For those in peril on the sea

The story of the Shipping Forecast, from the man who read it
Page 10
Ray Harryhausen’s iconic animation models and artwork at the National Media Museum

Phil Oates, Acting Senior Press Officer at the National Media Museum in Bradford, writes about an interesting new exhibition in Bradford.

Ray Harryhausen, and have been on show in Bradford since May 19. They will be displayed alongside examples of Harryhausen’s artwork for the films. Further objects from the Ray Harryhausen Collection will be exhibited at later dates as part of an ongoing rolling programme.

The display is one of the first steps following last year’s agreement with The Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation to deposit the animator’s complete collection with the National Media Museum, which was announced during Harryhausen’s 90th birthday celebrations.

Ray Harryhausen commented, ‘Knowing that my Collection is going to be cared for by the Museum, and that my Foundation will continue to be directly involved, as a great comfort and an acknowledgement that my work and art will be preserved for new film makers to study and hopefully continue to appreciate.’

Michael Harvey, the Museum’s Curator of Cinematography, said, ‘To have agreed with Ray and the Foundation to bring this internationally significant body of work to Bradford in its entirety is a huge coup for the Museum, and we are delighted that we can start putting some of the objects on public display.

Titan of Special Effects

Ray has without doubt been responsible for many iconic moments in cinema history, creating unforgettable scenes such as the fight with the skeleton warriors in Jason and the Argonauts, and the chillingly atmospheric encounter between Perseus and the Medusa in Clash of the Titans.

The display area, outside Insight, the National Media Museum’s Collection and Research Centre, will not only feature a selection of Harryhausen’s models, storyboards and drawings but also provide an indication of why and how a museum acquires such a collection. The theme of the display will change regularly to showcase different aspects of Harryhausen’s work: the first, Mythology, runs until October 2011.

The National Media Museum along with the Foundation is now commencing plans to catalogue Ray Harryhausen’s entire array of models, artwork, storyboards, scripts and other objects relating to his film career. It is estimated there are in excess of 20,000 artefacts in the collection.

Centre of Excellence

This is perhaps one of the most important cinematic collections in the world, says Tony Dalton, Ray’s co-author and the Collection’s Curator and Administrator. ‘It covers all aspects of Ray’s art and films – from his experiments and early titles such as Mighty Joe Young (1949) and The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms (1952) through to The Golden Voyage of Sinbad (1973) and Clash of the Titans (1981). There were 16 features made and all are classics in the field of fantasy and stop-motion model animation. Gratifyingly, all continue to be a major inspiration to today’s top film makers.’

Proposals for the future of this unique body of work, in addition to becoming a major feature of the National Cinematography Collection at the National Media Museum, include making it the basis of an international ‘centre of excellence’ for animation. As well as supporting and developing animators, the centre and the Museum would be one of the world’s leading institutions for the preservation and conservation of objects relating to the field.

History

The National Media Museum in Bradford, West Yorkshire, opened as the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television in 1983, with a remit to explore the art and science of the image and image-making, and has since become one of the most visited UK museums outside London.

It aims to be the best museum in the world for inspiring people to learn about, engage with and create media. Permanent galleries include: Experience TV, a hands-on visitor experience about the history, present and future of television; the Kodak Gallery, charting the history and development of popular photography; the Animation Gallery and the Magic Factory for the young and young at heart, plus Insight, an extensive collection and research facility. Learning activities for families and schools bring the Museum’s subject matter to life and there are regular cultural events for adults.

For more information visit: www.nationalmediamuseum.org.uk

Medusa from Clash of the Titans (1981), © Ray Harryhausen, Courtesy of the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation

(Archive: © Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation)

Skeleton, animation models, Jason and the Argonauts (1963), © Ray Harryhausen, Courtesy of the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation

(Archive: © Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation)

Jason fights the skeletons, key drawing, Jason and the Argonauts (1963), © Ray Harryhausen. Courtesy of the Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation

(Archive: © Ray and Diana Harryhausen Foundation)
Northern exposure

The BBC director general, Mark Thompson, has admitted the corporation is looking at moving another channel to its new northern headquarters in Salford. About 500 to 1,000 more staff could be added to the 2,300 already relocating to the new £600m MediaCityUK as part of a strategy to make the BBC less London-centric.

After more than five years of planning, staff are beginning to move from London into the new BBC North base, which will be home to its children’s department, along with sport, learning, parts of Radio 5 Live, BBC Breakfast and parts of future media and technology by 2012.

Speaking at a launch to show the media the new buildings and offices that will house productions such as Match of the Day and Blue Peter, Thompson was asked if any more departments or channels could relocate.

“We’re looking at it,” he replied, adding that it is being discussed “as part of ‘Delivering Quality First’”, the review he initiated to make 20% of cost savings after last year’s stringent licence fee settlement.

Thompson predicted that in years to come someone working at MediaCityUK will be running the BBC.

Salmon announced BBC North is bringing more employment to Greater Manchester, offering 100 apprenticeships and setting up a BBC North ‘ambassadors’ scheme, which will give 16 to 19 year-olds looking for their first job a salaried six-month role working on the BBC’s front desk. The BBC also announced Salford will be host to the Sports Personality of the Year event in December and that for the first time, the BBC Philharmonic will play live on seven of the BBC’s national radio networks, including Radio 1, as part of a new festival in June.

Separately, Salmon confirmed again that although he is currently renting in the north-west, he is buying a house next year.

Costs

The corporation also gave an update on the cost of BBC North - £189m to date. So far £40.8m has been spent on designing and kitting out the three BBC buildings, £86.5m on relocation packages, redundancy and recruitment, £74.8m on technology, £19.9m on moving and £11.3m on ‘professional services’ such as surveyors to ensure the corporation is getting value for its money.

The BBC revealed around 69% of the 390 people currently relocating have said they will buy a home in the north-west. They will be entitled to a number of benefits, including a contribution from the corporation of up to £3,000 towards fixtures such as curtains and carpets, plus a taxable relocation payment of £5,000. The generous allowance is estimated to cost the BBC just over £2m but that bill could rise if other staff who are due to relocate, such as those on BBC Breakfast, choose to buy homes.

BBC Television Centre up for sale

Television Centre, the landmark west London home of BBC television and news, has gone on the market.

The 14-acre site, home to 5,000 members of staff, first opened in Shepherd’s Bush in 1960. Among the shows recorded in its studios were Family Tree, Monty Python’s Flying Circus, Blue Peter and Strictly Come Dancing. As well as earlier series of Doctor Who.

The corporation said the main aim of the sale, first announced in 2007, was to maximise the site’s value to the BBC and licence-fence payers. Bid proposals are being invited by the BBC from people looking for a conventional, freehold property. Alternatively, joint venture bids in which listed parts of the building might be maintained as a ‘hub for creative businesses and a visitor destination’ would also be considered.

With high investor demand for commercial property in London and a shortage of landmark sites as distinctive as Television Centre, we anticipate strong competition for both conventional and innovative proposals,” says Chris Kane, head of BBC Workplace.

Richard Deverell, W12 programme director, said, ‘Television Centre has played an extraordinary and central role in the history of the BBC, which will not be forgotten.’

