

Bill Bowkett
Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers
‘Major Award’ recipient 2020

From a young age, I have been actively pursuing a career in journalism. It began more than a decade ago at the *Knights Templar School* where I was Editor-in-Chief of the student magazine, *Newsnight*, winner of ‘Best Website’ at the *Shine School Media Awards* in 2016 and 2017. My involvement led me to read Politics at the *University of Kent* where I was Executive Editor of the student newspaper, *Inquire*. I even had the opportunity to work for *Daily Mail* Features Editor, Liz Hunt, as an Editorial Assistant.

Thanks to the *Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers*, I have been able to continue my journey and define my path at *City, University of London*. This summer, I graduated with a Master of Arts (MA) in Newspaper Journalism. Completing this course has been invaluable to my growth.

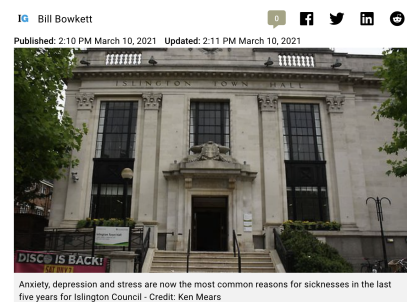
Making of a newsman

By enrolling at *City*, regarded one of the best universities in the country for the study of journalism, I developed a range of skills needed to make an impact in a competitive industry – such as news reporting, feature writing, sub-editing, teeline shorthand and data collection.

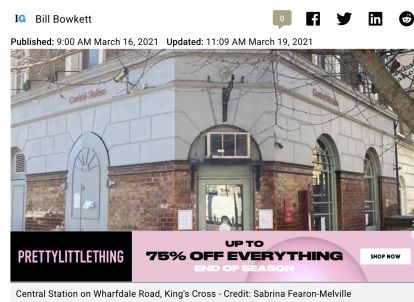
Perhaps the most important piece of teaching was media law. I needed a solid grounding in the various legal processes to understand my liberties and responsibilities, particularly the interplay between freedom of expression and the right to privacy. I was lectured by legal consultant Claire de Than, who taught me the *Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)* Editors’ Code of Practice, as well as the doctrine of judicial precedent. The module assessment – a timed examination – measured my ability to recall court cases, but also my ability to distinguish concepts such as slander and libel.

To consolidate my knowledge, I was assessed through an intensive three-week production week where I worked alongside peers to create an 8-page newspaper – a chance for me to take the theories discussed in seminars and apply them to real-life situations. Some of my articles from my portfolio managed to get published in the borough newspaper, the *Islington Gazette* (see below).

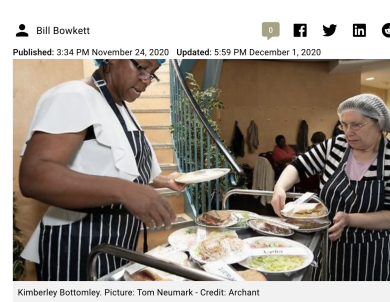
Data reveals work absence for mental health at council is double UK average

