

FREE Press

No 197 January-February 2014

£1

The Journal of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom

MEDIA MANIPULATION

European court slams UK titles over accuracy

THE European Court of Human Rights has taken the rare step of issuing a statement to try to correct “seriously misleading” stories that appeared in UK papers.

The court says one such article appeared in the *Daily Mail* on October 7, headlined “Human right to make a killing: Damning dossier reveals taxpayers’ bill for European court payouts to murderers, terrorists and traitors”. The report claimed that Strasbourg judges “handed the criminals taxpayer-funded payouts of £4.4m – an average of £22,000 a head.”

That, said the court, was simply wrong.

A statement from the Registrar of the Court said: “Several British newspapers ... published articles based on a table produced in Westminster in response to a written parliamentary question.

“The common theme of the articles is that judgments from the European Court of Human Rights since 1998 have caused the UK government to make substantial payments to successful applicants, the clear suggestion being that this constitutes a massive payout to criminals. The figure cited is £4.4m.

“However, the way in which this has been presented is seriously misleading. First, the figure of £4.4m includes legal costs as well as compensation. The calculation of the total paid in respect of compensation by the UK since 1998 (as opposed to compensation and costs taken together) is in fact in the region of £1.7m, less than half the figure of £4.4m.

“The failure to distinguish between

compensation and costs creates the impression that applicants were awarded significantly more compensation than they really were and that the sums indicated were for the applicants’ sole benefit.

“... the way in which this has been presented is seriously misleading ...”

“A significant proportion of the amounts referred to were therefore paid to lawyers. The particularly high level of legal fees in the UK compared with other Council of Europe countries means that in British cases costs normally exceed compensation. One example would be the case of *Financial Times* and *Others v the UK* in which the *Financial Times*, the *Independent*, the *Guardian*, the *Times* and Reuters were awarded a total of €160,000 in costs, but received no compensation.

“The articles also imply that the sums in question were invariably paid to criminals.

“According to one headline ‘Judges in Strasbourg paid out £4.4m to some of Britain’s worst criminals’. It is simply not true to suggest that all the applicants in respect of whom the Court has found violations since 1998 were criminals.

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MORE CAMPAIGN NEWS
www.cpbf.org.uk

World publishers rally to protect UK press barons

PUBLISHERS' representatives from around the world were due to arrive in London this month to try to strengthen the newspapers industry's political resistance to press regulation in the UK.

A "mission" to the country has been organised by the World Association of Newspapers and News Publishers (WANIFRA) was expected to include senior figures from the industry in five continents.

The visit - which was revealed by The Guardian - was thought by the paper to be the first of its kind. It was, The Guardian said, "prompted by growing concerns about UK government interference in press regulation and the political pressure on The Guardian.

"The delegation is expected to meet government and opposition leaders," the paper added, "press industry figures and civil society organisations."

OBITUARY

Geoffrey Goodman

THE journalist whose name reached a generation as industrial editor of the *Mirror* between the mid-1970s and mid-80s, Geoffrey Goodman has died, aged 91.

The grandson of Jewish emigrés, he was born in Cheshire in July 1922. After a grammar school education, he became an RAF pilot in the war before studying at the London School of Economics.

After working for the *Manchester Guardian*, he joined the *Mirror* but was sacked in 1948. He spent a brief time at the *Daily Herald* before it evolved into *The Sun*. He was invited back to the *Mirror* by editor Hugh Cudlipp.

In 1984, with colleagues Paul Foot and John Pilger, he demanded assurances from then *Mirror* proprietor Robert Maxwell over editorial interference, a pledge that proved worthless.

Geoffrey Goodman was a founding editor of the *British Journalism Review* and a leading early supporter of the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom. He died on September 5 last year. AC

Union support boosts online EU media ownership campaign

THE public service union Unison has become the latest major UK trade union to support the European Initiative for Media Pluralism (EIMP).

EIMP is trying to get a million people across Europe to sign a petition - either online or on paper - calling on the European Union to establish a clear democratic framework for media ownership and regulation.

The move to try to tackle the abuse of media power by the likes of Rupert Murdoch and Silvio Berlusconi already

has the backing of 100 organisations in 11 EU member countries.

UK co-ordinator Granville Williams said: "We've got a number of unions signed up to support the initiative.