BBC News is set to move to central London next year while BBC Sport, children’s programmes and TV’s Breakfast are moving to Salford, Greater Manchester. The Blue Peter garden, which is at the Shepherds Bush site, will be relocated to a studio roof at Salford.

The doughnut-shaped Television Centre is expected to be empty by 2015.

CROSPERO 158
devised and compiled by Jim Palm

Complete the square by using the clues; these apply only to words running across. Then take these words in numerical order and extract the letters indicated by a dot. If your answers are correct, these letters will spell out the name of a popular BBC programme.

Please send your answers in an envelope marked Cropspero to The Editor, Cropspero, BBC Pension and Benefits Centre, Broadcasting House, Cardif CF5 2YQ by Friday, 15 July 2011.

CLUES
4. Put a match to (3), 5. As it were (5), 6. Relating to forearm bones (5)
(and you may feel like completing the two partial down words; viz: a brown colour and a white heron)

Solutions to Cropspero 157: TREMOR, BOSH, ORE, GONE, NEATER, TEAL, MESH, MASTIC, ITEM, ATONE, FOOT, VISITORS, THEN, MOLE, RENEWS, HERS, ASH, JOGS, WANTON. The programme was ‘The Graham Norton Show’. The winner was Mr John Dean.
Dr. Who ‘howl-round’ title...

Incorporated unusual feedback effects. As I became closely concerned with these effects, hopefully I can put the record straight.

The person who first noted the effects obtained when a camera views its own output and thought of applying this to create an unreal, abstract title image was, I believe, Norman Taylor. Other individuals may have contributed ideas at the time but I was not present. I was told of the interesting effect and thought I might like to look into it further. I was an Investigation Engineer at this time, developing new operational techniques.

I conducted several tests and discovered an astonishing range of feedback effects which were visually stunning. By deliberately moving the camera slightly and changing the operation of the camera tube—reversing line scan, reversing field scan, rotating the picture, phase reversing the signal—one achieved multiple patterns—all quite abstract in nature. Using an image, such as a human face, to initiate the feedback made the face distort in an all spellbinding way.

Although not involved in the first use of this technique for Dr. Who, I was fully involved in generating the titles for several subsequent series, when the role holder changed. Because of this I became associated with the feedback effect as well as with other special effects.

I demonstrated this effect to BBC production staff but they would find no use for it except for a brief scene in a Rudolf Cartier play—Tobias and the Angel. However, word spread and I was approached by a Maurice Binder, a commercial film man who devised special effects. With BBC approval I showed him the effect and recorded several sequences for him, which were used in the film, Ampleforth.

But most use was made of the effect by a Slade student, Lutz Becker, to whom I gave a few different samples on film which he edited together and then had another student compose a musical background to the images. The titles were later included in a BBC Holiday programme. Lutz has since become a successful film director.

Ben Palmer

The achievements of Rosemary Gill

Prospero has been contacted regarding the obituary published in the June issue for Children’s Programmer Rosemary Gill. In the obituary we mentioned many of Rosemary’s achievements but failed to clarify one of her major ones. We are happy to include this clarification in this edition of Prospero.

Rosemary’s obituary noted that she was involved in the launch of the BBCC. In the obituary, Children’s Programming Rosemary Gill. In the obituary we mentioned many of Rosemary’s achievements but failed to clarify one of her major ones. We are happy to include this clarification in this edition of Prospero.

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Cagey response

I have read with interest your recent articles about the properties of a Faraday Cage, with which we at the transmission end of broadcasting have long been familiar. However, I must take issue with Graham Hare, and his accusation that the start of colour test transmissions from Holme Moss was the cause of his interference.

The only television ever radiated from Holme Moss was the good old 405 line service (the world’s first High Definition TV standard!), which started from Holme Moss in 1952 and was only ever in glorious monochrome! How can I be so sure of this? I was there as Senior Transmitter Engineer from 1970, and well remember the filming of early episodes of Last of the Summer Wine. We were also responsible for the 625 colour service from the nearby Emley Moor transmitter, which surely by this time was already in full colour programme service, and not just starting test transmissions.

I’m sorry Graham, you must look for a different culprit. It weren’t us, Guv!

Peter Sherdley

Recollections of journalistic training

I was most interested in an article (page 8) in the current Prospero – “Was it really only 40 years ago?” My late husband, Edwin Harrison, was Head of Journalist Training in the 1980s – Eric Stadlen was one of his assistants. He set off every January on a round of all the universities to interview aspiring trainees for the coveted 12 or so places.

The first question he used to ask was, “What news bulletin did you hear last night?” If the answer was ‘none’ the applicant found himself or herself out in the corridor very rapidly!

The two most famous chaps he selected were Jeremy Paxman and Nicholas Witchell, who are still very involved in BBC affairs. He had written a monologue on the Loch Ness Monster (he sent out a Loch Ness Monster T-shirt, which became much prized, to three children). Jeremy stood out at interview and, as events have proved, was a well justified choice. The year before Edwin died (2000), Jeremy published a book called ‘The English’ (a change from his usual fishing ones). I sent him an SAE enclosing an ex libris slip and requested his signature, as I wanted to give Edwin the book for Christmas. Back came the SAE, but instead of a signature, Jeremy had written ‘To Edwin – to whom I owe everything’.

Edwin also ran training schemes for overseas students. On one memorable occasion, we had 14 of them here in Kingston for afternoon tea and an evening meal. Several of them turned up in full tribal gear and, much to our children’s amusement, tackled the cakes first and finished up with the scones. It was the first time most of them had been in an ordinary English household and their reactions were interesting. Edwin kept in touch with several of them after they’d returned to their respective countries.

I thought you might be interested to receive these snippets.

In conclusion, may I say how very much I appreciate my index-linked BBC pension.

Miriam Harrison

Rugby recollections

I was interested in the article about the rugby club in the April edition of Prospero. It brought back many happy memories.

I played for the BBC rugby side from 1955 to 1969, being skipper for the 1959 and 1960 seasons. We played, of course, at Motospur Park. I remember such names as Roger Clarke, Johnny Ford, Bill Taylor, Roger Wakefield, Geoff Atkinson, Derek East, Liam Nolan, Ken Hughes and of course Brian Keyser who was then a mere youngster. Charles Curran, who later became director general, often refereed our games at Motospur Park.

I still have my rugger shirt together with an engraved winner’s medal, I think from 1960, for winning the ‘Harrods Sevens’ competition.

In 1959 we visited Paris and because the French radio and television team played rugby league we were not allowed by the RFU to play against them. We played against Vincennes and were received like royalty by the Mayor of Vincennes. We had a wonderful time – I remember the entertainment by one of the very large opponents.

Tom Smart

Salford in the 60s

With all the emphasis on the development at Salford Quays I just wonder what happened to the staff of the 1960s who ran the old newsroom at Manchester’s Broadcasting House which overlooked the then barren Piccadilly! Folk like Tom German and the unrelated Knowles – Alan, Freddie and Leo.

Martin Noble

The Big Drop

Abseiling down the tower of Guy’s Hospital – the tallest building in London down which civilians are permitted to abseil – might not be everyone’s cup of tea, but intrepid Angela Beeching did just that in aid of Marie Curie Cancer Care.

