

2019 / 2020

DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA & SPORT

The Parliamentary Review

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The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Dr Tristram Hunt

■ GENERAL REPRESENTATIVES

BBC

Searcys

Blonstein Creative Production

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Letter from Lord Pickles & Lord Blunkett

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The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

This year's *Parliamentary Review* comes at a momentous time for parliament, as we collectively determine the destiny of the United Kingdom.

On October 31, the UK will leave the European Union. The successful implementation of this process is this government's number-one priority.

Three years after a historic referendum vote, we will deliver on the decisive mandate from the British people. Trust in our democracy depends on it.

Until that final hour, we will work determinedly and diligently to negotiate a deal, one that abolishes the backstop and upholds the warm and close relationship we share with our friends, allies and neighbours in the EU. But in the event that the EU refuses to meet us at the table, we must be prepared to leave without a deal.

As the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, it is my job to lead on this government's approach, should that scenario happen. Preparing for Brexit is my department's driving mission. But while I am leading this turbocharged effort, the whole of government is committed to this endeavour.

Ministers across Whitehall are working together to ensure that every possibility is considered, every plan is scrutinised and every provision is made. A daily drumbeat of meetings means that we are holding departments accountable, so that preparations are completed on time.

The chancellor has confirmed that all necessary funding will be made available. And we have mobilised the civil service, assigning 15,000 of our most talented civil servants to manage our exit from the EU.

We will make sure that on November 1, there is as little disruption to national life as possible.

Our trade relationships will continue to thrive, thanks to agreements with countries around the world worth £70 billion. Our country will remain secure, thanks to nearly 1,000 new officers posted at our borders. And the 3.2 million EU nationals now living and working among us can remain confident, with absolute certainty, of their right to remain in the UK.

Above all, our goal is to be transparent. Soon, we will launch a public information campaign so that citizens, communities and businesses are ready and reassured about what will happen in the event of "no deal".

In my first few weeks in this role, I have travelled to ports and tarmacs, borders and bridges, all across the UK – from the seaside of Dover to the rolling green hills of County Armagh. I have heard from business owners and border officials, farmers and hauliers. They are ready to put an end to uncertainty. And they are ready to embrace the opportunities ahead.

Our departure from the EU will be a once in a lifetime chance to chart a new course for the United Kingdom. Preparing for that new course will be a herculean effort. But this country has made astounding efforts before. We can do it again.

“This year's *Parliamentary Review* comes at a momentous time for parliament, as we collectively determine the destiny of the United Kingdom”

Dr Tristram Hunt

Director, Victoria & Albert Museum



This year marks the bicentenary of the births of both Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, the royal couple who gave their names to the museum where I have had the great privilege of being director since 2017.

Prince Albert was the instigator of the 1851 *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations*, which sought to highlight innovation, design and technology. He was passionate about improving education for the nation, affording British artists, designers and craftspeople the opportunity to be inspired by objects from around the world. Today, the V&A's activities still reflect those founding principles, but with a local, national and global response that is right for our own times.

With the opening of the first phase of our Photography Centre and the conclusion of our Cast Courts refurbishment last year, we have tapped into our founding principles and reimagined them for today's audiences. In these wonderful galleries, we mix historicism with modernity, opening up new ways of seeing the past. Our William and Judith Bollinger Jewellery Gallery now puts Victoria and Albert literally at the heart of our galleries, where our visitors can see a stunning sapphire and diamond coronet designed for Victoria by Albert himself.

But our educational mission also goes far beyond South Kensington. The opening of V&A Dundee in September has brought the V&A and its collections to new audiences in Tayside, where the museum has now welcomed well over half a million visitors.

Last year, we also unveiled plans for an exciting major redevelopment of the Museum of Childhood, in Bethnal Green, which will transform the museum into a world-leading centre of design and creativity for children, families and young people. And our DesignLab Nation

programme of loans and partnerships with regional museums – from Coventry to Sunderland – continues to grow and expand to new venues, as part of our efforts to support the teaching of the Design and Technology curriculum around the country.

Over the last year, we have also been reflecting on some of our collections closer to home. In April last year, we opened *Maqdala 1868*, a free display which examines the uncomfortable history behind a collection of Ethiopian objects, seized in the 19th century by British troops, which are now part of the V&A collection. As debates around Britain's colonial legacy intensify, we must keep track of how the past is changing.

Prince Albert conceived of a museum which would be at the forefront of design education. As we celebrate his 200th birthday, we are proud that his vision remains at the heart of the V&A today.

“We have tapped into our founding principles and reimagined them for today's audiences, opening up new ways of seeing the past”

The Parliamentary Review

A message from Lord Pickles and Lord Blunkett

The ability to listen to and learn from one another has always been vital in parliament, in business and in most aspects of daily life. But at this particular moment in time, as national and global events continue to reiterate, it is uncommonly crucial that we forge new channels of communication and reinforce existing ones.

With ongoing fractures in Westminster, the reverberations of which are being felt across the country, it is essential that politicians have a firm understanding of the challenges with which British organisations must contend; and that leaders in both the public and private sectors are aware of the difficulties faced by those working in all levels of politics, from local government to the national arena.

This is why *The Parliamentary Review* combines political content with stories from a wide range of organisations – small and large; new and old; those at the peak of their powers and those who have peaks to surmount.

It is why these stories seek to inspire and challenge all who read them.

And it is why we, as former Labour and Conservative cabinet ministers and current members of the House of Lords, feel it is important to put aside our political differences and work together to ensure these stories are given the platform they deserve.

In this publication, you will find an insightful take on the past year in politics from the BBC's Andrew Neil and a concise rundown of key events in industry and parliament. Most importantly, you will be able to read in-depth accounts from the individuals and organisations who make *The Parliamentary Review* what it is.

It is our great honour and pleasure to have helped provide the platform for their insights to be aired. We hope that you find these articles – which begin on page 15 with a piece from BBC – as thought-provoking and informative as we do.



Rt Hon The Lord Blunkett
Co-Chairman, *The Parliamentary Review*



Rt Hon The Lord Pickles
Co-Chairman, *The Parliamentary Review*

A realignment in British politics?

The general election of 2017 saw the surprise return of Britain's two-party system, which had been in decline since the 1970s: the Labour and Conservative parties, between them, took over 80 per cent of the vote, a share they had not won for over a generation (though neither managed enough seats for an overall majority).

The failure to resolve Brexit, three long years after the referendum to leave the European Union, now threatens to blow the two-party system apart: in the latest polls Labour and the Tories can barely muster 50 per cent between them. We live in unpredictable, tempestuous times.

Note that the threat to the two-party system is not Brexit, *per se*. It is the failure to *resolve* Brexit, one way or another. The very existence of the Conservative and Labour parties as we have known them for over 70 years is now in danger. A major realignment of British politics beckons as long as Brexit remains unresolved – and maybe even if it is resolved.

The failure of a weak and divided May government to deliver Brexit has given Nigel Farage a fresh lease of life, this time as head of the Brexit party, which came from nowhere to win the European elections. The reluctance of Jeremy Corbyn's Labour party to be sufficiently anti-Brexit has meant resurgence for the Liberal Democrats, after their near wipeout in the 2015 general election.

Brexit is now the most important dividing line in British politics – more important than social class,

region or economic status. And it punishes parties that are seen to prevaricate over it. So the Brexit party, with its unequivocal promise to leave the EU (deal or no deal), prospers at the expense of Labour and Tory. As do the Lib Dems, with their clear "second referendum and campaign to remain" position.

As a result, by the summer of 2019 there were four parties that hovered around roughly five percentage points on either side of 20 per cent. Given the vagaries of our first-past-the-post voting system, nobody could predict the outcome if we were to go into a general election like that.

Of course the new Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has been explicit in recognising that the Tories could not risk another election without first delivering on Brexit. But that does not mean, as we head into the most turbulent autumn British politics has known in peacetime, that one will not be forced on him.

Mr Corbyn is being dragged by Labour's left and right to a more pro-Remain position (a move to be consolidated at Labour's annual conference end-September).



But it remains to be seen if it is a convincing conversion.

Labour and the Conservatives could still survive the Brexit threat. If Mr Johnson, one way or another, succeeds in delivering a broadly palatable Brexit then the Brexit party would lose much of its purpose, as UKIP did before it. If Labour morphs into a clear "referendum and remain" party, that would spike Lib Dem guns.

But these are big "ifs". And even if they were to happen, the Brexit scars run deep in the Labour and Conservative parties. They will not be easily healed.

Labour has already moved away from its working class roots and is fast becoming a party of the metropolitan professional and middle classes, especially those who work in the public sector or whose jobs depend on it (much like the French Socialist party until its recent demise).

The Tories see their biggest upside, as they become declining minorities in our biggest cities, in the votes of the working and lower middle classes in provincial towns and suburban spill across the country (a process first begun under Margaret Thatcher).

So, with or without Brexit, we could well be in for the biggest realignment in British politics since Labour replaced the Liberals almost 100 years ago. Nobody saw that coming after either the referendum of 2016 or the general election of 2017. But it is now a real prospect.

Neil believes a failure to resolve Brexit threatens the very existence of the two main parties

Review of the Year

Free TV licences axed for over-75s



In June 2019, the BBC announced it was scrapping the free TV licence scheme for over-75s

The BBC announced in June 2019 that the free TV licence scheme for over-75s was being scrapped.

This move, which comes into force in June 2020, is set to affect as many as 3.7 million pensioners.

The new rules will mean that only low-income households – where one individual receives the pension credit benefit – will remain eligible for a free licence.

Four years earlier the government announced that the BBC would be assuming the cost of providing free licences for pensioners by 2020. This was part of the fee settlement discussions that took place across the summer of 2015.

At the time, the BBC said the deal was “the right [one]” in what it described as “difficult economic circumstances”.

The cost of funding free licences for over-75s is set to reach £745 million, roughly 20 per cent of the BBC’s budget, by 2021/22.

The decision to stop the scheme was made as continuing to fund it would result in what the BBC described as “unprecedented closures”, with BBC Two, BBC Four, BBC News, BBC Scotland, Radio 5 Live and many local stations all being at risk.

It followed a consultation session where 190,000 people were involved – 52 per cent of them supported reforming or abolishing the scheme.

Theresa May, prime minister at the time, said she was “disappointed” with the ruling. She said that the BBC “received a good deal” and urged them to “think again” during a PMQs session after Labour MP Hugh Gaffney accused the government of “breaking” an election promise.

“A promise was made to pensioners at the last general election that your party would protect the free TV licence until the end of this parliament,” he said. “That promise has now been broken.”

A spokesperson from the government remarked that “We have been clear that we want and expect the BBC to continue this concession.

“People across the country value television as a way to stay connected, and we want the BBC to look at further ways to support older people.”

The free licence scheme for over-75s was introduced in 2000 by the Labour government under Tony Blair.

Tom Watson, the Labour deputy leader, said that charging over-75s the licence fee was an “outrage” and blamed the government. He added:

“Millions of elderly and isolated people will lose because of this announcement.”

TV licence fee revenue reached over £3.8 billion in 2018, according to parliamentary research – making up close to 76 per cent of the broadcaster’s total £5.06 billion income.

The annual fee is £150.50 for a colour television, and £50.50 for a black-and-white equivalent. The licence is required to watch or record live TV on any device, including computers and smartphones.

Netflix announce new UK production hub

In July, streaming giant Netflix announced it was acquiring the historic Shepperton Studios in a permanent move to create its UK “production hub”.

Roughly the size of the Westfield shopping centre in Shepherd’s Bush, the site encompasses about 435,000 square feet of space and is being leased from landlord Pinewood Group.

Ted Sarandos, Netflix’s chief content officer, said that the studio had been “synonymous with world-class film for nearly a century.”

He continued: “This investment will ensure that British creators and producers have first-rate production facilities and a world stage for their work.”

Pinewood Group, who had previously obtained planning for a £500 million expansion to the studio, also owns Pinewood Studios in Buckinghamshire, where the Star Wars and James Bond franchises are produced.

Group Chairman Paul Golding said the decision was a “real vote of confidence” and would help to “secure the ongoing success of the UK film and TV industry”.

Netflix plan to invest significantly in the studio, located near Heathrow, to add some 16 new sound stages to its existing 14, alongside workshops and offices.

The expansion is due to be finalised in 2021.

It had previously been used to film such blockbusters as *Gladiator* and *Alien*. Ridley Scott, who directed both,

is a former joint owner of the studio, and lauded Netflix in unveiling the expansion.

“[It] is a wonderful historic place,” Mr Scott said. “And one of the most efficient I can think of in the world today.”

The media firm, which has around ten million UK subscribers, released more than 40 productions in the UK over the last 12 months.

While some of these are original programming from the California-based streaming company, such as *The Crown* and *Sex Education*, it has also been responsible for breathing new life into UK series where production has previously been somewhat stagnant, such as Charlie Brooker’s award-winning *Black Mirror* series.

To support the move, Netflix has boosted the number of European productions it will roll out over the next 12 months.



Netflix plans to finish the expansion of Shepperton Studios, acquired to create a new UK “production hub”, by 2021

It has timetabled 221 projects, including 153 originals, with a net budget of over \$1 billion – figures that indicate a more than 50 per cent increase on 2018’s timetable.

The move comes after Netflix made clear the space limitations on UK production last year, where they said: “In 2018, [we plan] to spend approximately \$8 billion on content

worldwide, across more than 700 television and film productions.

“We would like to be able to produce more in the UK. However, we are limited by the lack of available space.”

Shepperton will be the second European production hub for Netflix, after 22,000 square-metre campus Ciudad de la Tele – or TV City – was opened in Madrid, Spain.

Channel 4’s long march north



Channel 4 will keep its current London headquarters, based on Horseferry Road

The Channel 4 move to Leeds was announced in October 2018, but there has been no shortage of coverage on the move since.

The new HQ was described as a “broad-based centre” which will include commissioning, production and digital content.

At the time of the announcement, it was stated that staff would move to the site in 2019.

BBC *Look North* Political Editor James Vincent said at the time that “Channel 4 was set up to be different to the mainstream” and that “Yorkshire [wouldn’t] just get jobs” but also

“a huge boost to an already-growing digital and media sector”.

The broadcaster was set to move roughly 200 of its 800 staff up to the West Yorkshire city, choosing Leeds above Greater Manchester and Birmingham, and also announced that it would open “creative hubs” staffed by 50 or so people in Glasgow and Bristol.

The move was to be the flagship development in a plan to increase the amount the broadcaster would spend on programmes beyond London by £250 million by 2023.

Jeremy Wright, then-culture secretary, said at the time: “The government made clear that Channel 4 needed to do more to increase its presence in the regions to help better reflect and provide for UK audiences outside of London.

“Congratulations to Leeds, Bristol and Glasgow, and I look forward to Channel 4 taking further steps to increase its impact around the UK in the years ahead.”

In April, the broadcaster announced that it had chosen a venue: the Majestic cinema. The broadcaster said in spring that it was approaching the final stages of negotiations with owner-developer Rushbond Group.

This announcement did come on the back of a delay, however, with staff expected to move up to Leeds across the second half of 2020.

Channel 4 Chief Commercial Officer Jonathan Allan said: "Leeds offered a wealth of potential locations for our national HQ, but the Majestic really stood out as an iconic building which will put Channel 4 at the heart of the city centre.

"It's an incredibly impressive redevelopment and offers the right mix of location, connectivity and space for our organisation and great facilities for our staff and our partners in the industry."

June brought difficult news, however, as the broadcaster announced the move would cost it £50 million, with more than 80 per cent of staff across some departments opting for redundancy payments in lieu of a move away from London.

With the number of staff moving increasing from 200 to 300, the broadcaster remains in late consultation with staff over relocation to the new national HQ.

No further announcements have been issued about a timetable, and the move is still expected to take place in the latter half of 2020.

Hammond's digital services tax

During his budget announcement speech in October 2018, Philip Hammond, then-chancellor, outlined plans to tax technology giants on the sales they generate within the UK. The new policy, which is expected to come into force in April 2020, will tax these sales at a rate of two per cent and is projected to raise £1.2 billion by 2022/23.

Currently, these technology firms pay tax on their profits, leading to a much smaller tax bill than if revenues were used. The tax will target social media platforms, internet marketplaces and search engines, although it is still unclear who exactly will be affected.

