Editor’s Comment

We are only a few months into 2015 and already it is shaping up to be another bad year for journalism and for freedom of the press. First we had French journalists and cartoonists shot and killed in Paris by Islamist terrorists, then an Iraqi TV reporter and a cameraman died covering the conflict in their country, and then came the beheading of a Japanese journalist who had been taken captive by the Islamic State in Syria.

Last year 60 journalists died in the line of duty. What will be the tally by the time we reach the end of 2015? I dread to think. A genuine risk to life and limb has always been a factor for war correspondents to consider, and, in many cases, investigative reporters, too – especially those covering organised crime or political corruption – but thanks to the particularly violent character of modern-day Islamism we are now also seeing newspaper cartoonists and sub-editors gunned down at their desks. Who would have thought these branches of journalism would become so hazardous?

I use the phrase ‘modern-day Islamism’ very deliberately because, despite the Prime Minister and others dismissing ISIS and Al Qaeda as ‘medieval’ and a throwback to a bygone era, in fact they are nothing of the kind. Islamism is very much a 21st Century phenomenon. These people have a thoroughly modern worldview and they take maximum advantage of hi-tech communications technologies to organise, recruit and ‘network’. Even the beheadings, so reminiscent of centuries past, are essentially global PR events made possible by the internet.

Let there be no doubt – the Islamists are modern revolutionaries. They are today’s Bolsheviks, no more or less barbaric than their Russian predecessors in 1917. Revolutionaries are brutal; it is in their nature. Soviet Communism cast its shadow over the world for three quarters of a century. Will Islamism be with us for the whole of the 21st century? Or will the civilised world unite against it, and succeed in snuffing it out?

Certainly the overwhelming response to the Paris shootings suggests the West is in no mood to put up with this latest revolutionary totalitarian ideology. But the Western tradition of free speech and free press has come under attack continually since the beginning of this century. And, thanks to ‘political correctness’, the West’s political leaders have often appeared spineless in the face of the growing Islamist threat.

In 2004 the Dutch film-maker Theo van Gogh was murdered by Islamists and threats made against his colleagues. Two years later a cartoon in a Danish newspaper, which Islamists considered ‘insulting’, led to mass protests by Muslim extremists with explicit calls to “Exterminate those who slander Islam” – but no action was taken to stop these incitements to murder because the political Establishment throughout Europe was anxious not to be accused of ‘racism’.

Even today, in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo killings, hate preachers still actively recruit for ISIS and Al Qaeda in mosques throughout Europe, and schools that promote Islamism can expect nothing more than to be mildly reprimanded by Ofsted! As Britain and Europe face increasing ‘Islamisation’, our timid political leaders look on nervously, hoping that by ‘bridge-building’ with the leaders of the Muslim communities in our midst the problem will eventually go away. It will not.

Islamism is the single greatest danger to freedom and free speech in the 21st century, and, be under no illusions, the followers of this evil ideology (for it is a political ideology, not a religion) have journalists (of all countries and all cultures) in their gun-sights. Communism, Nazism, Islamism – they are one and the same. This is no time for members of our profession to stand on the sidelines.
Blasphemy, self-censorship and the lessons from Paris

By Roger Bush

Not long after the appalling massacre of cartoonists and others at the offices of Charlie Hebdo in Paris, I was at the private viewing of an exhibition at the Cartoon Museum devoted to the work of Mark Boxer. ‘Marc’, as he signed his cartoons, was a brilliant caricaturist. There aren’t so many caricaturists around these days, though Ian Hislop of Private Eye told me that he had a few on his books. I was pleased to run into Charles Yorke, a CIoJ member I had not seen for some years, and whose caricature portraits I always admired. Naturally, every other conversation was on the subject of the Paris attacks. Cartoonists did indeed feel threatened.

In this country we have never had a satirical press quite as tough or extreme as that in France. Neither Private Eye nor even Viz ever had quite the scabrous quality of Charlie Hebdo or for that matter the political bite of Le Canard Enchaîné. For cartoon drawing really intended to offend one would have to go back to the early nineteenth century, to Gillray and others. But one out of the gallery of figures caricatured by Marc caught my attention – it was Lord Longford. Marc clearly regarded Longford as a prick and, as the good Lord was notably dolichocephalic, that is how he drew him, as a “tuberous cock and balls” (to quote from Larkin’s Sunny Prestatyn). Even the editor of the New Statesman, at that time the iconoclastic Richard Crossman, felt he could not publish the portrait, and suggested he could only do so if the torso or lower part of the drawing were cropped! Good taste prevailed, and the caricature was not printed.

Self-censorship has always had a part to play in newspaper and magazine journalism. Some twenty years ago, late in my year as Vice-President of the Institute, I was in Hong Kong en route for Australia and New Zealand. I had hoped to call on some of our members there on the English-language South China Post, but its offices had moved out of the centre to Kowloon and I had to be content with speaking to him on the ‘phone from my hotel. How, I asked him, did he see the future of his paper after Britain handed Hong Kong back to China? No great change, he answered: for the past year or so they had been regularly clearing copy with their Beijing office. At the time I thought of this as rather a cop-out, but they were simply taking a pragmatic approach to the handover and making sure they weren’t closed down.

A few years later, in 1998, there was a letter in the Times from my friend Thomas Braun suggesting that A H Clough’s ‘The Latest Decalogue is a satire on Victorian moral values (‘Thou shalt have only one God, who/ Would be at the expense of two...’ etc) needed bringing up to date and appending his ‘Post-Modern Decalogue’. As it happened, I too had a go at updating Clough, and sent Thomas my own version. Its third couplet reads: “Mock no man’s God, at least until you/ Make sure he lacks the means to kill you”. What I had in mind was the fatwa against Salman Rushdie over his Satanic Verses, but today this instruction seems even more apposite.

The right to offend

Cartoonists, in particular, must always have the right to offend. They need not be continually exercising this right, but it is there all the same. I do have the feeling, though, that there is an increasing tendency to take offence these days. As often as not an outrage story in the press is about something someone said or tweeted rather than anything they actually did. And look at the freedom of expression we have lost through ‘political correctness’. Anything that can be labelled ‘racist’ or ‘sexist’, or is discriminatory against any of a multitude of noisy minority groups is not usually going to make it into print. When it comes to religion, well... blasphemy has suddenly become almost a new capital offence. We have somehow made unacceptability into the accepted way of reacting to anything we don’t like. In this and in our bland acceptance of rules on the use of language – where some words are banned whatever the context – we are all in part to blame for the attitudes that gave rise to the carnage at Charlie Hebdo.

Dying for a story

Twenty two journalists and media workers were killed in the first month of 2015. In addition to the nine murdered by Islamists in the attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris on January 7, two more journalists were killed in Iraq in the weeks that followed – Adnan Abdul Razzaq, an Iraqi photographer working for the Sama Mosul channel, killed by ISIS in Mosul, and reporter Ali Ansari, who was caught in crossfire between the Iraqi army and ISIS in Mykdadyah on January 23.

Ansari was a reporter for the Iraqi Al-Ghadeer television channel and had recently been honoured for his courage in reporting on the Iraq conflict. As well as these fatalities, two other journalists, Mustafa Hamid and Qusay Sahib, both from Iraqiya state television, were wounded in the battle at Mykdadyah.

Jim Boumelha, President of the International Federation of Journalists, said: “The escalation of violence that has now hit the Middle East is getting unbearable. This latest outrage underlines the massive efforts needed to create the best conditions for journalists so they can safely do their job.”

