

PHOTOS: SKY NEWS UNLESS WHERE STATED OTHERWISE



In Dhaka, Dean Massey engages with local children, who are fascinated by his activities whilst shooting a documentary on the climate crisis in Bangladesh and India, 2021

THE MICK DEANE BURSARY — NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION

→ With freelancers making up the majority of the UK's camera workforce nowadays, it's not just staff roles that are rare, but training and internships too. Sky News is one of the few companies where opportunities for both do still exist. Named in honour of a much-loved colleague who tragically lost his life whilst on assignment, the Mick Deane Bursary was brought about to inspire and nurture newcomers from all backgrounds.

Understandably, this popular scheme was put on hold during the pandemic, but when it returned in 2022, the Bursary's online insight day was attended by 50-plus keen and talented young people. GTC member and 2022 Dick Hibberd Award winner **Andy Portch**, a senior cameraman with Sky News, has kindly gathered the experiences of some of the Bursary's recent recipients for Zerb.

Mick Deane was a Sky News camera operator who was tragically shot and killed in August 2013, whilst covering the Arab Spring anti-government protests in Cairo's Rabaa al-Adawiya Square.

In memory of Mick, Sky News supports an annual 12-month Bursary trainee scheme that aims to give one person the opportunity to work alongside technical camera and engineering teams (primarily based out of Sky HQ at Osterley, Middlesex), with the simple goal of learning what it takes to be a modern-day, technical news camera assistant and operator.

Sky News is committed to finding the most enthusiastic, energetic and eager person to join its news camera department for 12 months, so they can discover as much as they can about working in this exciting industry. This 'goal' reflects Mick's life-long passion to help younger individuals take their first steps towards developing a career in news-gathering camerawork.

Since the Bursary's creation in 2014, and more recently working alongside the Sky Early Careers team, Sky has always looked to widen its search for new talent, especially when it comes to finding new ways to make the role of camera operator as accessible as possible to those looking to break into this competitive industry.

The proof of the Bursary's success is best described by some of its recent recipients. Below, Dean Massey, Jess Sestili, Josh Masters and Raj Jaswal explain what the Bursary has meant to them – but first, Sky presenter Mark Austin shares his fond memories of Mick Deane.



Mark Austin, on Mick Deane: "People loved Mick; whenever he rocked up on a story, there were handshakes and hugs and warm greetings from everyone."

Mark Austin (Sky News Presenter)

Needless to say, I miss Mick and the times we had together. But it is a huge tribute to him that Sky News has set up a Bursary in his name. And it was by a strange quirk of fate that I found myself in Ukraine recently with Dean Massey, one of the early recipients of the Bursary. Mick would have loved to see a young camera operator doing so well. To cap it all, while we were in Kyiv, we got word that Dean had won the RTS Camera Operator of the Year award. We celebrated Dean's victory that night in Ukraine... and we also raised a glass to Mick. He was quite a guy.

In fact, Mick Deane was much more than a news camera operator. Mick Deane was much more than a news picture editor. Mick Deane was a journalist, a producer, a fixer, a mentor, a fount of common sense and wisdom. But most of all, Mick Deane was a wonderful travelling companion and a friend.

I was privileged to work with Mick in Hong Kong between 1990 and 1993, and again in 1996. I was in my early thirties and new to the job of foreign correspondent. We travelled across Asia together, covering some of the biggest stories in the world and Mick guided me through many tricky assignments. He knew the best local producers, he knew the best drivers, he knew where we should be and when we should be there. And he was also fun. People loved Mick; whenever he rocked up on a story, there were handshakes and hugs and warm greetings from everyone.

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Dean Massey (Bursary recipient 2017)

For me, the Bursary provided a way into an industry where I had few connections. When I was 16 years old, I took a GoPro Hero 1 with me when I went paintballing and later shared a video of the experience. I loved the creative process it had involved and felt a buzz after sharing my video. I enrolled on a Film & Television course at college, after which I undertook an internship at a recording studio, where I made music videos and filmed coverage of events. Then, while I was studying at Southampton Solent University, I won an RTS Bursary for aspiring students which, in turn, helped me to secure work experience at Sky News. Once there, I applied for the Mick Deane Bursary and was honoured to be accepted.