In July, following a consultation period, the Treasury announced that any businesses which "stream, broadcast or publish media like film or music" will not be included, showing that businesses such as Netflix and Spotify will almost certainly be excluded from the tax's scope. Video game businesses, especially those that allow players to interact with one another over chat platforms, are also expected to be removed from the tax's remit.



Former chancellor Philip Hammond said the tax would raise £1.2 billion by 2022/23

The Treasury also announced that financial services businesses would be exempt, explaining that they could "potentially overlap with the marketplace definition".

The key metric which decides whether a business will be liable to pay the tax is their total revenue and their profitability. Only businesses that generate more than £500 million globally and £25 million in the UK will be affected. This £25 million must be generated from advertising, facilitating transactions and subscription fees.

Announcing the policy in October 2018, Mr Hammond argued that it is “clearly not sustainable, or fair, that digital platform businesses can generate substantial value in the UK without paying tax here in respect of that business”.

Reaction to the proposed tax has been varied, however, with many raising concerns that it would affect UK businesses disproportionately. Giles Derrington, association director for policy at techUK, said: “There is no doubt that the system for international taxation needs to evolve to deal with

a digitising economy. To do that we need smart and innovative solutions developed at a global level.

“As a revenue tax targeted on a narrowly defined set of companies, the DST is not one of those smart measures. It risks making investing in the UK less attractive, increasing costs for consumers and will likely hinder progress towards a long-term global solution.”

Early indications suggest that Hammond’s plans will remain untouched by his successor, Sajid Javid.

DCMS announce new apprenticeship scheme



DCMS has pledged £100,000 to the pilot scheme

In order to encourage diversity in the UK’s creative industries, July saw Jeremy Wright, then-culture secretary, announce a new apprenticeship pilot scheme to encourage and enable underrepresented groups to work on some of the leading films and TV programmes made in the UK.

The announcement came during a visit to Pinewood Studios and the set of the upcoming James Bond film. Alongside the launch of this new scheme, Wright also stated his support for a new Creative Industries Council Charter

that would drive diversity across the broader industry.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport pledged £100,000 to support this pilot scheme. The new initiative will enable 25 apprentices to gain first-hand experience of working on sets of prominent TV and film productions. Prior to DCMS committing to the pilot, it had been championed by both ScreenSkills and the Creative Industries Council.

Launching in late 2019, the scheme will focus on young people from a variety of backgrounds and with no former qualifications relevant to the sector.

The pilot will also serve as a test for a new model of delivering high-quality apprenticeships which serve to fill placements across a variety of productions as well as address skill shortages.

Announcing the new scheme, Mr Wright said: “The UK is a powerhouse for award-winning creativity enjoyed by millions globally. But our creative industries cannot remain the preserve of the privileged, which is why we are

helping to create new opportunities to develop a more diverse workforce.

“I welcome the Creative Industries Council’s Diversity Charter and also call for firm commitments from major studios, both in the UK and worldwide, to adopt the BFI’s pioneering Diversity Standards.

“Companies must provide opportunities for young people

from all backgrounds to go as far as their talents take them in this thriving sector.”

In 2018, just over two million people were employed in the creative industries, an increase of 1.6 per cent on the previous year, accounting for six per cent of all UK jobs. Since 2011, this figure has increased by 30.6 per cent, triple the speed of overall employment in the UK.

England win Cricket World Cup

In July, England lifted the men’s Cricket World Cup for the first time in history at Lord’s, having beaten New Zealand in a final which proved to be one of the greatest cricket matches ever.

The final capped off a memorable tournament hosted on home soil and it was a worthy atmosphere for the occasion. Both England and New Zealand scored 241 runs in their 50 overs, seeing the final go to an extra super over.

The super over saw both sides level with 15 runs apiece. England were crowned champions having scored 26 boundary runs to New Zealand’s inferior total of 17 over the course of the final.

England’s journey to that point was nothing short of a sporting miracle.

Down and out after 25 overs of their innings, the team were four wickets down and required 148 runs to merely tie the game.

But they rallied and found themselves 15 short of this target with one over remaining. Player of the match Ben Stokes hit the ball into the crowd for six before benefitting from a huge slice of fortune as a throw from deep ricocheted off his bat to clock up four more runs as he dived over the line.

With the final ball of the game, England’s Mark Wood was run out



England won the ICC Cricket World Cup for the first time in history in July 2019

while attempting the title-winning second run, and the match went to a super over, whereby each team would bat for one final over. England went first and scored an impressive 15 runs but New Zealand responded well, needing two runs from the last ball of the tournament to win. As the ball was batted away, England’s Jason Roy threw back from deep, Jos Buttler caught it and stumped before New Zealand’s Martin Guptill could get over the line, sending Lord’s into pandemonium.

England went into the tournament as favourites, and captain Eoin Morgan and coach Trevor Bayliss oversaw a positive start, with four wins in their opening five games.

Two damaging losses against Sri Lanka and Australia halted that momentum and left England one defeat from elimination. However, they dug in and turned their tournament around with wins over India and New Zealand by 31 and 119 runs respectively to reach the last four.

A third successive victory followed in the semi-final, a memorable eight-wicket thrashing against Australia.

Then came the final which saw England become the first nation to win a World Cup competition in association football, rugby and cricket.

Jeremy Wright, then-Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, tweeted that witnessing the occasion was a “privilege”, before congratulating the team for a historic victory which he said “captured the imagination of the country”.

Lionesses impress at biggest-ever women’s World Cup



The Lionesses reached the semi-final of the Women’s World Cup in France

The England women’s national football team came fourth at the 2019 women’s World Cup in France across June and July, bowing out in the semi-finals to champions USA before being defeated in the third-place play-off.

It was the third major semi-final in a row for the Lionesses, following on from their third-place finish at the 2015 World Cup and their semi-final exit in the 2017 European Championships.

England topped their World Cup group, with victories over neighbours Scotland, Argentina and women’s football heavyweights Japan, before dispatching Cameroon in the quarter-finals.

A comprehensive 3-0 victory over Norway followed to set up England’s semi-final with the defending American champions.

The Americans’ Christen Press opened the scoring in the tenth minute, but the scores were brought level just nine minutes later by Manchester City’s Ellen White.

After a second goal from the opposition’s Alex Morgan, a late red card brought England down to ten women.

The game finished 2-1, with the Lionesses entering the third place play-off against Sweden.

England forward Ellen White was tied for the Golden Boot with six goals.

The Lionesses’ coach and former Manchester United player, Philip Neville, expressed his pride at how the team had inspired the nation and proved their worth as a side aiming for the top of the women’s game.

This does, however, top off a positive opening year for Mr Neville after the Lionesses took home the SheBelieves Cup in March, with a 3-0 victory over Japan.

The women’s World Cup has gone some way to boosting the profile of the women’s game, with a record-breaking 28.1 million people tuning into BBC’s

coverage of the tournament on both television and online. The total number of spectators more than double that of the 2015 women's World Cup.

England's semi-final exit to the USA drew the biggest live TV audience in 2019, with 11.7 million people watching.

Mims Davies, then-sports minister, has long since called for more extensive

coverage of women's sport, to ensure it is no longer treated like a "novelty".

After England's third-place play-off defeat, Mrs Davies heaped praise upon the Lionesses on Twitter, saying: "Thank you Lionesses for every single moment ... you have changed the game and we have so much pride in you".

Sky takeover

Following a bidding war for the acquisition of Sky plc, Comcast won an auction against 21st Century Fox and Disney with a £30.6 billion bid. The Philadelphia-based telecoms conglomerate proceeded to buy out Fox's remaining shares at a price of £12 billion.

After the acquisition was finalised, Jeremy Darroch, Sky's chief executive, who has held the role for almost 12 years, was handed a £37 million bonus.

Sky was delisted from the stock exchange on November 7, 2018, after Comcast acquired all remaining shares.

In March 2019, Mr Darroch revealed that Sky had already changed significantly and altered its model to suit the pace of technological advancement as well as their new ownership.

At the Deloitte and Enders Analysis Media and Telecoms 2019 conference, he said: "Just a few months after first coming together, we are seeing clear benefits flowing in both directions.



In 2018, Comcast acquired Sky with a £30.6 billion bid ahead of Disney and 21st Century Fox

"For example, we'll be bringing Comcast's own voice interface to Sky Q later this year, and our broadband customers in Italy will benefit from Comcast's xFi product.

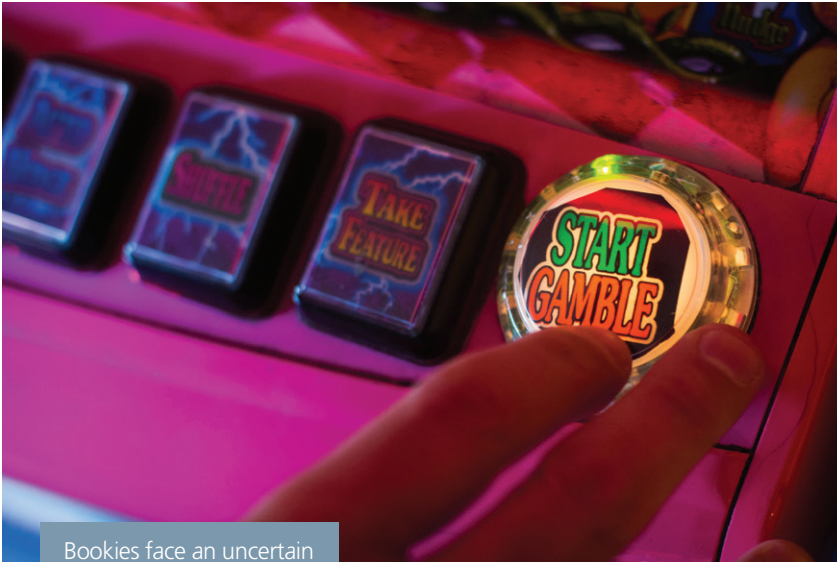
"Profound change is not exception; it's normal."

He continued by lauding the partnership with Comcast, stating that it helped Sky to "do more, move faster and better serve [its] customers and audiences".

Terminal decline for bookmakers?

Following pressure from MPs across the House, the government brought forward the implementation of a new maximum stake on fixed-odds betting terminals from October 2019 to April 1. The move lowered the maximum stake individuals could place at any one time from £100 to £2.

Pressure began to grow after the policy was delayed and the Minister for Sport and Civil Society, Tracey Crouch, resigned. The policy was designed to reduce the risk of individuals losing large amounts of money in short spaces of time. Prior to the move, individuals could bet as much as £100 every



Bookies face an uncertain future following the government crackdown on fixed-odds betting terminal stakes

20 seconds on electronic casino games such as roulette.

Anti-gambling campaigners had highlighted these fixed-odds betting terminals as being particularly damaging and said that they can quickly lead to addiction as well as social, mental and financial problems.

The plan to implement this change in October was based on a desire for the new policy to occur at the same time as the amount of tax charged to gambling firms was due to increase.

This would mean that public finances would not be affected by the fall in the amount of tax generated by these machines. The terminals generate £1.8 billion in revenue every year for the gambling industry and bring in £400 million in tax for the government.

Announcing the reduction, Jeremy Wright, then-culture secretary, wrote:

“The government has been clear that protecting vulnerable people is the prime concern, but that as a responsible government it is also right to take the needs of those employed by the gambling industry into account and provide time for an orderly transition.

“Parliament has, however, been clear that they want this change to be made sooner. The government has listened and will now implement the reduction in April 2019.”

Bookmakers warned that the cut in stakes would lead to thousands of outlets closing and the loss of thousands of jobs.

In July, high street bookmaker William Hill announced plans to close 700 of its outlets, with 4,500 jobs at risk – a decision they linked directly to the reduction in the maximum stake.

They said that these closures would begin before the end of the year and described a “significant fall” in gaming machine revenues since the government took action.

According to BBC sources, a “large number” of William Hill stores were reliant on FOBTs for more than 50 per cent of their turnover.

The day after William Hill made this announcement, Gavin Kelleher, equity analyst at Goodbody Stockbrokers, told the BBC that their decision could be just the beginning. He warned that between 2,000 and 3,000 outlets, out of a total of 8,400, could close.

Glastonbury 2019 – the greenest festival ever?

Sustainability and the environment were key themes of this year’s Glastonbury festival. For the first time in the event’s history, single-use plastics were banned and replaced by 850 water points across the 900-acre site and 37 WaterAid kiosks.

Alongside performances from Stormzy, The Killers and Kylie Minogue, Sir David Attenborough made a surprise appearance on the final day of the festival, congratulating the crowd for going plastic-free.

According to statistics from Glastonbury, one million plastic water bottles were sold at the festival in 2017; a figure which, in 2019, fell to zero.

Organiser Emily Eavis, daughter of the original founder Michael Eavis, said: “We’ve made so many positive strides with our green campaigns this year. It’s incredible to think that there will be one million fewer plastic bottles for the planet to deal with because we’ve stopped selling them.

“The most eye-opening part of the weekend for me was not seeing any plastic bottles in the bins or on the ground.

“I think people are really starting to understand how important it is to treat the land with respect, and to stop living a disposable lifestyle.”

Festival organisers also urged all festivalgoers to take their tents home as, in previous years, many had simply left disposable tents at the site.

The “Love the Farm, Leave no Trace” pledge, which was introduced in 2017, saw a reported 81 per cent reduction in the number of abandoned tents compared to the previous year.

Following this year’s festival concluding, Eavis tweeted that 99.3 per cent of tents had been taken home, a significant improvement on previous years.

After the festival ends, a massive clean-up operation is organised to return the site, which was home to 200,000, to a dairy farm.

On the Monday following the festival’s conclusion, a team of 1,300 volunteers began to clean the area. Each volunteer carries bin bags made from recycled plastic, which is later recycled after the clean-up is completed, to collect rubbish left on the ground and in the 15,000 bins that are scattered across the site. This process usually takes six weeks.



Glastonbury organisers have promised a cleaner and more environmentally-friendly festival ahead of their 50th anniversary

In 2017, more than 60 tonnes of card and paper, 32 tonnes of glasses, 45 tonnes of cans and 40 tonnes of plastic bottles were recycled. Alongside this, 132 tonnes of food waste was converted into compost and 4,500 litres of cooking oil was turned into biofuel.

Roughly 40 per cent of revellers attend Glastonbury via public transport, and since the turn of the century, 10,000 trees have been planted in the local area.

Next year will see the 50th anniversary of Glastonbury. Mrs Eavis vowed: “We won’t be slowing down for very long. We have already started working on next year’s 50th anniversary.

“Trust me when I say we are planning a huge celebration.”

The details of this celebration have not been announced as *The Parliamentary Review* goes to print, but acts, agents and fans alike are eagerly awaiting details of the largest UK festival’s semicentennial celebrations.

BBC



Strictly Come Dancing has been sold to over 40 territories across the globe



Director-General
Lord Hall of Birkenhead CBE

The BBC was founded almost a century ago with a simple mission: to inform, educate and entertain. Today, the BBC enhances the lives of almost everyone in the UK – around 40 million people use it every day, and more than 90 per cent of adults every week. Its global services now reach over 425 million people worldwide. Director-General of the BBC Lord Tony Hall discusses the increasingly important role of the BBC for the UK.

The BBC is the greatest cultural force in Britain, and perhaps the strongest cultural force for Britain in the world. It has the power to make a real impact for change and for good.

This is something that has always been in our DNA. Our public service mission was set almost 100 years ago by the BBC's founding father, Lord Reith: to inform, educate and entertain. That mission is as pertinent now as it was then.

Today, however, the BBC can and must do even more. As the historian R.H. Tawney put it: "Only those institutions are loved that touch the imagination".

The digital age, and all the technological tools at our disposal, mean that we now have the ability to capture the imagination of our audiences like never before. Every advance represents an opportunity to deliver our public service mission in new and exciting ways and, in doing so, to dramatically expand the impact we have for audiences and for the country.

The cornerstone of British creativity

First and foremost, our role is to make great programmes and services. Nothing matters more to our audiences than the content we create.

FACTS ABOUT BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION

- » Director-General: Lord Hall of Birkenhead CBE
- » Chairman: Sir David Clementi
- » Established in 1922
- » Headquarters in London
- » Services: Mass media and broadcasting
- » No. of employees: Over 19,000
- » The BBC is the world's oldest national broadcasting organisation
- » Global services reach over 425 million people worldwide
- » www.bbc.co.uk



The BBC's *Beyond Fake News* project aims to spearhead the fight for media literacy worldwide

“British content is not just vital for British audiences – it is crucial for the country as a whole”

More than 180 major awards over the past year tell their own story, not to mention over 20 Emmy Award nominations. Programmes such as *Bodyguard*, *Fleabag*, *Line of Duty* and *A Very English Scandal* show how we continue to drive British creativity. Meanwhile, world-class factual programmes such as *Blue Planet II* and recent seasons on mental health demonstrate the impact the BBC can have in addressing some of society's most pressing problems.