His message was reinforced by the CIoJ, which issued a statement highlighting the increasingly perilous situation for journalists in the Middle East, and called for all reporters, photographers and cameramen operating in the region to ensure they receive proper training and equipment to enable them to handle the current range of dangers.

Dominic Cooper, CIoJ Chief Executive, said: “Journalists and photographers should recognise the dangers that are present today and look after their own safety as a priority. The recent tragedies span offices as well as fieldwork. There is no safe place for journalists now. If you work in the media you need to be aware and always on the lookout for the dangers.”
RIPA

The fact that 19 police forces used the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) to find journalistic sources raised eyebrows, but silence still remains on who was involved.

The Interception of Communications Commissioner’s Office (IOCCC) report found that RIPA did not “provide adequate safeguards to protect journalistic sources” and concluded: “It is recommended that judicial authorisation is obtained in cases where communications data is sought to determine the source of journalistic information.”

Sadly the report did not identify where, when and even which police forces used RIPA – leaving most journalists with no idea whether they have been targeted or not.

In the 55-page report it says 19 forces have made 608 RIPA applications for communications data relating to sources over the last three years. It adds that 105 journalists are listed as “of interest” across 34 individual investigations, and 82 had their telephone records obtained under the Act.

The fallout has left journalists organisations scratching their heads with the Metropolitan Police calling those who use Freedom of Information requests to ask about RIPA ‘exasperating litigants’ and refusing to provide any information.

Which brings us back full circle to the initial ‘Alice’ report, in which the Met’s use of RIPA to access the Sun newspaper journalist Tom Newton Dunn’s Voafone records was first revealed. This led to three police officers getting sacked for being whistleblowers in the so-called Plebgate row with MP Andrew Mitchell.

The use of RIPA has totally undermined the principles of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) in which all journalists must be notified of an application to access their material and the right of hearing before a judge and the possibility of an appeal.

Liz Justice

Save Our Sources: Institute’s cautious welcome

The CIoJ has welcomed Sir Anthony May’s call for judicial authorisation to be sought before a journalist’s communication data can be accessed by the police. But, the Institute asks, can those in charge be trusted to act responsibly?

In recent months there have been numerous examples of a vociferous tightening grip, by legal and criminal chiefs in London, which is undermining the way journalists work. All of this has left eyewitnesses and whistleblowers out in the cold, says CIoJ President Paul Leighton.

Bernard Hogan-Howe, Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Alison Saunders, Director of Public Prosecutions, and Peter Lewis, Chief Executive of the Crown Prosecution Service, have all said that they will continue using undercover surveillance on journalists’ phone records and will continue prosecuting journalists on the basis of the information obtained through this surveillance.

“Bitter arguments keep being used against journalists, but with little justification,” says Paul Leighton. “Multi-million pound court cases have failed to seal a conviction against journalists who have had their lives turned inside out for years. Now, with no sense of humility, the CPS is seeking to spend many more millions on a re-trail. There is no justification!”

“Bernard Hogan-Howe has defended the use of RIPA to secretly seize journalists’ phone records, and to what end? So that the police may sack their own staff; not for counter-terrorism measures, which is what the law was allegedly bought in to protect. With no hint of irony, Hogan-Howe revealed to the Police & Crime Committee that the Met is in talks with news organisations about ensuring live coverage does not undermine their response to a future terrorist siege. Now we see that he wants co-operation from media outlets as he does his best to undermine them.

Welcome to our world

“Hogan-Howe has said that when police and security services respond to incidents ‘we want to make sure our ability to respond is not restricted by [media] coverage.’ Welcome to our world, Mr Hogan-Howe, because the media need to know that when we respond to an incident, or anything else in the public interest, we will not be hounded by law enforcement agencies fulfilling a political vendetta. When the legal services start behaving in this way, it starts to ring alarm bells.”

Liz Justice

Clegg has listened

At the Institute’s AGM last year, Justice Minister Simon Hughes listened to members’ concerns about police forces using the back door to gain access to journalists’ sources. He promised that his department would do all it could to stop this from happening and to seek better protection for whistleblowers.

Now, in a recent article in the Guardian newspaper, the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg seems to have come good on the promise. He has called for protection of journalists’ sources to be written into statute as soon as possible. Cynics among us will say this could be no more than a sop to the media ahead of the election battle. The optimists will point to a shift in attitude from a political leader who was one of the main protagonists for politicians having a stake in press regulation.

The acid test, of course, will be whether Cameron and Miliband back Clegg’s call, to make sure journalists’ sources get the protection they need in order to ensure that whistleblowers are confident enough to come forward in the future.

In the meantime, the authorities are still posturing as the industry continues to endure the sustained attack which started with the hacking inquiry. But other accusations of bad or illegal journalistic practice, such as the paying of tip-off fees, are slowly being thrown out by the courts as many journalists are walking free.

We all know that the hacking abuses were practised by a minority. However, the political and celebrity elite, supported by certain elements of the journalistic profession, have used the incident to force their hands onto the tiller of regulation. This latest change of heart by their political masters should cause, then, some consternation among the authorities who now lead the attack on the industry. What to do? Do they, too, suddenly recognise the value of a free press, and accept that there are some sacrifices we all make in order to enjoy to the protections that provides? Or do they risk being left out in the cold as they pursue what increasingly looks like a vendetta, handed to them by their political bosses some years ago now.
World Service seeks bilingual journalists

The BBC World Service is on the hunt for aspiring bilingual journalists from all over the UK to apply for a new training scheme – Future Voices – being launched this year.

Budding reporters who are fluent in English and one of 28 other BBC World Service languages will have the opportunity of a month’s training and work experience placement with the BBC in New Broadcasting House in London. This is the first time the World Service has offered training courses directly targeted at potential journalists in the UK.

Announcing the new training scheme, Liliane Landor, Controller of World Service Languages for the BBC, said: “The BBC World Service reaches hundreds of millions of people a week, on TV, online, mobile and radio too, in 28 different languages as well as English. For the first time ever, we’re offering a training placement to bilingual aspiring journalists in Britain.

“We know there are millions of bilingual people in the UK and we’re looking for fresh new voices with the potential to become BBC reporters. You don’t need any qualifications – you just need to be over 18, fluent in English and another language and, most importantly, have demonstrated your passion for international news.”

The World Service is a key part of BBC News and bilingual reporters will work with one of the BBC’s UK news programmes in English as well as with a BBC language service. This will follow a week of training. Each trainee will be assigned a mentor throughout.

The BBC is keen to encourage applications from people of all backgrounds and from all corners of the UK. The first wave of training will be in March this year.

Candidates should apply online on: http://careerssearch.bbc.co.uk/jobs/job/World-Service-Future-Voices/10454

The BBC’s international news services have a worldwide audience of 265m people each week. Candidates for the scheme must be fluent in speaking, reading and writing in both English and one of the following languages: Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bengali, Burmese, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Dari, English, French, Kinyarwanda/Kirundi, Kiswahili, Kyrgyz, Hausa, Hindi, Indonesian, Nepali, Pashto, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Sinhala, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Uzbek, Vietnamese.

Minister unveils major expansion plans for digital radio

Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture and the Digital Economy, has announced the single biggest expansion of local digital radio coverage, enabling nearly eight million more people to receive their favourite local radio stations on DAB “loud and clear”.

Speaking at a conference held by Digital Radio UK and the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders at BBC Broadcasting House, Ed Vaizey explained that almost two thirds of new cars now come fitted with digital radio as standard and that 182 new digital transmitters will be built by 2016 – a doubling of the UK’s network of local digital transmitters and increasing coverage of local DAB from 72 per cent to 91 per cent, in line with commercial radio FM coverage.