According to Angela the descent, on 17 April this year, was ‘the most terrifying thing I have ever done.’ The tower is 450 feet higher than the London Eye. Angela is a former Producer / Executive Producer in Children’s Programmes, responsible for Jackanory and children’s drama. She also produced three series of The Worst Witch for ITV and retired in 1993.

Despite her excellent efforts to raise money for a worthy cause, Angela adds, as a footnote, that she will definitely NOT be doing it again!

The Space Shuttle 30 years on

As for me, I shall always remember that deafening blast-off as Columbia climbed into the perfect morning skies on its first mission in 1981.

Russell Crombie

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PROSPERO JULY 2011
Prospero Sparks off Humberside Reunion which may lead to Conservation Project

Chris Bates tells readers about a Prospero-inspired idea which led to much more than just a reunion!

When more than 100 former staff from BBC Radio Humberside got together to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the station which had the unenviable task of uniting the traditional rivals of East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire on opposing banks of the River Humber – long before the Humber Bridge was constructed to link the ports of Hull and Grimsby and their surrounding communities, they learned their memories may form the basis of a unique project to be run with the Hull History Centre. Participants were there from Dubai, the USA, Spain and all over the UK, united in sharing their memories of a BBC station, which covered some of the most dramatic news stories of the 1970s and 1980s – the Cod War, the Flixborough Disaster and The Queen’s opening of what was then the world’s longest suspension bridge, across the River Humber.

Those who worked with the station always claimed it was in some ways different to the others – and that was more than local chauvinism. It’s a common theme in female – Big Lil Bilocca and Beryl Betts, for instance, who get honourable mentions in Germaine Greer’s The Female Eunuch. There had been big political battles over safety issues (on the trawlers) and there was a general sense that the world was changing – an unusual society – inward looking: females – Big Lil Bilocca and Beryl Betts, and it produced some extraordinary society – the women ran the community – the women ran the community – an unusual society – inward looking: females – Big Lil Bilocca and Beryl Betts, and it produced some extraordinary society – the women ran the community – the women ran the community – an unusual society – inward looking: females – Big Lil Bilocca and Beryl Betts, and it produced some extraordinary society – the women ran the community – the women ran the community – an unusual society – inward looking: females – Big Lil Bilocca and Beryl Betts, and it produced some extraordinary society – the women ran the community – the women ran the community – an unusual society – inward looking: females – Big Lil Bilocca and Beryl Betts, and it produced some extraordinary society – 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meant that news of the latest death at sea was available so much faster – (we were in contact with Morganbladit, the morning paper in Reykjavik most days) and that could be a problem. News of a death at sea was delivered usually by the Port Missioner. When he was seen turning into a street, everyone knew what was coming and would go indoors and watch from behind the curtains which house he went to – they knew what was coming.

‘I felt very strongly that no family deserved to hear bad news unprepared. I had a vision of some poor woman doing the ironing, listening to the radio and hearing that her husband, father, brother was dead – and I came to an agreement with the Port Missioner that we would hold off until he’d had the chance to get to the family first. This got me into a lot of trouble with London management, who were understandably not too keen, nor cared, but it was firmly part of the Radio Humberside contract with its audience and the mutual respect between the two parties.

‘So the station became the sounding board, a voice for Hull and Grimsby in a wider world, a link for the communities to talk amongst themselves – and the first bridge across the Humber at a time when there was no railway footbridge, nor tunnel, but it was firmly part of the Radio Humberside contract with its audience and the mutual respect of Overseas Coverage for CNN in Atlanta – deliberately keeping Teamwork meant everything.

Regional producer of the team was Fiona Cowan, a Production Assistant. On the day after the reunion, the present- regional TV studios opened up to many of those attending – and among those showing the guests around was Barry Stockdale, former Programme Organiser, who led the project to deliver Hull’s new broadcasting centre – a job he is replicating on a much larger scale for the BBC at its new centre in Salford Quays.

Accompanied by Jim Latham and former Head of BBC Local Radio Training and an erstwhile Acting Manager at the Station, Robert McLeish, the group then visited the site of 6KH in Hull’s Old Town – appropriately, these days thrashing as the city’s Museum Quarter.

Helping unite the Humber

Just why the station’s anniversary drew back so many people is explained by one of those who helped organise the event, Jill Hopkins (who baked a very fine cake, too, for the event): ‘I joined Radio Humberside in 1970 as part of the original team. We all went to Langham Place in London for a month’s training, during which we had to learn to do everything from driving the desk and editing oddments of tape together, interviewing and presentation skills. I was one of the four Station Assistants; there were only two females on the production/presentation team; the other was Fiona Cowan, a Production Assistant. I left Radio Humberside in 1975 to be a regional producer of the Today programme for Radio 4 in Norwich. I have since worked at Radio Stoke, and Radio Oxford in the 80s, commercial radio and Radio 4 in the 80s, but nothing compares with Radio Humberside! ’

‘Humberside (the county) was a creation of politicians, not altogether welcomed by the inhabitants; I think we helped to unite both sides of the Humber, and we gave people in a far-flung corner of the UK a voice,’ Jill observed. The county was abolished more than a decade ago, but the affection in which the station was held by its audience means the name has been retained by the BBC.

Teamwork meant everything

‘Once I left Radio Humberside I never kept in touch with the people who had been a huge part of my life for five years, but that didn’t mean I’d stopped thinking about them – they were special team, led by an extraordinary manager, John Cordeaux, who still believed in Reithian principles. A moment’s musings over dates made me realise that 40 years had elapsed and this could be the last opportunity to revive memories and after Joan Bradley’s obituary was published, my request to Prosper for people to attend a reunion and send their memories brought a deluge of replies. ‘There had been a lot of meetings and going through old photos; perhaps mentally it’s only a part of the Humber, and we gave people in a far-flung corner of the UK a voice,’ Jill observed. The county was abolished more than a decade ago, but the affection in which the station was held by its audience means the name has been retained by the BBC.

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She recalled, ‘That teamwork meant everything John Cordeaux insisted that there was no such thing as a ‘golden voice’ – so I guess no one got above their ears. We worked hard, and yes, many did go on to ‘golden voices’, but we didn’t forget the folks we were talking to, we respected the listeners, and were greatly moved by their response to us – especially the broadcasts in the early days must have been pretty rough! ‘Times don’t change: local radio has always been under threat, and we look to the listeners to wave the flag for us.’

Reminiscing – former News Producers Chris Bates (left) with former Grimsby staff Mike Cartwright and John Drury (right) Photo Julie Bates.

BRIEFING

LIFE AFTER AUNTIE

MONEY MATTERS

Strip out gains to boost your income

Kay Ingram, Head of Individual

 Savings and Investments writes about some important Capital Gains Tax considerations.

In its first budget, the Coalition Government made a major change to capital gains tax (CGT). This simplified the tax and reduced the rate paid by many private investors, while retaining the generous allowances which can be offset against gains before the tax becomes payable. At a top rate of 28%, compared to the income tax rate of 50% and an annual tax-free allowance of £10,600 per person, investing for capital gains rather than income, can increase the net yield from investments significantly.