It is the BBC's duty to make programmes about British people and British culture. We remain the largest single investor in original, home-grown content. This matters even more in an increasingly competitive global market.

We know that British audiences enjoy the quality and breadth of choice that the big global players bring, but they also want local content that speaks to them directly and reflects their lives, content that is at risk of being squeezed out.

British content is not just vital for our audiences – it is crucial for the country as a whole. As the UK seeks to reshape its relationship with the world, it needs the BBC more than ever as the cornerstone of our world-class creative industries, and to carry Britain's voice, values and influence across the globe.

Trusted, impartial news

News is another area in which the role the BBC plays for society is not just as important and relevant as ever, but has become much more so.

That is because the democratic values that underpin our mission have grown increasingly important to the country: independence and impartiality, representing all parts of the UK, making sure everyone has a voice, whoever and wherever they are.

These are ideals that have always been highly prized – today, however, they are priceless.

In a world awash with misinformation, we know audiences come to the BBC for trusted, impartial news. At a time when the country feels divided and fragmented, audiences need the BBC to reflect the views and perspectives of the whole of the UK. It is fundamental to our public service responsibility to make sure all diverse voices are heard.

It is also our duty to bring the country together around shared national moments and remind us of everything we have in common. Twenty million people across the country joined us to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of First World War last year, and 22 million joined us for the royal wedding, with millions more watching the world over.

Reinventing BBC services

If the BBC's public service mission has never been more important, how we deliver it to our audiences has never needed to evolve more quickly.

The extraordinary growth of our global competitors in recent years has dramatically reshaped the media landscape around us. Together with rapid technological progress, it has transformed the expectations of our audiences.

At the start of 2017, we secured the BBC's future scale, scope and system of funding through a new eleven-year royal charter and licence fee guarantee. That has given us the platform to pursue an ambitious plan to reinvent the BBC.

Our audiences are already starting to experience what that means. Last year, we set out plans to transform BBC iPlayer from a catch-up service to a destination in its own right, including by extending the availability of programmes to 12 months.

Killing Eve was a sign of our ambition. Released as a box set, it had more than 45 million iPlayer requests. A record 16 million streaming requests for Glastonbury showed how the BBC's "live" offer can set us apart.

Last year also saw the launch of BBC Sounds, bringing together all our radio, music and podcasts in one place. We know that, increasingly, it is through our online services that audiences will expect to receive value for their licence fee.

A strong, thriving BBC

The BBC's latest plans also reflect the importance of owning and controlling

intellectual property in today's media marketplace.

Last year we took the bold decision to bring together our production and distribution arms into a single commercial entity: BBC Studios. The move enables us to protect the values of the BBC and offers new opportunities for creativity, partnership and growth. This year BBC Studios generated record returns of £243 million to reinvest in the public service.

We have also announced that, as part of a series of deals with Discovery, BBC Studios has taken control of UKTV and the bulk of its channels. Most recently, we took the decision with ITV to launch a new subscription streaming service in the UK, BritBox, providing an unrivalled collection of British boxsets and original series, on demand, all in one place.

I am very proud of what the BBC has achieved in its first century. Our success has been based on the clarity of our mission, the quality of our talent and our constant desire to innovate. That is what motivates us every day, and it is why I am confident that a strong, thriving BBC in its second century can do more than ever for the UK.

“In a world awash with misinformation, we know audiences come to the BBC for trusted, impartial news”

Jodie Whittaker stars as *Doctor Who* in the longest-running sci-fi drama on television



Searcys



Managing Director Matt Thomas



St Pancras Brasserie and Champagne Bar by Searcys

FACTS ABOUT SEARCYS

- » Managing Director: Matt Thomas
- » Established in 1847
- » Based in Farringdon, London
- » Services: Catering and hospitality
- » No. of employees: 1,200
- » searcys.co.uk

In 1847, the Duke of Northumberland spotted potential in a young pastry chef in his kitchen team. Seeing that the budding chef was destined for bigger things, he offered to support him to found what was to become the UK's first catering company: Searcys and Sons. Over 170 years later, Searcys employ 1,200 people across 33 sites in the UK, including in historic venues, from St Paul's Cathedral to The Gherkin. Managing Director Matt Thomas details their remarkable history and how they have embraced innovation.

Over the years, we have gained an impeccable reputation for catering for a diverse portfolio of clients. Historic venues include The Orangery at Blenheim Palace, Wren's Tea Room at St Paul's Cathedral, the award-winning Design Museum in Kensington, The Pump Room in Bath and the restaurants and bars at the iconic Gherkin and St Pancras International. In 2018, we proudly celebrated the company's most successful year since its foundation in 1847. The annual accounts for the year ending December 2018 showed that we achieved double-digit growth at our flagship venues.

In March 2019, we opened two new venues: one at The Honourable Artillery Company in London, and, as a true homecoming, another at The Alnwick Garden, by the appointment of the Duchess of Northumberland.

This outcome is a result of our strategic plan and rebrand, appealing to a new and modern market. We aimed to bring our identity closer in line with our heritage while making it more contemporary and forward-looking. Consumer research, conducted by Future Thinking, revealed that 32 per cent of UK diners and 39 per cent of Londoners are aware of the name Searcys. With a privileged position in the UK's venue and restaurant market, the rebranding allowed us to expand awareness nationwide.

Our strategic five-year plan has articulated the brand's purpose as British hospitality specialists, as well as the international appeal of our world-renowned champagne bars. Our brand vision of "making the people we serve and work with feel special by being consistently exceptional" manifests itself through investment in flagship sites and our people, building a sustainable, responsible business.

Our iconic restaurants, champagne bars and events have an established reputation for quality and innovation. We carved out a name as brave market leaders, launching bold, forward-thinking concepts.

A flagship example of our success is at The Gherkin. The iconic Norman Foster-designed building had its levels 39 and 40 levels relaunched as Helix restaurant and Iris bar. Previously a members' club, The Gherkin was open to the public from July 2018. Level 38 was also revamped with five private dining spaces to reflect market trends for smaller, more intimate events.

The iconic St Pancras Brasserie and Europe's longest champagne bar, which we both manage, were also remodelled and relaunched in April 2018 with the addition of a new concept: Champagne School. Toasting the 150th anniversary of St Pancras Station, Champagne School was designed to appeal to all kinds of lovers of champagne and English sparkling wine. The revenue of these two venues has increased 18 per cent year on year. The overall customer sentiment has been increasing steadily too, with 98 per cent positive customer reviews of food quality and 92 per cent of value in autumn 2018.

Learning and development

Over 1,600 delegates attended our internal courses in 2018, helping to widen their knowledge and skills and to provide personal development.

Feedback concluded that 86 per cent would recommend the courses to a colleague, and 96 per cent would utilise their new skills.

Furthermore, we launched an apprenticeship scheme. This supports a new generation of UK chefs, giving opportunities to young talent across the country. Six new apprentices started working in our kitchens in 2018.

The importance of sustainability

In 2018, we launched our first ever sustainability pledges. We champion the best ingredients available, working closely with British farmers and producers to ensure that up to 90 per cent of the seasonal fruit and vegetables we use is grown in the UK. Our champagne list follows the same concept, and we shifted our focus to celebrate the most acclaimed English sparkling wine.

Our new menus incorporate UK-reared fresh meat; flour milled in England; and free-range eggs and milk from Red Tractor-certified farms, as well as our signature smoked salmon, sourced directly from the family-run and Royal Warrant-holding John Ross Jr.

Using seasonal and high-quality produce, our chefs reimagine and

“Our brand vision is to make the people we serve and work with feel special by being consistently exceptional”

A selection of our seasonal starters





Helix at the Gherkin



Over 56,000 bottles of Searcys signature cuvée are sold each year

“The importance of ethical consumption sits firmly in our minds and so we support sustainable and ethical products”

reinvent modern British dishes. Our recently awarded Two Star Food Made Good rating by the Sustainable Restaurant Association is a testament to how provenance and sustainability are at the heart of our business.

This year sees us expanding our commitment to sustainability with a new set of pledges. This includes an ongoing partnership with Beyond Food, a social enterprise that helps those who are most at risk of homelessness to gain employment in hospitality. In December 2018, we raised £10,000 for the charity through our A Very Searcys Christmas campaign.

We have established a number of meaningful brand partnerships in line with the company’s rebranding goals. Supper clubs and collaborations with well-known UK chefs like Saturday Kitchen TV presenter Matt Tebbutt or the award-winning British chocolatier William Curley were the highlights of our events calendar. This January, Searcys at The Gherkin partnered with Great British Bake Off finalist Ruby Bhogal, Harley Street nutritionist Rhiannon Lambert and ethical yoga company Yogasphere for a month of wellness-related supper clubs and events.

Outside of London, we have collaborated with the quintessentially

British perfume house Penhaligon’s to create a series of afternoon tea packages at Blenheim Palace and with Extract Coffee, a sustainable roaster in Bristol. Our espresso has been specially blended by the team in collaboration with Extract Coffee, using 60 per cent Project Peru beans. These are directly sourced from an organic co-operative of smallholders, who work closely with Extract Coffee to build a “quality pays” ethos in their community.

An oversaturated market

One of the main challenges we face is the level of competition in our industry: there are too many providers for too few customers. Many choose to discount their products, but we prefer to add value. As we are in a service sector, we need to think laterally to ensure that we remain attractive to consumers.

We work hard to retain the customers we have while expanding our profile. Key to this is supporting sustainable and ethical products, as the importance of ethical consumption continues to grow. By continuing to uphold our heritage and embrace these modern trends, we are sure we will be able to thrive long into the future.

Blonstein Creative Production



Roksanda LFW runway at the Serpentine Pavilion



Founder Sara Blonstein

Founded in 1990, Blonstein is a prolific creative production agency based in Brick Lane, east London. It delivers a wide range of high-calibre experiences for world-leading fashion, lifestyle and consumer brands including the British Fashion Council, the Mayor of London, London Fashion Week, Selfridges and Pernod Ricard, to name a few, as well as for a number of other innovative, cool and niche clients. Founder and Director Sara Blonstein reflects on the journey so far while discussing how the agency continues to identify and champion the next generation of talent.

Blonstein is situated on Brick Lane, the heart of east London's pool of new talent, new thinking and emerging cultural trends. This enables us to take inspiration from this world every day. We employ a 360-degree boutique philosophy to all our productions, from imagination to concept, delivery and completion. We are best known for our elaborate attention to detail and our unique ability to creatively and consistently place the brand at the centre of an experience.

Reinvigorating derelict spaces

We started off the business in the whirl of a post-feminist movement in the early 1990s, taking over derelict iconic buildings to host incredibly lavish events, entirely run by women, from security and DJs to performers and bar staff. These immersive events quickly gained press notoriety for their beautiful art direction and for the reclamation of neglected urban spaces, in a truly unique way.

FACTS ABOUT BLONSTEIN CREATIVE PRODUCTION

- » Founder: Sara Blonstein
- » Founded in 1990
- » Based in east London
- » Services: Creative production
- » No. of employees: Project-dependent
- » www.blonstein.co.uk



Her Majesty The Queen and Anna Wintour at the Richard Quinn show

“What differentiated us was our ability to transform these empty spaces”

Blonstein-designed and built runway



Our first commercial commission came from Channel 4, who wanted to offer edgy yet high-end events for their advertising partners. At the time, it was very much a disruptor in the TV market, so we decided to hold their party at a tiny jazz club in London Bridge. At the back of the club was a door that led to a huge vaulted space below the train arches. They were thrilled with the outcome and became a regular client. Together we threw huge parties in the empty County Hall and the derelict Battersea Power Station. Soon Sky, MTV and 20th Century Fox also became clients and we continued to push boundaries with our experiential events, sourcing abandoned spaces in London and abroad and then reinventing them.

As we grew, I started looking for a new location for the business. The Truman Brewery had just been bought by a completely new type of investor. They were letting *only* artists, creators and fashion designers rent spaces at far lower rates than elsewhere to generate a new creative hub. All the big British designers were born out of this time and place: Alexander McQueen, Kim Jones, Gareth Pugh and Hussein Chalayan were all working

out of east London. They were gaining traction and wanted to run shows in non-traditional spaces. We were perfectly primed for this and started producing runway shows for both Chalayan and Pugh.

Evolving and improving

What differentiated us was our ability to transform these empty spaces. We took the lead from our clients and mixed it with our unique skills in working with disused buildings. Being in east London and surrounded by this fashion crowd, with the fashion movement growing around us, we simply translated our core production skills and applied them to that industry. Soon we were delivering shows all over London.

We started collaborating with the British Fashion Council when they moved London Fashion Week to Somerset House, producing their showrooms and installations. This led to an Olympic project called Hatwalk, where Britain's top milliners designed hats for 25 statues across central London, including Nelson. We installed them all in secret overnight with an army of cherry-pickers to great acclaim globally.

Our work with Roksanda and Ozwald Boateng had also become increasingly ambitious with each project. With Ozwald we produced a show at the Odeon in Leicester Square, placing 100 models on the runway at once. For Roksanda we moved the production, season by season, from the half-finished Shard, to a disused sorting office, to The Serpentine Pavilion. All this was unprecedented at the time.

After attending one of our Roksanda shows at the converted Seymour swimming baths in Marylebone, the BFC approached us to produce the London Fashion Week Festival at the Saatchi Gallery.



Left: The Elle Style Awards
Centre: Paula Knorr
installation
Right: Molly Goddard LFW
runway at the Foreign and
Commonwealth Office

The festival was such a huge success that we were asked to tender for the transferring of the whole of London Fashion Week Men's and then LFW Women's to 180 Strand.

180 Strand was a semi-derelict building that had just been bought by an investor who, just like in the Truman all those years ago, was setting out to generate a new creative hub in his building.

The BFC wanted us to bring an edgier vibe to fashion week and this proved to be the perfect venue.

We have now produced LFW and LFWM inside the space for seven seasons and it has been a fantastic opportunity to work with some of the world's most inspiring designers.

Coming full circle, in 2019 we worked with the BFC to relocate their HUB to the East End, while London Fashion Week Men's took place at The Truman Brewery, and the empty spaces that we brought designers to all those years ago were right at the centre of the action.

Nurturing the next generation

Throughout our history we have worked with so many fantastic young designers and creatives, which has often entailed more than just producing their shows. We collaborate

with them, making sure the platform they are inhabiting is perfectly executed. We also act as mentors, guiding them as they move through the industry. To actively help build their confidence and skills in such a way has been a truly rewarding experience. Last year we produced Richard Quinn's first fashion show, which was also the first runway experience ever attended by Her Majesty the Queen. It was a true highlight for Blonstein and propelled Richard into the fashion stratosphere.

Being there for young people is so important and we have a responsibility to share our experience, promote their interests and protect the future of the creative industries. In pursuit of this goal, I became a board member of the Institute of Contemporary Arts. This has given me the chance to speak with a diverse range of young artists, championing the London art scene while also keeping an eye on the future of fashion.

It is terribly important to evolve with society and commerce, while retaining your original aspirations, loving what you do and staying true to your essence. The market for the unique, immersive experiences that we spearheaded over 20 years ago is still very fashionable and desirable for many brands. We are looking forward to where the next 20 years may take us.

“Throughout our history we have worked with so many fantastic young designers and creatives”

Ozwald Boateng show
at the Harlem Apollo



The Hari



General Manager Andrew Coney



il Pampero

FACTS ABOUT THE HARI

- » General Manager: Andrew Coney
- » Founded in 2016
- » Based in Belgravia, London
- » Services: Accommodation, restaurant, bar and event space
- » No. of employees: 110
- » The Hari aims to provide memorable experiences, not just accommodation
- » www.thehari.com

Located on Chesham Place, Belgravia, The Hari is an independent hotel that is built around a long heritage of hospitality bestowed by the Harilela family in Hong Kong. Aron Harilela rebranded the hotel three years ago in tribute to his late father, and it has grown rapidly in popularity ever since. The Hari's general manager, Andrew Coney, has over 30 years' experience in the luxury hotel industry. He tells *The Parliamentary Review* how he ensures his staff are fully dedicated to delivering exceptional service and creating memorable stays for guests.

