



STEVE ROWE

## SJA TRIBUTE TO THE BEST OF BRITISH

AN UNBEATABLE LINE-UP . . . British sport's stars of 2010 were hailed by members of the association and guests in London at the 62nd SJA British Sports Awards, the original and thus longest-running event of its kind on the domestic calendar. A P McCoy, Jessica Ennis and the Ryder Cup team took the top trio of honours. **See Pages 2-7**

# Sports journalism awards next on red carpet agenda

HEADING into 2011 is the perfect time to reflect on the great writing, stories and photographs of 2010 and who will be honoured at the association's British Sports Journalism Awards in London on March 7 and sponsored by UK Sport.

Considerable debate over the awards has focused on whether they cover all aspects of sports journalism and whether their scope should be increased or reduced?

Views are as varied as the range of journalists who will enter - which is exactly as it should be.

But two points came across loud and clear: the need for an award to the Sports Newspaper of the Year and the application of more imagination over the submission of entries.

Why should a writer working for the internet not be considered for any of the writing awards? Top-quality writing is to be admired and praised wherever it appears and there is hardly a writer from 'old Fleet Street' who does not top up his output via Twitter, a blog or a separate piece online. Newspaper journalists are wonderfully old-fashioned. Even while they campaign for

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JON RYAN

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change, sackings, new regulations in their chosen sports some stalwartly believe that if words do not appear in print they are not worth the reading.

Also, who says that 'Fleet Street' has the monopoly on top writers? Why should talented journalists working outside London not be recognised for the quality of their writing, no matter in what medium.

The SJA awards are the highest recognition of talent for sports writing and photography from a pool of talent unequalled in the English-speaking world. The last thing any journalist should think is: 'What's the point of entering, I won't win.' If you don't enter you certainly won't win.

To ensure that the very best are chosen we call upon tremendous talent for the judging panels and it is down to the leading sports editors to judge the Sports Writer of the Year

At last year's awards Mike Aitken, second-time

winner of the regional sports writer prize, said: "I've been coming to these awards for 25 years. It was a much smaller event then. Now, they're like the Oscars." No red carpet perhaps but you get the drift.

For an incentive, review the list of Sports Writers of the Year since 1976 or photographers who have been voted the best in the business since 1977. Some 18 different journalists have been voted Sports Writer of the Year in 33 years while 24 photographers have reached the peak in 32 award years.

Review the awards lists: these are both incredibly strong, no one-off horrors to haunt the judges. These are lists to inspire and set standards, exactly as they should. Go down the list of other awards and if anyone cannot find a category something is very wrong. For any sports journalist to win the acclaim of his or her peers is part of what drives us all but to win with grace and modesty is the highest achievement.

*\* Entry forms are enclosed with this Bulletin or can be downloaded from the SJA website*

# Bad weather helps McCoy past winning post with a difference

SPORTSMAN OF THE YEAR

AP McCOY

PRESENTED BY  
SIR MICHAEL PARKINSON, SJA PRESIDENT

WHEN it became clear that AP McCoy was going to be among the leading contenders for the SJA's Sportsman of the Year Award he was naturally invited to attend the awards lunch.

The response had a dreadful inevitability about it, there was racing that day at Leicester and he would be due to ride: "Sorry, but riding comes first."

He meant no offence to the SJA: not so long ago McCoy sought permission from Buckingham Palace to have the award of his OBE (he already has an MBE) delayed until next June when there is no racing. Given Her Majesty's enthusiasm for racing it was a request she granted.

But the SJA had no need of such artifice. Bad weather forced the cancellation of racing at Leicester and permitted AP (Anthony Peter) a rare awards appearance.

It's not that the 36-year-old – champion jump jockey 15 years on the trot and known in the weighing room simply as Champ – does not appreciate the awards, the praise, the acclaim. Rather, he prefers life away from the spotlight, although he almost appeared to enjoy the fuss after riding his first Grand National winner, Don't Push It, back in April.

McCoy is the most driven sportsmen performing on our shores and in a sport which accepts that once in every 10 rides or so the rider will come crashing down to earth no matter how good or how good the horse.

Falls happen which means a constant risk of injury - not just a pulled hamstring or a muscle



STEVE ROWE

Writing SJA history: A P McCoy and wife Chanelle

tweak but breakages and serious ones at that. To hear AP recount an operation on his broken back at his table at the SJA awards was to listen to someone who assumed that this was just what you did.

For this bruising, often painful but sometimes glorious privilege AP McCoy has to live on a strict and paltry diet, eschewing the big nights out, driving the length and breadth of the country to take around 800 rides a season (summer jumping makes it

pretty much a year-round sport) in relentless pursuit of winners to keep ahead of the talented chasing pack.

In the world of AP McCoy, life is about winning. But it is also about being a deceptively humorous, honourable and decent man of which his sport is rightfully proud and for whom the SJA was delighted to award the title of Sportsman of the Year.

JON RYAN

## Standing ovations are becoming a habit

AS AP McCoy stood on stage at the conclusion of the UK Sport-sponsored 62nd SJA British Sports Awards, cuddling his Sportsman of the Year trophy, so members and guests rose as one to salute him.