Capital gains tax is payable on capital profits made on disposals of assets such as shares, OEICs and unit trusts, investment trusts, property which is not a main residence, and traded endowments.

The disposal may be by way of sale (or by making a gift. However disposals between married couples and civil partners are not taxable. This means that a couple can effectively offset the tax-free allowance of £10,600 per person and realise gains of £21,200 before any tax is payable simply by gifting investments to each other prior to disposal.

A gain is calculated as: disposal price less (acquisition cost + cost of sale + expenses). Any capital losses made in the same or earlier years can then be offset to reduce the gain down to zero. If the resulting gain is less than £10,600, no tax is payable.

If it is more than £10,600, the excess is added to the income for that year. If this results in more than £42,476 in total, tax is payable at 28%, and if less than £42,476, at 18%. Some private company shares are only taxed at 10%, but special rules apply to these.

Investing in collective investments such as OEICs, unit trusts, shares or investment trusts for growth, investors can strip out gains and losses each year within the annual tax-free allowance. In this way, capital profits can be used to top up regular income. Taking capital gains within the allowance each year can also enable profits from a taxable investment to be used to fund the tax-free ISA allowance. This process is known as ‘bed and ISA’ with all future gains within the ISA then being tax-free.

Clearly gains cannot be guaranteed and any capital growth-oriented fund is likely also to sometimes result in losses. However, inclusion of investments which can give rise to gains, rather than income, can play a useful part in supplementing an individual’s income for discretionary spending.
FCO and BBC Trust allocate fresh funds to World Service

The Foreign Office is to give an extra £1.2m a year to the World Service over the next three years.

In a further boost, the BBC Trust has approved the reallocation of £9m of existing World Service funding, released by lower than expected restructuring costs and pension contributions, to editorial investment over three years to mitigate the impact of recent budget cuts.

Together, the new funding will help provide support to some priority frontline services, including sustaining the Hindi short wave service, the Somali service and services for the Arab world, as well as being used to develop new platforms and markets.

The announcement by the Foreign office came in a Ministerial Written Statement by Foreign Secretary William Hague. It follows months of controversy over cuts to the World Service budget, announced as part of the Government’s Spending Review, and a House of Commons debate on the issue on 19 May.

‘In line with the Government’s response to events in the Middle East and North Africa, and following the debate on 19 May, I asked the FCO to look again at whether there were other options open to us to provide support,’ said Hague in his statement.

Full responsibility Welcoming the development, BBC Trust chairman Lord Patten, who promised recently to lobby Hague over World Service

cuts, noted: ‘As Aung San Suu Kyi said only this week, the World Service is a lifeline for those hungry for unbiased news and information about their country and the wider world.

‘As an export for British values of fairness, accuracy and impartiality, I am delighted that we have been able to work with the foreign secretary to direct some more funding to these services. The additional money will help protect BBC services in the areas where they are most valued and needed.

‘The additional money will help protect BBC services in the areas where they are most valued and needed.

‘However, it does not mean that we will be able to restore all of what has been lost, and there will still need to be some cuts to the World Service as we have known it.

‘We are determined that when we take full responsibility for funding of the World Service after 2014, it will have the priority it deserves.

‘In the Government’s Spending Review in October 2010, the World Service’s Grant in Aid from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was reduced by 16 per cent. Taking account of the additional funding announced today, the BBC will still need to reduce spend on the World Service by £42m a year by 2013/14 (compared with 2010/11).

‘The World Service will be funded from the licence fee from April 1, 2014.

Time to slim down radio service

A slimmer management structure that would see an end to Radio 1 and Radio 2 being run as separate ‘silos’ is recommended in a new report into the BBC’s popular music stations. The study, by Radio Academy chief executive John Myers, also calls for significant reduction in overheads, a single location and removal of duplicated departments within Radio 1, Radio 2, Radio Xtra and 6 Music.

In a key recommendation, Myers urges the BBC to examine ‘the advantages of operating under a single tier management structure across all four popular music networks’.

While welcoming lessons that could be taken from Myers’ insights, BBC Audio & Music director Tim Davie, who commissioned the report, has today ruled out the possibility of merging Radios 1 and 2 under one controller.

The best of the best

The six week study examined the synergies between the four networks. Myers praises the quality of BBC staff as ‘the best of the best – intelligent, entertaining, bold, enthusiastic and ambitious, and importantly, proud of what they do and who they are’. He suggests that the networks’ service licences are ‘overly prescriptive’, but he identifies compliance issues as ‘without doubt, the source of biggest complaints within the networks’.

‘A review is required if morale is to be protected and producers can continue to do what they do best,’ he says, suggesting that Radio 1 could reduce the compliance load by broadcasting more of its daytime shows live. He reports an openness among network teams to change and ‘a real determination to explore all areas of cost control’, with action already being taken.

‘The ‘significant’ cost of news provision to the networks is one area where he thinks savings could be made, recommending a fresh look at the system of recharging.

Encouraged to self operate

The possibility should be explored of Radio 1’s Newsbeat, which has 52 full time staff, becoming the central newsroom for all four networks, Myers says. He claims studio managers are sometimes used at Radio 2 as ‘comfort blankets’. In my view, the broadcasting talent should be encouraged to self-operate wherever possible,’ Myers says. Radio 1 and Radio 2 were ‘national radio stations at the top of their game, with large audiences to whom they deliver a large number of high quality, distinctive programmes’.

While the public would not expect them to be run cheaply, the report says, there was wasteful duplication. ‘I found it difficult to understand how both could continue to be run as truly independent ‘silos’ units, with some areas of operation that mirror each other. There is limited evidence of sharing best practice or ideas,’ says Myers.

‘The rationale of keeping two separate silos, versus the cost reduction opportunities of sharing talent, management, information and skills cannot be justified.’ Operationally, he found all the networks to be ‘well run and expertly managed’ and the structure up to middle management was a good one.

From middle management upwards, Myers says, Radio 1 and Radio 2 have a separate management structure, larger than

be expected, which he argues could be slimmed down. Additionally, he wants a clearer definition of what ‘quality’ means for each network and recommends putting more programmes out to the independent sector in order to cut costs.

Opportunities for savings

In conclusion, he says, ‘The BBC’s four popular music radio networks are producing high quality output, with a great team at every level working alongside the very best talent in the UK. However, the current method of operation means there are opportunities for savings.

‘Broadcasting all four networks from a single location under a refined management structure would undoubtedly have the biggest impact on costs with the benefit of departments being merged and best practice and expertise shared.’

Anxiety over job cut speculation leak

Helen Boaden, Director, BBC News Group, has dismissed recent press reports that 1500 jobs are under threat in BBC News as ‘muddled and inaccurate’.

Reports in the Guardian and elsewhere claimed that ‘proposals’ were put before staff at a DQF briefing suggesting cuts to regional editors in World Service and a ‘cull’ of correspondents in English regions and foreign bureaux.