Leading a team of 110, I look to empower our staff to deliver generous hospitality in a layered yet singular approach. The Hari has truly become a beacon of modern luxury that offers impeccable service, a relaxing guest experience and meticulous attention to detail, no matter how small. Beyond providing a perfect night's stay, we also try to introduce our guests to new ways of appreciating the culture of our city and neighbourhood, a local area that we are very proud of.

Not an ordinary experience

The location of The Hari has been a hotel since the 1970s. The Hong Kong-based family have always been passionate about hospitality and wanted to set up a hotel that did things slightly differently. We always try to distinguish ourselves from the ordinary and offer a new service that clients don't quite expect. Our staff are empowered and happy to embrace The Hari way of working, and they ensure our clientele leave the hotel more than satisfied.

As a slightly smaller hotel with just 85 rooms, we can make our client experience more personal than larger, more corporate competitors. Before they arrive, we build an understanding of a guest's personality through social media and internet research, and we tailor their stay around their preferences. For example, one young guest who stayed with his parents was a big fan of Harry Potter, so we encouraged all of our staff to learn spells and play along with him. This didn't take much effort or cost anything, but it can make the difference between a good experience and a great one.

Staff empowerment is crucial in this process, and we ensure our employees feel equipped to deal with positive and negative feedback thoroughly. If someone has an issue, we don't simply say we will email them when we have looked into it; instead, we find an instant solution to keep the guest happy. Staff are free to make a judgment in this scenario, and we understand that there isn't a set of rules instructing you on how to react in any given situation. We trust them to do the right thing for the guest, and this is a big reason we retain both staff and customers.

Organic success

When independent hotels open, there can often be a period of downturn as they look to build their name and reputation within the sector. This has been common among a number of our competitors, especially in a city like London, but we were able to develop quickly and build a strong reputation. We have seen considerable growth since and are now ranked in the top ten hotels in London on TripAdvisor. We don't have large marketing resources, so our growth has purely been the result of great reviews and loyal customers who return to stay with us.

This loyalty extends to our staff, too, who have broken the mould of what is expected in our sector. This is a testament not only to the way we treat our staff but also to their ambition and drive to make a success of the hotel, which they have played a huge part in developing. Many of my colleagues have been with us since before we became The Hari, and their commitment further enriches what is already a great environment in which to work.

Twenty-five per cent of our clientele come from the US, with 20 per cent

“We build an understanding of a guest's personality through social media and internet research, and we tailor their stay around their preferences”



Studio King Suite



The Snug

“This loyalty extends to our staff, too, who have broken the mould of what is expected in our sector”

from the UK and the rest broadly coming from across Europe and Asia. Of those guests, around 60 per cent are business travellers. To our credit, our occupancy is very high all year round, very rarely falling below 90 per cent. While our service is a huge part of this, our discreet and charming location plays a significant role, and a number of our guests are glad to refer to us as their hidden gem. The relaxed, homely and private atmosphere is entirely different from a corporate chain, while our restaurant and bar are in keeping with the local area and vibe.

Remaining on top

Although we possess a strong record on retaining staff and encouraging them to learn new skills, Brexit has had an impact on the hospitality sector. The supply of potential employees has diminished, and we face future challenges with importing goods.

This hasn't been difficult for us up until now, but it is vital that we adapt positively and prepare for all circumstances. Regardless of your level of success, no business can afford to ignore external events, and those that do will simply create issues for themselves further down the line.

We have found a strong balance between a lean and agile workforce and outstanding customer service. Our small size also allows us to adapt overnight, whether that be in relation to pricing, strategy or approach. We can change and are happy to do so if we think it will be to the benefit of our guests. Everyone at The Hari is very proud of what we have achieved, and it has become a great place to work. The hospitality sector has developed a bit of an unfair reputation among some people, but it offers fantastic, rewarding career opportunities that more people should definitely look into.

Bien Venue



Providing exceptional quality



Director Samantha Elliott

Samantha Elliott grew up in a family of entrepreneurs and risk takers. Early in her life, she recognised the opportunities in running her own business. She says that the first-hand experience of the ups and downs have guided her through Bien Venue's development, a journey that saw a team of two with a handful of clients become a major venue-sourcing and events management company. Bien Venue now has 25 staff, and it serves a number of major international blue chip companies who themselves are global market leaders. Samantha tells *The Parliamentary Review* more about the philosophies that have driven the company's growth.

I've never been overly concerned about growth – for me, the focus has always been on how well we can deliver and ensuring that we add value for clients. This is something that is distilled down into every member of the Bien Venue team – we look for staff who share the same passion for delivering something truly special, something that they can be proud of.

I am extremely proud of the fact that, in the past 23 years, we have proven time and time again that delivering such outstanding service is absolutely possible – this is only further demonstrated by the loyalty our growing list of clients have shown to us.

Client growth and retention

When we secure clients, they stay with us – so we must be doing something right. We have never lost a client – with the exception of the consequences of

FACTS ABOUT BIEN VENUE

- » Director: Samantha Elliott
- » Established in 1996
- » Based in Poynton, Cheshire
- » Services: Venue sourcing, event management and team building
- » No. of employees: 25
- » Bien Venue prides itself on championing gender diversity – 75 per cent of its senior management team and larger staff team are female
- » www.bvevents.co.uk



Delivering the truly special

“Our longest-standing account has been with us for as long as we have existed”

restructuring or corporate change – and our longest-standing account has been with us for as long as we have existed.

This loyalty and repeat business has allowed us to continue offering real and significant value to our clients. In keeping with this, we try to develop a deep understanding of the businesses we work with, maintain strong relationships with all levels of the client organisation and continue to build our industry knowledge for specific sectors.

As a result of our dedication to acquiring and developing expertise, we have established ourselves as the leading provider of venue and event services to the education and not-for-profit sectors, as well as supporting

» A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CONTRACT

We work with a number of clients to secure and source venues across the world. One such contract has been with a major international unnamed association.

This association have a significant need for us to place meetings and source venues for their events overseas, both in Europe and the wider world. We have been working with this organisation for over 15 years in what has been an incredibly rewarding partnership.

Concerns with leaving the EU and the location where they choose to hold conferences have caused issues in recent years, but our expertise and determined value-adding team have continued to deliver, and our work with this association, as with many other clients, has been incredibly beneficial for both parties.

major retail, food and beverage and blue light organisations.

We invest heavily in the client relationship. We take time to understand specific needs and issues, so we can design a support service that is appropriate and delivers benefits that are important and relevant. It is absolutely true that one size doesn't fit all, and we don't try to shoehorn our own ways of working onto any given account. We work how clients want to work, deliver the benefits they want to prioritise and provide the technology platforms and data that are useful for them, all the while recognising that what matters differs from client to client.

For example, we recognise that client data reporting needs are different from organisation to organisation; as such, we are able to meet these needs using our own specialist reporting structures and systems. We also find that clients particularly value having dedicated individuals and teams allocated to support them; this way of working means that the partnership provides a value-added extension to an organisation's own teams by bringing common goals and shared understanding.

This is all reflected in our strapline: “Our team is your team”. Where our clients experience periods of staff turnover and structural changes, this often means that we become an invaluable point of consistency and knowledge to help maintain service levels for their own customers.

A history of innovation

We invest in technology to support our services to clients. We recognise that clients want the ability to self-serve, and they also have increasingly greater demands for management data to effectively manage significant cost items.

We now offer clients online portals that allow their own staff, clients and delegates to book meeting rooms and accommodation in both their own and externally sourced venues. Alongside this, we also provide a set of comprehensive self-managed data tools that allow clients to report and analyse meeting and accommodation cost spend.

Providing this kind of access through mobile devices is also now fundamental to how staff within our client organisations work; as such, we are working to roll out a suite of new mobile apps to enhance client technology support in 2019.

Working with like-minded people

While technological developments have been an area where we have invested, the other key area of focus for us in the past few years has been to continue to develop our skilled staff base to support our clients' further success.

Staff don't just stay with us for our competitive salary packages; every member of the team is respected. We invest in and develop each staff member's knowledge through involvement in key supply chain events and visits.

We look for staff who share the same passion and desire to provide outstanding service and value for our clients. It's actually one of our key recruitment criteria; we prioritise it in our search for people who demonstrate enthusiasm and teamwork.

Competition may try to catch up to us in terms of technology or product offering, but we will always have our staff as key differentiators and will do everything we can to retain that edge.



Creating unforgettable moments

Continuing to serve our clients as best we can

While the future does hold some uncertainty, we are confident that by continually listening to our customers, acting as a true business partner and investing in our technology and our staff, we will remain relevant and essential to current and future customers alike.

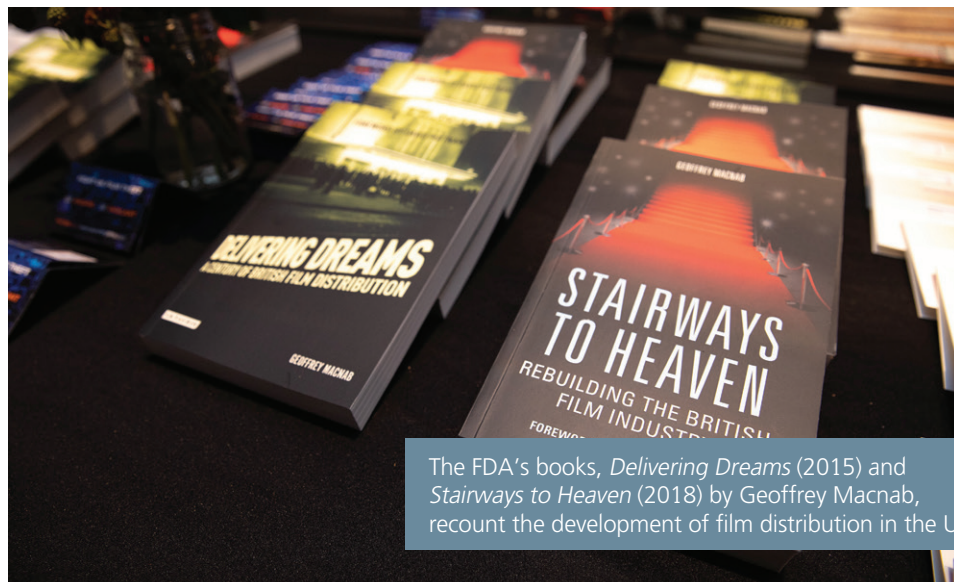
New technology will come and go in our sector, as is the case with all industries, but we remain confident that the essential soul and purpose of Bien Venue will continue to endure in this uncertain yet exciting world. The value we add and the benefit that our staff and relationships bring to our clients position us well going forward – as far as change is concerned, we are more than ready to embrace it.

“We can design a support service that is appropriate and delivers benefits that are important and relevant”

Film Distributors Association



President Lord Puttnam of Queensgate CBE



The FDA's books, *Delivering Dreams* (2015) and *Stairways to Heaven* (2018) by Geoffrey Macnab, recount the development of film distribution in the UK

FACTS ABOUT FILM DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION

- » President: Lord Puttnam of Queensgate CBE
- » Chief Executive: Mark Batey
- » Established in 1915
- » Based in Soho, London
- » Services: Championing the generic interests of UK film distributors
- » Our diverse membership extends to 32 companies; the films they release generate 98 per cent of UK cinema visits
- » www.launchingfilms.com

With Lord Puttnam as its President, the Film Distributors' Association provides support to the UK film distribution sector through five main methods: training, copyright safeguarding, media services, audience development, and policy and resources. In the last year, more than 800 feature films were showcased in British cinemas, while the top 20 accounted for half of all ticket sales. Chief Executive Mark Batey tells *The Parliamentary Review* about their commitment to the education and training of the next generation and the challenges of piracy.

At the heart of the film industry is a skilled distribution process that connects films with audiences. If the word "distribution" conjures up images of forklifts and warehouses, think again. Film distributors source and acquire the rights to films and position them in a crowded marketplace. They then release them on all available formats and execute innovative advertising and partnership campaigns to engage audiences who have a super-abundance of media and entertainment options in and out of the home.

Film distributors bear all of the commercial risk for every film they release. They invest around £350 million each year to bring their releases to UK audiences – in addition to formidable investments in film production. In 2018, more than 800 feature films were launched in UK cinemas. Audiences felt motivated to see particular titles thanks to professional distribution, which built awareness and social currency.

Box-office receipts roll into cinema tills as film releases and their launch campaigns roll out. Like all forms of entertainment, the film business is product driven – the films themselves are why people buy tickets. Few venture out to a cinema with no

idea what they want to see. In 2018, UK citizens made 177 million cinema visits, the highest number since 1970, spending £1.3 billion, including VAT, on their tickets. With just one per cent of the world's population, the UK delivers five per cent of the world's box-office receipts.

We are delighted to champion the UK film distribution sector, for which we have developed five ever-evolving work streams:

- » Training and development
- » Safeguarding copyright – the intellectual property rights that underpin the whole film industry
- » Media services
- » Audience development
- » Policy and resources

Our training programme aims to enhance the talents, confidence and networks of people from entry level to senior managers. We offer a foundation course, immersing recent starters in all aspects of the film "value chain", and modular courses to hone the management skills needed in 21st-century workplaces. For some years, most of our training places have been occupied by women.

We co-ordinate a paid internship scheme, which entered its fifth year in 2019. The cohorts have been predominantly women of BAME origin, and we're delighted that dozens of them remain employed in UK film today. It is vital that ScreenSkills, the sector's training body, supports continuing professional development training for businesspeople, alongside those in the production crafts.

The scourge of film piracy

Most "pirated" films available online and on discs around the world are sourced in cinemas. In the UK, we've built an enviable track record of preventing illegal recordings, usually made on smartphones and uploaded swiftly afterwards.

Our specialist unit investigates cases of copyright theft in co-operation with the law enforcement community. Last year, it also delivered anti-piracy training to 2,000 cinema staff and rewarded the best practitioners for their vigilance.

No fewer than 146 suspected attempts to record films in cinemas were reported to us in 2018. Local police attended 97 of the incidents, resulting

“With just one per cent of the world's population, the UK delivers five per cent of the world's box-office receipts”

The head of the FDA's anti-piracy unit, Simon Brown, and voice artist supreme, Redd Pepper, with recipients at our best practice awards event in July 2019





“Marilyn Monroe” greets guests at our November 2018 event in Manchester, previewing the UK film release line-up for cinema bookers

“However technologies and platforms continue to evolve, public demand for great characters and stories told in the form of feature films appears to be insatiable”

in 12 arrests and 19 formal cautions. It’s widely recognised that copyright theft can be serious and organised, often linked to other kinds of crime. Last May, two cases came to court, in Newcastle and Glasgow. Both trials resulted in successful prosecutions and media coverage, which should continue to deter others. A robust regime to protect copyright remains essential for our economy and society.

Press previews in three regional hubs

Day by day, we fulfil the essential behind-the-scenes task of co-ordinating a central schedule of preview screenings for editors, critics and online influencers – all branches of UK media.

There are well-established preview formats in London and Glasgow, while recently we launched a new series of press shows and events in Manchester.

In London’s West End, we present “FDA Showcases”. These events give a platform to British, independent and specialised films for media who might not otherwise see them.

Online influencers are a target audience for our film-themed pop-up events. We’ve run these in holiday seasons as a means of sharing with visitors, free of charge, a range of stimuli – VR experiences, poster displays, creative play areas and our own unique LEGO model cinema, built from 25,000 bricks.

Partnership working

We collaborate with many organisations to achieve shared objectives. In partnership with The Film Space and FutureLearn, the Open University’s online education platform, we launched a massive open online course about film distribution – more than 2,000 people signed up for its first edition in 2018.

We worked with the publisher IB Tauris, now part of Bloomsbury, on a well-received book about the huge growth of our industry over the last three decades. Written by Geoffrey Macnab, *Stairways to Heaven: Rebuilding the British Film Industry* was launched at a BAFTA reception attended by Lord Smith of Finsbury, Daniel Battsek (head of Film4) and other contributors.

We maintained our sponsorships of the National Film & Television School and YourLocalCinema.com. This trusted, independent website, app and social network promotes films with digital subtitles and audio description and plays subtitled trailers for cinema-goers with hearing or sight loss.

