no doubt about the fate, 75 years ago, of Hitler's number 2. He met his end on May 2 1945 during the fighting in Berlin with a reliable witness (the leader of the Hitler Youth, appositely named Herr Axmann) definitely seeing his corpse not far from the Fuhrerbunker. Bormann was the man they couldn't hang at the Nuremberg Trials a few months later because he wasn't in court. This was on account of him being dead. Or was he? (Yes – Ed.)

In a more straightforward world, this would have been the end of my article. Talk among yourselves for the next 1200 words. However, in 1945, living German war criminals were two a pfennig. Wernher von Braun gave up his day job with V2 rockets and moved from the Nazis to NASA. Those who were less employable went to ground, frequently to somewhere with a South American postal address.

According to rumours, a host of Third Reich folk, from Hitler downwards, did a runner from Berlin's burning ruins. So prolific are these tales that you could give a course of fascinating academic lectures on them – and this is precisely what historian Luke Daly-Groves, author of *Hitler's Death: the Case Against Conspiracy*, does at the University of Leeds. The Führer, who in reality had for once done the decent thing and killed himself, lived on afterwards in tall tales about him shaving off his moustache and, together with Bormann, taking a getaway submarine to Argentina.

"I think that those who in the 40s and 50s may

have seriously believed the Bormann and Hitler escape stories – and wanted them to be true – were Nazis and neo-Nazis," says Daly-Groves.

Others were journalists swept away by the blitzkrieg of a very good story. While Hitler would have taken his place in the history of infamy even without rumours of his surviving the end of the Second World War, his sidekick Bormann became more famous for his imaginary exploits after his death than for what

he did in his despicable life. There's no business like no-show business.

Admittedly, some of the reincarnations did not give him a long 'life'. As its title suggested, *I Killed Martin Bormann!* by 'British army intelligence agent' Ronald Gray demonstrated that, even if he had escaped having a funeral in Berlin, the subject of the book was no longer available for interviews.

Serialised in the *News of the World*, the narrative relates how Gray encountered a German who could have been Bormann and who in March 1946 accompanied him through a defeated Germany to the Danish border, where he led the British agent into an ambush. Understandably, Gray promptly opened up on the war criminal he was escorting: "Bormann is dead, his body riddled by a burst from a Sten gun. And it was my finger that pulled the trigger."

This meant that Bormann had died twice, both in fact and in Gray's elegy – three times pushed off his perch if you include the Nuremberg sentence. But was he, in fact, three times lucky? A wide variety of other 'sightings' gave the (deluded) impression that his deaths were, as Mark Twain didn't quite put it, much exaggerated.

The best of accounts had him up a Tibetan mountain with Hitler: two war criminals for the price of one. A corroborative detail was that the Führer looked rather pale, as would be expected of someone who was reincarnated and on the run.

An increasingly exasperated MI5 accumulated a large number of press cuttings about Bormann's whereabouts, of which the least helpful was an Egyptian newspaper's tip-off: 'the Middle East'

Back from the dead?

LORD LUCAN killed the family's nanny in 1974 and is thought to have thrown himself off a cross-Channel ferry or been eaten by a lion, a tiger or perhaps pigs at his friend John Aspinall's friend's zoo. With friends like that...

This year, the nanny's son identified an elderly Buddhist in Australia as being in fact his lordship. Lucan's son disagrees.

In the same year, John Stonehouse really did come back from a (bogus) death. Facing fraud charges, the MP (and, it turned out much

later, Czech spy) faked his death by leaving his clothes on a beach in Miami and doing a runner to Australia (what is it about Australia?), where police initially suspected he was Lord Lucan.

"There's a guy works down the chip shop

swears he's Elvis," in the words of Kirsty MacColl.

According to conspiracy theorists, 'The King' faked his death. Admittedly, there were 80,000 mourners who saw him in his funeral casket.

However, the body

could have been a wax dummy – his nose looked flat, as if melted, for a start.

In 1969, the student newspaper of Drake University, Iowa, printed a rumour that went round the globe: Paul McCartney had gone to the Great Recording Studio in the Sky.