There was no announcement, Boaden said in an email to colleagues, and the presentation – to 10 people from Newsgathering in a cramped TV Centre meeting room – had been one of several DQF presentations she has given. ‘This story came from what was clearly a muddled leak and led to a muddled and inaccurate article,’ the director of BBC News Group said. ‘All ideas are provisional, they need to be tested – and to be signed off by the Trust’.

Need sign-off

It was a fact that News is seeking to make


‘It’s completely understandable that people want to know about the detail. In reality however, all ideas are provisional, they need to be tested – and to be signed off by the Trust’.

speculation leak

The figure of 1500, out of 8000 journalists, was also speculation, Boaden insisted, although given that 70% of the division’s cost base is in people, there would definitely be post closures as part of DQF.

Further ‘muddle’ had arisen from reports on World Service, where the current cuts, including closure of five services, are a consequence of the government’s spending review, not the DQF process, she said.

‘It’s regrettable the leak which she acknowledged had caused anxiety - as local radio staff had experienced after previous leaks about an idea to share schedules with Radio 5 live. ‘Given the size of our savings target, I am not going to pretend that we don’t face radical change and some very difficult decisions ahead,’ she said.

‘However, until any DQF ideas have been formally agreed with the BBC Executive and the BBC Trust, they remain only ideas. Once the BBC’s overall plans are approved, then I will of course communicate them fully. I will be holding more meetings as the DQF process moves forward.’

Yorkshire region annual reunion pensions’ lunch

This year the lunch will be held on Thursday 11 August, 12.30pm for 1.00pm.

The venue, once again, is the popular Dower House Hotel, Knaresborough. Do join us and catch up with former colleagues at a superb venue and with excellent food!

Please contact Sue Pagdin for details.

Phone Sue on 0113 261 2613 or Email her at sspagdin1@btad.com.
The BBC has issued extracts from a letter sent by the Director General to the Prime Minister after reports that David Cameron intervened in the Delivering Quality First (DQF) process to save his local TV opt-out.

BBC sources say the decision not to close the sub-regional opts for Oxford, amongst other areas, was taken before Mark Thompson received a letter from the Prime Minister about it. Cameron’s Witney constituency is in the Oxford opt-out area and he wrote to raise his concern about the loss of this local news service.

The extracts from Thompson’s letter to Cameron, sent on 25 May, include the following: ‘Your constituents are correct that there has been a suggestion from some of my colleagues that, in order to save money, we should withdraw those regional services – based in Cambridge, Oxford and the Channel Islands – which serve the smallest populations.

‘Like you however, I believe that these services are very valuable, particularly in the light of ITV’s retreat from regional broadcasting, and that to withdraw them would be a retrograde step. I do not intend to include this idea in the final package of proposals that I submit to the BBC Trust.’

A BBC source said, ‘The Director-General was happy to reassure those concerned, and confirmed that these local services will not be axed.’

**Local opt-outs safe, DG tells PM**

The BBC must apologise to Primark says Trust

The Trust has ordered the BBC to broadcast an on-air apology after finding it was ‘more likely than not’ that pictures of an Indian sweatshop in a Panorama programme were not genuine.

The Trust Editorial Standards Committee (ESC) found that Panorama’s Primark: On the Rack, broadcast in June 2008, breached the BBC Editorial Guidelines on accuracy and fairness. Primark had appealed to the ESC about footage in the programme which purported to show young boys in a Bangalore sweatshop working on garments for the low-cost fashion chain. The ESC report concluded it was ‘more likely than not’ the footage was not genuine.

Primark’s programme was an investigation of Primark’s claim that it can deliver ‘cheap, fast fashion’ without breaking ethical guidelines. Primark sacked three of its Indian suppliers after the programme showed they had sub-contracted work to firms which used child labour. The programme also won an RTS Award.

The ESC noted over rushes tapes, emails to the UK programme team from the freelance journalist who obtained the Bangalore footage, and witness evidence. Its conclusion is that, although the case can’t be proven beyond reasonable doubt, it was more likely than not that the Bangalore footage was not genuine.

**Persuasive points**

The ESC focused on details in the footage which, taken together, felt were conclusive. These included: inaccurately sized needles for the detailed work the children were said to be doing and the tight camera focus on the boys with no details on their surrounding environment, in contrast to filming of other child workers in different settings. The ESC concluded that the BBC has already tightened procedures for undercover filming and following this ruling will ensure that all the staff involved in this specific programme, as well as staff involved in investigative reporting, understand their responsibilities when it comes to authenticating evidence.

The statement goes on, ‘These additional safeguards should ensure that the BBC maintains the standards our audiences expect but should also protect our journalists against claims which may be false but which are impossible authoritatively to disprove. We note that the Trust supported the central thrust of the programme, which was that there was clear evidence that work was being outsourced from factories in India in contravention of Primark’s own ethical trading principles.

Primark welcomed the ruling, saying, ‘Millions of people have been deceived by Panorama. Viewers who watched the programme, shoppers who were then fed the lie, sourcing experts who believed the lie, teachers and pupils who viewed the programme in lessons, have all been badly let down.’

**Sanctions**

The Trust has ordered the BBC to broadcast an on-air apology on BBC One alongside a Panorama programme; an apology will also run on the Panorama website and the programme is not to be sold or repeated.

The ESC has also asked the BBC Executive to consider its position on the RTS Award the programme won.

The ESC issued a statement in which it said, ‘The BBC accepts the Trust ruling. Two previous internal BBC reports similarly concluded that one 45-second sequence could not be authenticated. We accept that because this of the sequence should not have been broadcast.

It is important that the BBC has already tightened procedures for undercover filming and following this ruling will ensure that all the staff involved in this specific programme, as well as staff involved in investigative reporting, understand their responsibilities when it comes to authenticating evidence.

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**Journalists accept pay offer**

A ballot of National Union of Journalists members at the BBC has produced an overwhelming vote in favour of accepting this year’s pay offer. The BBC proposed a 2% increase for all staff earning under £68,302 (equivalent to the Grade 10 ceiling). Those earning less than £20,000 would get a minimum increase of £400. Of those who took part in the ballot 70.47% voted ‘yes’ to the offer, and the NUJ has written to the BBC informing it of the decision.

The letter also restates the NUJ position that acceptance of the offer does not mean acceptance to an assurance of the BBC pension cap if members remain in the existing pension schemes rather than transferring to CAC 2011.

**Nurse suspended over abuse film**

Panorama captured footage of vulnerable patients being repeatedly pinned down, slapped and taunted by staff at a private hospital near Bristol. Two members of staff at the hospital, where patients were filmed being abused, have been temporarily suspended from the nursing register.

Sokollalignum Appoo and Kelvin Fore cannot practise while allegations of misconduct are investigated. It follows a BBC’s Panorama programme which showed Winterbourne View residents being slapped and taunted.

The Nursing and Midwifery Council said a suspension order lasts 18 months, but can be reviewed periodically. A statement said, ‘A panel of the investigating committee placed an interim suspension order against the registration of Mr Sokollalignum Appoo and Mr Kelvin Fore pending a full investigation into allegations of serious breaches of the NMC code of conduct.

The NUJ is the only authority with the power to stop nurses and midwives, whose conduct or competence has been called in question, from practising.’