The Minister told the conference: “Digital radio is the future of radio in the UK and I am delighted that Government has been able to play its part in this major expansion which will help accelerate the transition to digital radio.”

The new transmitters are being jointly funded by the Government, the BBC and the commercial multiplex operators. Work to deliver the infrastructure – which forms part of the Government’s long-term economic plan – starts in March and will be completed by the end of 2016.

Helen Boaden, Director of BBC Radio, added: “The BBC is playing its part in the development of digital radio across the UK. We are completing the expansion of the BBC national DAB network to 97 per cent of the population this year and contributing funding to expand local DAB coverage thereby ensuring listeners can receive local BBC stations on DAB.”

Students’ hard-hitting film shown worldwide

An award-winning film by a pair of University of Bedfordshire postgraduates will have featured at over 20 festivals by the end of this year. Killing My Girl, which was made by MA Creative Digital Film Production students Tasos Giapoutzis and Michael Carter, tells the story of a London-based Asian woman who is forced by her family to undertake sex-selective abortion against her will.

The 12-minute film has been shown across the world, from India, to Peru, to Germany, as well as in the UK, including at the London Short Film Festival in January. The piece, produced by Tasos and Michael, has received the Director’s Choice Award – third prize – from the Black Maria Film Festival, as well as winning at the International Euro Film Festival in Malaga.

The film has also been shown in Greece, ‘Tasos Giapoutzis’s home country and where he decided to move from to build on his passion for films in the UK, with the University of Bedfordshire his ideal choice. “When I arrived at the University I already knew I wanted to make films but I had no formal knowledge on filmmaking whatsoever,” he said.

“On this aspect, the University played the role of the parent to me. It held my hands and showed me how to make my first steps, making sure I am on the right track.”

With his filmmaking career well underway, Tasos, who also holds an undergraduate degree well in Media Production (Moving Image) from the University, has actioned a proposal for a film festival in Luton. The Vice Chancellor’s Student Experience Projects (STEPS) fund gave Tasos’ project the green light in December, with the festival set to launch late this year.

“Organising an international short film festival in Luton is not just important for me personally, but for the whole community of Luton. It is a cultural event missing from the town and I am sure people will embrace it,” said Tasos.

“Initiatives such as STEPS give extra motivation to people to be more creative and active.”

PENSION VACANCY

The Institute’s Pension Fund is seeking applications from members.

The Pension Fund delivers a small monthly stipend on a lifetime basis to a small number of members who are experiencing long-term financial difficulties.

Any member who is interested should download an application form from the Institute’s website. If you have any questions or want to discuss a potential application please contact the Chief Executive.

Deadline for applications is April 30.
‘Orphan Works’ in newspapers and magazines

Why does ‘diligent search’ matter?

Take a good look at the Internet. It’s crowded with electronic versions of newspapers and magazines. Not just facsimiles of current editions, but archives and reproductions of old material still in copyright. Currently the 1914-18 War occupies many Internet pages. Some of this is out of copyright, in some the original publisher can provide proof of copyright ownership, but in many others the copyright may be owned by the original journalist or his or her successors. Perhaps not surprisingly, there are many, many instances where the original journalist cannot be identified or located and these are described as ‘orphan works’.

Why are there so many journalistic orphan works? Quite simply, because, under the 1911 and 1956 Copyright Acts, the first owner of copyright for reproduction in another newspaper or magazine was the publisher, but for all other purposes (including the Internet and other forms of electronic publication) it was the journalist, even if the journalist concerned was a staff member. Under the 1988 Copyright Act, things changed and staff journalists lost this special right. From that time most orphan works have been created by freelances who cannot now be located. In 1911, staff journalists were asked to sign away their special rights, but only the NUJ did so for their members, whilst the then-powerful Institute of Journalists refused to do so.

EU Directive

Until October 2014, it was illegal to publish orphan works at all and the legislation then published, guided by an EU Directive, took a great deal of discussion, consultations and the development of special codes of practice. Nevertheless, it made little impression on the journalistic industry. Newspapers, or their agency the NLA (Newspaper Licensing Agency) had been happily purporting to license orphan works for years, either by self-licensing or through the agency. Apparently they had been donating a small proportion of the fees to a journalistic charity, but that did not make those fees legal.

Under the new regime, any organisation wishing to use orphan works must first carry out a ‘diligent search’ for the copyright holder, then if necessary apply to the Intellectual Property Office for a licence at a fee that the IPO will set. Following a request by the British Copyright Council, I provided a ‘skeleton’ summary (see below) of what would comprise a ‘diligent search’ in the case of written journalistic material. A really diligent search (as is required by the legislation) might turn up some well-earned and much-needed additional income for aged (and younger) ex-journalists, as well as their heirs and successors. At our last check, though there had been an impressive number of applications to IPO for the use of many kinds of orphan works, the number concerning journalistic material was zero.

Diligent search

The following table relates to written material originally published in a serial publication (newspaper or magazine with an ISSN number) for reuse other than in a serial publication. Note that freelances may or may not have retained such rights and that, between 1911 and 1989, staff journalists retained all such rights unless assigned to the publisher or otherwise. From 1989 the publisher held the copyright of staff (but not freelance) material without the need for assignation.

Ken Brookes

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There were giants in the land in those days...

By Stuart Millson

Not even the cynicism of our self-obsessed, nihilistic age can dilute the potent, symbolic magic of Winston Churchill – writer, journalist, adventurer, soldier, statesman and, in 1940, saviour of Britain.

With the death of Sir Winston Churchill in 1965, England and the remnants of the British Empire lost a truly legendary figure. I use the [admittedly] clichéd word 'legendary' because it is almost as if Churchill belongs to a separate, long-ago era and way of life; as distant, perhaps, especially to modern people, as Queen Boadicea, King Arthur, Hereward the Wake or Robin Hood. Why should this be so, when the man in question died only 50 years ago? But what a half-century this has been: one in which the Victorian-Edwardian values which shaped Churchill have been trodden into the mud, and in which the adventurer-soldier-'man of letters' has been rendered extinct by a brave new world of dull, materialist, conformist human beings, presided over by autocue-reading politicians – masters, not of the ringing phrase, but the everyday, demotic language of a nation that feels sometimes as though it has surrendered!

To say my ‘farewell’ to Churchill (I was born in the year of his death – 20 years after VE Day), I travelled on January 30 to the south bank of the Thames, to the Pool of London and the vista of Tower Bridge, the Tower of London and HMS Belfast at its resting place, to watch the Havengore (the vessel that carried Sir Winston’s body those many years ago) as it passed upstream once more in a symbolic re-creation of Churchill’s last journey. My companion for this Churchillian pilgrimage was CIJ Journal Editor, Andy Smith. Together with many other onlookers, of all ages and backgrounds, we felt a tingle of pride to see the great road-crossing of Tower Bridge raised as the Havengore sailed through. The dockside cranes of the 1960s have long gone, replaced by the faceless plate-glass architecture of the modern business cityscape, but enough of the romance of London’s river has remained to make the scene one that the ghost of Churchill might recognise. I was reminded of the words of H G Wells, from his novel, Tono-Bungay:

As I passed down the Thames I seemed in a new and parallel manner to be passing all England in review. I saw it then as I had wanted my readers to see it. The thought came to me slowly as I picked my way through the Pool; it stood out clear as I went dreaming into the night out upon the wide North Sea…

And now behind us is blue mystery and the phantom flash of unseen lights, and presently even these are gone, and I and my destroyer tear out to the unknown across a great grey space. We tear into the great spaces of the future and the turbines fall to talking in unfamiliar tongues. Out to the open we go, to windy freedom and trackless ways. Light after light goes down. England and the Kingdom, Britain and the Empire, the old prides and the old devotions, glide abreast, astern, sink down upon the horizon, pass – pass. The river passes – London passes, England passes...