We are fortunate to have Lord Puttnam of Queensgate CBE as our president. Lord Puttnam has consistently called for flexibility – to ensure that the digitisation of cinemas, largely funded by distributors, does not disadvantage distributors; that established release patterns do not stifle innovation; and that the EU digital single market retains flexibility for territorial and pan-European licensing.

The film business is fast-moving and competitive, and distribution serves as its lynchpin. We’re optimistic about future prospects for film in the UK. However technologies and platforms continue to evolve, public demand for great characters and stories told in the form of feature films appears to be insatiable. Happily, it’s an area of creative endeavour in which the UK punches far above its weight, and we are thrilled to be part of the vibrant ecosystem.

The Bakehouse Factory



We provide immersive theatrical experiences for a range of clients



Managing Director Kate Statham (centre) with Creative Director Hannah McGavin (left) and Design Director Dan McGavin (right)

Originally established by a group of three creative friends with a passion for immersive events, Bakehouse Factory provides theatrical productions on behalf of retail landowners, public spaces and corporate clients. Offering these experiences for free to the public, they have become a benchmark of quality in their industry. Instead of using third parties to source their props and components, they manufacture them all inhouse to ensure cohesion. Managing Director Kate Statham tells *The Parliamentary Review* about how their combination of skillsets has driven their success and their expansion into ticketed events.

We were established seven years ago and at this point, we were very much a kitchen table business. I formed the company with two friends and each of us had different, but well-suited, skillsets and a shared background in event production and performing arts. I had worked for many years brokering collaborations on behalf of cultural institutions and artists with media partners, commissioners and corporate organisations. This provided us with an understanding of both the public and the private sector. Hannah was our performer, choreographer and director; and Dan was our fabricator, designing and building anything we required. We began the business because we identified an opportunity to create truly immersive and magical events that could communicate directly and meaningfully with an audience; providing a transformative experience for them while also conveying a brand message, helping to define a place, or create awareness of an issue. We were determined to deliver only the best quality theatre in places where it was

FACTS ABOUT THE BAKEHOUSE FACTORY

- » Managing Director: Kate Statham
- » Established in 2012
- » Based in Bristol
- » Services: Immersive theatrical experiences
- » No. of employees: 14
- » www.bakehousefactory.co.uk

“Every client works with us again and again”

Our team are incredibly talented, passionate and committed



least expected. This remains our core focus and for the vast majority of events we work on, we are invited by a client to create something that will be placemaking or set them apart from their competitors.

Our combination of skills is a key element of our appeal: Dan can create a set for any location, Hannah can infuse the set with magic through performance and I can liaise with clients to find ways to design events that will fulfil all of their aspirations. Between the three of us, we are uniquely placed to answer corporate briefs with creative and authentic theatrical solutions. Most of our events are offered to the general public for free and this will always be at the heart of what we do. Beyond fulfilling the objectives of our clients, this means

we can offer theatrical experiences to those who would not usually visit the theatre, going to where they are in their day-to-day lives and pulling them into another world.

As we have grown the business, we have also come up with concepts that we are so passionate about we are looking to host and promote them ourselves, branching out into ticketed events. We are equally excited about the prospect of producing our own installations as we are those for our brilliant clients.

A benchmark within the industry

We have never worked with a client just once; every client works with us again and again. Retention has been a key way of growing our customer base and ensuring continued business. We have won numerous industry awards and are recognised as a benchmark of quality within the industry. We are also not afraid to contact those we think we could work well with: we are always hungry to reach out to more people, expand our network and introduce ourselves to potential clients.

A key element of our best practice is how we select and work with our performers, the vast majority of whom hold Equity cards, and our commitment to always remunerating them fairly. We search for the very best performers in their field because with immersive theatre, only the best experiences delivered by the most effective performers succeed.

We support, nurture and pay all of our staff properly and are proud to be able to offer both performers and makers a regular income. We never treat staffing as an afterthought. All of our customers, among both the corporate sphere and the general public, immediately identify the talent, passion and commitment of our whole team.

Handcrafting all of our components

When it comes to creating magical immersive theatre, the devil really is in the detail. Having a cohesive nature is key to our events. When you are working in a temporary environment, it can be tempting to buy dissonant parts and cobble them together. We take a polarly opposite approach. We treat every production as if it were a touring theatre show and we hand craft all of the necessary components. We bring in the highest quality craftsmen to support this.

We are also extremely rigorous in all of our health and safety procedures and planning. As we are dealing with the general public, we are committed to ensuring they are protected and that our productions are accessible and available to all. In order for the production to be performed at the highest level and often in very high footfall locations, this preparation is essential.

In addition to proudly programming many events that have a strong eco message, we are also always looking at ways of making our business more sustainable. We therefore repurpose as much as we possibly can. If you deal with the amount of props and set that we do, finding affordable storage space will always be a challenge. We have an Aladdin's Cave of sets, props and backgrounds which means we have to find storage space which incurs significant cost. This is something that remains at the forefront of our planning.

We have not struggled with recruitment as we naturally attract those that are passionate about what we do. Our base in Bristol supports this as the city has a rich and diverse scene of creatives who understand our world. We adapt our team's skillsets to each job we take on and we constantly challenge ourselves to try new build techniques and adopt new technologies.



A performance at the intu Trafford Centre

As we continue into the future, we are looking to take on larger challenges, mainly related to the size of our productions. This will span both our retail briefs and our own projects. This does not necessarily mean a greater volume of work but we will try to balance these larger projects with our roaming characters, a part of our portfolio we never want to give up. The key will be striking the balance between the two while achieving strong growth.

Immersive theatre gives both us and our clients a credible, authentic and creative way to engage with people and build long term relationships with customers. We are seeing competitor event companies with a shallower engagement model leave the industry, as audiences expect and deserve more.

“Immersive theatre gives both us and our clients a credible, authentic and creative way to engage with people and build long-term relationships with customers”

Journeyman Pictures



Managing Director Mark Stucke



FACTS ABOUT JOURNEYMAN PICTURES

- » Managing Director: Mark Stucke
- » Established in 1990
- » Based in Surrey
- » Services: Documentary and current affairs content distribution
- » No. of employees: 15
- » In the last year, 6,213,820 hours of Journeyman's content was watched on Amazon
- » www.journeyman.tv

Journeyman Pictures supplies documentaries and current affairs programmes to a wide range of broadcasters and digital platforms. Originally focusing on the production of war zone and harsh environment reports, they have since diversified and act as a medium between individual filmmakers and the global markets, as well as direct consumers. In order to raise their profile, they were one of the first British organisations to negotiate a partnership with YouTube, and their channel now has over 1.2 million subscribers. Managing Director Mark Stucke, a former war reporter himself, explains the complications of adapting to the digital age and the methods they employ to reach audiences around the world.

We offer three distinct product lines: documentaries, current affairs coverage and the provision of video clips for productions. We act as a sales agency for some of the most significant news producers worldwide, including PBS's NewsHour Weekend, Al Jazeera, BBC Arabic and ABC Australia. While Europe is mostly our centre of gravity, all the world's most significant TV stations regularly use our services to acquire factual content. Over the last five years, we have developed expertise in the digital sector, with thousands of our documentaries streamed to a worldwide audience everyday through iTunes, Amazon and Google Play, all of whom we are directly licensed with.

I began my career as a war journalist and was one of the first freelancers to adopt small digital technology. Thanks to this technology, anyone could cheaply purchase the equipment and, with the right skills, produce a film of a quality high enough to

achieve mainstream broadcast. This is how the company began in 1990, as a producer of reports and documentaries from the world's war zones. Originally, Channel 4 was our main supporter, but we went on to work with many of the major international networks.

Our ambition grew as we moved more into TV and feature documentaries, immediately recognising the central importance and value of copyright. It was the experience of marketing and selling our own content around the world that really established us as a distributor. As our company developed and our revenue stream for our own content grew, producers came to us to sell their content too.

Adapting to the digital age

I always knew that the digital age would require us to find a direct route to the documentary consumer. Where previously our audience had been reached via TV broadcasters, we could see that the market was becoming more commercially driven, as increasing competition pushed broadcasters to focus on more populist content. The obvious loser of this change was serious factual programming, and our survival relied on finding the means to reach our demographic directly. We've achieved this with regular "day and date" global digital releases, thereby enabling us to become like a TV channel with scheduled releases, in a sector that's increasingly only viable on a worldwide scale.

When Google purchased YouTube, we realised that it would become a valuable promotional tool for our content. We were one of the first British organisations to negotiate a YouTube partnership, and today our channel is one of the top ten news and politics channels on the platform, with a rapidly increasing subscriber base of over 1.2 million. This platform

is now central to the promotion and distribution of our films to both public consumers and our industry client base.

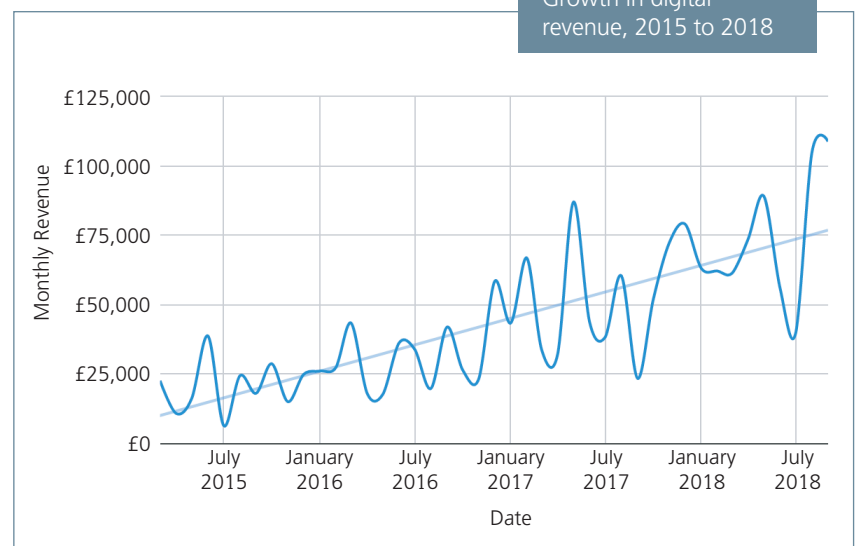
More recently, we've become one of the smallest independent companies in the world to secure direct output contracts with iTunes, Amazon and Google Play. This disrupted the way distributors have traditionally accessed the main digital platforms, as previously this had only been achieved by delivering video content to these platforms via a small number of select third parties. This method adds further layers of costs and commissions, reducing the returns the copyright holders receive. It also limits the ability to manage the release of a film on these platforms in a tactile way.

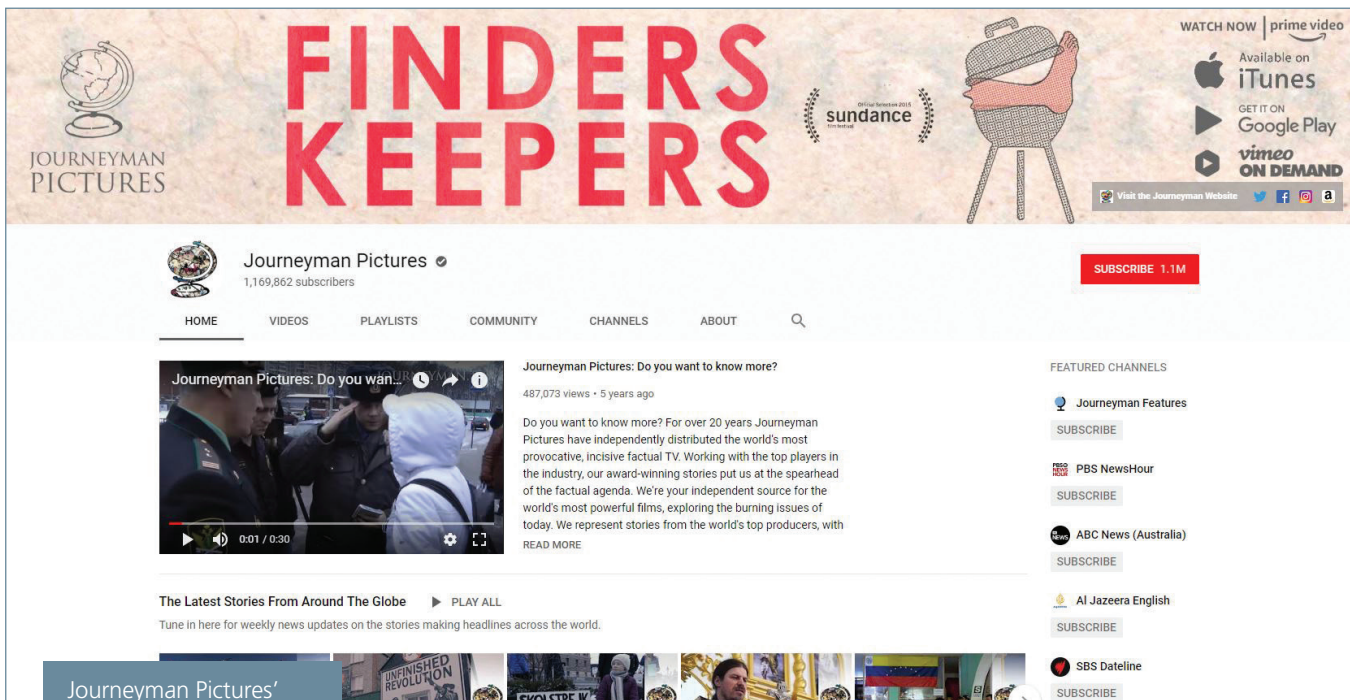
The challenges of the digital market

Today, the digital market accounts for half of our revenue model, and this is increasing. The growth and visibility of our YouTube channel have enabled us to develop a global presence. The success of our promotion through YouTube and various social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, is appreciated by the major platforms, as we channel our followers directly to their rental pages via transactional links. The digitisation

“I always knew that the digital age would require us to find a direct route to the documentary consumer”

Growth in digital revenue, 2015 to 2018





Journeyman Pictures' YouTube channel

“We have already seen impressive growth in territories further afield”

of video content also allows us to offer the purchase and delivery of our films to customers directly via our website, for private and educational use, public screenings and community events. The costly challenge we face is to produce good-quality digital copies of the older content in our library, which goes back 25 years and is still largely stored on tape.

The market is going to become increasingly digitally focused, but challenges remain. Two years ago, iTunes constituted 80 per cent of our digital market, and today they are less than ten per cent. Similarly, Netflix was our biggest single customer two years ago, yet as they increasingly focus on producing original content, we've seen a drop in their acquisitions. It is essential that we stay vigilant in the marketplace and remain on top of every development that happens, such as Apple opening up their applications to be used on non-Apple products or Google revamping their video-on-demand platforms.

We are not significantly affected by Ofcom or similar regulators, as currently the regulatory world is not very concerned about high-quality

documentaries or current affairs programmes. We were concerned, however, when Ofcom began to look at companies like us for licence fees, treating us as if we were a broadcaster. A governmental discussion followed, which recognised the growth of the digital community, and for a few years we had to pay a few thousand pounds a year. Despite this, the fees were never too burdensome and are understandable, as the marginal sector we are involved in is still being formed.

As we look forward, we are endeavouring to expand our audience base to reach the public further afield and those outside of our core market. This involves various issues, including language localisation of our content, international regulations and a shrinking, unpredictable broadcast market as TV broadcasters find a place alongside the VOD phenomenon. We have already seen impressive growth in territories further afield, especially China, yet we only currently access about ten per cent of our potential global market. Our future growth is going to be defined by how we target the remaining 90 per cent.

The Tythe Barn, Launton



Historically, the barn was used as the lambing barn and cattle shelter



Director Emma Deeley

The Tythe Barn is set on a working farm in Oxfordshire that has embraced the wedding industry since 1998. Weddings now make up 90 per cent of the business and while the barn does also host corporate events, it is as a wedding venue that it has become most well known. When Will and Emma Deeley saw that the farm was facing a difficult future, they noticed the potential of the location as a venue. Following a series of renovations, the business has grown quickly. Emma tells *The Parliamentary Review* more about how this was all possible.

The company was founded 20 years ago when we recognised that the barn was becoming increasingly redundant in its role as a lambing barn on the family farm. Following a careful restoration, the impromptu wedding of Will's older brother Peter in the barn set the path for a future wedding venue. Will and I met at university in 1988, and with our combined creative vision, passion for style and eye for detail, we have been able to take the business from strength to strength.