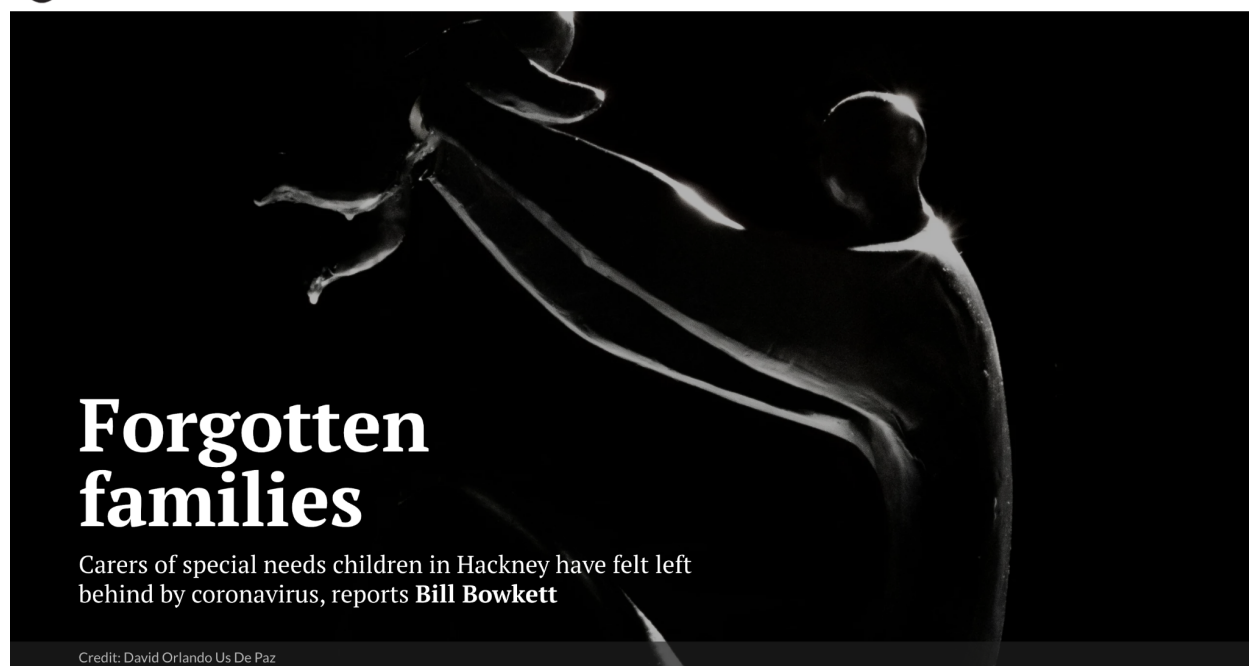


Lord urges public to help save Islington's oldest surviving LGBT+ bar



Older people face hardship amid coronavirus pandemic, Islington charity worker warns





Forgotten families

Carers of special needs children in Hackney have felt left behind by coronavirus, reports **Bill Bowkett**

Credit: David Orlando Us De Paz

Final Project assessment, created using Shorthand and using applications including Datawrapper, Premiere Pro, Audition and Soundcloud <https://tinyurl.com/92j29zt2>.

Although it was labeled as ‘Newspaper Journalism’, the course placed a strong emphasis on multimedia storytelling. The challenge for news publications in an age of rapid connectivity is to provide information that is engaging without sacrificing core values. The degree was designed with the needs of a rapidly changing industry. For instance, I was shown how to create video and audio packages, which I used to great effect in both my Final Project – an investigation into SEND provision in Hackney (see above) – and the Podcast module with my classmates to create a *A Future Union*, a show that was later published on *Spotify* (see below).



Aside from coursework. I was given some invaluable opportunities to meet prominent figures and learn tips of the trade. We had a guest lecture from BBC Newsnight’s Deborah Cohen on factual accuracy during the coronavirus pandemic, as well as Dan Evans – convicted of phone hacking – on ethics. We also had external sessions on writing curriculum vitae (CVs) and cold pitching to help prepare ourselves for the world of work, and even had a Q&A with Peter Sands and Sue Ryan from the *DMGT* graduate scheme on preparing for job interviews.

A Future Union, published on Spotify and using applications including Audition, <https://tinyurl.com/2p8c8zse>.

Financial assistance

The 'Major Award' scholarship, amounting to £5,000, has been invaluable in aiding me cover the costs of my degree. A large proportion went on trains from my home in North Hertfordshire to the *City* campus in North London. Besides travel expenses, the money allowed me to pay for personal IT equipment, like a new laptop, the *Adobe* Creative Cloud package, and a professional podcast set with headphones, a diaphragm studio condenser microphone, a pop filter, a mount, a USB adapter and a splitter cable. All this so that I could produce content to the high standard expected from those who attend *City*. The costs were considerable and my bursary enabled me to fully engage with my studies without the additional financial burden on top of tuition fees.



Benefits and future prospects

With my time at *City* at an end, I now feel as assured and confident as I start my career, with a solid grounding in ethical considerations, traditional news reporting and workplace experience. It has helped refine the skills needed to work in a multi-disciplinary media environment. I am delighted to say that since graduating, I have been working full-time as a political reporter for the commentary news website [Reaction](#). I have transferred the techniques I learned from my tutors into my role - such as social media coordination, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) management, and long-form storytelling. In addition, the exposure I received from *City* and my job has provided the platform to frequently broadcast for [GB News](#), [talkRadio](#) and [Times Radio](#).

I am indebted to *Stationers* for supporting me during my training. Without their assistance, I would not be where I am today. By making the most of my education and continuing to pursue my dream, I hope I will be able to make the people of *Stationers* proud.

For more of my work please go to, <https://muckrack.com/billbowkett>.

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