As you can see, Wells was actually travelling in the opposite direction from that taken by the Havengore – but the impressions and the feelings evoked by these words seemed to be the perfect accompaniment to the day.

Bundle of contradictions

During the morning we history-obsessed chaps had a curious encounter, with a female functionary of the modern BBC (the very body which attempted to prevent Churchill from broadcasting during the crisis of the Appeasement years!). In her matter-of-fact way, she asked us why we were there and what relevance Churchill could possibly have for us today? Apart from the obvious point, that a defeated and Nazi-conquered Britain would no longer have such a body as the BBC, it was – in all honesty – impossible to give a simple answer to her question, for Winston Churchill was so many things, so many people – a bundle of contradictions – all moulded into one person. I doubted if any American journalist, covering the end of the
John F Kennedy or Ronald Reagan years, would have asked an American citizen such a crass question. The fact that the crowds were there was—surely—enough of an answer.

In fact, it is the American historian and commentator who often gets to the heart of the matter, more clearly and honestly, and with an empathy and (possibly) vicarious pride more worthy of Churchill’s name than many English observers. For Robert H Pilpel, in his immensely readable, Churchill in America, 1895-1961, the author (12 years old when Churchill retired as Prime Minister in 1955) felt…

… a warm communion that enveloped me as I started to read, an almost immediate sensation of fraternal intimacy, of being taken into the confidence as a fellow member of the English-speaking tribe. Then there was the wonderful Brittishness of expression: the robust roast-beef-and-potato phrases, rolling cadences, portentous Latinate locutions—alien yet eerily familiar, the echo of racial memory. Before long I caught sparkles of irrepressible humour percolating through the majestic narrative façade, as though Puck had escaped from A Midsummer Night’s Dream and infiltrated Paradise Lost.

Pilpel’s fellow countryman, William Manchester (an academic and author) was just as enthralled by Churchill and the unforgettable year, 1940, as he wrote in his magnificent, 970-page The Last Lion—Visions of Glory, 1874-1932:

It was England’s greatest crisis since the Norman conquest, vaster than those precipitated by Philip II’s Spanish Armada, Louis XIV’s triumphant armies, or Napoleon’s invasion barges massed at Boulogne. This time Britain stood alone…

Now the 22,000 Tommies at Dunkirk, Britain’s only hope, seemed doomed. On the Flanders beaches they stood around in angular, existential attitudes, like dim purgatorial souls awaiting disposition…

The House of Commons was warned to prepare for ‘hard and heavy tidings’.

As Manchester discovers, perhaps Britain – the island nation and fortress – galvanised itself, not just through the war-words and personality of Churchill, but his very early experiences in the art of warfare as a young soldier at the Royal Military Academy (at which he reputedly argued with the commands he was given during parade-ground drill)…

Winston had entered Sandhurst ninety-second in a class of 102… But Sandhurst was fun. He particularly liked the exercises in field fortification. They dug trenches, built breastworks, and revetted parapets with sandbags, heather, fascines, and Jones’ iron-bound gabions—cylinders filled with earth. Chevaux-de-frise were constructed, and foulgasses, a kind of primitive land mine in which the charge was overlaid with stones. Using slabs of guncotton, they blew up simulated railroad tracks [readers of this article must remember that this is an American book!] and masonry bridges; then they erected pontoon or timber substitutes. All the hills around Camberley were mapped. Roads were reconnoitered. Picket lines were established and advance and rear guards posted.

Growling man of war

Those military exercises from 1893 served Churchill well, and represented a prophecy of things to come, 47 years later – when the Southern coast of England became a defensive border of pill boxes, tank-traps, trenches, and seaside towns patrolled by the Home Guard. Yet it is wrong to think of the ‘old man’ only as a growling man of war, obsessed with victory and destiny. He was also a skilled painter – an artist who sought solace and spiritual refreshment in English and North African landscapes; a collector and writer of books – and a keen bricklayer and excavator of lakes; a worshipper of his ancestor (the victor of Blenheim); a gentleman at home in Kent, at his beloved Chartwell, never happier than with his family close to him; and a lover of animals (“pets to be cherished and pampered” writes William Manchester), who were always welcome in the Churchill menagerie. A story is told of one such pet, a goose, which had to be sacrificed for a family dinner. “You carve him, Clemmie,” he said. “He was a friend of mine.”

The title of this article was suggested to me by an old picture-book history of Churchill, which I remember buying from a second-hand bookshop in 1981. (This was from the days when I used to visit Churchill’s statue, on the green at Westerham at Kent, the fine, unspoilt old town which is just a few miles from peaceful Chartwell.) The book showed the war years and many other famous moments from his life; then, the Havengore, the cranes which dipped in the days when I used to visit Churchill’s hand bookshop in 1981. (This was from the days when I used to visit Churchill’s statue, on the green at Westerham at Kent, the fine, unspoilt old town which is just a few miles from peaceful Chartwell.) The book showed the war years and many other famous moments from his life; then, the Havengore, the cranes which dipped in the salutes, and the last stages of Churchill’s journey to his resting place at Bladon, Oxfordshire. And on the very last page, a photograph of Bladon church, in the gloom of a January dusk, and the words… “There were giants in the land in those days…”

Photographs on pages 7 and 8 are reproduced with the kind permission of This England magazine.
The Churchill War Rooms

Phil Reed OBE
Director of Churchill War Rooms.

...[Churchill’s] penchant for watching enemy air raids from an exposed position on the roof of the building above, are now part of his legendary disregard for his own safety, but were in fact sources of great concern among those tasked with ensuring his and his governments safety...

Photos:
left: The PM at his desk in the War Rooms
below: The Churchill War Rooms today
Photographs reproduced by kind permission of the Imperial War Museum.

The Churchill War Rooms, now a branch of the Imperial War Museum, are the preserved historic site where Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, sheltered during the Nazi bombing raids on London and where he met with his War Cabinet, his generals and his military planners, while overhead the bombers laid waste to London.

So it comes as something of a shock to anyone visiting the site to find that you only descend one floor, about 20 feet. Surely he would be like Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin, hunkering down hundreds of feet below ground, with a lot of concrete, steel and ballast between him and the surface? The explanation for his being so at risk lies largely in the very trademark fearlessness of the man who, throughout his life, liked to lead from the front and always be where the action was.

When the War Rooms were first envisaged, however, it was not for Churchill – at that time still in the political wilderness – nor even for the War Cabinet of the then Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain. In 1938, despite Chamberlain’s promise of “peace in our time”, the military planners were contemplating a likely war with Germany, a war in which aeroplanes would fill the skies of London and devastate the capital with massive bomb loads. Their first thoughts for the protection of the small core of government, the ‘war cabinet’, involved evacuating them to specific large houses in the Cotswolds, where they should be out of harm’s way.

The Spanish Civil War, in which, for the first time, bombers were used on a large scale to bomb populated cities, caused the planners to reconsider the likely casualty rates and to greatly reduce their calculations of casualties. As a result, the plan to take the War Cabinet out of London was also reconsidered and the idea of keeping them in London was mooted. Work had begun in the summer of 1938 to convert an old storage and working basement in the GOGGS (Government Offices Great George Street) Building, which was occupied by the Office of Works, and to house military planners there. Its central location in the government quarter of London and the steel frame of the building above led them to think of it as an ideal location in which to house the War Cabinet, though little thought seems to have been given to making it bomb-proof.