Dean, left, and Sky News presenter Mark Austin on assignment in Kyiv, Ukraine, early 2022. Dean has returned repeatedly to the frontline in Ukraine as the war progressed throughout 2022 and 2023



The Sky team with presenter Kay Burley, third from left, alongside Ukraine's President Zelenskyy, with Sky foreign specialist camera operators Richie Mockler and Dean Massey holding their cameras, fourth and third from right

Over the course of a year, the bursary would provide me with training on production sound, editing and camera operation from some of the best practitioners in the industry. I remember sitting down with my manager as we planned the Bursary and writing a list of goals, no matter how improbable. The list included: to film both the US President Donald Trump and the Queen; to shoot a full news package on my own; and to be sent on a foreign trip. Within that year, I would manage to tick off every single objective.

Putting training into practice

It was 2017; I had just started on the Bursary and already had some basic training and a handful of shifts in production sound under my belt, when I was dispatched with Sky News camera operator Keith Hopkins to cover a news story in central London. With a trusty Sennheiser 416 boom mic in hand and SQN sound mixer on my hip, we set out on my first ever assignment for Sky News. By the time we arrived at the location, my nerves were through the roof and my heart felt like it was going to beat out of my chest. Our interviewee approached and, jostling among the media scrum, we scrambled to grab a few words on camera before they moved on. And so, within that quick 20-second burst of action, I had completed my first practical task as part of the Mick Deane Bursary.

After finding my feet recording sound, I next began to try my hand with a broadcast camera. Many days were spent with senior camera operators critiquing my every action so that, as with most things, I could progress through trial and error; it was invaluable experience. I absorbed knowledge through listening to and observing the expertise of the many operators I encountered, and combined it all to establish my own shooting style.

The next step: solo

After a great deal of shadowing and training, I was finally set free to shoot solo. This would be a huge landmark in my career; it felt surreal to be entrusted with so much responsibility.

A few weeks on, I received a call from assignments team leader Mark Paterson, in which he asked if I was ready for the next step. He wanted me to provide 'pool' coverage of an event that Princes William and Harry were attending. After some words of encouragement from Mark, I took a deep breath and accepted the challenge; this was going to be a self-defining, sink-or-swim moment. So, the next day, I put on my suit, rocked up to the event, all nervous, and filmed as many shots as I possibly could; I didn't want to miss a single thing. The months of training had led up to this and, thankfully, all went well. Phew!

As I grew in confidence, I was given yet more challenging opportunities. Soon after my Bursary had finished, I secured a permanent camera/editor position with Sky News. With promotion came foreign travel and I have since worked on stories around the globe, including bushfires in Australia, the impeachment of Donald Trump in the US, child slavery in Africa, the student protests in Hong Kong – and, most recently, completed repeat tours to the frontline in Ukraine.



Camera operator Keith Hopkins, left, accompanied Dean on his first assignment as sound recordist for Sky News in 2017

In 2021, I was given a high-profile assignment to shoot an important documentary on the climate crisis in Bangladesh and India, to be aired on Sky Documentaries, Sky Cinema and Sky News, with the broadcast timed to coincide with the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow.

During the shoot, I witnessed extreme poverty through filming in the slums of Dhaka, on the tiny islands off the coast of India, and within the world's largest mangrove forest, the Sundarbans. I'll never forget the desperation on the faces of so many people we filmed; their lives had been ruined by forces beyond their control and they were helpless. I felt a huge responsibility to show the world their suffering at the sharp end of climate change. We filmed for six weeks in Bangladesh, then moved on to India for the following eight weeks, where correspondent Katerina Vittozzi and I edited the documentary from a hotel room. It was an enormous undertaking with a tight deadline.