This reminded me that McCoy had also received a standing ovation at the Grand National Press conference, not something bestowed on all champions. He had admitted: "For a long time I had no interest in what anyone thought or wrote or anything." Perhaps now, at 36, and with one huge pinnacle scaled, he has changed his mind.

McCoy has had a long and staggeringly successful career over – "Piling up winners

BARRY NEWCOMBE

SJA CHAIRMAN

like leaves," as Andrew Longmore put it in *The Sunday Times* - but until this past year he had never nailed the Grand National.

Putting that one finally to rest ensured his sporting status expanded into public consciousness beyond the world of racing.

Other impressive cameos lit up the SJA's last major event of 2010 – such as Jessica Ennis being acclaimed Sportswoman of the Year for the second successive time; and

such as Colin Montgomerie accepting the Team of the Year award on behalf of the European Ryder Cup men and becoming a target for the men with cameras from the Tickets for Troops force who just wanted to be pictured with him. So the SJA wound up the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with an awareness that soon the Olympic Games of London 2012 will be drawing us ever closer, an enticing prospect.

Simultaneously, the SJA also faces a restructuring in losing our direct link with UK Sport for whose enthusiastic support and financial backing we have cause to be extremely grateful.

**Jessica Ennis** . . . on why she was not undertaking warm-weather training:

“I’M TRAINING IN SHEFFIELD COS I’M HARD.”

On her fame as a model on poster hoardings:

“I’M GETTING TEXT MESSAGES FROM EVERYONE SAYING: ‘I KEEP SEEING YOUR SWEATY BODY EVERYWHERE.’”

**Dai Greene** . . . on accommodation arrangements at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi:

“ONCE I KICKED THE DOG OUT OF MY ROOM IT WAS FINE, TO BE HONEST.”

**Zoe Smith** . . . on making the weight for competition:

“DIFFICULT, CONSIDERING I DO LIKE A CHOCOLATE BAR NOW AND THEN.”

**Ellen Faulkner**, Commonwealth Games gold medallist . . . on the image of bowls:

“I’M ONE OF THE MORE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE TEAM AND I’M 31. WE HAVE A 19-YEAR-OLD, A 21-YEAR-OLD AND A 22-YEAR-OLD.”

**Maggie Alphonsi**, England women’s rugby star . . . on spreading the word:

“YOU’D THINK THAT, WITH GETTING GIRLS INVOLVED IN PLAYING RUGBY, THEY WOULDN’T LIKE THE CONTACT BUT IN FACT THEY’RE OFTEN MORE UP FOR IT THAN THE BOYS.”



STEVE ROWE

# Ennis still beating all the pressure

JESSICA ENNIS was the 2010 choice, for the second year in succession, of SJA members as Sportswoman of the Year, the first woman since Paula Radcliffe in 2003 to win in consecutive years.

Ennis won the pentathlon at the World Indoor Championships in Doha in March and the heptathlon at the European Championships four months later, both times eclipsing championship records set by the great Swedish all-rounder Carolina Klüft.

Also, for the second year in succession, she was ranked by the IAAF as the world’s No1 heptathlete, short-listed among five for their world award and chosen already as British athlete of the year for a second straight year by the British Athletics Writers’ Association

She said: “It’s so nice to have had the votes and won again. Last year was brilliant but you always kind of worry: ‘Are you going to perform as well the next year? Make the most of it here and now.’ But yes I’ve had another great year and to win this award again, it’s brilliant.

“Having a good year in 2009 and backing it up with another good year, winning gold in the world indoors and the European outdoors, was really special. I’m still surprised when you say out loud what I’ve achieved. It does give you goose pimples. I’m obviously very proud.

“It’s important to me to stay on top. I

SPORTSWOMAN OF THE YEAR

JESSICA ENNIS

PRESENTED BY SIR MICHAEL PARKINSON, SJA PRESIDENT

always want to build on the year before, keep progressing, and I know there are bits I can improve.

“Am I feeling the pressure? I’ve always felt pressure, even before I had won any medals. I always put pressure on myself. Now it’s changed. It’s pressure from other people.

“I kinda have an idea of what people expect me to do, what they are thinking, but when I go into a championships I don’t read the papers or the tweets, or anything. So still the pressure is what I put on myself.”

Her 2011 goals are the European indoor pentathlon championships in Paris in March and a defence of her world heptathlon title in Daegu, South Korea, in August. Along the way she hopes to pick up the world pentathlon record and the British 100 metres hurdles record.

Should she achieve all of that, who will give odds against her equalling the achievement of her heptathlon predecessor, Denise Lewis, in winning the SJA award for a third time?

NEIL WILSON



SJA members' favourites:  
Beth Tweddle (left) and  
Zoe Smith (above)

# Role model status driving Tweddle on towards 2012

## UK Sport Award (Recognising fair play and those who inspire others as role models)

### BETH TWEDDLE

*Presented by Nigel Walker (National Director, English Institute of Sport)*

BETH Tweddle became world champion once more in 2010 and is the most successful British gymnast of all time. Yet, although a veteran in her sport, she has no intention of giving up just yet.

"I still have one ambition to achieve, an Olympic medal," she said. "I'd rather look back in 10 years time and say I tried in 2012 than I wish I'd have tried."

Tweddle won world championship gold on the uneven bars in Rotterdam and two European titles in front of an adoring home crowd in Birmingham. Yet her role model status has come as a surprise.