Downing Street bombed

By the time Churchill became Prime Minister in May 1940, the war had moved to a different phase, as the Nazi war machine progressed westwards into France, Belgium, Holland and Scandinavia and the threat of invasion came ever closer. As the bombing raids on Great Britain began in the summer of 1940, Churchill initially shielded his ‘bunker’, but, after No 10 Downing Street was seriously damaged in an air raid, he was obliged to move underground.

Ironically, the basement of the GOGGS building was far from safe and any single bomb of the tens of thousands dropped on London in the ‘Blitz’ could have destroyed him, his War Cabinet and the whole military planning machinery for the British war effort. His faith in the statistical unlikelihood, ignoring the random nature of bombing, and his penchant for watching enemy air raids from an exposed position on the roof of the building above, are now part of his legendary disregard for his own safety, but were in fact sources of great concern among those tasked with ensuring his and his governments safety.

Months after the Blitz had begun, enough concrete and steel was jammed into the floor space above the War Rooms to make it proof against a 250 kilo bomb, but it took three years to complete! Even that, however, might have given little cover in the face of the new aerial weaponry that soon rained down on London following the D-Day landings: Hitler’s weapons, the V-1 flying bomb and the V-2 rocket. During the period of their impact on London, June 1944 to March 1945, Churchill and his War Cabinet were once again forced to ‘spelunker’ down to the war rooms.
An eye for history
The complex was large and housed several hundred people, apart from the War Cabinet, who worked in shifts around the clock and whose sleeping accommodation was a shallow and squalid cellar one floor below the War Rooms. Almost all of the rooms that housed these people were reused after the war, when accommodation was chronically short, millions of buildings having been destroyed in the bombing raids. However, with a keen eye for history the principal rooms of the complex were kept just as they had been left when war finished on 15 August 1945.

The Rooms eventually became a branch of the Imperial War Museum and opened to the public in April 1984. What was originally given to the IWM was only the 1939 footprint, but, in 2000 almost all of the space was occupied and, in 2005, to mark the 40th anniversary of Sir Winston’s death, the restoration was completed with the opening by Her Majesty the Queen of the Churchill Museum.

Churchill 2015
Organisations and institutions around the world have come together to present ‘Churchill 2015’, a unique celebration of the life and legacy of Sir Winston Churchill, 50 years after his death, 60 years after his final resignation as Prime Minister, and 75 years after his ‘finest hour’ leading the fight against Nazi Germany in 1940.

To engage the nation and inspire the next generation, a host of exhibitions and events are taking place this year as part of ‘Churchill 2015’. A special exhibition has opened at the Science Museum in London, telling the little-known story of how Churchill’s fascination with science led to the scientific achievements that helped Britain win the Second World War. The incredible events of WW2 are brought to life through a rich array of significant historical objects, original film footage, letters and archive images, and the exhibition features a number of personal objects belonging to Sir Winston.

Other exhibitions include ‘Death of a Hero’ at Churchill’s family home of Chartwell in Kent, now cared for by the National Trust. This exhibition features a number of never-before-seen items from personal family mementoes to commemorative gifts and a revamped Churchill Exhibition. There is also an exhibition and new memorial garden at his birthplace, Blenheim Palace in Oxfordshire.

Internationally, the Musée de l’Armée in Paris opens its Churchill–de Gaulle exhibition in April, exploring the relationship between these two great figures. The exhibitions are supported by materials from Churchill’s own personal papers at the Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.

Lectures will be delivered across the UK including a series by the University of Bristol which features key historians and members of the Churchill family. The Churchill Centre (UK) will host the 32nd International Churchill conference between May 26 and 29.

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, established in 1965 as Sir Winston’s national memorial and living legacy, awards Churchill Fellowships to individuals from throughout the UK to enable them to travel to different parts of the world in pursuit of new and better ways of tackling a wide range of social, educational, environmental, medical and scientific issues, and bringing back new approaches and solutions to the UK.

Churchill the journalist
Churchill was a longstanding member of the Institute of Journalists. His association with the Institute started in 1900 when he was writing for the Morning Chronicle. He went on to write for most of the Fleet Street press during the course of his career, and particularly for his friend Lord Beaverbrook’s Daily Express and Evening Standard.

A number of documents relating to Sir Winston’s membership of the Institute of Journalists are currently held at the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge. These include his IoJ membership certificates and correspondence between Churchill and the Institute’s head office.

Pictured: Winston Churchill’s Institute of Journalists membership certificate for 1936 (above), and details of a contribution made to the conference fund (left). Documents reproduced with the kind permission of the Churchill Archives.
New Vice-President

Only one nomination has been received for the position of Vice-President and, accordingly, Mark Croucher is duly elected and takes up office following the first meeting of the Institute’s governing Council. He will then automatically succeed Paul Leighton as President in 2016.

Mark is an experienced investigative journalist with a background in political PR and media relations (including several years as director of communications for the UK Independence Party). He joined the CIoJ in 2001 and has been a member of Council on two separate occasions, 2003-2007 and 2013-present.

The formal ‘installation’ of the new Vice-President took place at the Civil Service Club on February 27, following a meeting of the Institute’s Council.

New fund for women journalists

The International Women’s Media Foundation (IWMF) has announced the formation of the Howard G. Buffett Fund for Women Journalists. An annual total of US$230,000 will be awarded to applicants who can demonstrate how their proposal will lead to the exposure of under-reported stories, strengthen story-telling skills, develop their expertise or support entrepreneurial media projects. “Promoting the work and advancing the role of women in the media is critical to transparency and the diversity of voices in the world,” said IWMF Executive Director Elisa Lees Muñoz. “The launch of this Fund marks an unprecedented opportunity to provide significant support to hundreds of journalists on the path to future leadership roles in the news industry.”

The Fund was established by the Washington DC-based IWMF in 2014 with a $4 million gift from the Howard G. Buffett Foundation to empower women in the media working around the world. “This Fund will give outstanding women journalists the ability to turn their reporting ambitions into reality,” said Howard G. Buffett. At least $2.3 million will be awarded to women journalists across all media over the next 10 years. The IWMF has left individual grant amounts to be awarded as well as the type of projects intentionally undefined. The fund was designed to help women journalists by providing support to:

- Expose under-reported but critical global issues
- Undertake ambitious projects that challenge traditional media narratives
- Develop field-based expertise and strengthen careers
- Pursue training and leadership opportunities
- Launch entrepreneurial news projects or acquire the skill to do so

The schedule for future 2015 funding rounds will be released on the IWMF website in the coming weeks. Learn more about the Fund and submit proposals at iwmf.org/fund

Calling all PROs!

The Institute had a specialist Press & PR Division for many years but unfortunately this division ceased to operate in the 1990s. It is now proposed that we re-establish a group within the CIoJ for press and public relations officers. If you work in this field and would be interested in joining the new group, please contact Dominic Cooper at Head Office.

Don’t forget

You will find many of the CIoJ’s forms, leaflets and guides available as downloads on the members’ area of the Institute’s website, www.cioj.co.uk.
The Chartered Institute of Journalists continues to campaign in defence of local newspapers. We recently took part in a meeting of the all-party parliamentary group on the crisis in local newspapers. Amanda Brodie, who chairs the Institute’s Professional Practices Board, spoke at the meeting, telling MPs (including Culture Minister Ed Vaizey) that local papers “are facing challenges as never before” and that the Government must act now to help safeguard their future.

She told the meeting: “We supported MP Jonathan Edwards’ call, made in 2012, for local papers to be designated community assets under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, and gave evidence to an APPG which he organised on this subject. Much has been said since then from inside and outside the industry about the precarious state of our local press, but little has been done to support it.