Industry recognition

It was not long after that I found out I'd been nominated for the Royal Television Society's 2022 Camera Operator of the Year award. I was ecstatic! I couldn't believe that my camerawork was considered in the same league as that of the best in the business. Months later, in February 2022, I was working in Kyiv, Ukraine, just ahead of the Russian invasion. I sat with my Sky colleagues watching a live stream of the RTS awards ceremony from London, nervously peering through my fingers at the screen, as Cathy Newman introduced the camera category. My heart rate was through the roof! Hearing my name read out as the winner was a surreal moment, and one I'll never forget. My phone erupted with calls and messages of congratulations; it was overwhelming. Weeks later, having been brought down to earth by covering the Russian invasion of Ukraine, I returned to the UK. To my surprise, I was greeted at Gatwick arrivals by Ed Bayliss (Manager of Sky News cameras), who presented me with my RTS trophy.

By Feb 2023, I was promoted to Sky's team of elite foreign camera editors. My brief will be both firefighting international breaking news and investigative foreign features. When I think about every experience and all the people who contributed to my work in winning that RTS camera award, without doubt the key was the Mick Deane Bursary. Through a catalogue of fantastic mentors and training, its opportunities have changed my life. I'm incredibly proud and grateful, and I look forward to seeing how the Bursary changes the lives of future recipients to come.





Jess Sestili mics up Andre Agassi, former World No1 tennis player, Wimbledon, 2018

Jess Sestili (Bursary recipient 2018)

I was revising for an entrance exam to French journalism school when the Charlie Hebdo terror attacks happened just down the road, in January 2015. I headed straight over to the scene and stuck around, not really knowing why I was staying there. I'd noticed that the Sky News crews were among the first UK broadcasters to have arrived (and stayed the longest). "I've got nothing to lose," I thought, so I approached them, explaining I was fluent in French, knew Paris well and was studying for a Masters degree in journalism. With that, my passion for news was unleashed.

As a result of that encounter, I went on to freelance as a fixer for Sky News on several occasions and met people at Sky who knew other journalists in Paris. This resulted in my working for a French broadcaster and a news agency. The French broadcaster was a great place to learn; the fact that it was actually completely shambolic meant that, if you grafted enough, you could try your hand at many different roles within the newsroom. I spent time as an output producer, specialist producer, desk reporter, output editor, VJ and editor. By working through all these roles, I discovered that what I loved most was to shoot and edit. The editing was fine, as I did this every day, but I needed to find a way to get into filming. However, camerawork has been, and often still is, viewed as a male role. (The number of times you hear the title 'cameraman' is testament to that.) I kept being sidelined and ignored in my quest for camera training.








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Jess with Tom Clarke, Sky News Science and Technology Editor, reporting live from COP26 in Glasgow, November 2021

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I'm so grateful that Ed took the time to meet with me and listen to my ambition to shoot and edit, and after our meeting, he arranged for me to shadow Dean for a few days – and the rest is history.

So, I left, moved back to London, and took a course in documentary filming. I thought, *“At least my skills and desire to move into camerawork will be seen as legitimate”* – although, of course, this shouldn't have been necessary and is indicative of an industry which has been dominated by white men.

Perseverance brings opportunity

For me, Sky News remains a heavyweight in the news industry. I had loved fixing for Sky's teams and wanted to try to work with them full-time. A Sky engineer put me in touch with the company's Camera Manager, Ed Bayliss, as well as Dean Massey, who was the current Mick Deane Bursary recipient at the time. I'm so grateful that Ed took the time to meet with me and listen to my ambition to shoot and edit, and after our meeting, he arranged for me to shadow Dean for a few days – and the rest is history.

It was incredibly refreshing to be listened to by people who could see my drive and ambition. It felt as though, finally, I was no longer being ignored. Ed introduced me to Mick's widow, Daniela Deane, who shared with me her hopes for the Bursary. Together, they both decided that I would be a good fit and awarded me the place. While I waited for the Bursary to begin, I moved to Berlin to work for another state broadcaster. I kept editing and working in any newsroom role that was made available to me but, most importantly, I took every opportunity that came along to be behind a camera.