**Unreserved apology**

A serious case review into alleged abuse at the hospital for adults with learning disabilities has been set for July. Eleven people have been questioned and bailed by police. The hospital’s owner, Castlebeck, has suspended 13 members of staff and the vulnerable patients filmed by Panorama have been moved to safety.

Earlier this month, the government said a full independent inquiry into what happened at the hospital had not been ruled out. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) issued an unreserved apology for failing to act on warnings by whistleblower Terry Bryan about abuse at the home.

**Lottery Results**

Club Lottery was launched in 1993 and is enormously popular. With prizes worth over £127,000 annually we’ve given away over £3.1milion so far. There’s a quarterly £10,000 Jackpot draw, plus monthly cash prizes of £1,000, £100 and £50. So far we’ve given away over £1.1million in cash prizes to members just like you.

Congratulations to this month’s lucky winners: Michael Jennings, Elizabeth Wickins, Jeff Booth, David Dunmall, Michael Conder, Philip Riss, McLachlan, Tracey Langford, Lorraine Clark, Eric Young, Colin Cooper, Tony Thomas and Daphne Steele.

A special mention to Carele Brasel who was a lottery winner in March – congratulations to her!

**Yes Prime Minister**

Top-price tickets just £25 (usually £49.50).

The award-winning comedy, YES, PRIME MINISTER, returns to the West End starring Simon Williams and Richard McCabe. This hilarious comedy is written specifically for the stage by original writers Antony Jay & Jonathan Lynn and follows a critically acclaimed West End run (Best New Comedy Award - Whatsonstage.com Awards 2011) and a hugely successful national tour. Sir Humphrey Appleby and Jim Hacker are back by popular demand for a limited 10 week run at The Apollo Theatre from July 6. Valid Monday-Friday for performances until 31 July 2011. Login to Club save for details https://www.bbcclub.com/save.php

**Young at Heart**

Due to its popularity, Young At Heart is now EVERY Tuesday. As always we will be serving up some tasty treats. Enjoy a meal, dessert and a cup of tea all for just £5. For more details please contact bbcclub.events@bbc.co.uk.

**BBC (London) Club AGM**

Wednesday 20 July 2011 6pm in Meeting Room 1 (8th floor) TVC. For more info, contact wai.man@bbc.co.uk.

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Rockall, Malin, Irish Sea...'

Peter Jefferson, author, broadcaster and former presenter of the Shipping Forecast, has written a history of the service for publisher UIT Cambridge. In this article he gives Prospero readers a background to his involvement with the Shipping Forecast and the creation of his book.

I joined BBC Radio in 1964 and after a few years was given the opportunity of trying my hand at presentation – first on the World Service then as holiday relief on domestic radio. I ended up in Radio 4 Presentation in 1974 where I stayed before taking early retirement in 2001. I then became a freelancer doing some voiceover work plus appearing in several TV shows as a background artist which was all great fun. I also continued to work for R4 Pres for a further eight years up to 2009. I must have read the Shipping Forecast many hundreds of times – first on RT which had use of the 1500 metre broadcast frequency and then on R4 which was allocated that frequency some years later.

In May last year I was approached by a Publisher (UIT Cambridge) who asked bearing in mind what I had been doing for so many years, if I would be interested in writing a book about the Forecast. My first thought was that it would be a mighty thin volume, but yes I would have a crack at it and see what happened. This was to be one of those occasions when what appeared to be a simple idea just grew like Topsy into something much more than I ever imagined it would.

As well as telling the story of how the forecast came into being and who was involved in this vital aid to anyone who was sailing through our waters – it also presents an insight into what all the terms mean and how the words of the forecast were chosen. The book shows how the Forecast developed into a history of the sea areas it encompasses, and is a mixture of history and biography all rolled into one, combining humour and sadness with many tales of more recent history which many readers will recall.

**Background**

I lived in Deal on the Kent coast as a small boy just after the end of WW2 and witnessed many lifeboat launchings for craft stuck on the notorious Goodwin Sands a few miles off shore. There was then still evidence of the recent war around the beaches including the odd unexploded mine bobbing about worryingly close to the road and shops endangering life and limb of both those on land and sea. This meant very little to this little boy who was certainly not aware of what had happened just before he was born let alone the problems the weather posed in peacetime. The Shipping Forecast was not on my listening list on the ancient cracked Bakelite wireless set at home – though I’m sure I must have heard it – but I was much more interested in ListenWith Mother and Childm’s Hour.

We roll forward a few decades and here I am reading the Forecast on crackly old longwave on Radio 2, plus of course the gale warnings, meaning that one had to fade in and out of the music shows (probably to the annoyance of those who had to listen on longwave).

**The problems of bog roll**

Reading the Forecast presented the announcer with a number of possible or actual problems. Anything which could go wrong usually did at some point, and the Forecast found its way into your hands via a rather ancient and hard-to maintain teleprinter (parts had run out years ago, the only way to replace them involved cannibalising other similarly ancient machines which became thinner and thinner on the ground by the day). What joy!

These machines contained a ‘bog roll’ of special and very expensive paper which was heat sensitive. We had to have the printer semi sound-proofed which worked up to a point, but there was always the danger of the poor thing becoming overheated and expiring altogether. The Forecast – once printed – covered a piece of paper several feet long which had to be cut or torn into more manageable pieces to avoid the dreaded ‘script rustle’ as it was on very noisy paper.

More than once the paper ran out half way through the print-off, which usually meant a frantic phone call to the Met Office in Bracknell to ask them to re-send the Forecast. They must have thought we were clowns, but of course they had no idea of the problems we had.

**Further hazards**

When at last you had the Forecast and it was time to read it and – all being well – you had had time to rehearse it, off you went. Of course it was at times when you were up against the clock with faltering machine or exhausted paper roll that you discovered that this particular Forecast was either a bit on the short or long side. Long was more of a problem as you had a fixed transmission time so it would mean speeding up your delivery without making it obvious to the listener who might be being tossed about in a Force eight gale somewhere.

There was one further hazard which everyone new to reading the Shipping Forecast had to endure at some early point in their career. About halfway through with everything going swimmingly, one or more of your colleagues would slide noisely into the studio and do the unimaginable. In the days when smoking was permitted in BBC buildings it was the rapid and completely unexpected use of a cigarette lighter to the bottom of your script! Yikes! To show we were not completely unprofessional, the invading announcists also brought a spare copy, but did not give it to you until the sweat from your brow was almost copious enough to extinguish the conflagration. How no damage was ever done I will never know.

A review of Peter’s book, by David Edwards, can be read on below. As a footnote to this article, Prospero readers might be interested to know that the Shipping Forecast has been set to music by composer Cecilia McDowall. A world premiere of the work was given during the recent Portsmouth Festival.

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**And Now the Shipping Forecast**

by Peter Jefferson, published by UIT Cambridge £10.99, reviewed by David Edwards

Open this book and an oozing ladeen sea breeze floats free. You can almost hear a jolly hornpipe as Peter traces the history of the Shipping Forecast, and what could have been a sad story with many tales of more recent problems. Anything which could go wrong...
‘It’s nice to be daft’

A great pioneer of BBC Local Radio, Allan Shaw passed away recently after a long illness. Two of Allan’s friends, Michael Barton and Derek Woodcock, remember him. ‘No-one could have been more selfless in forging local democracy than Allan Shaw,’ writes Michael. ‘Our deepest sympathies go to Wendy and all the family.’