Historically, The Tythe Barn was used as the lambing barn and cattle shelter for the Deeley family farm, which has been owned by Will's family for over 500 years. Will grew up working on the farm and has always been passionate about his roots, and so rural diversification, from lambing barn to venue, seemed a natural step, particularly given our central location and easy access to transport links – our clients come from all over the country and abroad.

Our pricing structure places us at the higher end of the wedding venue category and this was an intentional move as well as a necessary and practical one. We are acutely aware that our role is to understand, support and connect with all of our couples,

FACTS ABOUT THE TYTHE BARN, LAUNTON

- » Director: Emma Deeley
- » Founded in 1998
- » Based in Launton, Oxfordshire
- » Services: Wedding venue, corporate events and private party hire
- » No. of employees: 23
- » www.thetythebarn.co.uk

“We are obsessed with attention to detail in all aspects of our business and this passion and drive help to keep us delivering both a high-quality product and an informed and professional service”

We are obsessed with attention to detail in all aspects of our business

and we go to great lengths to ensure our couples feel welcome, looked after and part of our small family.

Level of service

We are obsessed with attention to detail in all aspects of our business and this passion and drive help to keep us delivering both a high-quality product and an informed and professional service. Feedback from our couples is fundamental to our continued success and every couple is sent a form to fill in, which asks them to rate various aspects of their wedding day with us, including the planning and preparation before the day and the level of service during and after the event. Questions about the suppliers they have used also help us to stay informed as to the performance of various suppliers, be they regular or new.

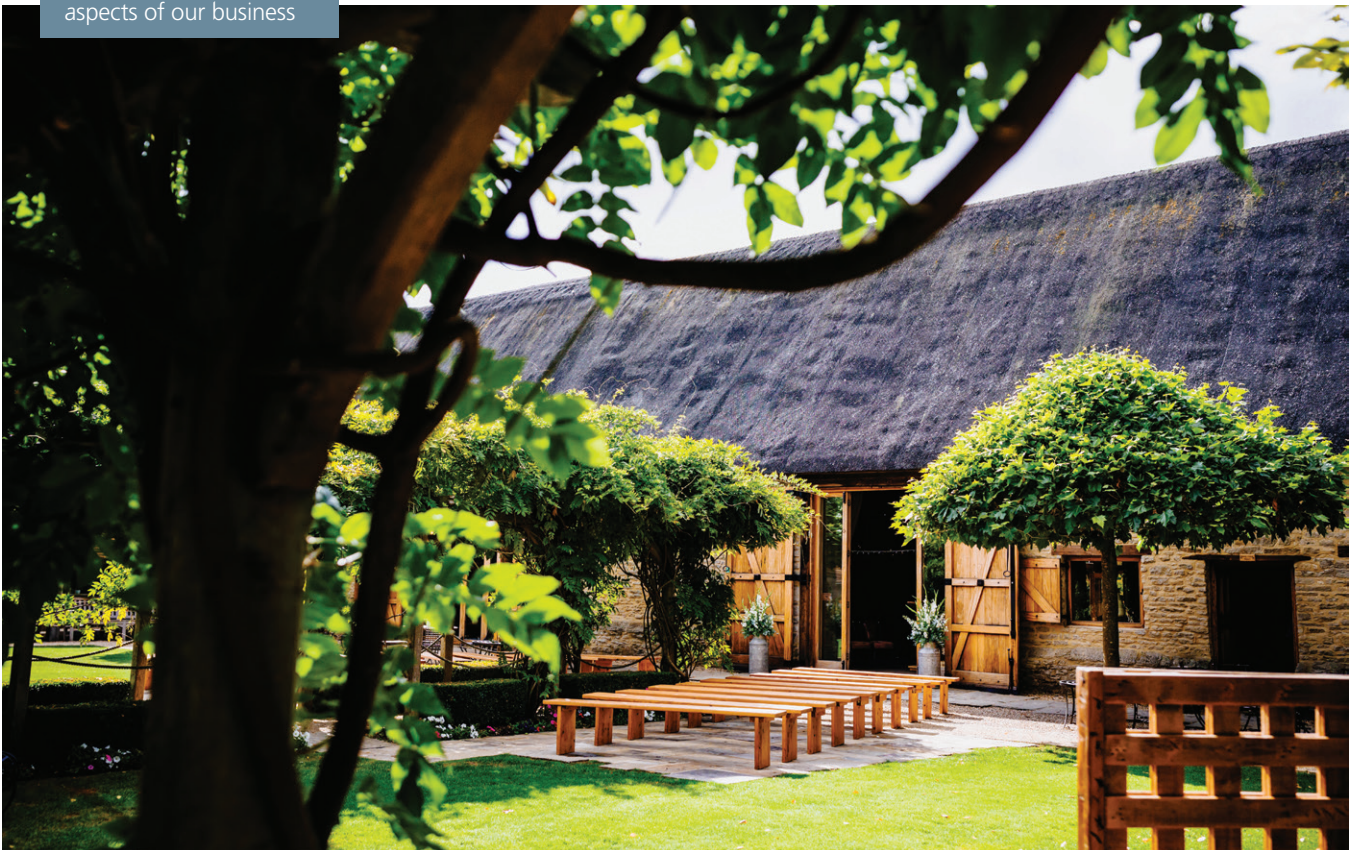
A wedding and events venue is a demanding business, frequently with commitments all week long as well as all weekend – we have a full office during the week with some evening and weekend show-rounds, and we

usually have at least two weddings every weekend. We pop in on the bride and groom in the evening to show our face and check the couple are happy. A wedding and events venue is expected to interact with, participate in and respond to social media 24/7 and so activity across all our accounts is very time intensive.

Supporting our staff and community

We employ a number of local people and have always supported the community by using local businesses. There's been a sharp increase in our staff requirements as demand has grown, but the growth of Bicester Village has seen a number of staff transferring over to more sociable hours at the retail outlet. They also offer a high wage that we've now tried to match.

As employers we have had to learn to step back a little to ensure the right balance between family life and work. This is something we are still trying to negotiate and get right but





The Tythe Barn was built in 1370

as owners you need to rely hugely on trust and the ability to delegate certain roles to staff, which in turn allows us to focus on the bigger picture, the future of the business and the family. Our team is always evolving but we have been incredibly lucky to have a predominantly loyal group.

Many of the staff have been with us since the start, and a large number of our temporary bar staff are university students. The fact that some have gone on to full-time roles with us is massively rewarding. We have always hoped that employees see their role with us as a career and not just as a job, and we return this loyalty by treating our team well.

Navigating a crowded sector

The wedding industry is vast and a crowded market. Barn weddings in particular have been a growth sector for a number of years and although this has been fantastic for the business, it has also meant that we have seen an incredible increase in the development of new barn venues and competition is intense. The popularity of such venues means we have to keep on top of our game, constantly creating new ideas and projects.

With access to social media and the inspiration couples can gain from

different platforms, the nature of our industry and role within it has changed dramatically. Couples are more demanding, spurred on by the wealth of images and ideas they have at their fingertips. Many arrive at the venue armed with specific ideas and plans for how they want the barn to look, and they bring a large number of additional items with them to create the day they want. This has increased our workload on a wedding morning ten-fold and carries with it an increased demand for staffing to accommodate the work involved.

At one point, we experienced a significant downturn in bookings following the hiring of staff who were not perhaps best suited to particular roles. Will's intention was to reduce his role in managing the business 24/7, but we realised that an essential element of this was finding good people who we could depend on. The answer to this particular issue was for us to take back on the roles of carrying out all show-rounds and being once again more proactive within the office. We learnt very early on that it is not only vital, as owners, to be passionate about the business, the customers and the personal touch but also that our presence helps our customers to pick up on that passion and buy in to our story for their big day.

“Barn weddings in particular have been a growth sector for a number of years and although this has been fantastic for the business, it has also meant that we have seen an incredible increase in the development of new barn venues”

London Hotel Group



Founder and Owner
Gauhar Nawab



Ibis Styles London
Walthamstow hotel

FACTS ABOUT LONDON HOTEL GROUP

- » Founder and Owner: Gauhar Nawab
- » Founded in 1969
- » Based in London
- » Services: London hotel management
- » No. of employees: More than 500
- » The business started by selling a home, a car and premium bonds
- » www.lhg.co.uk

Gauhar Nawab arrived in England from Lucknow in 1961 aged 21, with little more than a strong ambition to make something of himself and serve society. From modest beginnings, he went about satisfying market demand wherever it appeared, beginning by providing guest house services. He now manages a portfolio of hotels across London. Gauhar tells *The Parliamentary Review* more about the journey he took along the way.

Inspired by Persian poetry and a penchant for philosophy, I believe that by exhibiting the qualities of hard work and perseverance, then God the most merciful will smile on my endeavours. I started in a modest way but was always committed to providing services that the public needed in a manner acceptable to them: for me, to serve was to succeed.

I came to study as a barrister, but my grant was stopped due to the Indo-China war, so I worked first as a factory worker, and then in a bakery for two years, seven days a week. When I left the bakery, I joined Selfridges as a sales assistant. I also studied part-time for the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers' exams and, having gained the qualification, joined Distillers as a shipping clerk. I still yearned to have my own business, so I sold my home, premium bonds and car and bought a small guest house in Balham, London, for £8,500 – doing everything from the cleaning to making the beds, preparing breakfast and everything in between, day and night.

This purchase was made in 1969 with the assistance of a banker, whom I had impressed by my commitment and determination, and I purchased the four adjoining properties by 1974. Wanting to acquire an additional adjacent property,

I found that I could not secure finance unless I convinced the bank that I was conversant with the building trade. Consequently, I found a retired builder who taught me everything. I purchased 132 Ritherdon Road for £11,000, converted it into three flats and sold it for £45,000. My banker then introduced me personally to other banks, and with judicious use of credit cards, I bought two more small hotels of 16 rooms each on Clapham Common – Dudley Hotel and Belvedere Hotel – for £45,000 each. Thereafter, I bought another adjoining property and turned the three into a single 65-bedroom hotel. I managed a good turnover through almost 100-per-cent occupancy rates and kept going.

Principles of good practice

The principle of expansion for me has been not to overextend and to use, wherever possible, free reserves for financing of new acquisitions, thereby reducing exposure to loan finance. The choice of lender has been critical; I have always looked to find the best-available rates in the market. Ensuring consistently high occupancy rates has been achieved by entering into partnership with Accor and Best Western and by building my own sales team. Word of mouth from satisfied guests is important in ensuring both repeat and new business, while our receptionists are trained to give a warm welcome to all visitors.

My company, London Hotel Group, sees itself not just as a successful private hotel business, with consistent occupancy rates of over 85 per cent, but also as part of the communities in which the hotels are situated. To that end, we have appointed a community engagement officer to operate both across London as a whole and within individual boroughs. The officer works with the local authority and community groups, assessing how we can support them both in practical terms, by

enabling use of hotel premises, and financially, as an active part of our corporate social responsibility.

Secrets of success

I am an irrepensible advocate for London and the UK, and my ambition is to ensure that London can always provide affordable but good-quality hotel accommodation, so that it is a city that those of modest means from all over the world can visit. To that end, I should like to double our present number of hotels. Currently, we have 1,500 hotel rooms and two more hotels under development, as well as 200 residential properties in sites throughout London.

A number of factors have allowed me to develop a hotel and housing portfolio that employs more than 500 people, while retaining a focus on charitable causes and assisting the needy. Firstly, I always meet the guests' needs – good, clean, competitively priced accommodation with comfortable rooms and good facilities, internet connectivity, and transport links. I put myself in the position of the guest, and that includes getting a courteous service from all the staff, which is instilled into them. That leads to near 100-per-cent occupancy and

“I came to study as a barrister, but my grant was stopped due to the Indo-China war”

Best Western Plus Croydon bedroom





The Best Western
London Queens Crystal
Palace Hotel

“My ambition is to ensure that London can always provide affordable but good-quality hotel accommodation”

consequent turnover, as well as guest loyalty and marketing through word of mouth.

Secondly, I am never overambitious. I fund as much as possible from cashflow, reducing reliance on loans. Thirdly, I build friendships and mutual trust with close experienced advisers and funders, earning their respect, so that my business is their business. I am blessed with infinite energy and an innovative spirit. When first starting in 1969, I sent a brochure to every overseas British embassy and high commission so that potential visitors could know that there was basic but clean accommodation available for £5 per night at a time when there was a desperate shortage – as tourism then was orientated much more around wealthy clientele – so that I was able to capture a market.

Putting clients at the centre

My commitment to the customer is demonstrated by a couple of stories. One was where I saw an elderly couple waiting to check in and personally escorted them, carrying their bags, to the room. In return I was given

a £5 tip, but I said I was the owner and returned the tip. Another was when a couple with three young children couldn't find accommodation anywhere in London during the Christmas period, so I moved beds into the hotel dining room and let them stay for free.

I am pleased that determination and aptitude, elbow grease, and respect and care for guests are hallmarks that others have recognised in me. I am always aware of my origins and act as a dynamic individual who expects the same from others in the business. I was also lucky enough to have a strong partnership with my wife of 55 years, which ended only recently with her untimely death. We did everything together, and she was an essential support and inspiration in both my business and my personal life. Finally, I have consistently been elected as president of the Non-Resident Indians Association and host the annual awards for achievement, which bring Indians distinguished in the fields of medicine, science, academia and engineering from all over the world to the House of Lords.

Trinifold Management



UB40 feat. Ali Campbell & Astro



Managing Director Robert Rosenberg (far left), with The Who and Bill Curbishley (far right)

Founded in 1974 by William Curbishley, Trinifold Management has been based in Camden Town since 1996 following a move from its initial base in Soho. Primarily a management company for musicians, having worked with notable artists including The Who, Jimmy Page, Robert Plant, Judas Priest and UB40 among others, it has also branched out into publishing and production. Managing Director Robert Rosenberg tells *The Parliamentary Review* about the current state of the music industry and the future of many of Trinifold's clients.

Despite managing some of the most popular artists in the world, publishing in the music sector and producing feature films and documentaries, Trinifold Management has always operated as a dynamic, small business. This included a staff team of around eight people and a roster of artists to whom we dedicate a significant amount of time and effort. Whether famous or unknown, we guarantee that each artist we partner with is given the quality service that they deserve. This model has always worked for us and our clients, and in 2008 we became part of the Universal Music Group of companies.

Managing the success and progression of our artists

The successful management of music artists involves organising every aspect of their careers. This includes tasks such as booking and organising tours, negotiating record, publishing and merchandising deals, overseeing all ongoing aspects of these deals and responding to all their day-to-day issues. Each artist is different in terms of what they expect or need from their manager, so our staff have to

FACTS ABOUT TRINFOLD MANAGEMENT

- » Managing Director: Robert Rosenberg
- » Founded in 1974
- » Based in Camden
- » Services: Artist management and film and TV production
- » No. of employees: 8
- » www.trinifold.co.uk

“It is our belief that for a manager to do their job properly they have to be passionate about the artist and their music”

be very adaptable. Our job is literally 24 hours a day, especially when you consider that a lot of our work involves artists in the USA, but our staff are always willing to give everything for our clients.

We have always focused on artists who can play live and on music that we like – regardless of whether it is in fashion at a particular time. It is instead our belief that for a manager to do their job properly they have to be passionate about the artist and their music. We have always signed and invested in young upcoming artists, some of whom have gone on to be successful and some who have not, but they have always been people whom we believe in artistically and personally.

The changing face of the music industry

The challenges our company faces are very different from those of most companies in that the general economic climate does not usually impact our work. People always seem

to want entertainment and it could even be argued that in bad economic times they need it more. What has been and still is a challenge, however, is the huge change we have seen in the music industry over the past ten years.

Today, we look at an industry in which it is very difficult for older artists to sell records in a physical format. The record stores of previous generations have largely disappeared, and more and more people are consuming music online. Within a few years the CD will have disappeared and almost all of the music that is consumed will be through online streaming platforms.

As yet, the older demographic has not adapted fully to streaming, so the older artists are noticing that their traditional sources of income from album sales are going down and not being replaced by income from downloading and streaming. We are confident in the belief, however, that streaming represents a huge opportunity for our clients in the medium to long term as

Judas Priest





The Who in concert

older people adapt. If this is the case, we are certain that the older artists for whom the past ten years have been a struggle, will see their income rise to levels that are possibly higher than during their peak.