Fast forward 4 years and I'm now in a full-time shoot/edit role at Sky News, where I feel my work is properly recognised and valued. I've embraced my role through the Bursary's interesting combination of 'nurturing and opportunity', and have put my new skills into practice (and pretty sharpish too). In the previous 4 years of my career, I had the constant impression I wasn't being heard but, here at Sky, people have sat up and listened. It's rare to enjoy the company of so many people you work with (and yet this is so important when you find yourself working so closely together). There are two female camera operators in significant international bureaux at Sky News: Olivia Prutz in Jerusalem and Jenni Wetters in Berlin, and both are role models for my future career.

Sky: has no limits

Sadly, there remain some old-fashioned, sexist, patriarchal and untrue stereotyped opinions in the wider industry, which, in all honesty, I've had to push harder to get over than my male peers. I've met people on the road who've ignored me as a female camera operator, but at Sky News I know I've got some of the best people in the industry behind me.

I've honed my editing skills with many a speedy shoot/edit; I've done bureau cover in Brussels for 4 months and on three occasions in Washington DC; I'm a keen politics and conference fanatic, covering every Tory conference since I joined along with those of Labour and the SNP, as well as summits for NATO, COP and the World Economic Forum at Davos. Going full circle, I found myself back in Paris for the French elections; I've had shoots at sea and in the air (including from an army helicopter over Serbia); and I travelled the world during the pandemic when no one was allowed to get on a plane... and all this only touches the surface!

The Mick Deane Bursary provided the opportunity to add another determined and focused female camera operator to the ranks. It nurtured my skills, supported me through tough times and has given me the privileged chance to tell people's stories with my camera.



In amongst the press pack, Josh Masters, centre standing, captures Prime Minister Boris Johnson arriving at Downing Street, July 2020

Josh Masters: (Bursary recipient 2019)

Graduating from university with my mind set on a career behind camera was daunting. Few camera operator vacancies ever come up, and effective training courses are rare, so I was delighted to be chosen for the Bursary. It feels like only yesterday when I set off for the first time to shadow some of Sky's amazing news crews, as I took up my Bursary placement. Three years on, I'm shooting full-time and my role is hugely rewarding.

At university, I had used a range of cameras, but they were mainly DSLRs. When I joined Sky, I had been keen to get to grips with the bigger Sony PMW-X400 ENG cameras. I quickly got hands-on experience with these cameras but, ironically, I soon realised that most crews would choose Lumix GH5s for daily news-gathering, as the compact kit draws less attention and contributors feel less intimidated.

Every day at Sky News is one of learning. On the Bursary scheme, you start with sound. My goal was cameras, but learning the techniques of sound recording was integral to building my confidence. I gleaned so much from different shooters. It's not just about gaining invaluable camera tips or even more advanced techniques of motivational lighting; it's also the bigger picture of integrity in journalism and the importance of being an ambassador for our profession and craft.

With experience comes wisdom

After understanding the kit and shadowing crews, I began to 'fly solo'. On my early shoots, I would fill my camera bag with extra light stands, loads of XLR cables and a few too many batteries. For my first 10pm Downing Street live, I turned up an hour and a half early, with enough kit to cover a two-week foreign trip! Now, with growing experience, packing my gear more economically is becoming second nature.

A few months into the Bursary scheme, I was first on the scene of the Streatham terror attack. Sky News began

broadcasting my live shot as I was hastily approaching the police cordon with the camera down by my side. I didn't even have time to white balance and, in hindsight, that live shot was a little bit blue.

Sky News has prepared me for anything. Throughout the Bursary scheme, I travelled non-stop for assignments: from Royal engagements to gangland investigations to huge General Election outside broadcasts. One memorable OB was covering the floods on the borders of Wales; I have never owned hardcore wet weather gear, so turned up with only walking boots and coat. Thankfully, one of the other camera operators had spare waders. I definitely pulled off the oversized waders look!

Team is everything

Not only do our colleagues look out for each other by sharing wellies and the like, but everyone is welcoming and eager to share knowledge and experience. This isn't just within the camera department, but whenever you phone into the assignments desk or our News Operations Centre (NOC), it's always a friendly voice on the end of the phone. I've learned that successful news-gathering is a team effort.