‘There was an impressive turnout at a celebration of Allan’s life’ recalls Derek, ‘and it was fitting testimony to his stature. But it was not a sombre occasion because the Allan I knew as a cub reporter on a weekly paper at the age of 16 was full of fun in equal measure to his intensity as a journalist. His daughter put it most succinctly in a poem about her dad, whose mantra was, ‘It’s nice to be daft’: ‘A sentiment shared by the many friends whose lives were influenced by his force of personality and inherent kindness.’

Allan was one of the great champions of BBC Local Radio who gave every ounce of his energy to the service of the communities he loved. He made no secret of his leftwards measure to his intensity as a journalist. His approach to the care Allan gave him – a spot of shopping for £2.50, for instance – was typical of the goodwill he showed everyone.

In 1939 he volunteered for service in the REME. After the war he returned to AP where he worked firstly on the studio floor. It was a steep learning curve and he survived to become a Sound Mixer. Under a string of demanding producers his natural calmness under pressure set a good example to his crew staff.

In the 1950s Ron, as Assistant to Head of Technical Operations, was involved in progressing sound staff to service the increased number of studios. Later he produced instruction manuals and Data books for a range of sound operations staff. In 1967 he had an attachment to Manchester and in 1969 to Birmingham.

Ron was always available to listen to staff concerns and to give helpful advice. As one colleague noted, ‘He was always the reliable, uncomplaining in difficult conditions and positive in his responses.’ In 1975 he was given grace leave and spent a month touring France with his invalid wife, Mac. He retired in late 1975. Mac died in 1978.

In retirement Ron learnt to cook. His life-long interest in music continued and his love of France endured. He travelled widely with friends and with his second wife, Elizabeth. Ron is survived by his daughter Judith, son Alan and all the grandchildren.

Judith Pottinger, John Eden-Radu

Respected electrical engineer

Tim Eyet joined the BBC Research Department, in 1942, where he was involved with radio frequency and field strength measurements. In 1952 Tim was selected as the engineer to be responsible for meeting the requirement for 60kW erp cyclindrical slot aerial systems at the Woolwich power television transmitting stations. This he did with distinction, having been largely responsible for setting up a development base and production of a prototype antenna at Aldenham House, near Elstree. Afterwards his managerial responsibilities grew and he was promoted to Head of Aerial Unit.

After a life-threatening illness in 1967 he returned to his old post and became involved with short wave transmitting stations. He also lectured at Dounreay, the site of the fast breeder atomic reactor. After he retired he was re-employed, part-time, to recruit BBC engineers.

It was a pleasure and privilege to work with Tim. Many young engineers saw him as a father figure and went on to obtain senior posts in the Engineering Divisions of both the BBC and IBA.

Potts, ‘He was always there’

Ronald Pottinger died on 22 April 2011. He joined the BBC in 1936, and after a short period in radio he was transferred to the Television Service at Alexandra Palace for operations on the studio floor.

Second only to his family life, he had a passion for sailing. After retiring, and his other BBC colleagues formed a crew and delivered several new yachts from the Mediterranean coast of France to new owners in the Greek Islands. He was a warm and friendly man, with a diverse set of skills, a sense of humour and an interest in others – an old world gentleman making people feel at ease.

He died on 11 March 2011. He is survived by his wife, Janet, his two daughters, four grandchildren and a twin sister, Marian, who is resident in the USA.

Geoff Platts

Former chief medical officer dies

Former Chief Medical Officer Ann Fingret died on 9 March 2011 after a long battle with cancer.

Already a distinguished physician before she came to the BBC in 1988 – she was president of The Society of Occupational Medicine in that year – she introduced many changes to the Care of Employees’ Health at Work.

Her first challenge was to deal with the outbreak of Legionnaires Disease at BH in April/May 1988. Then came her health promotion and support initiatives such as ‘smoking’ and ‘stress counselling’, well woman screening, dental care, physiotherapy and gymnasium facilities.

Ann retired before the move from Portland Place but in spite of deteriorating health went on as an NHS Consultant to replicate and implement her ideas at the Royal Marsden Hospital. She is survived by her husband Peter, four children and seven grandchildren.

Dr Howard-Vule

Renowned commentator

Idwal Robling, who has died at the age of 84, was for over 40 years one of the mainstays of the BBC Wales Sports Department, and also came to nationwide prominence as winner of the World Cup 1970 FidATV Commentator competition.

Prior to joining BBC Wales as a radio football commentator in the mid 1960s, Idwal had been an amateur footballer of repute. He captained Wales and was a member of the 1952 GB Olympics squad in Helsinki. In 1969, Idwal pipped luminaries such as Scottish international Ian St John (later to be part of Saint & Greavsie) and Tony Adamson, who went on to be BBC Radio’s golf and sports department drama. He happily swapped

Idwal Robling

Fireless worker

Dai Jeffries has written in an announcement of the passing of Violet Chester. ‘I am not entirely certain of dates and places,’ writes Dai, ‘the paragraph below is passed on to me from a conversation with an old friend of Vi’s and her retirement scrapbook. The attached photograph is an official BBC one from her younger days.’

Violet died suddenly at her home on 17 May 2011. She was 81. Violet joined the BBC in 1946, initially at Yaldings House. She continued to work in music contracts until her retirement in 1974. After leaving the BBC she worked tirelessly for The Young Persons’ Concert Foundation. Her funeral was at Golders Green Crematorium on 7 June 2011.

Dai Jeffries

Generous eccentric

Designer Andy Dimond died recently Andy was a kind and lovable eccentric who was generous and supportive to all.

Andy had worked in the theatre before joining the BBC and like the majority of us he began his career in the Design department as a design assistant. His appreciation and understanding of the work and contribution of craftsmen, show workers and lighting engineers, resulted in ‘batchless’ studio recording days. In 1979 Andy designed the general election set. Studies for elections are complex and can generate tension between departments, but seemingly not with Andy: we had our own open plan office in the studio, with its very own supply of brandy to get us through the night. He put me ‘in charge of hules’, endless square holes, chippy-cut, for technical cables.

When Stephen Bundy became Head of Design he immediately promoted Andy to Designer. He (Andy) became very adept at organizing himself onto the shows he was interested in doing! Dick Coles had just been allocated ‘Brands Hatch’. ‘So, you’re the lucky bloke who is doing the Brands Hatch OB’ said Andy. Andy had been scheduled a Schools department drama. He happily swapped shows to be at the races.

There will be many who will remember Andy for his enthusiasm, his/modelled approach to life at the BBC. Cliff Hatts, who Dick spoke to recently, said of Andy that he was ‘a cornerstone, agreeable, pleasant, solid and much loved’. We know that Andy loved his family: Pam and his two daughters. His pride in them was immense, almost touchable. Recently Andy became a grandfather to the next generation. Dick Coles & Mark Sevant
Cheshire cheese for charity!

