

11th July 2022 at Ashtead Baptist Hall

Chaired by: Sarah Minister

Number of participants: 32 members, two speakers and 2 guests

Sarah Minister introduced John Curran and his wife Kate to the members. John's talk was entitled broadcasting breaking news. - How the editorial dilemmas are dealt with by network broadcasters on a major unscheduled event i.e. a news breaker

John was a senior news desk producer with the BBC until 2012 and has since worked for seven different radio and eight TV networks. Since retiring he continues to work as a guest lecturer at Cranfield University where he teaches radio and TV skills to marine, aircraft and train crash investigators.

John talked about the difference in reporting news where communication was by fax and analogue phones compared to today where mobile phones can capture picture footage and voice recordings that can be transmitted by almost anyone. However the dilemma of the news producer is to decide what resources and associated costs should be allocated. How much weight should one attribute to a report of a news breaking story when a major story breaks with the associated adrenaline surges and competitive nature of journalism combined with protocols in place to safeguard people's privacy.

John illustrated his talk with contemporaneous examples of news recording of events that we now have consigned to history. He quotes James Cameron to ask the question do journalist write the first draft of history?

John recounted that he was the overnight editor for The BBC on the night that Princess Diana was involved in a car crash in Paris. He was in a middle of a mundane night shift when news filtered in that Princess Diana had been involved in a car crash in Paris and had been taken to hospital. His first deployment decisions would be crucial in ensuring that the correct talent was in the right location to report the story as often there are limited resources. The BBC also needs two confirmed sources of information before the story is broadcast so who and why people are giving the information is evaluated carefully.

John then went on to give other examples of new breaking stories that he was involved in and his thoughts on ethical decisions that need to be made about what should be broadcast and when if the topic and pictures are distressing.

John suggested using a watermarking app such as Marksta if one does not want ones photographs circulated unaccredited.

Sarah Minister thanked John and his wife for an interesting and humorous talk of life behind the scenes at a newsdesk.

Refreshments were served and the opportunity to buy WI raffle tickets.

The meeting closed at 21.35

Next meeting a social event At the Leg of Mutton on Monday 8th August at 20.00.

Forthcoming Programme

Monthly meetings held at Ashtead Baptist Church Hall, Barnett Wood Lane at 8pm unless

specified.

Monday 8th August Social get-together in the back area of the Leg of Mutton Pub on The Street. 8pm. Hope you can join us. It will be a great opportunity to get to know other members better.

Monday 12th September Gill Thompson 'Becoming an Author'

Monday 10th October 'Acupuncture and Women's Health'

Monday 14th November Emma Potter Colour Consultant and AGM

Monday 12th December Christmas Celebration

Please keep in touch - send us an email to ashteadwing@gmail.com, if you have any comments or ideas or would be willing to join our lovely committee.