The evidence was that if you put the needle on *Revolution 9* on the *White Album* and played it backwards (as you do), you would hear what sounded to a stoned listener like "Turn me on, dead man."

The former Beatle is still with us.



Looking
back to:
.....
1945



KESTONE PRESS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

didn't narrow it down much. A British agent in Sri Lanka named Mr Merry seriously asked for a photograph in case Bormann's peregrinations should take him to that part of the Indian Ocean. An MI5 officer responded: "The press is doubtless waiting to break the Silly Season scoop: that he has been seen riding the Loch Ness Monster."

Well, not quite. But, one evening in November 1972, it emerged that the Daily Express was vastly increasing its print run for the next day's paper; it clearly was on to some very big story. Syndicated in the New York Times, this turned out to be the exclusive news that Bormann was alive and well and on his perch in South America. An interview with the journalist in charge of the story, Stewart Steven, who went on to edit the Mail on Sunday and then the Evening Standard, can still be found on the internet.

"The difference between this story and every other Martin Bormann story is that we have got total documentary evidence of every word we say," he declared. (Unfortunately, the similarity between the Express story and everyone else's was that they were all absolutely barking – up the wrong tree.)

"Have you yourself spoken to Bormann?" probed the bewildered interviewer.

"No, we didn't."

"Did you meet him?"

"No."

"Have you seen him?"

"No."



He added that the runaway used 'several names' and went to 'a specific country' after the war. He knew 'precisely' where Bormann was. "There is virtually nothing this man has done which is not known," he said.

That at least was dead right in the sense that 'this man', being dead, had done nothing since 1945. Six days after the story appeared, the Express discovered that the source, a man named Ladislav Farago, was a conman who had given the paper a farrago of lies. The Express photographs were of an Argentinian teacher disappointingly innocent of a single war crime. In the following month, excavations near the

Führerbunker uncovered a skeleton identified as Bormann's, which was confirmed by DNA in 2009. Yet the rumour mill rolled on.

"I hope the thing you won't do is jeer at this story," begged Milton Shulman, the late Evening Standard theatre critic, in a 1995 radio interview. Someone had informed him that, towards the end of the war, Ian Fleming plus a band of crack commando kayakers had captured Bormann and paddled back to Britain, where the war criminal had lived quietly 'in a village' until dying a decade later.

As Shulman says, we should try not to laugh too loudly at this account – or, I must add, the rest of the 'Bormann was here' reports. As the Bible nearly says, Let he who has never featured in a Corrections column cast the first Rolling Stone. There but for the grace of Goebbels goes any journalist who gets carried away. We all make mistakes; remember The Sunday Times and the Hitler Diaries, said to have been rescued from a plane crash in Germany?

That plane crash did take place but what was in fact rescued was not the forged Führer's memoirs but the luggage of one of the passengers booked on the flight. She was duly declared dead.

It turned out later that she had missed the plane and was still alive. So, although he himself may not have enjoyed any sort of resurrection, Bormann's secretary was the one who in a sense came back from the grave.

REASONS TO JOIN



Ending the Gender Pay Gap

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.



Respect at Work

The NUJ challenges work cultures which lead to bullying and harassment. It will represent you if you experience this behaviour. It uses its collective voice industry-wide to argue that media workers are treated with respect. We promote workplaces where workers and managers are constructive with their criticism during the creative process, and the union publishes codes of conduct and dignity at work policies.



The National Union of Journalists

Is the voice of journalism in the UK and Ireland for all media, communications and PR workers. It represents staff and freelances working in newspapers, news agencies, broadcasting, magazines, online, book publishing, social media, copy writing and as photographers and illustrators.

The NUJ supports members throughout their professional careers, provides a collective voice for industrial issues and freelance rights and defends press freedom.

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Public service news is vital in times of crisis



Covid-19 shows need for good journalism, says **Raymond Snoddy**

The headlines have not all been perfectly judged. The Sun's 'House Arrest' against the background of a padlock, and the Daily Telegraph's 'End to Freedom' to mark the appeal to UK citizens to stay at home if they possibly can spring to mind.