She said: "You don't realise it until you turn up for a championships and you've suddenly got all these little girls coming up asking for your autograph."

## Peter Wilson Trophy (Recognising the Best International Newcomer)

### ZOE SMITH

*Presented by Alec Stewart (former England cricketer)*

ZOE Smith was only 11 when London was awarded the 2012 Olympics but, as

England's first female weightlifter to take a Commonwealth Games medal, she is a tremendous prospect for Team GB. Commonwealth Games medallist, she is a tremendous prospect for Team GB.

"I loved every minute in Delhi. It was the highlight of my life so far" said Smith, just 5ft 2in and who can lift three times her own body weight - but who started out as a gymnast.

"I went into the gym and my coach said would you like to try lifting some weights. When I did, he wouldn't let me leave!" she said.

Smith is juggling Olympic ambition with A Levels: "It is not easy but I am coping." So, shouldn't you be at school today? asked host Jim Rosenthal. "Yes actually," she grinned. The SJA won't tell.

## J L Manning Award (Recognising an outstanding contribution to sport)

### COLIN MONTGOMERIE

*Presented by Christina Schmid (Patron, Tickets for Troops) and Lance Corporal Matt Croucher GC, Royal Marines*

RYDER Cup captain Colin Montgomerie paid tribute to the nation's armed forces as he received his award from the widow of bomb disposal hero Olaf Schmid.

He said: "I might be here representing a marvellous team, but we know ourselves that the troops here with us on these tables

are part of the reason we are here in the first place." Reviewing the Ryder Cup triumph, Montgomerie said he hoped to return to the team as a playing member in 2012: "I'll be 49 at that stage, but golf gives us that opportunity to keep going on. I've just got to get my own game in shape and not worry about other people for a change."

## SJA Committee Award

### EMMA POOLEY

*Presented by Mark Foster (former British Olympic swimmer and world and Commonwealth champion)*

AMID the gold rush in Beijing, Emma Pooley's Olympic silver was overshadowed but she stepped into the spotlight with a tremendous year on the road in 2010. She followed up a win in the Tour de L'Aude, the biggest stage race in women's cycling, with gold in the individual time trial at the World Road Race Championships in Geelong, Australia. Pooley combines riding with her reading for a doctorate in geotechnical engineering and believes even making the Olympic team in London will be a huge challenge.

She explained: "Cycling is very course-specific. There aren't that many hills around London and I'm more of a climber so I'll have to get better on the flat if I want to do well in 2012."



Left: Swimmer Fran Halsall collects the President's Award. Below: Dai Greene (right) with Andrew Castle

#### SJA President's Award

##### FRAN HALSALL

*Presented by Sir Michael Parkinson, SJA President*

FRAN Halsall was not going to let recent surgery on a troublesome ankle prevent her stepping up to collect her award, even though she said: "To get up here was really hard. I am a lot faster in the pool than on crutches."

Halsall had demonstrated that truth in winning 100m freestyle gold at the European Championships in Budapest, her first individual title at this level and among a medal haul which made her the most successful British swimmer at these Championships.

"I thought if I spread it over a few I'll just get lucky in one," she added. Halsall followed up with 50m butterfly gold at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi and plans an ambitious programme for 2012 where she expects to race in the 50m and 100m freestyle and 100m butterfly. She is also targeting two of the relays.

#### Pat Besford Award (Recognising Outstanding Sporting Performance)

##### DAI GREENE

*Presented by Andrew Castle (former British Davis Cup tennis player)*

HURDLER Dai Greene can look ahead to London 2012 with real confidence after a wonderful year. "At the start of the year my

WORDS  
PHILIP BARKER

PICTURES  
STEVE ROWE



Jim Rosenthal: linking it all together in style

targets were European and Commonwealth gold and I managed to deliver both of them," he said, looking back with pride to the European Championships in Barcelona and to having become the first Welshman to win gold at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi.

He recalled: "It was OK to have one or two guys coming up to wish you luck but when it was the whole Welsh team – a hundred people – that's when you feel the pressure."

Greene dipped below 48 seconds for the first time but Kriss Akabusi's 18-year-old British record still eludes him. The Welshman said: "He sent me a text saying: Close but no cigar!"

#### Bill McGowran Trophy (Recognising the Achievements of an Athlete with a Disability)

##### DANIELLE BROWN

*Presented by Ade Adepitan (basketball Paralympian)*

DADANIELLE Brown took up archery only five years ago but made an immediate impact with Paralympic gold in Beijing. Her disability makes it difficult for her to stand for prolonged periods but she shoots from a specially adapted stool. Chosen for the able-bodied England team in Delhi she won Commonwealth Games gold in the Team Compound event. Paralympic basketball star Ade Adepitan received the award on her behalf, promising: "I'll make sure she gets it. She's a dead eyed shot with the arrows."

# How Montgomerie and his men rose to the Ryder Cup challenge – again

STEVE ROWE

RARELY does the the Ryder Cup let anyone down. For almost three decades the great tussle between the best golfers from Europe and their counterparts from the United States has offered a modern-day template filled with competitiveness, good grace and high drama.

