

**Birmingham**

**PRESS**

News from the world's oldest press club. . . August 2008 **Club**

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# Amanda Platell – a career full of controversy!

**C**ONTROVERSIAL Aussie journalist Amanda Platell is set to be the latest high profile guest of Birmingham Press Club when she appears at an event on 9 September at Opus.

Amanda Platell, 50, is best known for her editorship of the 'Sunday Express' in the 1990s, and also her stint as spin doctor for then Tory leader William Hague.

These days she is a star columnist for the 'Daily Mail'. Amanda Platell was born in Perth, Western Australia, and arrived on these shores in 1986, as a backpacker.

She decided to stay on, and got a job with the now defunct 'Today' newspaper in London, before rapidly rising up Fleet Street's greasy pole to the editorship of the 'Sunday Express'.

Her fall from grace at the 'Express' was equally rapid, after allegedly falling out with then owner Lord Hollick over an article about prickly Labour

politician Peter Mandelson and his Brazilian boyfriend.

In 1999 Platell was hired by William Hague in a bid to revive the flagging fortunes of the Tories, who had not long been thrashed at the polls by Blair and New Labour.

Her bid to revamp Hague's image was often controversial and some of the resulting publicity horrified Tory traditionalists.

For instance, her attempts to portray Hague as a man of the people included the revelation that as a young man he regularly drank 14 pints a day – cue more infighting at Conservative Central Office.

Defeat to Labour at the 2001 General Election saw Platell abruptly leave her post once again.

Never afraid of controversy, Platell once again sparked headlines a year ago, after writing an article warning the McCanns to beware of courting publicity.

For tickets and further information please contact Kay Cadman at Core Marketing (0121 643 8151 or email [kc@core-marketing.co.uk](mailto:kc@core-marketing.co.uk))



## Press Club Ball ready for take-off

THE annual Press Club Ball will take place at the Burlington Hotel in Birmingham city centre, on 26 September.

East Midlands Airport are once again main sponsor for the event, with further support coming from Aston Science Park. The ball is one of the most popular on the Press Club's annual events roster.

Tickets are £50 (including VAT) for members, and £55 (including VAT) for non-members. Tables of ten are also available.

For further details, please see the Press Club's web site ([www.birmingham-press-club.co.uk](http://www.birmingham-press-club.co.uk))

## Annual General Meeting set for November

THE web site is also the place to go to find out more about this year's annual general meeting, which will take place on 6 November.

The AGM will be held at the Old Royal, Church Street, before the regular 'First Thursday' networking event which takes place at the same venue.

The AGM will commence at 6.30, and will consider the adoption of the annual report of the directors and accounts for the year ending 31 December 2007.

All Press Club shareholders are invited to attend.

Press Club chairman John Lamb said: "I would urge as many of you as possible to attend the AGM, as it is a good opportunity to raise any queries with the board about the running of the Club."

# Media is not a closed shop

**U**P-AND-COMING journalist Cara Simpson, who scooped a major accolade at the recent Birmingham Press Club annual 'Midlands Media Awards,' has encouraged aspiring youngsters from a minority ethnic background not to be deterred from pursuing their ambitions.

Cara, whose parents originate from Jamaica, said: "The industry has been perceived as a closed club in certain sectors of society and this belief has forced talented individuals of a minority ethnic background, who would dearly love to work in the media, to turn to other careers.

"This is a huge shame, as newspapers, magazines, radio stations, TV networks and other news providers, not only need but have a duty to represent people from a range of backgrounds in order to properly reflect the society in which it reports.

"That role has never been more crucial than now in this increasingly diverse society."

"That said, whatever a person's background, regardless of race, religion, class or creed, a strong sense of self-belief, hard work and persistence, is what is crucial for success."

Warwickshire-born Cara, aged 25, who collected the Press Club's Newcomer

of the Year Award, joined the Coventry Telegraph newspaper in January 2007 as a trainee reporter.

Before that, she studied at Lancaster University, where she edited the student newspaper SCAN, and took a postgraduate diploma in newspaper journalism at Cardiff University.

Recently, she has been elected as a trustee of the George Viner Memorial Trust Fund, which supports people of a minority ethnic background in their pursuit of a journalistic career with financial assistance and advice.

"Nineteen months into my job as a reporter



**AMBITIOUS:** Cara Simpson, pictured with Press Club chairman John Lamb at the awards evening

I have not been disappointed.

"I am glad I stayed true to my decision to pursue a career in the media and hope others with the same desire have the courage to follow their dreams," added Cara, who is seen here at the awards with Press Club chairman John Lamb.

## It's time once more for Brum's 'Open'

IT may not be the Open – but the Birmingham Press Club annual golf day is just as popular!

This year's event tees off next month at Blackwell Golf Club, one of the Midlands' most prestigious courses.

As ever, the event is being held to raise funds for charity, and this year's beneficiary will be the Primrose Hospice at Bromsgrove.

The event is being supported by Barclays, who have kindly offered to help with matched funding.

The cost of taking part in the event – which takes place on 8 September – is £395 per team of four (plus VAT).