People are not under house arrest and the freedom that was being lost was the freedom to increase your chances of contracting the deadly Covid-19 virus or spreading it to someone else.

At the height of a pandemic, the nature of the message in the media and its tone and balance matter hugely.

As far as any one pair of eyes and ears can fairly judge, journalists, from the local, regional and national press and across broadcasting, have risen to the unprecedented challenge.

They have provided knowledge, facts, context and explanation in the face of the usual torrents of unfiltered misinformation and conspiracy theories from the social media.

Their role has even been recognised by this government, which more than any other has been reluctant to expose itself to the scrutiny of difficult journalists, preferring instead the slippery Facebook route to the public.

Above all, journalists reporting on the crisis have, with the help of pressure from the NUJ, been recognised as key workers although we will never be as key as those risking their lives to run intensive care units.

In confirming the key worker status for broadcasters and journalists, culture secretary Oliver Dowden noted that: "Public service news across TV, radio and print has never been more important than it is right now."

Regional newspapers have run matching front pages to reach out to their readers – 'When You're On Your Own, We Are There With You'.

Papers as different as the Belfast Telegraph and the Daily Mail have produced, for the first time, thoroughly professional editions without having a single person in the office.

It is time to be proud but also time to ask questions about how the pandemic coverage could be improved.

Even more importantly, it is time to start thinking about what sort of media industry and journalism will emerge when the virus has run its course.

Too often, there has been too great an inclination to take the sayings of prime minister Boris Johnson at face value, albeit backed as he has been by perfectly respectable scientists.

Johnson's 'science', with its attachment for several weeks to theories of 'herd immunity', was flawed. We now know, thanks to Imperial College researchers, that the Johnson/Cummings approach could have led to 250,000 deaths in the UK and, mercifully, there was a swift U-turn.

How costly has that delay been?

Journalists should also stay on the trail of where precisely all those ventilators, personal protective equipment for medical staff and testing provision so frequently promised at press conferences actually got to.

The world that emerges from the worst pandemic since 1918 will be a very different one and it will be one that inevitably involves much more remote working.

It will be a challenge for the NUJ to prevent the increasing casualisation of journalism with an accompanying erosion of rights and salaries.

After all, public service news is so important that the BBC has postponed the loss of 450 news jobs.

Another task will be to make such a postponement permanent in order to help cover the years of disruption we now likely face.

With the collapse of advertising revenue – and for free newspaper publishers in major cities, the evaporation of their audience of commuters – serious financial help will be needed from the government.

It will have to go far beyond the small but welcome sop in the Budget that removed VAT from online publications.

The biggest question of all involves the future of the BBC.

If the Johnson/Cummings administration survives the crisis, politically will it push on as if nothing has happened with its vendetta against the BBC? Or will lessons have been learned?

Even this government must surely now notice that a national public service broadcaster funded by a universal licence fee is not the same as subscription services such as Netflix or Disney+.

An early step to show good intent would be to postpone the public consultation on decriminalising the BBC licence fee. Decriminalisation would simply be a first step towards the ultimate marginalisation of the corporation.

We must all hope that Johnson shares his culture secretary's view that public service news has never been more important than now.

Except that this is the case not just now – but going forward into any foreseeable future.

Journalists have provided facts, context and explanation in the face of the torrents of misinformation and conspiracy from social media



Jim Lindsay

NUJ life member Jim Lindsay has died in his native Derry after a long illness. Jim was a journalist to his fingertips. He was pivotal to setting up BBC Radio Foyle, serving as news editor and station manager.

He was born in 1945, the youngest of three children. After leaving technical college, he studied journalism in Belfast. In 1961, he began working for the Londonderry Sentinel and joined the NUJ. From the Sentinel, he moved to the north-west edition of the Belfast Telegraph, then BBC Radio Foyle.

Calmness in crisis was his trademark. He showed this in the 1980s when the station's radio car was wrecked during a Loyalist day of action, and when a reporter was hit by a rubber bullet during rioting at a Republican funeral.