Judged even by the highest recent standards, however, this latest version played out across the rolling acres of a soaked Usk Valley at Celtic Manor proved high-level sport of the very best sort. Golf, sometimes, can be as dreary as the next game but this Ryder Cup was compelling to everyone who savours a battle properly played out.

The fact that the European side has now



AN ENVELOPE raffle held during the SJA Awards lunch raised more than £2,000 for Tickets for Troops, the event's nominated cause. The J L Manning Award had been presented to Colin Montgomerie, captain of the European Ryder Cup winners, by Christina Schmid, one of the organisation's patrons, together with Lance Corporal Matt Croucher GC, Royal Marines (above). Christina Schmid is the widow of Staff Sergeant Olaf Schmid GC, who was killed trying to disarm an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan in October 2009, his last day of deployment. She has joined the News of the World as a campaigner for the military and their families.

SPORTS TEAM OF THE YEAR

EUROPEAN RYDER CUP TEAM

PRESENTED BY JOHN INVERDALE

been voted the year's top team by SJA members underlines the impact that this rain-affected, occasionally dishevelled but ultimately brilliant event had on the general sporting consciousness.

The drama was, of course, studded with sub-plots. How would Tiger Woods play? Would Colin Montgomerie implode under the emotional intensity he brought to the European captaincy? Had his American rival Corey Pavin secretly ordered an airstrike if things went wrong?

As it turned out, Woods played excellently, Monty held himself together to roll-out a shrewd, understated, sensationally effective captaincy while Pavin, sort of, evaporated.

Monty's players responded superbly to his subtle touch. A team made up of four Englishmen (Luke Donald, Ross Fisher, Ian Poulter and Lee Westwood), three Irishmen (Padraig Harrington, Graeme McDowell and Rory McIlroy), a brace of Italians (Francesco and Eduardo Molinari), a Swede (Peter Hanson), a German (Martin Kaymer) and a jolly Spaniard (Miguel-Angel Jimenez) formed an impenetrable partnership.

These guys only come together once every two years, the rest of the time they are trying to beat each other's brains out but for one long week in Wales they became a band of brothers. In the end, individual glory fell to McDowell whose last-match heroics against Hunter Mahan clinched the trophy for Europe.

It was, he says, the most nervous he ever has felt. This from a man who had won the US Open a few months earlier. Then, as all the bouquets began to fly in his direction, he sounded a verbal barricade against individual applause: "I have 11 team-mates who gave me the opportunity to do what I did. Without them, without what they did first, I could not have done anything. This team was fantastic."

BILL ELLIOTT



Roving interviewer John Inverdale with Captain Charisma, Colin Montgomerie





Guests with plenty to celebrate in 2010 –  
 Top: England rugby star Maggie Alphonsi.  
 Above: Bid-winning PR specialist Mike Lee

## Surely it doesn't get much better than this

I SHARED a table with two lovely ladies from hockey, an ex-*Daily Mirror* man now proving that there is life after death as a successful PR and two SJA members – one a mad golfer who would have probably left early if the Ryder Cup team had not been so honoured. He was arguing all the way home that Graeme McDowell should have won the top award.

I mention our table's meagre contribution to the superb occasion because we three stalwart members, while indulging in Fleet Street nostalgia, continue to support the event in the belief that ours is still the finest sports writing association of them all.

For a non-Olympic year, I cannot recall a higher gathering of super stars - not just the winners – such as AP McCoy, Jessica Ennis,

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### TREVOR BOND

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Colin Montgomerie, Dai Greene and Beth Tweddle but, as John Inverdale in his round-the-tables mike chat, highlighted celebrities such as Alec Stewart, former England cricket captain, Maggie Alphonsi from the England women's rugby team, Ellen Faulkner the Commonwealth Games bowls gold medallist and Mike Lee who fed the assembled press some juicy thoughts on England's World Cup bid.

The additional presence of troops back from Afghanistan, with the raffle proceeds going to Tickets for Troops, made the room aware that all that is good and great about sporting

achievements, pales set against those who put their lives on the front line every day.

Inverdale pursued a libation line. From Dai Greene who came so close to breaking Kriss Akabusi's 400 metre hurdle time and will not rest until he does: "I might have a tippie on Christmas Day."

Then McCoy, collecting the coveted Sportsman of the Year trophy for the first time for horse racing: "Wine or water? Definitely water".

Back to my table. It would normally have included that doyen of sports writing Patrick Collins, many times winner of our journalism awards and stalwart SJA member Ian Cole, a former chairman. Last I heard of them they were soaking it up in a bar in Adelaide but I am sure they were with us in spirits, so to speak.



FIFA president Sepp Blatter appeals for football to trust FIFA after the suspension of two exco members

# Media the wrong target when it comes to World Cup blame game

THE media always struggles to find the correct perspective when it becomes a part of the story as it did in the run-up to the FIFA executive committee's award of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups to Russia and Qatar.

Did the various assaults of the *Mail on Sunday*, *The Sunday Times* and BBC's Panorama play a decisive role in what ended up as a first-round knock-out for England's bid? Readers/viewers might have thought so considering the amount of time bid leader Andy Anson had to spend discussing the issue.