“There has been enough debating, we are all only too aware of the problems – it is time to take some positive action. The Chartered Institute of Journalists has campaigned long and hard on many of these issues. But we now call on people in government to act, because without your support, our local newspapers will be lost.”

Addressing the Minister, Ed Vaizey, she said that during a Westminster Hall debate in 2012 Mr Vaizey had spoken of the “passionate support” of the House of Commons for the local press. “We now ask you to make good on that support and to do your utmost to ensure that quality local newspapers do survive, so they may continue to provide a valued service to their communities, well into the future.”

The meeting was attended by a wide variety of representatives from the media industry, including the Society of Editors, Newspaper Society, and local newspaper editors, as well as by John Whittingdale, Chairman of the Culture, Media and Sport select committee.

Crisis
After the meeting Amanda Brodie presented Ed Vaizey with a briefing document from the CIoJ which described the closure of local newspapers as “arguably the greatest crisis ever to hit our profession. It is a silent cancer which will have far-reaching effects long after the current debate about press regulation has died down.” It added that the “furore over phone hacking has become an unwelcome diversion to the issue we should be tackling – whether local papers can survive in the current economic climate.”

One of the UK’s biggest local newspaper groups, Johnston Press, had only recently announced that it would be halving its journalistic workforce by 2020, with content being produced 50/50 by journalists and “community contributors”.

“If we lose our local papers, it will be a loss for the community, a loss for society and ultimately a loss for democracy. Democracy is not only the right to vote, but the right to know. Our councils and courts need to be covered, authority needs to be challenged, press offices need to be bypassed – this cannot be left to so-called citizen journalists.”

Twenty per cent of the UK’s 1,100 local newspapers have closed in the last seven years, that’s more than 240 titles. This is arguably the greatest crisis ever to hit our profession. It is a silent cancer which will have far-reaching effects long after Lord Justice Leveson has put down his pen.

Johnston Press has announced that its present 2,000 employed journalists jobs will be cut by half by 2020, when content will be produced 50/50 by journalists and ‘community contributors’.

But this is not just a question of journalists losing their jobs. If we lose our local papers, it will be a loss for the community, a loss for society and ultimately a loss for democracy.

Democracy is not only the right to vote, but the right to know. Our councils and courts need to be covered, authority needs to be challenged, press offices need to be bypassed – this cannot be left to so-called ‘citizen journalists.’

Both the Local Government Association and the Magistrates Association have expressed concern that local courts and councils are no longer being covered properly by their local papers. This is because they simply do not have the qualified staff to do these jobs.

In the past our industry has relied on its journalists and the quality of its editorial content to pull it through the difficulties. But this requires experienced journalists to provide the content which newspapers need, to maintain the trust and loyalty of their readers. Little doubt, then, that local newspapers are under attack as never before.

There is an important distinction to be made between local and national newspapers. Local journalists are much more likely to adhere to a code of conduct, because they live in the communities in which they work, and are accountable to them in a way which the national papers are not. Local papers are not just in the community, they are part of it. It should be remembered too that many older people or low-income families cannot afford access to the internet and rely on their local media.

Extracts from the CIoJ submission to the APPG on the crisis in local newspapers:

Local newspapers are the training grounds for the top-flight national journalists of the future. Their duty to educate, inform, entertain and campaign, sits well with a possible approach to give them charitable status, providing they can demonstrate a genuine commitment to their community as well as fulfilling an educational role.

One example of this has already come from journalists made redundant when the Scarborough Evening News went weekly last month – they are to help launch a new title for the town. The three-day-a-week Scarborough Voice will be launched in September. It will sell for a quarter of the price that Johnston Press are charging for their evening-turned-weekly paper.

It is worth noting that those newspapers which are still independently owned and operated are not saddled with huge, crippling debts. They may be experiencing some difficulties, but not as severe as those of the larger groups, nor have they dispensed with their main stock-in-trade – their journalists and quality editorial content.

One example of this is the South London Press, which in the last month has been split into a series of hyper-local titles and overall circulation has increased by 35 per cent in one week. This shows that if you give readers what they want, they will still buy.

In the light of what is happening in the major publishing groups, we feel that the conditions for approving future newspaper merger proposals should be strengthened by requiring the taking-over group to provide a statement of intent incorporating guarantees for the maintenance of the taken-over titles and that any future departure from this pledge should require the permission of the Government for the change to be made.

As things stand, a newspaper can be taken over one year and closed down the next, without anyone being able to do anything about it.

The Chartered Institute of Journalists feels this is a massive betrayal of both the journalists and their readership, for a purpose which only benefits the publisher.
When local news truly means local
– the philosophy of Institute Fellow, Sir Ray Tindle

When I first had the pleasure of meeting Sir Ray Tindle over lunch at the Farnham headquarters of his newspaper – and radio – group, he had one overriding theme...’keep it local’. We had been chatting about his first foray into ‘journalism’, producing an onboard newsletter for fellow passengers on the troopship to India with the Devonshire Regiment. He had the ultimate ‘local’ environment, men from Devon, many of whom knew each other, so there was plenty of ‘Devon’ and plenty of ‘names’; he kept them informed and entertained on the journey.

He described his initial difficulties breaking into the business after being demobbed. Many trained journalists who had survived the conflict had returned and, not unreasonably, wanted to pick up where they left off! The inevitable result was that anyone keen to get into full-time journalistic employment was in competition with trained and experienced journalist. Those like Ray Tindle found themselves scrabbling round looking for work. Coincidentally, my late father, Philip Leighton – a CIoJ member for many years – had a similar experience when he first returned from ‘peacekeeping’ duties in the Kings 3rd Hussars with the Palestine Mandate Force.

It took them, and others like them, quite a while to establish themselves in the business.

Sir Ray’s solution, after doing some ‘general dogsbody’ work with the Croydon Times, was to buy a small local ‘paper with £300 ‘demob’ money. The paper was the Tooting and Balham Gazette, which had the somewhat limited circulation of around 700...but it was with that the Tindle entrepreneurial exercise began.

Throughout conversations with Sir Ray, and I’m happy to say there have been several, he has returned to one overriding theme, a clear and still current philosophy – ‘keep it local’!

The Tenby Observer

This was, perhaps, best exemplified when, in 1978, he read in the Daily Telegraph that the Tenby Observer, re-named by its owners as the West Wales Observer to attract a wider readership geographically, was to close. Sir Ray is quoted as saying that “The West Wales Observer covered everything from Carmarthen to Haverford West, and it had failed. I told the staff I only wanted news of Tenby and I wanted to go back to the old title.” Sir Ray says the Tenby paper made well over £100,000 in 2007 and sales have more than doubled since he saved it.

There was another, much more poignant reason, that Sir Ray wanted to save the Tenby Observer. Apparently he knew that the ‘paper had played a rather significant role in newspaper history. In 1908 the Tenby Observer’s editor had led a major campaign which resulted in Parliament approving the Admission of the Press to Meetings Act. Hardly surprising then that the paper continues to carry the slogan ‘pioneer of press freedom’ under its masthead. I must have a look at the Institute archives to see whether the Institute played a part!

The other consistent part of Sir Ray’s philosophy is that, in the face of newspaper closures by much larger newspaper groups, he has never closed down a title. It is also said that he has never made staff redundant. The philosophy of ‘keeping it local’ also seems to have contributed to the success of the small group of radio stations he has acquired – from the Channel Islands to the Republic of Ireland.