It was a time of deep political division, but he had good relations with members of all factions.

After the BBC, he worked part time as a subeditor on the Derry Journal, and was a PR consultant.

A cricket man, he served as secretary and treasurer of the North West Cricket Union, and known for his compassion with clubs that faced difficulties.

He was also deeply involved in All Saints Parish Church, Clooney, where he served on the select vestry.

Colleagues fondly remember him as 'decent spud', who would always do a good turn if he could.

He is survived by his wife Norma, daughter Kathryn, son Laurie and grandchildren.

Anton McCabe



David Bytheway

David Bytheway, born in Aberdeen in 1947, began his career in journalism at the BBC in Aberdeen and went on to be launch editor of an award-winning local paper.

After the BBC, he worked at the Daily Express in Stirling, then as news editor at the Strathearn Herald, editor of the Cumbernauld News and news editor at Radio Forth (he was part of the team to launch the station). He was also a subeditor at the Daily Record for 18 years.

He was father of chapel at the Daily Record during the Maxwell years, guiding staff through redundancy after they were told to clear their desks at the end of a shift. He took redundancy himself, calling himself 'the last man out'.

He then set up a PR company, made business and historical videos, and worked at the Falkirk Herald.

He was approached to be editor of a new paper for Clackmannanshire in 1995 – the Wee County News – which soon went on to win awards.

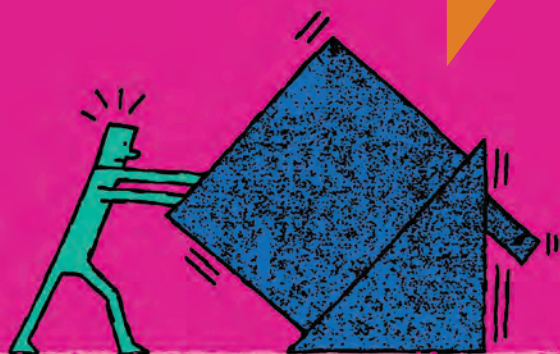
Here, he took no nonsense from anyone. A few times, he 'quit' in the middle of a stormy discussion to get what was right. He was protective of reporters, but if the rival paper got an exclusive story, he wanted to know why his staff had missed it.

A former WCN colleague said he had a 'winning combination of greatness and utter ridiculousness'.

He was later group editor at the Helensburgh Advertiser and lectured in journalism at Telford College.

Jackie Stewart

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Should we be soliciting Amazon's tainted cash?

I was interested to see the letter from Chris Wheal, chair of NUJ Extra, in the February/March issue of The Journalist.

He lists several systems that involve people signing up to asking companies or groups of companies to make donations as they shop. The point here is that the companies are the ones donating – and making useful contributions.

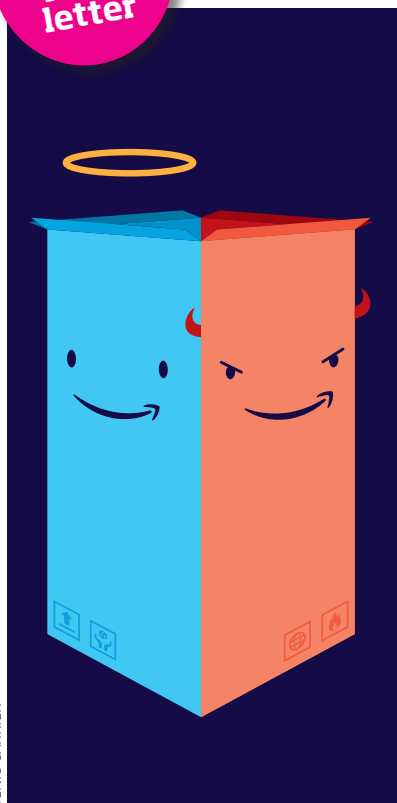
But including AmazonSmile in that list is worrying. It means the NUJ's charity is soliciting donations from an organisation that has a particularly appalling employment record in various parts of the world and is in dispute with trade unions in several countries, including the US as well as the UK (see: 'GMB calls for parliamentary inquiry into Amazon as conditions for workers worsen': <https://tinyurl.com/ryjimpw>).