To recap: in May, the *Mail on Sunday* produced the eavesdropping articles which forced Lord David Triesman to quit as chairman of the Football Association and of the England bid; in October *The Sunday Times* splashed its vote-rigging allegations which forced even FIFA to suspend Nigeria's Amos Adamu and Oceania's Reynald Temarii; then in late November – three days before the vote – Panorama resurrected the ISL scandal to point an accusatory finger at exco members Brazil's Ricardo Teixeira (Brazil), Issa Hayatou (Cameroon) and Nicolas Leoz (Paraguay). FIFA – with the exception of the

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## KEIR RADNEDGE

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expendable Adamu and Temarii - closed ranks in ungracious but predictable fashion.

Ethics chairman Claudio Sulser, a lawyer and former Swiss international, offered *The Sunday Times* no well-deserved words of acknowledgement or thanks, complaining instead about the manner in which video and audio footage had been edited down to a conveniently tight soundbite for website publication.

There was more. Like a school teacher lecturing naughty children, he added (amid much more): "You [journalists] need to establish real facts not those which could lead to sensationalism and to selling more newspapers."

As he rambled on about ethics in the media – this representative of a body which has just banished six of its own senior officials - one wondered who was more at fault? Was it the Guilty Six? Or was it the newspaper for exposing them?

It was almost as if what had upset football's hierarchy the most was not

corruption at the heart of its power base but the exposure; that FIFA and Sulser and later president Sepp Blatter resented having to come clean.

In fact, it became clear within hours of the announcement of the ballot results that the media coverage – whether the media may like it or not - had had very little effect. Russia had long since had its core votes sewn up; England, whingeing about broken promises, crashed for other reasons.

On this score Sunil Gulati, president of US Soccer, had the right attitude from the outset. As he told me: "The only members you believe are the ones who say they won't vote for you."

When the original vote-rigging story 'broke' the Zurich daily *Tages Anzeiger* ran a headline: "Blatter should thank the journalists." FIFA could do that, indeed, by awarding *The Sunday Times* the fairplay prize at its annual gala in Zurich in mid-January; but, frankly, there is more chance of Blatter-badgerer Andrew Jennings becoming FIFA president.

At least the media inquisition did serve one purpose: it gifted exco members a perfect excuse – if they needed it - for breaking those promises.

# Eric Burley, a tribute

ERIC BURLEY of Agence France Presse, who has died aged 87, was a sports writing name better known across much of the world than in Britain. The association knew him for his wisdom, his quiet strength and his constant amiability, all of which were freely available throughout his extraordinary length of service to what was then the Sports Writers' Association.

Eric was on the committee before I had my first job in Fleet Street. He was still there when I became chairman in 1977, some 23 unbroken years.

It was Eric's relentless determination which cracked open the SWA's sexist barriers and admitted women to the annual awards. For years, first the committee and then the membership had voted to exclude even its own female members. The very first woman member, Millie Hudson, signed up in 1949, was once offered two theatre tickets in compensation. She returned them.

Eric would not be beaten and in 1963, the year of his chairmanship, he prevailed.

For 40 years from 1943, Eric had been AFP's sole British sports and motoring correspondent. His career, which ended in retirement in 1983, included covering five Olympic Games and three football World Cups, and many historic sporting events such as Roger Bannister's first sub-four-minute mile in 1954.

The SJA sends its condolences to Eric's widow Margaret, daughter Julie, and their family.

DAVID HUNN



## Delhi delights the shop floor not the front office

JOHN WRAGG

DAILY EXPRESS

MEDIA arrangements in Delhi were just like the Commonwealth Games themselves, up and running and pretty near perfect just as the Games were over.

The Main Press Centre looked excellent when you walked in, gleaming computers, rows and rows of pigeon holes for info, new desks, nice chairs, power points everywhere. Except very little worked.

There was no information system whatsoever, nothing to put in the pigeon holes by the way of start lists or results and banks of desks where the power wasn't on. And I never did get the wifi working, although some did.

In one corner there was a little media café where you could get cups of tea or coffee. With sugar. Not without sugar. It was all pre-prepared. And water. But you had to pay for it. The sub centres were much the same. At the swimming venue the climb to get to the media seats was Everest-like and equally cold if you sat by the giant air-conditioning systems that offered instant colds and flu.

Seating at the boxing, one of the key events, was limited and the outdoor press box at the athletics track should have been named the David Attenborough Box, such was the amount of flying

things and creepy things that attacked you. Those senior management and government officials who put on these Games did a dreadful job but it has to be said that the people on the ground floor, those you dealt with at the main press centre and sub centres every day, could not have been more helpful.

When the mouse on my laptop packed up the excellent people on the main press centre help desk went into Delhi town and bought me a new one. When the wifi failed at the swimming venue, people quickly fixed it. And the staff waited and waited long into the night until English reporters, not on tight deadlines, finished their work.

We might not have liked the green bread some of the sandwiches were made of, but the media staff were delighted if we were delighted with their service. Had they swapped things around and put the people on the shop floor into the management offices, this would have been a hugely successful Games.

## SportAccord heading for London

ONE of the first signs that the Olympic Games are about to roll in to town will be there for all SJA members to see at the southern end of Westminster Bridge in early April, when the SportAccord International Convention is staged in London.

Sport Accord is the effective annual conference of world sport, attended by leaders

of the major national and international sports federations, IOC members, other leading industry figures and, of course, the international media.