Rediscovering classics

Rock music has sadly become increasingly difficult for listeners to access on the radio, and the result has been that a lot of young people are unaware of great bands such as The Who, Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd. Streaming provides listeners with the opportunity to find music for themselves though, without first hearing it on radio or TV. As a result, we have noticed an upturn in interest from younger people who are discovering these bands for the first time, often by accessing playlists that are linked to the modern artists that they like.

Our focus has always been on live music, and if someone had said 30

years ago that our clients would still be touring today and be as popular as ever, we would not have believed it. This is very much the case though, and we find ourselves entering another year of extensive touring in 2019. As a company, we are looking to the near future when our clients may no longer wish to tour, and we are using our experience and the tremendous interest that remains in the music of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to develop feature films, TV series and a stage musical.

As we are now part of the Universal Music Group, we have taken the opportunity to work with Sir Lucian Grainge and his team. This has been tremendously helpful for us when looking at our plans for the future and how we want to progress our clients' interests. We look forward with optimism as the present remains an incredibly exciting and dynamic time for the music industry.

“If someone had said 30 years ago that our clients would still be touring today and be as popular as ever, we would not have believed it”

The Black Arts Company



Changing the way people think about beer

Eschewing the size of most advertising agencies, The Black Arts Company have chosen to remain small and agile, allowing them to focus with great attention on each project. As the sector changes, and larger firms begin to buy or create their own internal branding agencies, Founder Ian Cassie believes this type of project-focused agency will become more and more attractive. Having organised events for the Professional Footballers' Association and used their significant expertise to produce adverts and short films for a variety of high-profile clients, they have become renowned for their creative skill. Ian tells *The Parliamentary Review* about how the sector is changing and their switch to having a stake in the companies they work for.

Prior to establishing the company in its current form, I owned a mid-sized agency group. Headquartered in the West End with a staff body of 90, we faced ever-increasing overheads, and most of our work was with major brands, many of whom we helped to develop. Having sold the company in 2012, I decided to change tack. We had, against the then-current trend, conceived, produced and delivered projects ourselves with event, graphic and film producers in-house.

We still do this but rely increasingly on freelancers to provide these services. As long as you have a creatively sympathetic pool of affiliates, you can keep your overheads down and bring in a continual source of contemporary thinking. For instance, we recently co-ordinated and organised over 120 crew for the PFA awards, and this clarity

FACTS ABOUT THE BLACK ARTS COMPANY

- » Founder: Ian Cassie
- » Established in 2012
- » Based in Leamington and London
- » Services: Advertising, branding and film & event production
- » No. of employees: 5
- » www.theblackarts.company

of organisation is a real strength. It also leaves us to focus on the quality of the content and the projection of the brand.

The challenge of being project-based is the lack of retained business. Financial planning and continual workflow are almost a thing of the past, but the reality is that clients increasingly view agencies as being only as good as their last job.

We believe an agency group, providing you find the right one, could well be the answer, serving other members of the group with “white label” services while being able to use the skills of these agencies to provide additional projects generated by us through the larger group. This group will also have the infrastructure to complete the work.

An example of this is the supermarket chain Lidl. We went to them with the concept of “Lidl Surprises” where we built an unbranded restaurant in Shoreditch where the food and wine came from Lidl but “your bill of £123.60 was reduced to £19.97 because everything came from Lidl.”

They thanked us for our efforts but, as we were half a dozen people in a tiny company, we were seen as far too small to move it forward. Their perception, and to some extent the reality, prevented expansion, but as we have no desire to build an empire, we need another way to move forward.

We do large-scale events for the now-thriving Co-op, and organise, and frankly have transformed, the PFA Awards for the Professional Footballers’ Association. We have also tailored advertising projects for motor group Vertu, who have around 150 multibrand car dealerships across the country, as well as high-profile charity work ranging from male cancer awareness with Samuel L Jackson to a new initiative to “Give proper jobs to the homeless” called Only A Pavement Away. We have worked with Liam Fox

MP for some years to support an army charity called Give Us Time and have welcomed them to share our offices.

Combining creativity with practical results

Clients often ask creative agencies to think outside the box when reality dictates that what they really mean is to tick one or two. But if you think about it, that is neither impossible nor unreasonable.

Original, “cool” ideas that win awards are all well and good, but the success of the client’s enterprise, and the jobs of the commissioning executives themselves, dictates the ideas must work and boost sales.

Advertising has become ephemeral for a lot of people, and our “creativity” is always based on attracting consumers to our brands.

A man who had the biggest influence on my thinking is the immortal Doug Hamilton. I learnt from him while helping to promote the massively successful mobile brand Orange in the Nineties. He always said you needed to “have your head in the clouds” but “your feet on the ground.” He was right.

“Clients often ask creative agencies to think outside the box when what they really mean is to tick one or two”

A Lidl Surprises restaurant





Launching an awareness campaign

“This country is a major force in the world of creative services: from music to film production and from fashion, games, television and advertising to sport”

Part owning the brands you promote

We have also adapted our relationship with some clients to a different business model by working with brands we have a stake in and where we benefit directly from their success.

I had a major influence on the brand and marketing of Italian beer Peroni Nastro Azzurro and followed the CEO Nick Miller to a tiny craft brewery in East London called Meantime when hardly anyone had heard of craft beer. When Nick sold the business, we had shares.

He now has an interest in Liverpool Brewery Love Lane, and we do too. We have been working with the company for a year, helping them to construct their brand, but as we are now directly invested in the business, we support them beyond advertising and try to assist with their wider business.

We want them to become a global brand rather than just the biggest brewery in Liverpool, and this new method of engaging with creative agencies helps to foster a partnership of interest that drives the business forward.

A bright future

Looking ahead, online platforms and media owners are increasingly taking control over the creation, production and distribution of advertising. Initially this will affect the media agencies, but clearly the creative agencies are next.

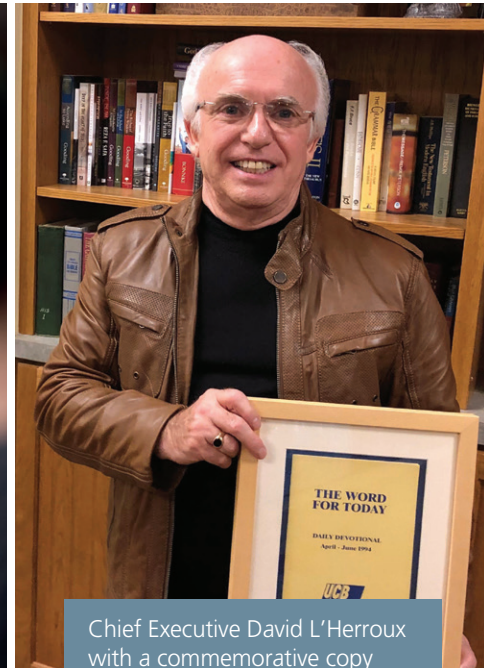
Sites like YouTube are already repurposing existing TV adverts for their platform, and the next logical step for them would be to replace creative agencies and film production companies, of which we are both, with creating their own adverts for their platform. This serves as an illustration of how the sector is evolving and how the movement towards agility, and a focus on each commission, is becoming increasingly essential.

We would like to see an end to the current uncertainty around Brexit, but whatever happens, this country is a major force in the world of creative services: from music to film production and from fashion, games, television and advertising to sport. There will always be a strong domestic market and opportunities for international expansion. It is a complex, frustrating, annoying and fast-changing sector, but above all, it is great fun.

United Christian Broadcasters



UCB 1 presenters live on air



Chief Executive David L'Herroux with a commemorative copy of the first edition of the UCB *Word For Today*

United Christian Broadcasters is a media charity that exists to offer every person in every place at every moment of the day, the opportunity to hear, watch or read the word of God in a relevant and engaging way. Founded in 1986 by Ian Mackie, it is now under the stewardship of Chief Executive David L'Herroux, who tells *The Parliamentary Review* about their journey and ambitions for the future.

"Setting up a radio station must be easy. You just need a big field, a mast, a transmitter and then you plug in the wires and switch it on, right?" In the early 1980s, those were the words of a young Ian Mackie, who would later become the founder of United Christian Broadcasters. Originally from Scotland, Ian had moved to New Zealand some years earlier, as a person with no real belief system and by his own admission to get as far away from the UK as possible.

Searching for some meaning in his life, he explored different philosophies and then in 1980 had an unexpected, dramatic conversion to Christianity. Full of passion and eager to share his faith, Ian heard about Rhema Radio, a Christian radio station based in Christchurch. He was immediately struck by the idea that this was a great way to communicate faith to a mass audience. With an electrical engineering background, Ian met with the manager of Rhema Radio and soon discovered there was significantly more to running a radio station than simply turning on a transmitter. Rhema offered Ian a job and he spent the next three years learning the art of radio.

FACTS ABOUT UNITED CHRISTIAN BROADCASTERS

- » Chief Executive: David L'Herroux
- » Founder: Ian Mackie
- » Founded in 1986
- » Located in Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire
- » Services: Two national Christian radio stations, two quarterly print Bible devotionals, a Prayerline service, UCB Player (app-based, on-demand Christian TV) and children's and other print and online resources
- » No. of employees: 110, alongside 400 volunteers
- » UCB reaches over 500,000 people every month through sharing Bible-based content on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- » www.ucb.co.uk

“This was bad news for UCB and the next few years were a long and hard challenge, with the team lobbying for change at every level”

Challenging legislation

In 1986, Ian and his wife sold their home and with their young family flew back to England with a vision to see Christian broadcasting established in the UK. But almost immediately, it seemed as though the door was firmly closed. Ian was told there would never be an opportunity for religious broadcasters to be granted national licences. Officials told him that the UK already had *Songs of Praise* and “Thought for the Day” and had no need for additional religious content.

In 1989, the UK government produced Green and White Papers, with the intent to prevent all expression of people’s religious views by broadcasters, on independent TV and radio channels. This was bad news for UCB and the next few years were a long and hard challenge, with the team lobbying for change at every level. In 1993, the situation began to shift with the advent of new technology and we were able to broadcast to the UK and Europe on

satellite. It still wasn’t quite the dream come true, but the emergence of digital radio in the 2000s began to open up new possibilities.

On December 1, 2009, UCB went national with our flagship station UCB 1, then known as UCB UK. As the sounds of UCB Christian radio filled homes, Ian was found in the UCB staff dining room, gently shaking his head in awe and disbelief. Legal battles and political challenges for more than two decades had not dimmed his enthusiasm for what he knew was right. This was an extraordinary day and it was just the beginning.

In 2019, we celebrate our tenth year of broadcasting nationally on DAB. We now have two national Christian stations, UCB 1 and UCB 2. Understanding that music taste differs hugely, UCB 1 features the top 10 in contemporary Christian music, talk programmes on big issues ranging from Brexit to Myanmar, all interspersed with what we call “God spots”. These are short, punchy 60 to 90-second pieces designed to stop listeners in their tracks and give them a moment with God.

UCB 2 has a more reflective style. It’s geared towards an audience who may have been Christians for longer, so there are programmes with Christian talks and music ranging from contemporary praise to southern gospel. Over the years, we also developed a Prayerline phone service whereby callers can receive prayer from trained volunteers, a TV channel with an on-demand app service and a daily Bible devotional called the UCB *Word for Today*.

From an initial print run of 3,500 copies in the mid-1980s, the distribution of the *Word for Today* has expanded to over 400,000 print copies each quarter, in addition to digital copies and circulation through social media. While radio is our passion

UCB 2 presenter, Ruth O’Reilly-Smith





UCB in the early years of broadcasting

and central to all we do, the Word for Today celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, with the same writing team, and remains an important resource for our listeners and the wider UK church. Observers often question whether there is any evidence that Christian media has any kind of impact: I can tell a number of stories about people whose lives have been changed after an extraordinary encounter, through Christian radio with a loving God.

Lives changed for good

I recently met with Chantell Leonie Hayles, who was formerly a lap dancer working in a Birmingham club. She described herself as being lonely and confused, working in a difficult environment. She remembers arriving home one night and somehow finding UCB on her radio. The music, the songs about a God who loved her, touched a nerve and made her cry. Curious to find out more, Chantell started attending church, where she became a Christian. She left her job as lap dancer and is now an ambassador

for UCB, travelling to churches and events across the UK, sharing her story.

We hear so many stories like these. We've heard from former alcoholics, from people who feel they've found freedom from depression, sickness – the list goes on. We are big believers in the power of testimony. We believe that when a person hears a life-changing story, it helps them to believe that change is possible for them too. But this is not about us or what UCB can do; we're just a platform to tell people about how a relationship with Jesus Christ can change their lives.

Having lost a son to cot death and a grandson who was stillborn, I know what it feels like when your world seems to explode. And because of those experiences, I also know, very personally, why Christian media is so important. It's there around the clock when the physical doors of church are closed; it's there in the twilight hours when no one else is available. And that is why Christian radio is such an incredibly important resource.

“We are big believers in the power of testimony. We believe that when a person hears a life changing story, it helps them to believe that change is possible for them too”

The Garage



Executive Director Adam Taylor



The Garage, Norwich

FACTS ABOUT THE GARAGE

- » Executive Director: Adam Taylor
- » Founded in 2002
- » Located in Norwich
- » Services: Performing arts centre
- » No. of employees: 23
- » The building they operate in was once a car garage, hence their company name
- » www.thegarage.org.uk

The Garage trust was established to work with those from challenging circumstances in order to raise their aspiration and improve their prospects, with inclusion work permeating every facet of its work. In doing so, The Garage work with 6,000 participants per year, reach an audience of 25,000 and support 285 bursaries. They run over 100 regular weekly classes in dance, music and drama and provide qualifications at GCSE, HNC and, in 2020, MA levels. Alongside this, they also present and put on productions for young audiences. Executive Director Adam Taylor tells *The Parliamentary Review* more.

Our previous business model was to sell the majority of our studio space in our building to external customers and to run project activity around our charitable objectives. In 2015, however, our major building users were leaving us for their own sites, and we were forecasting a reduction in income and, alongside this, had seen a reduction in subsidy from the local authority. We used to think about what to do with the building, but we now needed to think about what we could do for the community.

Building a relationship with the right funder

Not so long ago, like many small charities, we would chase small pots of restricted funding to sustain our portfolio of activity, but this could and would shift our art forms and the areas that we worked in. However, with the reduction of core subsidy

– which historically for us came from the local authority – we had to shift how we operate and, indeed, how we raise funds to support our activity and the communities we work with.

This meant that we were driven to find funders to support the activity that we are presently running, underwriting the cost of support workers on our class programme or bursaries to cover the cost of travel, places on courses or equipment needed. This utilisation of subsidy to develop a portfolio of activity – which had the potential to become sustainable – brought about a growth in turnover of 25 per cent over the last three years.

In this time, we have been operating without a fundraiser, and the staff in the organisation have been raising funds to support their portfolio of work. We have also found a core funder who has supported the business model changes we've been going through. This funder is able to see the journey to sustainability for the charitable trust, helping us focus not on the short-term funding

situation but instead on making longer-term changes for the trust and our community.

The meaning of education for cultural organisations

Our newest area of growth in recent times has been in our education portfolio, an area of work which sees qualifications delivered to young people and adults who want to study outside conventional settings. For a number of cultural organisations, when referring to their education provision, they are referring to the work that they undertake with education providers or young people – as did we until recently.

In the 2015-16 period, young people told us that they wanted us to consider running qualifications. They wanted to focus their time at school on what they considered academic, more STEM-oriented subjects, but they still wanted to take creative qualifications. They wanted to do this, however, in a setting they found conducive to the subject matter. Therefore, a

“A dance GCSE is delivered by our dance artists rather than, for example, by a PE teacher”

HNC Performing Arts
Foundation Programme
students





Little Red Riding Hood

“We make interactive performance work for toddlers and their families so that they can have their first cultural experiences together ”

dance GCSE is delivered by our dance artists rather than, for example, by a PE teacher, and drama is taught by a director in a theatre that produces its own professional performance work.

Accordingly, we began delivering GCSEs by setting up as an exam centre, which soon saw us develop into delivering HNCs too – essentially, this is an intensive qualification to support progression of young people from colleges to universities, as well as to dance and drama schools. This programme is in its second year and is seeing real success, with many students receiving offers to higher education institutions.

Our theatre is core to our work

Our small studio space, which can seat up to 180 people, started by mostly hosting youth theatre. We started programming professional work and curating the performance offer in 2011, and in 2016 we began making our own performance work. This has been a real catalyst for growing our reputation and reach.