As the former news editor of local radio stations in both independent and BBC radio I can only admire the Tindle philosophy; it is what motivated me as a committed ‘local’ newsman throughout my time at the local radio coalface! It is also the approach that has made some smaller radio stations – like BBC Radio Derby or Mix96 in Aylesbury, with clearly recognisable communities in smaller geographical areas, more successful than the big city ‘local’ stations.

Sir Ray now runs one of the top ten biggest newspaper publishers – with 225 titles at the last count with an audited weekly circulation of 1.4 million. Among those are the 27 titles the Tindle Group bought from Trinity Mirror in 2007, papers in south London, Mitcham, Barnet and Bexley among them. Not to mention the Yellow Advertiser Series.

But Sir Ray has never been just a one-man band, though the company is very much his company. He gives huge credit to his two lieutenants Wendy Craig (finance), who started as a PA and Group Managing Director Brian Doel. He is also quick to praise thirty general managers whom he routinely describes as ‘superb’.

So, we inevitably return to the main question: is the concentration on ‘local’ the only explanation for the success of our distinguished CIoJ Fellow? Is the Tenby Observer a very special case?

With the growth of the Tindle Group the question is almost laughable. Sir Ray’s philosophy has made viable newspapers that much bigger players, like Trinity Mirror, had written off. Whatever happened to EMAP?

There are, of course, always other factors at play. The Tindle Group owes no money. The only shareholder is Sir Ray Tindle; the Group does not have to please any shareholders; only Sir Ray.

When other companies have contracted, sold off titles, made journalists redundant, he has not.

He has consistently weathered the storm. Jon Slattery, of the Press Gazette, once wrote: “How has the Tindle Group survived for 40 years (now rather more) when companies like EMAP have turned to dust?”

‘Noli Cedere’

The Tindle coat of arms bears the slogan ‘Noli Cedere’, which for those who did not have the dubious pleasure of being taught Latin by a man who had been taught the language by my grandfather, translates as ‘No Surrender’.

He never has. No compromise on emphasising ‘local’ coverage, no willingness to reternch in the face of recessions – and Sir Ray reckons he’s lived through six of those!

In an age when most journalists despise media owners, who look for profits first and care about the product much later, the Tindle Group has a refreshingly different approach.

I did not set out to write a hagiography, but as I put these thoughts together, I realised that I admired this man much more than I has previously realised. Best of all, he is one of ours!

Paul Leighton
President CIoJ

Student members

The CIoJ has a large and growing number of student members. We would like to reflect this in the Institute’s Journal, ideally with a “Student Page” or section in future issues. So, if you are at university studying Journalism and would like to write an article for the Journal about your experiences on the course, or any aspect of student life that relates to journalism, please email editor@cioj.co.uk
You are invited to:
The Westminster Media Forum

Conference on public service broadcasting

SPEAKERS: David Mahoney, Ofcom; James Heath, BBC; Magnus Brooke, ITV; William Field, Prospero; Mostyn Goodwin, OC&C Strategy Consultants; Catrin Hughes Roberts, S4C; Guillaume Klossa, European Broadcasting Committee (EBU); Alistair Law, Sky; John McVay, Pact; Adam Minns, COBA; Alex Pumfrey, Digital UK; David Rodman, Virgin Media; Ben Roome, at800; Martin Stott, Channel 5; Simon Terrington, Terrington and Company and speakers confirmed from Channel 4 and Digital TV Group

Chaired by:

Lord Colville of Culross
Director and Senior Producer, BBC

Lord Inglewood
Member, All-Party Parliamentary Media Group

Tuesday, June 2, 2015
Central London

Please note there is a charge for most delegates, although concessionary and complimentary places are available (subject to terms and conditions).

This timely seminar will consider the future of public service broadcasting in an evolving television market. It will bring together the five UK PSBs with policymakers, regulators and key stakeholders from across the media sector.

It is scheduled to follow the expected publication of Ofcom’s findings from its third review of public service broadcasting and the report from the ongoing Culture, Media and Sport Committee inquiry into the future of the BBC, as well as the EU Commission’s response to its consultation on the future use of the UHF band and the implications for digital terrestrial television.

Key areas for discussion include:
- The role and value of public service broadcasting
- Content investment and programme supply
- Digital innovation and content distribution
- The way forward for regulation and policy

For further details please email jayne.co@westminsterforumprojects.co.uk

BOOKSHELF

1913 – The World before the Great War

“At Easter 1913 Tsar Nicholas II gave his wife Alexandra a remarkable present: a golden Fabergé egg. Its exterior was sumptuously decorated with golden double-headed eagles, imperial crowns and eighteen exquisite miniature portraits of the Tsars and Tsarinas of the Romanov dynasty stretching back to Nicholas’ distant forebear Tsar Michael, who had become Russia’s leader exactly 300 years previously. But the egg’s true masterwork was on the inside. There, a globe of blued steel showed the frontiers of Muscovy in 1613, and those of the Russian Empire in 1913… For now, the double-headed eagle could be seen from the Baltic to the Pacific, from the Black Sea to Central Asia, from the borders of China to those of Prussia.”

So begins the chapter entitled: St. Petersburg, Eastern Colossus – just one part of the four great sections devoted to the capitals and cities of the world (and world empires) as they were on the eve of the Great War, in Charles Emmerson’s masterly study, 1913. Although the general unrest in the Balkans prompted thoughtful editorials in The Times and The Economist (the latter certainly believed that its readers had much to look forward to for the year 1914), it is not entirely clear – even, with superpower rivalry between the British and German navies – that the world believed it would soon be at war. The Tsar, with his Fabergé egg and ancient crown, clearly had no premonition of the horror that would await him in 1917; in Germany, the Kaiser and his subjects looked forward to opera galas, openings of technical exhibitions and parades of mediaeval guilds – although in Vienna, where (as one writer observed) “it was forever Sunday”, concern was expressed at the curious number of suicides – over 1,300 in 1912 – an indication of some sort of spiritual, psychological malaise.

Yet it is not just the “old world” that interests the author: the story is also told of the emerging importance of Washington D.C. (world capital and American political centre, just 50 years on from its Civil War) – yet we are also brought to an understanding of New York (its art-loving leading citizens felt that the “rough edges” of the country needed to be rounded off), with a stop on the West Coast at Los Angeles (a thirst for water and hunger for wealth), and the old New World of Mexico City. But what of the world’s other spheres of influences and races? The author takes us across the Pacific Ocean to Tokyo (the modernising, Westernising Japanese authorities determined, even since 1880, to rebuild their capital as “a grand city of ceremonial avenues”); but then turning his attention to the cities of ancient eras – Jerusalem, Constantinople, Tehran and Peking – the last Emperor locked inside the Forbidden City, whilst Yuan Shikai – half-President, half-Habsburg emperor – was driven through Peking by car. Usually, in our minds, the pre-First World War period is concentrated on happenings in London, Paris, Berlin, St. Petersburg: with Emmerson, you are given a truly global, and local view.

There is also an intriguing ending to the book, a touch of The Time Machine, perhaps…

“What will be the standing of the British Empire in AD 2013?, asked the Evening Standard of its London readers in 1913. Certainly, it answered, it would not be an empire held together by force; rather it would be most probably a collection of ‘allied autonomous states under a common head. The Standard speculated that Canada would have a population of 100,000,000 and the federal capital of the Anglo-Saxon Federation would be along the Canadian border with the United States. India might be a self-governing entity by 2013 – but probably not. Britain itself might have become an agricultural country again, its home population having peaked in 1950. “

But Emmerson deals in facts and reality, and rarely would you find a book so rich in evoking the life of the world, 100 or so years ago.

Stuart Millson

Did you know?

Your annual subscription to the Chartered Institute of Journalists is tax-deductible? This applies to any Institute member who is a UK taxpayer, whether you are a staff journalist or a freelance.