Amazon is quite clear that the donations made through AmazonSmile come from Amazon itself, stating that 'when you shop on AmazonSmile, Amazon will donate 0.5% of the net purchase price... from your eligible AmazonSmile purchases'.

Are we really happy with seeking donations from an openly anti-union company that has such a poor reputation when it comes to treating its workers?

Jenny Vaughan
London Freelance Branch

DENIS CARRIER



Political chiefs ban local media to stifle reporting too

The last issue of The Journalist reported that Conservative and Labour leaders were banning journalists they see as critical from briefings. This is increasing trend and not confined to major political parties and national media outlets.

After exposés on expenses abuse by councillors and chief police officers and a paedophile ring involving the Conservative mayor of Scarborough and Jimmy Savile (who the police protected), Scarborough Borough Council (under both Labour and Conservative leaders), North Yorkshire Police and the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire all banned the local outlet that exposed these scandals. This restricts public awareness and strangles local media.

The journalists who boycotted a Downing Street briefing are a credit to the profession.

Tim Hicks
North Yorks Enquirer

We shall fight on the beaches, not on air...

I really enjoyed Jonathan Sale's article, Radio Shack, on the birth of broadcasting (February/March).

It is a sign of the myth-making around Churchill's speeches that it included a common error; Churchill's words about fighting on the beaches were not broadcast. The speech was made in the House of Commons. The recording was made later for posterity.

James Rodgers
London

A majority wanted Brexit so stop pretending otherwise

I'm afraid The Journalist is still trying to present myth as fact regarding Brexit.

Francis Beckett, in an otherwise excellent article on Corbyn's election disaster (Control freaks and Corbyn's catastrophe, February/March), claims a 'clear majority' of voters did not want

Brexit, stating that 'more people voted for remain parties than leave parties'.

However, this is palpable nonsense when Corbyn himself declared he was 'neutral' on the issue of Brexit.

Yes, many Labour voters in the north and Midlands abandoned their party and voted Conservative for the first time to get Brexit done, but there were also

many pro-Brexit Labour supporters who could not bring themselves to change.

The only political party that fought their election campaign on a largely remain ticket was the Lib Dems, and look what happened to them.

Antony Collins
Staffordshire
Life member

twitter feed

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



Denis MacShane
(@DenisMacShane)

Fascinating insights into disaster of Corbyn's media operation by [@francisbeckett](https://twitter.com/francisbeckett) in The Journalist. Beckett with [@MarkSeddon1962](https://twitter.com/MarkSeddon1962) wrote 'Jeremy Corbyn and the Strange Rebirth of Labour England' so not anti-Jezza but his media handlers – useless



William French
(@wtfrench76)

The times they are a-changin'? An article in [@NUJofficial](https://twitter.com/NUJofficial) house mag 'The Journalist' ventures to suggest that Jeremy Corbyn may not possibly have been the best thing since sliced bread.
[#mieuxvauttardquejamais](https://twitter.com/mieuxvauttardquejamais)

An excellent read

The December-January of The Journalist was excellent and thought provoking. I read just about all of the Zwarte Piet, Irish question, Sunday supplement, alternative press and class ceiling articles. The idea of PressPad is wonderful and I would love to take part, but Montrose no longer has a newspaper office.

Good work!
Chad Neighbor
Montrose

and finally...

Hurray, a newspaper comes to the rescue!



Chris Proctor stops guarding toilet rolls to read the Standard

My partner Amanda rushes into the kitchen, an expression on her face like she's copped for the lottery jackpot, put the money on a virtual casino, and cleaned up. If glee was glue she'd be stuck to the floor.

In her shaking hand is a newspaper. It is the Evening Standard.

Abandoning my toilet roll security duties, I rush to her, imagining strains of Cole Porter emitting from the scullery; cheek to cheek we shuffle around the printed paper, gazing at it as if it were the image of a newborn child on Facebook. At that sort of distance, even I find tiny babies appealing.