This is the first time the event has come to London when it will be staged at the Park Plaza Westminster Bridge from April 3-8. The programme includes presentations on the 2012

and 2016 Games as well as IOC spring executive board meetings.

The SJA has been in discussions with the organisers about staging a special event that week, details of which will be posted on [sportsjournalists.co.uk](http://sportsjournalists.co.uk) and emailed to SJA members.

STEVEN DOWNES



# John Jackson

## How that man in the brown bowler got in on the act when Chile had something else worth celebrating

IT WAS the wondrous rescue of the Chilean miners, and their chanting of: "Chi Chi Chi Le Le Le, Viva Chile," as they emerged from the depths, that rushed back memories of the mother of all hangovers, and that legendary rascal among sports writers, Desmond Hackett.

The occasion was a noisy night in Vina del Mar, Chile, shortly after a quarter-final of the 1962 World Cup had seen England (including present BBC pundit Jimmy Armfield and two young Bobbies, Moore and Charlton) despatched 3-1 by Brazil.

I had decided on an early night but soon realised that not even the snoring from my roommate, AP's Argentinian photographer Francisco Caruso, which could normally drown out any tenor of a similar name, would silence the "Chi Chi Chi Le Le Le, Viva Chile!" celebrations outside. Chile had beaten the Soviet Union to reach the semi-finals.

With an if-you-can't-beat-them-then-join-them decision I strolled from the Hotel O'Higgins, to be greeted by a familiar: "Well, old commander, I feel this calls for a modicum of local lotion."

It was true Hackett-speak.

Desmond Hackett was known to the readers of the then top-selling *Daily Express* as the 'man in the brown bowler' who would make the most amazing predictions. He said that if boxer Jack Bodell beat Joe Bugner in 1971 to become British, Empire and European heavyweight champion he would clean all his windows. Hackett duly climbed a ladder with bucket and leather.

After seeing Chelsea's first match in the 1967 FA Cup campaign he said that if they won the Cup he would walk barefoot over broken glass down Wembley's Olympic Way. He arrived at Wembley for the Chelsea v Tottenham Hotspurs final with boxes of empty bottles.

Losing Chelsea manager Tommy Docherty was devastated he missed the chance to help smash them.

Hackett, like close rival Peter Wilson of the *Daily Mirror*, always included a toy fire engine in his luggage when he



flew to the United States - with the tank full of whisky. This cunning ploy was to get round the fact in those days that bars on airliners had to be closed by law when crossing States which were "dry." They ordered glasses of water, then surreptitiously enjoyed a quick squirt from the fire engines.

So here was I, a young agency reporter at my first World Cup, heading for what turned out to be lashings of local lotion. At the first bar Hackett ordered two pisco sours, the lethal South American cocktail, and told the barman to serve one to every person there. And that was it!

Unknown to us it was an unwritten Chilean custom that if you bought someone a drink, you could not leave until they had returned the compliment.

I am sure I still had pisco lingering in my system when we later met up at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

There Hackett arrived with a white smock and stethoscope in his suitcase, then scribbled an additional "P" to the D Hackett GB on his plain card accreditation, and got himself entry to the segregated women's village as Dr Hackett. British golden girls Mary Rand and Ann Packer thought it was a tremendous wheeze.

And Hackett wrote this memorable line: "Everyone here is so polite that even the pigeons flew upside down over the Emperor at the Opening Ceremony".

What a star!

# HATCH MATCH AND DESPATCH

## Comings and goings at the sports desks around the country

■ TWO respected and high-profile sports journalists died in November - **Ken Montgomery**, the former chief football writer on the *Sunday Mirror*, and **Christopher Hilton**, the *Daily Express*'s one-time F1 correspondent. Ken, the long-time stalwart of the Football Writers' Association, died after a short spell of illness. Chris, the author of around 80 books on history, sport and even a couple of novels, died suddenly while on a business trip in Germany.

■ **Peter Cooper**, the former *Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Express* and *Sunday Times* sports writer and broadcaster, died in October after a long illness, aged 77.

■ **Doug Wilson**, who competed on the track at the 1948 London Olympics and went on to become the athletics reporter for the *News of the World*, died in Winchester in October, aged 90. For the last 17 years, Wilson had edited *The Olympian* magazine. The SJA sends its condolences to all families and friends.

■ **Kevin Garside** is the *Telegraph*'s new golf correspondent. Garside replaces **Mark Reason**, who is leaving the company as his family is emigrating to New Zealand.

■ **Martin Chilton**, deputy sports editor at the *Telegraph*, has moved within the Victoria offices to become Digital Culture Editor. Chilton has been at the *Telegraph* since 2008, having previously been sports editor and columnist for the *Evening Standard*.

■ *The Observer* has not renewed the contract of its golf correspondent of 15 years, **Bill Elliott**.

■ **Nick Harris** has been appointed as the chief sports news correspondent at the *Mail on Sunday*. Harris had written for *The Independent* since 1996, as well as contributing to the *Sunday Times* and other titles. Harris's appointment follows **Dan King**'s move from the Mail group's Sunday title to the *News of the World*.

■ **Roger Ryan**, the Hong Kong-based SJA member, has been hired as a senior sports sub-editor at the *South China Morning Post*. **James Porteous** will be joining him there in the new year, having left his job as deputy sports editor of Glasgow's *Herald*.