"However, we need to build broad public support to get as many signatures as possible by the cut-off date in August."

■ www.mediainitiative.eu



John Beck

The CPBF records with sadness the death of John Beck late last year. John was treasurer of the CPBF in the 1980s and early 90s. He was a printworker, a member of the National Graphical Association (NGA) who with Alf Parrish represented the union on the CPBF national council in the turbulent years of the miners' strike and Wapping. He was also London NGA regional secretary and NGA executive council member. GW

Join the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom

THE Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom depends on its membership for day-to-day operating funds - including the production and distribution of *Free Press*.

Taking out - and maintaining - membership will allow the Campaign to maintain its work, strengthen its voice and enhance its profile at a time when the media industry is facing more repressive political and commercial constraints than for generations.

If you are interested in a media and journalism that contribute to an informed electorate, then please join the Campaign or renew your membership now.

MEMBERSHIP RATES PER YEAR

- a) Individual membership £15
- b) Unwaged £6
- c) Supporting membership £25 (includes CPBF publications)
- d) Institutions (eg libraries) £25 (includes 10 copies of *FREE Press*)

AFFILIATION BY ORGANISATION

- f) Fewer than 500 members £25
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I/We want to join the CPBF and enclose a cheque/PO for £ _____

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Please return to: CPBF, Second Floor, Vi and Gomer Smith House, 23 Orford Road, Walthamstow, London E17 9NL
Tel: 0 772 984 6146 E-mail: freepress@cpbf.org.uk

Regional publisher expects readers to write papers too

JOHNSTON Press is now expecting people to write for its papers- and then pay for what they have produced.

The regional publisher's "experiment" has begun at Bourne in Lincolnshire where JP say *The Local* is "being repositioned" as "the people's paper".

The company is also letting contributors use special software to "add items to the pages of the paper from the comfort of their own homes". The aim, according to the JP intranet, is "to generate up to 75 per cent of editorial content from local contributors" and has also been introduced at the *Harrogate Advertiser* in North Yorkshire.

Bourne Local editor Mark Edwards said: "We still have journalists on the group and they will still be covering the important stories in the area.

Journalists ... 'will curate submitted content'

"What we hope this project will allow us to do is cast our net wider and include more community news written by our readers - and in some cases written directly onto the pages of the week's newspaper."

Mr Edwards was quoted as saying the project will be overseen by journalists "who will curate submitted content".

The JP intranet quoted him as adding: "The usual legal and ethical constraints will apply and so will those of public interest and relevance."

Qualified journalists working for JP titles elsewhere who spent considerable time, energy and cash "doing the legals" to gain National Council for the Training of Journalists' (NCTJ) accreditation were reported to be wondering why they had bothered. Potential concerns regarding readers' appreciation of the PCC code of practice also appear to have been overlooked.

FREE PRESS UPDATE

Journalists maintain Magpies' stand-off

THE stand-off between journalists working for Trinity Mirror newspapers in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and the chairman of Newcastle United football club Mike Ashley has continued, despite calls in parliament for an end to the debacle.

Campaigning led by the National Union of Journalists led to an early day motion (EDM) being tabled in the House of Commons late last year.

The EDM broadened the issue - following revelations that similar attempts to restrict media coverage had been made by Nottingham Forest, Port Vale, Crawley Town and Rotherham United.

The motion condemned the approach, specifically naming Newcastle United chairman Mike Ashley.

The wording added that MPs were calling on their colleagues to "support the National Union of Journalists in believing that journalists working for a free press in a democratic society must be able to express themselves as they see fit within the law, without fear of petty and vindictive corporate sanctions; welcomes the broad support that supporters of the club have given to reporters trying to do their professional best in reporting the affairs of football clubs; and therefore calls on the Premier League and Football Association to implement a code of conduct in respect of the treatment of working journalists."

Among those adding their names to the motion

were sports select committee member and former sports minister Gerry Sutcliffe from Bradford and Gateshead MP Ian Mearns.

Some Trinity Mirror reporters did get to cover one of Newcastle United's major away games last autumn after the ban was introduced.

Tottenham Hotspur went out of their way to welcome reporters from the *Newcastle Chronicle*, *Journal* and *Sunday Sun* to their White Hart Lane ground in London a few days after they were banned from the Magpies' home stadium, St James's Park.