Josh Masters used his Insta 360 camera to great effect with NATO forces' Challenger tanks on exercise in Estonia, Feb 2022



Raj Jaswal receives training from camera/editor Paul Nasr on how to use radio mics

After I finished on the bursary, I filled freelance gaps in the rota, before securing a full-time assistant role. In Jan 2023, I was delighted to be made up to full-time camera/editor. I now shoot and edit news daily; I have one of Sky's parliamentary passes, which puts me at the heart of politics and means I'm often shooting the top story of the day. As Sky is keen to reflect politics across the nation, rather than just inside the Westminster media bubble, I've also travelled the country shooting and editing lead packages with Sky's political editor, Beth Rigby.

Foreign assignments are the holy grail of news-gathering. I think every news-shooter knows they've arrived when they are trusted to take responsibility for overseas coverage. Recently, I've been working out of both our Europe and US bureaux. My favourite foreign assignment so far was in Estonia to film a NATO forces' winter training camp. Tanks and armour were thundering by in all directions; rushing to attach my 360-degree camera to a tank felt a bit risky, but the reward was some excellent action footage.

I quickly learnt the phrase the 'Sky way' – you certainly need a flexible and positive mindset to succeed. At times, it feels like the hands-on approach is throwing you in at the deep end, but this has been the best way to learn. My development has set the pace for the jobs I am assigned. I love the excitement and anticipation, always wondering what my next job will be! My assignments constantly give me access to people and places most folk will never meet or see for themselves. It's been a privilege to be part of the Mick Deane Bursary – and somehow it still feels like just the beginning.

Raj Jaswal (Bursary recipient 2022)

I'd been working at Sky for over 3 years in a different department (retail) but had always wanted to get into news, which was not an easy task, and I didn't know where to start. Last year, I saw the internal advert inviting applications for the next Mick Deane Bursary. I instantly knew this was my chance to get my dream job, where I could learn about and work in the role of camera assistant (with a view to eventually becoming a camera operator). During my time working in the Sky retail outlet in Uxbridge, a career in journalism had always

been on my mind, but attaining it had felt out of reach. With the chance of a place on the Bursary, I told myself, "Just go for it!"

So far, I absolutely love it. I had the perfect welcome within the first month, under the guidance of Camera Manager, Ed Bayliss. From initially shadowing shifts in sound, I've progressed to actually doing them myself, with some incredibly supportive camera assistants and camera operators; I've felt comfortable and nervous at the same time. The advice is always to pace myself, but don't overdo it. I'm really enjoying the steep learning curve; I've learnt that you must always be ready to react to things at any time and be able to work under pressure.

Transferable skills

The transition across from retail to news-gathering is dramatic, but I do find similarities. Treating a customer with respect is like treating your contributors with respect; valuing their time and making sure they think well of meeting you is so important. It's imperative for a trust to exist between contributor and journalist. I've always had a fascination with news and the importance of journalism, and it was really brought home to me during COVID, when I realised how the public was desperate for reliable information and therefore depended heavily on trusted journalism. Bringing news to people and making them aware is so important. I believe climate change is the most pressing story of our age. I have a longing to film gorillas in the Congo but will happily cover any story that comes my way.

My dream is to make the most of this Bursary and to maximise my opportunities at Sky News beyond the 12-month placement. I would love to develop this career, with the chance to travel overseas and experience the world the way Mick Deane did. Nobody knows the future, but I am determined to push myself and prove myself worthy of the Mick Deane Bursary.

FACT FILE

2024 Mick Deane Bursary. In the autumn of 2023, the Sky News team will host a virtual 'Insight Day' event, designed to share more information about the role as well as to engage potential applicants in news-gathering orientated theoretical exercises. The event will help attendees to discover more about this fantastic scheme, and will be a day of learning and networking, with support from professionals at Sky. We wish all the bursary graduates success in their camera careers.

Many thanks to GTC member **Andy Portch**, a senior cameraman at Sky News, for collating this article. Aside from his extensive career spanning many years, during which he's covered countless major news events stories across the globe, Andy has been a longstanding and active supporter of the GTC in various ways, including contributing to Zerb. The GTC is delighted that Andy is the recipient of the Dick Hibberd Award 2022, a highly deserving winner indeed.

You can contact Andy at: email: andy.portch@sky.uk