For those who can't handle a golf club, but want to support the event, there is the opportunity to sponsor a tee, for £150 plus VAT.

*Further information on the golf day can be obtained from Andy Skinner at ASAP PR Ltd (07990 978257) or from Press Club board director Tony Flanagan on 07831 605267 (email [ajfpix@btopenworld.com](mailto:ajfpix@btopenworld.com))*

## New Directory now published

THE Press Club's latest Members' Directory has now been printed, and is in the process of being mailed out to the membership.

This process is likely to be fairly time consuming – remember, those that are doing the mailing are doing so on a voluntary basis – so if you haven't received your copy just yet please bear with us.

*Our thanks to all those who have supported the Directory via advertising.*

## Jones and Palmer – our newsletter sponsor

THIS issue of the Birmingham Press Club newsletter is sponsored by Jones & Palmer.

The newsletter is being printed by the company, who are based at 92-95 Carver Street, Hockley.

The company specialises in developing professional communications for the

corporate and public environment (printed and electronic) with a special focus on investor relations and marketing communications.

Jones & Palmer is a full-service creative agency, from copywriting, design through printing, and production to distribution.

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projects or work as part of a team with in-house designers or marketing departments and is flexible and creative in its approach.

Contact Heidi Hill on 0121 236 9007 or [heidi.hill@jonesandpalmer.co.uk](mailto:heidi.hill@jonesandpalmer.co.uk)

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# Rich pool of talent is saluted

**T**HE Nottingham Evening Post and Stoke-on-Trent's the Sentinel led the pack at this year's Midlands Media Awards, collecting the top prizes.

The Nottingham Evening Post walked away with the coveted title of 'Newspaper of the Year' and the Sentinel's star reporter, Laura Naylor, fought off competition from the Sunday Mercury and the Birmingham Post to win 'Scoop of the Year' and 'News Reporter of the Year (Daily)'.

The chairman of judges and Daily Telegraph assistant editor, Andrew Pierce, said Ms Naylor's stories, which included the exclusive 'Smoke on Trent' exposing a council blunder that meant the smoking ban could not be enforced in Stoke, were 'head and shoulders above the others' in the 'News Reporter of the Year (Daily)' category.

"This category was one of the strongest and the judges consider Laura to be a great winner," he said.

"Her front page lead was followed up by the nationals as well as media overseas, appearing on the front page of The Mirror and in newspapers around the world."

The judges were so impressed with 'Smoke on Trent' that they awarded it 'Scoop of the Year' even though Ms Naylor had not entered that category.

The Sentinel's photographers also had a good night as Wesley Webster won 'Regional Photographer of the Year' and Cara Edgington won the prestigious 'Trevor Roberts Award', which is presented to the best photographic newcomer.

Jim Tomlinson of the Hinckley Times took the award for 'Sports Photographer of the Year' and Matt Barron of the Coventry Times picked up the award for 'Weekly Photographer of the Year'.

The Coventry Times triumphed in several other categories, including 'News Reporter of the Year (Weekly)', which went to Les Reid, and 'Headline of the Year', which went to Steve Adams for 'Battered and boozed', a front-page story about drunken violence amongst women in Coventry.

The Coventry Telegraph's Cara Simpson secured the award for 'Newcomer of the Year'. Other winners were Adam Wakelin of the Leicester Mercury, 'Feature Writer of

the Year', Stevie Roden of the Nottingham Evening Post, 'Sports Journalist of the Year', and Jon Griffin of the Birmingham Mail, 'Business Journalist of the Year'.

Midlands Business Insider scooped 'Magazine of the Year' thanks to its cleverly designed front cover, excellent use of photographs and relevant business content.

The two new broadcast categories were evenly split between ITV and the BBC, with ITV Central's Keith Wilkinson taking the award for 'Television Journalist of the Year' and BBC Hereford & Worcester's Howard Belgard winning 'Radio Journalist of the Year'.

John Lamb, chairman of the Birmingham Press Club, which organised the event, said: "The Midlands has a rich pool of journalistic talent and this year's entrants were all of a very high calibre.

"The Nottingham Evening Post's victory as 'Newspaper of the Year' was well deserved. It is consistent in its quality content and presentation and should be commended for its campaigning efforts and strong links with the community.



*EVERYONE'S A WINNER: The 2008 Midlands Media Awards winners take a bow (left); Scoop of the Year winner Laura Naylor (below left) and the victorious Nottingham Evening Post crew (below)*





# 2008 Midlands Media Awards in pictures

*Clockwise from top: Julie and David Darlaston and John Morris; Gayle Stephens, Yvonne Stevens, Andy Holding; How many lagers was that, Sir?; Lisa Kennedy of Barclays, Press Club chairman John Lamb, Birmingham Post editor Marc Reeves, and Olivia Harris of sponsor Service Birmingham; Kevin and Louise Pashby, Ed Dawes, Michelle Knight, Dave McMullan, Carnel Dorricott; John Lamb and John Morris, of sponsor Birmingham Airport with a trio of 'trolley dollies' - or should that be hostesses?*