The reassuring welcome came after NUJ northern and midlands organiser Chris Morley wrote to Spurs' head of press Simon Felstein.

"The NUJ," he wrote, "is concerned, first and foremost, that the freedom of the media is upheld We believe the attitude of the owner at Newcastle is unreasonable but whatever his quarrel over the coverage of those newspapers, this should be taken up in the appropriate way with the papers concerned.

"It should not be directed in embarrassing and hostile actions against journalists who are workers simply trying to carry out their jobs."

However, despite the positive move from Spurs and the MPs' intervention the stand-off continued into the new year.

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK?

Comment
on the
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Simply the pits ...



BATTLE LINES: Photographs by Sheffield-based photographer Martin Jenkinson were among the most powerful images to come out of the pit communities during the year-long strike. Martin's personal commitment won him trust and access that was rare at the time. Picture: Martin Jenkinson.



THE release of cabinet papers from 1984 provided confirmation of a cover-up by the Thatcher government and that National Coal Board chairman, Sir Ian MacGregor, did have a secret hit list for pit closures. **Nicholas Jones** went to the National Archives in Kew to examine the documents.

THE claim from National Union of Mineworkers president Arthur Scargill throughout the year-long miners' strike that the National Coal Board (NCB) chairman Ian MacGregor had a secret plan to close 70 pits with the loss of up to 70,000 jobs has been proved correct.

Cabinet records for 1984 have revealed that six months before the start of the strike, within weeks of him taking up the job, MacGregor was advising the government that he intended to close as many as 75 pits with the loss of 64,000 jobs.

The Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher ordered there should be total secrecy about the existence of MacGregor's personal target for closures.

So effective was the subsequent cover-up within Whitehall that MacGregor's 75-pit closure list was never mentioned again in the cabinet papers nor was it ever referred to during the year-long dispute.

When the strike began on March 6 1984 – and then for its duration – the NCB insisted that it wanted to close only 20 pits with the loss of 20,000 jobs, a closure rate that the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) always argued was far fewer than the chairman's true plans.

After only a week of picketing, Mrs Thatcher intervened personally to "stiffen the resolve" of chief constables whom she believed were failing to provide police protection for those miners who wanted to report for work.

Her cabinet papers reveal that she demanded action after becoming "deeply disturbed" at the way the NUM had resorted so quickly to unlawful mass picketing to intimidate those men who had volunteered to work normally.

Within four days of her intervention, police were turning back flying pickets from Yorkshire who were heading south on the motorway to coalfields in the

Midlands and Nottinghamshire. Striking miners from Kent were being turned back at the Dartford Tunnel.

In another move behind the scenes, she put pressure on the government's top law officers, the Lord Chancellor Lord Hailsham and the Attorney General Sir Michael Havers, after being told that magistrates in Rotherham and Mansfield were "dragging their feet" in dealing with cases involving pickets arrested for pit head violence.

■ *Former BBC political correspondent Nicholas Jones presents the CPBF podcasts – available online at www.cpbf.org.uk – and blogs at www.nicholasjones.org.uk.*

Regional TV documentary highlights lingering legacy of police actions

AN edition of the BBC's regional *Inside Out* current affairs programme produced and broadcast in Yorkshire last year has received plaudits for revealing how concerns about the strike, its coverage and the role of the police remain living controversies in former pit communities.

The programme revealed similarities between the police investigations of the strike and the Hillsborough tragedy in nearby Sheffield in 1989.

The chief constable of West Yorkshire, Sir Norman Bettison – who had already announced his retirement – stood down within 36 hours of the broadcast. He had been with South Yorkshire Police at the time of both the strike and the football stadium deaths.

The programme included comments from those arrested during a stand-off between police and miners at the Orgreave coking works about the accuracy of their statements.



FETED: Anne Scargill, centre, leads the new Women Against Pit Closures banner through Durham when it made its first appearance at the Miners' Gala in 2012.

Picture: Joan Heath

THE miners' strike may have been 30 years ago – but the determination of the women who campaigned so furiously against the closure of the coal mines lives on.

Since the 25th anniversary, the Women against Pit Closures (WAPC) group has commissioned a new banner – from 75-year-old West Yorkshire artist Andrew Turner (whose work was also featured on the cover of the CPBF book *Shafted*, published in 2009).