■ *World Soccer* magazine is 50 years old. A special issue published in October included

interviews with the outstanding players of the past half-century, including Bobby Charlton by **Jim Holden**, Pele by **Keir Radnedge**, Diego Maradona by **Eric Weil** and Emilio Butragueno by **Sid Lowe**. "I know a lot of SJA members have contributed to the magazine since the launch in October 1960, and many more have been regular readers," *World Soccer's* Editor, **Gavin Hamilton**, said. "I've always encouraged my staff to help colleagues from across the industry when they contact the office with inquiries. We like to think that mutual support has contributed to our success and enhanced our reputation."

■ **MVP** was launched in October as Britain's only magazine dedicated to basketball. Published by Response London, the £3.50 quarterly is edited by **Greg Tanner**. *MVP's* launch team includes Edinburgh-based SJA member **Mark Woods**.

■ **JF Media**, the publisher of Brighton-based **Golf Punk** and **Football Punk** magazines, has ceased trading. *Golf Punk* editor's since 2008 **Shaun McGuckian**, travel editor **Joe Lancaster** and *Football Punk* editor **Richard Lenton**, lost their jobs without any redundancy payment. *Golf Punk* was launched in 2004. Despite investments from the likes of ex-footballers **Phil Babb**, **Jason McAteer** and **Stephen Wright**, *Golf Punk* struggled financially and in recent years published only spasmodically. It collected several County Court Judgments, brought by disgruntled and unpaid contributors, and was condemned by an Advertising Standard Authority ruling in 2009 brought by angry subscribers.

■ The National Union of Journalists has condemned plans by **Northcliffe Media** to axe more than 50 sub-editor jobs on its regional papers, and instead rely on a system of direct entry of articles by reporters. The use of six regional subbing "hubs" – set-up by the company just 18 months ago as a cost-saving, job-cutting exercise – will be subject to another reorganisation, with the subbing centres at Nottingham, Stoke and Plymouth at risk of closure. The moves leave the regional titles with vastly reduced staffs: at the *Nottingham Post*, where four years ago there were 25 reporters, under the latest proposals there will be just 11 reporters.

■ The **British Athletics Writers' Association** annual awards dinner did not take place in 2010, for the first time in nearly 50 years. The athletics writers could not reach an agreement with the sport's national governing body, UK Athletics, who wanted to shift the event to Loughborough, or their sponsors, Aviva, who had in recent years funded and largely organised the gala event at a central London hotel. The BAWA's Ron Pickering Memorial Award will now be presented at a lunch, supported by the **Virgin London Marathon**, being held in central London on January 14.

# Another fantastic year caps a fantastic sponsorship

2010 could have been a very difficult year. Uncertainty over future funding of sport, combined with the 'mid-Olympic cycle' feeling, that the hard work required is not yet showing true reward, suggested an environment where doubt might have been allowed to grow.

Fortunately now it is possible to look back and realise that in fact we have built some very solid foundations.

Our Olympic and Paralympic sports, less than two years away from the most important sporting event of our lifetimes, have in the main performed terrifically.

To the list of those from whom success is expected – such as rowing, once again topping the world championships' medal table; or sailing, delivering five world champions in 10 Olympic classes - we can now add a number of sports showing real performance improvement.

The likes of hockey, whose men's and women's teams performed so well at both the world championships and Commonwealth Games; of equestrian, whose outstanding performances in both the able-bodied and Paralympic competition at the world championships in Kentucky led to their winning a record number of medals; and of gymnastics, a sport in the doldrums six years ago, now winning three medals at the world championships.

Overall we are very much on track - with results suggesting we are as a nation further forward at this stage of the Olympic cycle than at any previous Games. Add to that the certainty provided by a good settlement from Government in the Spending Review - which also recognised the need for continued funding beyond London and also the importance of UK Sport's Major Events and international responsibilities - and you can point to welcome progress, and confirmation that, as a nation, we are doing the right things, the right way, at the right time. There is one unfortunate outcome of the tough economic times however. It has been UK Sport's great pleasure to be the main sponsor of the SJA for nearly 10 years – and to provide an award "recognising fair play and those who

■ **Brian Scovell**, the former *Daily Mail* sports staffer, has published his 25th book, an autobiography, *Thank You Hermann Goering* (Amberley Publishing). The fast-paced book tells of many of Brian's countless scoops during his 50 years on the Fleet Street beat, in both football and cricket.

■ **Eric Brown** has written to the Bulletin to highlight a couple of omissions from our listing in the last issue of the roll of honour of one-time *South London Press* journalists (we wondered aloud whether any other local weekly could have produced as many high-fliers as the likes of the BBC's **David Bond**, *News of the World's* **Paul McCarthy**, and others. Brown, these days to be found working on the back bench at the *Daily Star*

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TIM HOLLINGSWORTH

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CHIEF OPERATING  
OFFICER, UK SPORT



inspire others by being role models" at the SJA British Sports Awards.

From our first winner, Sally Gunnell, through to this year's outstanding winner, bob skeleton gold medallist Amy Williams, we have sought to recognise true excellence on the field of play and, through our sponsorship, also pay tribute to the many outstanding sports journalists without whom the exploits and achievements of our many funded athletes would not be recognised.