We make interactive performance work for toddlers and their families so that they can have their first cultural experiences together – this has grown

from 12 shows in year one to 156 across four productions three years later. During Christmas, we saw a little under 4,000 audience members, even when the seating capacity was limited to just 70. As we continue to make and programme work for young audiences, we consider how we can better support artists that are producing this great work. Ways in which we do this range from our work-in-progress nights, through to giving space to develop ideas, as well as hosting workshops with young people to ensure work is made with, and not just for, young people.

Looking forwards

To date, we have been creating a business model that enables us to grow our own income, which also supports our charity work. When this income exceeds covering the direct overheads, this will mean we can rely less on funding from other sources to underwrite our charitable and inclusion work.

We are always looking to broaden our horizons by seeking out other geographic areas that could benefit from our ethos. We constantly review how our approach can be utilised to reach other communities that need it – be this in the form of adding more sites, in the form of a partnership or even just as a consultant. The challenge for us is carrying this out with our finite capacity.

We've had to show courage while building and expanding our business model to support the trust and our beneficiaries in the long term – especially given that benefits are not always immediate. Managing the short-term funding – at times near crisis point – has not been easy, but we know that thinking of the bigger, longer-term picture is what's essential to our continued success.

A matter of time



How long will the prime minister's tenure last?

As regular readers will know, the final pages of *The Parliamentary Review* look back on the most significant parliamentary incidents of the past year. Consider our frustration, therefore, at the fact that our early September publication date coincides with what is likely to be one of the most momentous weeks in parliament's history.

By the time you read this, you will either be in the midst of the mayhem or you'll be reflecting on it from a safe distance. At the time of writing, Boris Johnson has been prime minister just shy of a month. But it's not until September that his premiership truly begins. And, if certain pundits are to be believed, this may also be the month when it ends.

A confidence motion is expected to be tabled by the leader of the opposition shortly after parliament returns on September 3, with a small handful of Conservative MPs said to be seriously considering voting against their own government; such is their desperation

to thwart Mr Johnson's promise to take Britain out of the EU "come what may".

If the government to lose the vote, we will all be dusting off our copies of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011.

The Act, which was passed by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government, aimed to transfer the power to control the electoral timetable from the prime minister to parliament by requiring the former to have the agreement of two-thirds of the house in order to call an election.

Crucially, the Act also allows the prime minister a stay of execution in the event of a lost confidence vote. Rather than having to call an election immediately upon defeat, as was the case prior to 2011, there is now a 14-day period during which he or an alternate leader has a chance to secure a majority of support in the Commons.

Normally, this would be incidental. At present, with the clock ticking towards October 31, the date on which it is legally mandated for Britain to leave the European Union, 14 days could make all the difference.

Once the two weeks are up, if no new government has been formed, an election must be called and the power for choosing the date rests entirely with the prime minister.

Rather than limiting Mr Johnson, this Act, at this particular moment in time, has provided him with an unexpected source of strength. Even if he is defeated in a confidence motion on September 3, an election will not be

announced until October 17. At this point, Mr Johnson can announce that the election will take place on October 31, or a date shortly thereafter, with parliament closed in the interim, thereby guaranteeing that the United Kingdom does indeed leave the EU without a deal, which is exactly what those who vote the government down would be hoping to avoid.

According to *The Daily Telegraph*, this is exactly the strategy being employed by Mr Johnson's most senior aide, Dominic Cummings, who is said to believe that MPs are powerless to prevent a no-deal Brexit.

Mr Cummings' namesake, the Tory MP Dominic Grieve, responded to this suggestion by claiming "there are a number of things which the House of Commons can do, including bringing down the government and setting up a new government in its place."

Without the whole-hearted support of the Labour Party, however, this remains purely hypothetical, with shadow home secretary Diane Abbott tweeting that a national government "didn't work

for Ramsay McDonald and won't work now".

It is apparent that Labour MPs will not, in any serious number, back any government not led by Jeremy Corbyn, and it remains desperately unlikely that any Tory MP would ever countenance supporting a Corbyn-led government, even temporarily.

A no-confidence vote against Mr Johnson's government would therefore lead inexorably to a general election at a time of the prime minister's choosing.

By the time you read this, much of the above may already have been rendered irrelevant. Whether the political picture looks any clearer, however, is another matter altogether. As the following articles and indeed previous editions of *The Parliamentary Review* demonstrate, unpredictability has been a key component of our politics for quite some time. Expectations have been subverted on a regular basis.

If we can predict anything with confidence, it is that this is likely to continue. For how long? Time will tell.

Backbenchers take back control

Lenin allegedly said that in politics "there are decades where nothing happens; and there are weeks where decades happen." Yet, even he might have been surprised by the sheer pace of events in the British parliament on April 3, 2019.

It was a battle for control of Brexit. Against the background of the offer of talks with Labour to end the parliamentary deadlock over leaving the EU from Theresa May, then-prime minister, a cross-party backbench alliance seized control of Commons business and then rammed through a bill to postpone Brexit day. Their aim was to prevent Britain from



Yvette Cooper spearheaded the charge to postpone Brexit with an emergency bill

leaving without a trade deal, but the manoeuvre by which they achieved it was unique and unprecedented in the modern era.

With the prospect of a no-deal exit on April 12, those opposed to that eventuality had been cornered into decisive action – but it was a close-run thing, with the Business of the House motion which allowed the bill to be pushed through won by a single vote, 312 to 311. MPs gasped – but that vote meant that the European Union (Withdrawal) (No. 5) Bill would be put through all its stages of debate in the remaining time available that day – before being sent off to the Lords.

A law was essential to compel the government to obey because a mere resolution of the House would not carry sufficient force, but many regarded it as unconstitutional. Moving the bill, Yvette Cooper, the former Labour cabinet

minister, said the group were acting “for fear of the damage that no deal would do to all our constituencies.”

For the government, Stephen Barclay, the Brexit secretary, said the bill was being passed in haste and was “constitutionally irregular”, and could even increase the risk of an accidental no-deal exit, if there was a last-minute disagreement over the length of a postponement offered by the EU.

But a few moments later MPs did back the bill, approving a second reading by 315 votes to 310. As the process continued, a series of amendments were seen off at committee stage, before the bill received its third reading, again by a single vote – 313 to 312.

The Speaker rewrites the Commons rulebook



Speaker John Bercow was widely criticised by MPs

This constitutional irregularity on the part of backbench MPs was partly inspired and enabled by the actions of the Speaker three months earlier.

In what may turn out to have been the biggest decision of his Speakership, John Bercow defied Commons precedent to make a novel ruling on framework for MPs’ “meaningful vote” debate on Theresa May’s Brexit deal.

With the government apparently heading for certain defeat, the planned vote on the deal had been abandoned, just before Christmas 2018. And when MPs finally resumed their debate, the Speaker decided to allow an amendment to be proposed to the Business of the House motion. This was, most MPs believed, flatly against the Commons rules, both because the motion would be voted on “forthwith” – a term normally seen as foreclosing any possibility of an amendment – and because the existing Business of the House motion said that changes could only be proposed by a minister.

This seemingly technical step allowed a combination of opposition MPs and Conservative rebels to vote through an important change; in the event of its deal being voted down, the government would now be required to put down a motion within three sitting days which would allow MPs to debate what happened next.

The effect was to sharply reduce the grace period the government would otherwise have had – and to bring forward the moment when MPs might seize control of Brexit. And the result was a furious backlash against the Speaker in the chamber.

In spite of such backlash and the heated exchanges that ensued, one thing quickly became apparent. Mrs May had been stymied by the Speaker, the opposition and her own backbenchers, and her days as prime minister were numbered.

Crisis at British Steel

The government faced calls to renationalise British Steel, once a giant of UK industry, after the company was put into liquidation, placing 25,000 jobs at risk. In a statement to the Commons, on May 22, Greg Clark, then-business secretary, told MPs he had been unable to agree a £30 million emergency loan to keep paying wages to company staff.

He said the government could only act within the law and any financial support must be made on a commercial basis. “The absence of adequate security, no reasonable prospect that any loan would have been repaid and the shareholder being unwilling to provide a sufficient cash injection itself meant that this did not meet the required legal tests,” he said. He promised to “pursue remorselessly every possible step to secure the future” of vital steel-making operations, saying “Britain and the world will continue to need high-quality steel, and British steel is among the best in the world.”

For Labour, Rebecca Long-Bailey said the government should “move heaven and earth” to ensure the business continued: “This is indeed very worrying news for the workers, their families and the communities who rely on British Steel directly in Scunthorpe, Skinningrove and Teesside and all the way through the supply chain. At least 25,000 people will be worried sick this morning, wondering whether they will have a job this time next week.”



British Steel went into liquidation in May 2019, putting 25,000 jobs at risk

She said steel manufacture was critical to the UK’s manufacturing base and asked if the possible options included bringing British Steel into public ownership, as Unite the Union and the Labour Party had called for: “The truth of the matter is that the cost of British Steel collapsing is far greater than any short-term outlay the government must make now. The Institute for Public Policy Research has estimated that British Steel’s collapse could lead to £2.8 billion in lost wages, £1.1 billion in lost revenue and extra benefit payments and that it could reduce household spending by £1.2 billion over ten years.”

Restoring parliament's Victorian home



Work has already begun on restoring the Elizabeth Tower, which is expected to finish in 2021

It had, said Andrea Leadsom, leader of the Commons at the time, been a very long time coming. The deteriorating state of the Victorian Palace of Westminster, the home of parliament, had been obvious for decades, but governments and successive generations of MPs had always been wary of a public backlash against committing not millions but billions of pounds to a decade-long mega-project to restore and modernise the building.

But amid fears of a catastrophic failure in the infrastructure of the palace – a flood, a fire, a collapse – the government and the parliamentary authorities brought forward the

Parliamentary Buildings (Restoration and Renewal) Bill, which would create the administrative structure for what promised to be a massive project, under which MPs and peers would move to new temporary chambers for several years, before returning to a restored building in the 2030s.

Moving the second reading of the bill on May 21, Mrs Leadsom (who was to resign as leader the following day, over the government's approach to Brexit) said it was time for MPs to take decisive action to protect parliament for future generations.

She said there had been three significant incidents of falling masonry – and it was only luck that no one had been killed or injured. The parliamentary authorities had been running round-the-clock fire patrols, and there had been 66 fire incidents since 2008.

She described the continuing problems: “Countless water leaks, floods, sewage leaks, and lighting and power outages, and these incidents are about much more than inconvenience... my concern is that the pace of deterioration is now much faster than our ability to patch and mend.”

Davis questions defence secretary over torture

Newspaper allegations that the Ministry of Defence had sought to bypass laws designed to prevent the UK becoming involved in torture prompted an urgent question in late May to Penny Mordaunt, then the newly-appointed defence secretary, from one of the most dangerous Commons questioners – David Davis,

the Conservative ex-cabinet minister. Mr Davis, a longstanding human rights campaigner, wanted reassurance about reports in *The Times* suggesting that ministers could share intelligence with allies even if that led to someone being tortured. Under the rules, information could be passed on if the benefits justified it.

Mrs Mordaunt offered a firm assurance: “The UK government stand firmly against torture and do not participate in, solicit, encourage or condone the use of torture or cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment for any purpose.”

In reply, Mr Davis said the prohibition of torture was an “absolute incontrovertible right... there can never be a reason or justification for torture; what is more, it does not work. It leads to bad intelligence and bad decisions.”

He said MPs should not ignore a Ministry of Defence policy document which in his view presumed that ministers could overrule the law, even international law, including that on the prohibition of torture. “They cannot, they must not, and I hope that my right honourable friend will ensure that they do not,” he added.

Mrs Mordaunt agreed “100 per cent” and insisted that ministers could not overrule or disregard the law. But her Labour shadow, Nia Griffith, said it was time to scrap the policy: “Today’s reports suggest that, according to the Ministry of Defence, torture is acceptable if, and I quote from the policy document, ‘ministers agree that the potential benefits justify accepting



Davis stated that “there can never be a reason or justification for torture”

the risk and the legal consequences that may follow’. Will the secretary of state confirm what the government consider those ‘potential benefits’ to be?”

The defence secretary insisted that it was not government policy to condone or facilitate torture, saying that no ministers had been involved in decisions that would have led to torture. “That is the assurance that I have received from the department,” she added.

“Breathing space” for people in debt

Plans to help people facing crisis debt, by adopting a system already operating in Scotland, won cross-party support in the Commons on June 19.

Under the new breathing space scheme, hundreds of thousands of people in England and Wales with high levels of debt will be able to freeze interest, fees and charges for 60 days. During that time enforcement action against them by creditors and bailiffs will be suspended. In return they’ll have to consult debt advice

services to work out a plan to fix their finances.

Announcing the plan, John Glen, the Treasury minister, said this was a cause close to his heart. Many people ran into debt, not because they’d spent too much, but because they couldn’t pay essential bills. “For people who are just getting by, even a small income shock can provoke a cycle of debt dependence that can be difficult to escape. If then faced with invasive debt enforcement, it is no wonder that

many people in problem debt simply disengage.”

He added that the first step was to ensure that consumer credit firms did not make loans to people who could not afford to repay them. The Financial Conduct Authority had been instructed to make certain that firms lend responsibly, protecting consumers from overborrowing. And the government was also seeking to

increase access to affordable credit and to support people to make good financial decisions.

While most MPs welcomed the plan, the Conservative Sir Edward Leigh urged ministers to tread carefully “because there are unintended consequences of governments, in their dying days, trying to virtue-signal and regulate more but actually doing more damage than good.”

Immigration after Brexit



Sajid Javid told MPs Britain would not abandon its “proud history of being an open and welcoming nation”

Perhaps the single most politically sensitive policy issue flowing from Brexit is immigration; one of the major themes in the Leave campaign in the 2016 Referendum was taking back control of the UK’s borders and ending the freedom of movement which allowed EU citizens to move to Britain. But that had to be balanced with concerns about the impact on industry if vital international talent, and seasonal workers who could not easily be replaced by British workers, were no longer allowed to work here.

And on December 19 last year, the day Sajid Javid, then-home secretary, prepared to unveil the new policy in a Commons statement, it became clear

that the government’s internal debate on this issue was far from resolved.

During a BBC interview that morning, he was repeatedly asked if he was sticking to the Conservatives’ longstanding target of reducing net migration to the tens of thousands, and he repeatedly declined to answer “yes” to that question. That did not go unnoticed. During the session of Prime Minister’s Questions immediately before the statement, a Labour MP, Chris Elmore, put the same question to Theresa May, and she responded with the unequivocal “yes” the home secretary had pointedly failed to deliver. The contrast was not lost on anyone.

In his statement the home secretary reminded MPs that he was the son of immigrants, as he announced plans to end freedom of movement and introduce a policy based on people’s skills. He said leaving the EU meant for the first time in 40 years the government would be able to control who could enter the UK. But he added that Britain would not abandon its “proud history of being an open and welcoming nation.”

He promised a new system giving priority to people with skills the UK economy needed: “We are taking this approach to ensure we can attract the brightest and the best people to the

UK – those who can help our economy flourish. There will be no cap on numbers and no requirement for the highest-skilled workers to undertake a resident labour market test, and there

will be a minimum salary threshold of £30,000.” The plan also included a short-term workers scheme, enabling seasonal and low-skilled staff to come to the UK.

The last word

At *Review* HQ, we often express our relief that our job is to look back on the recent past, rather than make predictions about the future. But this year, more than ever, we have no idea what happens next.

Will the new prime minister face a confidence vote? Will he lose it? And what happens then? A snap election? A no-deal Brexit? A new-deal Brexit? An extension?

Our honest, considered opinion is that we do not know.

We are well and truly on unexplored terrain and, for the world’s oldest parliament, this is quite an achievement. But, throughout this voyage through the political unknown, there has been a

constant, familiar life raft to which we at the *Review* have clung.

It is our privilege to be able to work with leaders from every part of the British economy; something that affords us a unique perspective on the country as a whole. And we have come to the realisation that we understand the country better than we do parliament. While the latter offers uproar and unpredictability, the former simply gets on with the job. It motivates staff, inspires students and creates the products and services from which we all benefit.

We can’t tell you what will happen in parliament. But we can cast an unequivocal vote of confidence in the United Kingdom.

Lord Pickles addresses the Parliamentary Review gala in the House of Commons



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