His latest colourful tribute confirms that the work of WAPC goes on, linking pit communities in countries as far apart as the UK, Australia, Cuba and the US.

When it was unveiled at the 2012 Durham Miners' Gala, WAPC stalwarts Anne Scargill and Betty Cook met a delegation from Spain, where, just days earlier, miners had been attacked by Madrid police during a protest against stringent austerity cuts.



PRESS coverage of the 1984 itself became the topic of serious debate. Accounts of how different titles and different journalists approached events were first documented by the CPBF in the 2009 book *Shafted: The*

media, the miners' strike and the aftermath. Now, editor Granville Williams is producing an update – *Settling Scores; the media, the police and the miners' strike*, to be published by the CPBF in March. The contributors will include Nicholas Jones, Paul Routledge, Michael Bailey and Pete Lazenby.

SETTLING SCORES: The Media, the Police and the Miners' Strike

Edited by Granville Williams

£6.99

ISBN 978-1-898240-06-8

Corporate complacency may break BBC's heart



THE fight for the future of the BBC has already begun, as **Tim Gopsill** reports from the VLV autumn conference.

EVEN the start was embarrassing for BBC director general Lord Tony Hall when the projector broke down and his opening remarks, "as you can see, next year is going to be very special", fell flat as the video promoting the BBC's blanket coverage of the anniversary of the First World War failed to ignite.

Just as well in a way, for when the trailer finally got its airing at the end of Lord Hall's address to the autumn conference of the Voice of the Listener and Viewer (VLV) it was almost as embarrassing. It runs for six minutes (surely they're not going to subject viewers to the whole thing, night after night?), enough to put anyone off, with its images of families being torn apart and traipsing through cemeteries. It's the Corporation doing its duty but the First World War isn't the battle that the BBC's supporters want to see.

Lord Hall was supposed to be presenting a newly-resolved Corporation, rallying from its recent disasters and ready for the fight not just to retain its charter of independence and licence fee but to win back the losses over the last four years.

He made no reference to charter renewal, no acknowledgement that the political battle over the next two years to retain the public service will be the

toughest it has ever faced; nor offered any kind of lead or strategy. Instead he said: "The BBC will be making the argument about its future through the actions it takes. We are going to make great dramas, great arts, great programmes. We are going to provide the best news service in the world."

This popular 'belonging' ... means consuming BBC products when you want to rather than by schedules

Starting with *Doctor Who*, then celebrating its 50th anniversary – "creative, intelligent, fun ... that crackles with wit and intelligence" (does it?) – he ran through a list of the wonders of the BBC ... "high-quality content ... best in the world ... *Top of The Lake*, *Luther* and *Sherlock*. *Peaky Blinders*, *The Fall* and *The Village*. *Ambassadors* and *Atlantis*. *Line Of Duty*, *Last Tango In Halifax*, *EastEnders* and *Call the Midwife*. And I haven't even begun to mention all the brilliant drama I listen to every week on Radio 3 and Radio 4".

May falls foul of publishers' political ineptitude

BEWARE the briefers, for they "may make you look totally inept".

What used to be a commonsense adage for politicians seems totally to have slipped the mind of Home Secretary Theresa May when she sashayed into the dogmatic minefield of the battle between the BBC and corporate newspaper interests.

The BBC's internet presence, she claimed publicly, was threatening the commercial existence of regional papers.

Really? Let's take one region – Yorkshire and the Humber. In Leeds, the BBC's regional online news team includes a staff of about six – managing sites that reflect the coverage areas of local radio stations for South, West and North Yorkshire, Humberside and Lincolnshire.

That's an area with daily newspapers in York, Hull, Scunthorpe, Grimsby, Lincoln, Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford and Huddersfield, accompanied by weekly titles for major towns and cities such as Wakefield, Halifax, Castleford, Pontefract, Scarborough, Keighley, Skipton, Dewsbury, Doncaster, Barnsley, Rotherham, Chesterfield, Malton, Hebden Bridge, Ripon, Harrogate and Wetherby.

Mrs May's remarks cannot surely be taken as anything other than highly offensive by, for example, the 33 remaining staff of the Yorkshire Weekly Newspaper Group with the implication that six other journalists at the BBC can cover an entire region more effectively than they can cover a few towns.