UK Sport is a public body however, and one outcome of the spending review is the requirement for us to greatly reduce our funding of non-'front line' activity and indeed to freeze any spend that could be deemed 'marketing and advertising.'

We had already agreed to sponsor the 2010 Sports Awards and Sports Journalism Awards. I am delighted to honour those commitments. However after that we will have to bring to an end this long and very productive relationship. I still hope that UK Sport will remain close to the SJA in the future and I will work with the officers to make sure the transition is as smooth as possible.

I wish you all well, know that I will still see and speak to many of you as we build up to the excitement of London 2012 and beyond, and on behalf of everyone at UK Sport, thank the SJA.

and *Daily Express*, was not the first to point out that we had omitted from our list that Olympian sports journalist, **John Rodda**, and he reckons we were a decade out on when **Tony Stenson** inhabited the sports desk on Leigham Court Rd. "I worked with Tony and then succeeded him as sports editor of the *SLP*, and that was a lot more than 30 years ago," says Brown. "No one could be expected to recall all the Fleet Street fodder produced by the *SLP*. There's also **Peter Smith** (long time *Daily Mail* cricket correspondent now deceased) and **George Binyon** (now chief sports sub at *The Sun*) who succeeded me as *SLP* sports editor," says Big Eric. In the last issue, we challenged other local paper veterans to come up with as impressive a list of former staffers. Any offers?

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Bulletin & Yearbook design

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# Happy new Yearbook – but only for those who have paid their dues

## PAUL TROW

AS THE SJA prepares for the biggest sporting year in Britain for more than 40 years, publication of the 2011 *SJA Yearbook* has been moved to coincide with the SJA British Sports Journalism Awards dinner in March.

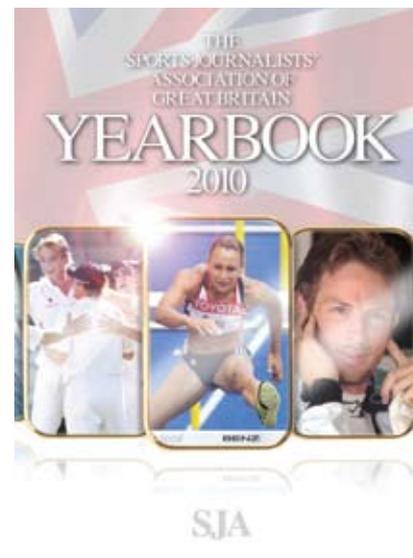
All nine previous editions of the *Yearbook* have been launched at the Sports Awards in December. The SJA committee has decided that the March event offers better timing, as it attracts a far greater turn-out from the SJA membership.

Therefore, the revised deadline for members to submit their profiles or updates has been extended to February 15. Anyone who has already submitted a profile for the 2011 *Yearbook* needs not re-submit.

It has also been decided that basic contact details of every SJA member should be included in the directory, in keeping with other professional journalism handbooks. Those members who have never previously submitted fuller profiles are therefore encouraged to take charge of their own entries and submit short biographies of themselves.

Inclusion in the *Yearbook* is a service exclusive to fully paid-up members of the SJA.

Annual membership fees fall due, as ever, on January 1. Anyone who has not paid their 2011 subs by the time of the *Yearbook* deadline will not have a profile included in the *Yearbook*, and nor



will they receive the complimentary copy sent to members.

The membership rate remains unchanged at £30 including VAT, or £20 for those working more than 50 miles outside London. Members who have set up bank mandates should receive their membership cards towards the end of January. For those paying by cheque, make it out to "SJA" and send to:

#### Mr Bill Colwill

31 Chesham Lane  
Chalfont St Peter  
Gerrards Cross  
Bucks SL9 OPG

The directory form is available online. Members can complete the form and send it online, or print it off and send by post to Paul Trow at 3 Clifton Avenue, London N3 1BN. Mugshots, preferably using a properly labelled jpg attachment, can be sent by email to ptrow76780@aol.com.

In addition to the members' directory, the 2011 *Yearbook* will include a calendar of sporting fixtures for the coming 12 months, an enhanced and expanded contacts' section, articles and updates from London 2012, and detailed reports from the SJA's events over the past year.

## Security note for SJA annual meeting

THE SJA's annual general meeting will be held in London on Wednesday, April 13. Sponsor UK Sport will again provide the venue at 40 Bernard Street, WC1N 1ST, opposite Russell Square Tube station. Security concerns mean attendees must pre-register through the SJA secretary in the month before the event.

The AGM will start at 12.30pm, and is open to all current members. The meeting will elect the SJA president, officers and committee for

the coming 12 months as well as hear reports on the association's activities and finances.

Members who wish to stand for election or propose motions or amendments to the association's rules, need to advise the committee in advance. Candidates and motions need to be proposed and seconded by current SJA members. For more information contact SJA Hon Secretary Steven Downes at stevenwdownes@btinternet.com or on 07710 428 562.

### Dates for your diary

**Monday, March 7** SJA Sports  
Journalism Awards (The Brewery)

**March 23-26** AIPS Annual  
Congress (Seoul)

**April 3-8** SportAccord convention  
(Park Plaza, London)

**Wednesday, April 13** SJA annual  
general meeting (UK Sport, 40  
Bernard St, London WC1N 1ST)

\* For lunches contact **Mary  
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