Also, you may pay your subscription online or by internet banking. Check our website for more details.
Robin Morgan, 1939 – 2014

Our Robin was good-hearted, generous and supportive. His bright sense of humour mixed with an equal measure of mischief, were qualities that equally endeared him to friends and the profession he loved.

He was a seasoned hack of the old school. Like many journalists of his era, he started his career while at school; submitting soccer and cricket reports to the Blackpool Gazette. After leaving school he briefly joined the staff at the Gazette before seeking a more permanent position on a trainee scheme.

His close and life-long friend Alan Chester heard of a vacant position on the Barnsley Chronicle and wrote in Robin’s name applying for the role. Neither friend could recall the content of the letter, nor the journalistic licence applied to Robin’s qualifications, but it was clearly good enough to get an interview; and Robin’s performance on the day good enough to formally start him out on his career.

A career to which he would dedicate a lifetime. After leaving the Chronicle, Robin briefly freelanced for a national news agency before joining the staff of the Yorkshire Post in 1963. He became the paper’s Industrial Correspondent in 1968 and later the Business Correspondent, a position he held until his retirement in 1997.

Robin made a name for himself during the miners strike, often dodging bricks to get the story and, in the process, wreacking up so much time off in lieu that he hardly had to use his actual holiday entitlement.

Former colleagues at the Post remember him as the consummate professional and archetypical ‘old school’ journalist; happiest with a fag in one hand and a pint in the other. He could be asked to knock out a page lead with minutes to go before the deadline and it would be there on time.

Such was his dedication that on one occasion he was driving home, on the evening of December 21 1988, when he heard the news of a Pan-Am Boeing airliner exploding and crashing into the town of Lockerbie. He promptly turned the car round and drove up to Scotland to file first hand accounts from the scene of the disaster.

On another occasion, Robin stepped up to “host” a Russian journalist for a couple of weeks when his then boss, Simon Mountford, who had agreed to the gig, found himself too busy. The lady was, of course, Raisa and after the visit ended Robin stayed in touch and the rest, as they say, is history.

He built up a vast network of contacts - most of whom owed him at least one favour, which he had no hesitation calling in when he needed something, such as a new mattress or a suit length. These contacts were an immense help to him when, as President of the IoJ, he hosted Institute’s annual conference in Leeds, with great success – even getting Sir Bernard Ingam to give the keynote speech.

Robin’s commitment to the profession went beyond his dedication to the Post. He joined the Chartered Institute of Journalists in 1979 and quickly took up a position defending the rights and working practices of journalists.

Circulation war

When he became President in 1993, he dedicated his term of office to encouraging quality journalism and prophetically wrote a piece about standards in the press, following Lord Calcutt’s report in 1990.

He wrote that the vast majority of journalists worked for magazines, broadcast outlets and local newspapers; committed to informing and entertaining the public. Seldom did these sources treat news in a manner that raises public alarm – it was a handful of nationals, locked in a vicious circulation war, where every extreme seemed acceptable to their publishers.

He went on to point out that the local newspapers fought the same circulation battles without recourse to sensationalism and trash treatment of news.

Twenty years later he would repeat many of his arguments in the wake of the phone-hacking scandal and the subsequent inquiry by Lord Leveson.

Robin’s generosity and kindness endeared him to friends and colleagues alike. This was never demonstrated better than when, on hearing of the death of a former colleague, he learnt that the family needed support. He arranged that support through the Institute, but didn’t stop there. He gave generously of his time in order to ease the burden of the tragedy and maintain the connection with the family.

Robin was a man of many jackets - most as bright and colourful as his character - whose hospitality was the stuff of legend. Often entertaining friends over banquets of three, five and even seven courses.

At Institute conferences he would always bring an ample supply of gin and whisky, and following the evening meal he would invite a gaggle of colleagues back to his room for a night cap…or three!

On one such occasion, at our Guernsey conference, he and Robert Benson had rented an apartment rather than stay at the conference hotel. Quite late into the evening, a bunch of British squaddies knocked on the door and got the shock of their lives when Robin opened it…they had got the wrong apartment. They were looking for some women in the same block and didn’t fancy Robin or Robert!

Looking back I wonder if it was his generous or mischievous side at work when he encouraged me to stay on with the immortal words: “Have another one, lad.” He, of course, did not necessarily have to attend the following morning’s business session, but knew that I did. And mid-morning he would stroll in at the back of the room, fresh as a daisy, courteously nodding to me at the front as I bravely wrestled with the day’s order while in the middle of a thick fog.

His friends, journalism and the Institute meant a lot to Robin, and in equal measure, if not more, he meant a lot to us all. He will be sorely missed.

Dominic Cooper
Hughes pledges “perpetual vigilance” to defend liberty

By Andy Smith

Justice Minister Simon Hughes MP has called for “perpetual vigilance” in defence of civil liberties, including freedom of the press, and has pledged to “keep fighting for freedom”.

The Liberal Democrat MP for Bermondsey and Old Southwark, who trained as a civil rights lawyer, told the 2014 annual general meeting of the Chartered Institute of Journalists on October 25 that “the authorities are entitled to ask for new powers but often the right answer has to be ‘No’.”

He gave an assurance that he would resist calls from within the Government for measures that restrict freedom, in particular the rights of journalists. “We are all acutely aware that there are pressures in Parliament from both the right and left for more draconian measures”, Simon Hughes said. “Let me tell you - I shall keep fighting for freedom.”

He lamented the fact that the two Coalition parties did not always agree on civil liberties, for instance on the protection of journalistic sources and ‘whistleblowers’. “There isn’t always agreement across government on the important issues. There are sharp differences between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats on this.”

Open government

With ministerial responsibilities including data protection and freedom of information, Mr Hughes outlined a series of initiatives from the Coalition which he said would make government “more open and accountable”, including proposals for Parliament to publish online “free of charge, for the first time ever” a statute book detailing all the latest Westminster legislation.

He also said that a “gap in the freedom of information rules” would be plugged by bringing private contractors working for the Government into the FOI system. “It is no good having contractors who work for Government departments outside the terms of the FOI Act. We will change that.”

The CIoJ meeting, which was held at the Civil Service Club in Great Scotland Yard, Whitehall, also debated a resolution from Institute Council member Mark Croucher deploring the misuse of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) under which anti-terrorism powers have been exploited to curtail civil rights and press freedom. “I worry about the political agenda behind RIPPA”, he said.

The motion, urging the Information Commissioner to overrule any attempts by the police to misuse RIPPA, was passed by CIoJ members at the AGM, and Simon Hughes promised that he would “take the Institute’s request to the Information Commissioner”. For details of all the motions passed at the meeting, go to www.cioj.co.uk.

Elected PPB members

Your PPB members for 2015 are:

Amanda Brodie, Chairman
Cleland Thom, Vice-Chairman
Campbell Thomas
Janice Shillum-Bhend
Tim Crook
Norman Bartlett
Jim Filbin
Andrew Kelly

If you have an idea for a campaign contact Amanda Brodie - amandabrodie@cioj.co.uk.

Watchdog at work

Pictured: The CIoJ’s Campbell Thomas with Sir Alan Moses, Chairman of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), the new press watchdog, at the start of an IPSO meeting in Scotland. (The meeting was boycotted by Hacked Off.) Campbell had 15 minutes with Sir Alan during which he highlighted the Institute’s view that the IPSO Board needs wider representation from grass-roots journalists, not just senior editors and proprietors. Afterwards, Sir Alan asked to see the CIoJ’s Code of Conduct which he said he would study with interest.