Are regional newspaper managers really so incompetent that they think that six desk-bound sub-editors based in Leeds can do more than their larger teams and their professional local promotions units?

That Mrs May accepted such information from the newspaper industry raises serious questions about her own wisdom. How much else is she saying that has come from vested lobbying interests that

has not been subjected to appropriate political – if not editorial – scrutiny?

The Home Secretary later claimed she had been briefed by a local paper editor in the Home Counties.

The regional news pages of the BBC website may headline six or seven stories associated with each "section" – about as many as are on one single page of newsprint. Cuts to staffing levels under round after round of BBC budget trimming mean that some stories on the main page may be several days old. Even weekly newspapers can do better than that. If papers are losing out, then it's not because of "competition", it's because the companies have done nothing to market their products, invest in their quality or promote them as they should have been doing.

Asking Mrs May to try to add ammunition to this battle has not only revealed their own ineptitude but brought a leading politician into disrepute too. If the Tories think they're the friends of the newspaper industry, then their mates are doing a grand job in making them look more like the stupid party than the nasty party. With friends like these

Regulation and balance requirements mean that the BBC – and licensed commercial broadcasters – should be nasty to everyone. Unregulated news outlets can – as many a celebrity can attest – be subject to the most violent of mood swings.

Without muzzles that should be cosmetic for most of the time, apparently benign old media dogs can suddenly become killers – as witnesses at the Old Bailey have generously been confirming recently. Mrs Brooks and Mr Coulson deny all the charges. The case continues.

AC

as control is confused with accountability



OUTPOST: The BBC appears to continue to undervalue its strength outside London, where dedicated journalists strive to provide local radio and regional television programmes that are in touch with listeners and viewers.

From Page 1

European court hits back at UK newspapers

"Finally, some of the articles cited a familiar refrain that 'because they are political appointees many of the Court's judges are not even legal experts'.

"A list of three candidates is put forward by the Government, but before the Assembly proceeds to the election the list is vetted by an independent international panel of senior judicial figures to ensure that the candidates satisfy the Convention criteria that they must "either possess the qualifications required for appointment to high judicial office or be jurisconsults of recognised competence". In other words they must be shown to be 'legal experts.'

"The Court naturally understands that some of its decisions in sensitive areas give rise to criticism. The operation of the rule of law will not always tally with public opinion and it would be surprising if all its judgments were popular with governments.

"However, it is concerned about the frequent misrepresentation of its activities in the British media, the confusion between the costs (awarded in all properly functioning judicial systems) and compensation being one example of how a distorted picture of the Court's decisions and work has been put forward."

CPBF chair Julian Petley said: "Of course, if the Court had complained to the PCC all this could have been put right in a jiffy."

The BBC is brilliant at making programmes; no doubt about that. But it's no good at anything else, and heartbreakingly prone to complacency. It is hopeless at organising to defend itself and its remit.

This is not an endearing shortcoming: the corporation has a duty to protect public broadcasting as well as to practise it. Reputation and popularity are not enough.

Lord Hall rehearsed the litany of public service. The BBC, he said, "belongs to its viewers and listeners ... I want a BBC that feels different, where our audiences are on the inside, helping us to be the best we can be. In future individuals will have the ability to control the BBC themselves."

This was promising until he made himself clearer: "Digital technology now means that we are able to hand to our listeners and viewers a huge amount of control that 30 years ago we kept to ourselves.

"Services like the iPlayer bring you the programmes you want to watch and listen to whenever you want them."

This popular "belonging" does not mean participation, nor exploiting the BBC's tremendous public appreciation for political support.

This means consuming BBC products

when you want to rather than by schedules.

Despite the dutiful rhetoric, the public have no say in BBC governance. They were never asked about the last licence fee settlement, when the BBC gave away 10 per cent of its revenue – "getting its capitulation in first" as *Free Press* put it in 2010 – nor about slashing news budgets and sacking 6,000 staff, nor paying millions in severance payments to supernumerary functionaries.

These actions weakened the Corporation terribly by opening it up to savage criticism from its enemies in the commercial sector and in government. These people are now rubbing their hands at the prospect of wielding the knife as charter renewal comes up in 2016.

Lord Hall concluded: "In the debate about what the BBC should or shouldn't do, the voice... of all our viewers, listeners and users will be pre-eminent ... But I hope and believe that you will speak for it too. After all – it's your BBC."