Written and illustrated by Maggie Partridge-Smith, reviewed by June Hudson

Cheshire - The Cheese-Loving Bear by former Brighton BBC Local Radio Producer John Henty, is a 36-page book in full colour, with the story brilliantly performed on accompanying CD by Martin Jarvis OBE. There is a cheeky (if not cheeky) foreword from Gyles Brandreth and international cartoonist Alex Noel Watson provides the illustrations. All proceeds from the sale of the book (£7.95) will go towards the Royal Marden Cancer Charity. I’m not into marathon running these days or sitting in a bath of cold baked bread, commented John, ’so this is my way of raising funds for a very worthwhile cause.’ Several book launches are planned for London in June, John’s home town of Lewes in July and at as Max Miller Garden Party in Brighton on the afternoon of Sunday 7 August. ’Everyone’s welcome!’ explains former Max Chairman, John. Copies can be ordered from Natasha Cook, The Royal Marden Hospital, Downs Road, Sutton, Surrey SM2 5PT. Cheques should be made payable to The Royal Marden Cancer Hospital.

Crumpet Goes to Lundy (Notes from a Very, Very Small Island)

At last, a true account of what really goes on behind the scenes’ says Jimmy Perry, creator of Dad’s Army in his very amusing foreword to Maggie’s hilariously honest account of filming a small BBC Drama Documentary in 1989. Just four actors: Ken Colley as exiled Napoleon, with Ian McNeice, John Normington, Stephen Fallow but no actresses (A rumoured romance between Napoleon and a local young lady deemed inappropriate). The crew crosses from Bideford, North Devon to Puffin Island (a notable absence of Puffins, but barely as a substitute location for the more remote island St Helena). There are graphic descriptions of the chewing, vomit-ridden voyage, surpased only by those of the eventual arrival: equipment, props, costumes and luggage piled in sodden heaps, potted palms flapping wildly in the wind. ’We huddled together, hunchied and forlorn, on the boat strewn beach, waiting for further instruction...’ Throughout, and despite all the odds, the ’Dunkirk Spirit’ prevailed. Maggie’s keen observations of the assortment of personalities and their foibles, lends the book great charm.

’Crumpet’ was the collective name given by the lusty prop-boys to the female costume and makeup contingent who were lodged, together with the technical equipment, in Government House. Maggie’s evocation of the film Elephant Walk as male members of the crew tramped noisily through the house early each morning, sending a frisson through so startled ladies still in their nighties, is very funny, as indeed are lakers pausing for breath and peering innocently through the bathroom windows...

I found myself waking early, reading at 4am, curious to know what happened next.

The process of making a film on Lundy is so entertainingly brought to life. Descriptions of the primitive, improvised transport bumping and rattling up and down rocky terrain in the wind and rain, loaded with antique furniture and actors (often simultaneously) no doubt more enjoyable in retrospect than at the time, is gloriously absurd and true. Used as we are to ’Bl‘f Safety’ now, resourcefulness and common-sense were simply the norm then. Often ravenious, due to fresh air and gruelling exercise, food was always uppermost in everyone’s mind, but a meagre catering budget allowed only for a frugal diet of damp spam baps, accompanied by tepid tea and coffee, from a collection of old thermos flasks. This dull fare was stoically tolerated despite causing embarrassing digestive problems for some.

The book is written in quasi diary form, the narrative, (like the author herself) is great company, and as Maggie says, ’I knew each other from past productions there is plenty of teasing. Bill Bryson wrote to her personally, allowing her to paraphrase the title of one of his own books. Maggie’s affectionate humour and illustrations soften her sharp-eyed observations. This is a hugely enjoyable, nostalgic read for anyone who has ever been away on location, and a must for those who have not yet had that pleasure.

Our World at the Science Museum

BBC History is currently involved in a new partnership with the Science Museum in the creation of a new Communications gallery in 2014. Both BBC History and the Science Museum are keen to contact any ex-staff who worked at Alexandra Palace. BBC History is currently involved in a new anniversary season, October will see the 50th anniversary of Songs of Praise, and November the 30th anniversary of Correspondents, and in September they will be celebrating the 30th anniversary of Fools and Horses.

For information on Our World, or the Science Museum project, please contact Doug Millard, Senior Curator ICT & Space Technology, Science Museum, London SW7 2DD, +44(0)20 7942 4212 or doug.millard@iens.ac.uk

Ex-BBC employee Ann Mann is having her first novel published, at the age of 69. The Impersonator is a story of obsession set in the sixties. ’It features a love triangle with a difference’ says Ann, who has talked about her remarkable achievement in a number of BBC radio and magazine interviews. Details of Ann’s novel, and of her time with the BBC, can be found on her website: www.annmann.co.uk

A Love Triangle with a Difference

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Venice, Giudecca apartment, sleeps 5. Fully equipped, very quiet, vacpetto to St Mark’s. Tel: 01260 227262 Email: maggie_harwood@btinternet.com

Seaview, Isle of Wight. Wanting to get away for a break? Pleasant ETB 4* studio annex, sleeps two comfortably. Near beach and village. For details contact studiocaneness@btinternet.com. Tel to 01983 812180

Lake District. Historic waterfront, secluded in woods and fields, sleeps 6. Beautiful full year at for walking, climbing and sailing. Tel: 020 7387 6654; Email: jocelyn.mayne@virgin.net

Lagos, Algarve. Small townhouse, 2 bedrooms, private terrace, from £150pw. La large apartment. Contact 07966 181613; cdgoldean@hotmail.co.uk

Paphos, A/C studio apartment, sleeps 2/3, spectacular balcony view, from £395pw. Amenities adjacent. To/car hire arranged. Tel: 01455 635799; www.cypriusapartments.net

Brittany, Dinan. Delightful medieval riverside town with many restaurants. Attractive apartment in old merchant’s house; quiet, central. Beaches, walks close. Near St Malo channel port and Dinard airport (Ryanair). Sleeps 2, drill or bed. From £195pw. Phone: 020 8595 8543 Email: dinain@chiswood.co.uk

Norton, Isle of Wight. Holiday chalet for 2 in peaceful and secluded landscaped gardens. Ideal base for walkers. Tel: 01372 462 792 www.nambersretreatnorton.co.uk

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[Price cut] Provence. Traditional 3-bedroom villa (sleeps 6) with pool. Near enchanting medieval village. From £250 per week. Email: margaretwood7398@btinternet.com for brochure

North Devon. Comfortable warm modernised cottage for two with excellent views, walking and touring. Details: www.devonlillicottage.co.uk or contact keith.hoppe@sky.com

Dordogne. Farmhouse in peaceful hamlet with magnificent views from property. Ideal walking, swimming nearby, all comforts. Steps 4. Bargain. Contact 07788 940600, claire.c3@btinternet.com

Kilkivan. Turkey 2 bed apartment with pool on lovely turquoise coast, SW Turkey. Owing to medical recommendation to reduce stress, I am proposing to sell off fortnights of the year (like a time share at c.£1,000 per fortnight). Compared to a time share though, the property would be wholly legally owned by all our families for ever. Do give me your email / phone number for further details, or contact me on 01643 841602, email: martin99brown@btinternet.com

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