The Evening Standard has been delivered to our door to keep up its readership because people aren't picking it up at its usual distribution points. Yes, the Standard - despite its editor being George Osborne - is one of the most beautiful things I've touched since my last draught stout.

The fact is, that once I was voluntarily banged up, I stopped the newspapers and ceased to pay attention to the news. This, I felt, was a logical response. Everything in the newspapers was bad news; I dislike bad news; so I decided to cut off its method of entry. Others might suggest this is a less than mature approach. It's like watching general election results from behind the sofa. I do that too.

I can't be doing with incessant misery. Supporting Everton is bad enough. So, I decided to avoid the news websites, radio broadcasts and written publications. At first, I continued to

listen to the BBC World Service but just as I was settling into accounts of modern dance trends in Taiwan or Sengalese butterfly fanciers, they suddenly cut it off and infested the airwaves with a Coronavirus Special. This caused leaping from the bath, soaking the bathroom and being handed the mop.

This Evening Standard was the first actual, physical, real, blessed newspaper that I had beheld for several months. (Six days for the pedants). I virtually hugged it. I perused every letter of every syllable of every word on every page apart from those with virus reports.

You realise that papers aren't simply a method of conveying news. They are part of our culture. To one degree or another, they are our entertainment, source of information, our eye on the world and a form of diversion. They offer a glimpse of normality in these housebound times.

I have even, initially reluctantly and now I find addictively, taken to trying to fill in crosswords. They're not the ludicrous cryptic ones which to me are akin to some form of masonic rite, they are incomprehensible and inexplicable: puzzles that are like condensed versions of Finnegans Wake, full of arbitrary words and empty of obvious reason. I've even tried doing them with the answers in front of me and I still have no idea what's happening. I have no time for them. I like ones with clues like 'Animal. Barks. (3)'. They are good for the ego and keep up the spirits.

And there's the horoscopes, which I previously ignored as nonsense.

Familiarity with them has changed my view. I now entirely believe a good proportion of them: the ones that say everything's going to be fine. The miserable ones I continue to view with scepticism.

They rival political manifestos in their first-rate lack of precision. Recently they've been mentioning that 'change is inevitable' and 'plans may need rethinking'. They stress that 'you're unclear what's next'. I have been advised to 'act swiftly and with courage'. I'm pondering how to do this effectively from my front room. But I'm pleased someone cares about me, even if it is an astrologer called Shelley Von Strunckel.

As I avoid the news, I've been taking more interest in the advertising. Most of the adverts these days are from banks who I presume are trying to get in with us before they ask us for money to bale them out.

Towards the back comes the pinnacle of our profession: the sports pages. I positively marvel how it is possible to report on sport when there isn't any taking place. But the lack of competition hinders our sport scribblers not one jot. Here's a bit of old sport, they say; or a rumour to enjoy and hopefully forget before things return to normal.

The union fights to retain print editions not from some sense of nostalgia or hankering back to the 'good old days' of the industry, but because print offers something different from mere on-line scanning. And even now, when I don't want to know what's happening, print is an indispensable part of my life.

I can't be doing with incessant misery. Supporting Everton is bad enough.

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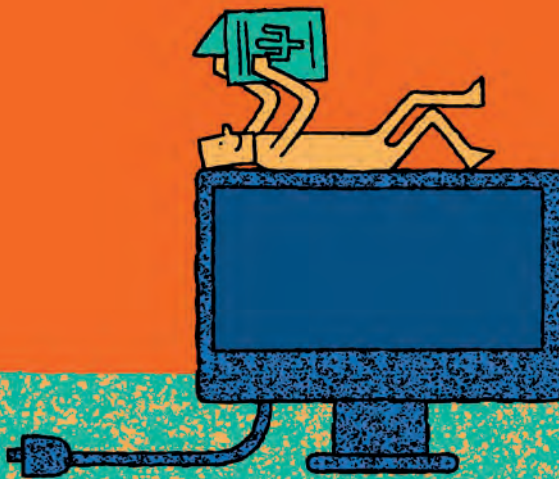
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