Yes it is, and no doubt the VLV, the CPBF, the unions and other will speak up. However BBC bosses themselves must summon the courage to hold out for the principles they are charged with upholding.

FREE Press

Free Press is published by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom,
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Views expressed in *Free Press* are those of the contributors and should not be regarded as formal CPBF policy.

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Printed by Swallowmax Ltd, 43 Aden Road, Enfield EN3 7SY

This edition went to press on January 8, 2014.

The deadline for the next edition is Friday February 21, 2014.

Their own words

THE voices and memories of those involved in the infamous “Battle of Wapping” are being recorded and made available in perpetuity.

The exhibition created to mark the 25th anniversary of Rupert Murdoch’s attempts to break the unions is being replicated online – and in two books.

Unlike the static version, the website that was due to “go live” on January 24 includes film and audio clips as well as images and documents.

The date chosen for the official unveiling of the site is the anniversary of the beginning of the dispute in 1986.

Police attacks started on those locked out almost immediately and mounted riot police were used for the first time three weeks later, on February 15.

Building the site has been the continuation of work that started three years ago, involving the unions and union members who had been involved in the dispute – the GPM sector of Unite and the National Union of Journalists – as well as the CPBF and the Marx Memorial Library on London’s Clerkenwell Green.

The exhibition, created by volunteers including journalists and an historian, has already toured the UK.

Now, an oral history is being added to the existing print, video and photographic collection.

“It is,” said working party member and former Unite national official Ann Field, “intended to be a significant research resource containing a wide range of primary material as well as being of great interest to people who were involved in the dispute and their families.

“The large collection of photographs and personal papers donated by individuals and the voice recordings and reminiscences is expected to increase when the website goes online. It will enable those who lost their jobs, their livelihoods and their trade union and industry community to tell their side of the story for the first time.

“It was an episode that changed irrevocably and entire industry and the process ruined thousands of lives,” she added.

A team of volunteers trained by the Bishopsgate Institute Library has been



STORYBOARD: Each section of the travelling version of the exhibition covers a particular aspect of the dispute, its origins and its legacy. Picture: Adam Christie.

interviewing some of those sacked from News International including former printworkers, journalists and others directly affected. The recordings cover the unions’ role, the impact on the 5,500 who lost their jobs and their families, the demonstrations, picketing, the role of women, the effects on the local neighbourhood and the legacy for the print and newspaper industries. Artefacts are still being collected and more are welcome for the archive, much of which will be online. Full originals, recordings and transcripts will be achieved at the Library.

Retired GPM/Unite members hope they can encourage more contributions online by

giving talks, especially as the website has a facility that lets dispute participants contact one another.

Key legal documents, together with notes, will also be available for downloading from a dedicated educational section of the site.

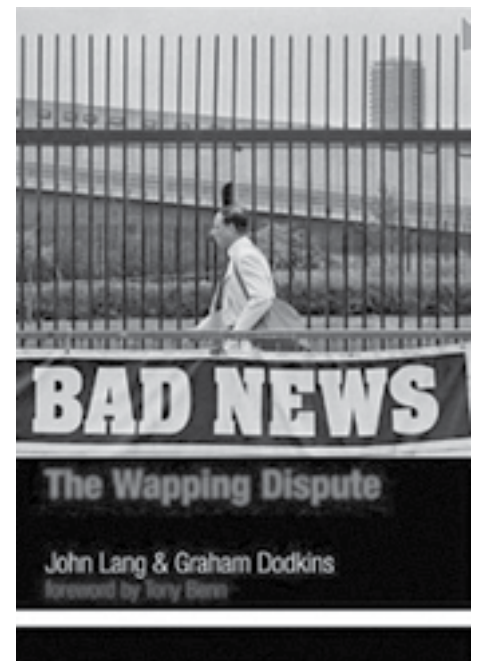
■ For the url, visit www.cbpf.org.uk

WHAT ARE YOUR MEMORIES OF THE WAPPING DISPUTE?

Can you add to the archive?

Comment on the CPBF website

www.cbpf.org.uk



IN PRINT: *Bad News* by Times newspaper librarians John Lang and Graham Dodkins was published in 2011. *Wapping; the great printing dispute* by John Trow, a former linotype operator for the *News of the World*, is due out shortly.