And in other news...

BROADCASTING

BBC boss defends Sherlock nudity

BBC drama boss Ben Stephenson has defended nude scenes in *Sherlock*, telling journalists that broadcasting before the watershed "doesn't mean you have to be dull". A total of 100 people complained about the racy footage of actress Lara Pulver in the New Year's Day episode which attracted more than 10 million viewers.

CINEMA

PM Cameron in gaffe over film funding

The Prime Minister has urged British film bodies only to fund "commercially successful" pictures, prompting criticism from industry figures. *My Week with Marilyn* actor, Eddie Redmayne, said changes in this vein could "dilute the quality of the product and mean we don't move forward culturally". PAGE 20

CHINA

City signs up to canine clampdown

A tourist city in northern China will from next month ban residents from keeping large dogs. The city of Xi'an, known for the terracotta warriors, will not allow breeds such as German Shepherds within the city centre. No reason was given, but other Chinese cities have imposed similar bans over the mess and fears of rabies.

ARMAGEDDON

The end of the world moves a bit closer

The apocalypse is now a minute closer, according to the Doomsday clock, a symbolic measure which counts down to Armageddon. The minute hand on the 64-year-old concept clock has edged forward to show "inadequate progress" on containing the global threat posed by nuclear weapons and climate change, scientists say. PAGE 17

FRANCE

Museum threatens legal action for strip

The Musee d'Orsay is threatening legal action after a publicity stunt by the clothing chain Etam, which saw models in underwear running through the Paris gallery's Impressionist collection. In a video shot last month, three girls throw off their coats, revealing underwear to surprised museum visitors. PAGE 22

PAGE 3 PROFILE

RICHARD GERE ACTOR

Pretty Woman 2, perhaps?
Something altogether more serious, alas, because Gere has labelled China "the largest hypocrisy in the world". The Buddhist actor and Dalai Lama devotee is deeply upset by the continued Chinese occupation of Tibet.

Some context, please?
China believes that Tibet has been one of its constituent regions (and therefore subject to rule in Beijing) since the 13th century. Under Mao Zedong's incarnation of the Communist party, the Tibetans suffered greatly, with thousands of their monasteries destroyed. The tension has not abated since.

And what was the opinion of our very own Confucius, Mr Gere?
"China is a very difficult place to live if you are a free thinker, if you are an artist, if you are a religious person, but especially in Tibet," he said. "No matter how many roads [the Chinese] build, or how many skyscrapers, or how many – I think there's about six or seven million Chinese settlers, Han Chinese who have been brought to Tibet at this point – it is not going to change [Tibetan culture]. [China] would have to kill every Tibetan to change it and they are not going to do that."

China won't be too alarmed by this trifle, surely?
You'd be wrong. In fact there will almost certainly be some form of retribution. In 2008, Sharon Stone's films were banned from Chinese cinemas after she said that earthquakes leaving almost 70,000 dead were the result of "bad karma".

LIAM O'BRIEN

Letter from the executive editor

Stefano Hatfield

Blimey, that was one hell of a lie down. I haven't seen you all since the dog days between Christmas and New Year (thanks to Victoria and Rhodri for holding the i fort), but I feel like a Time Lord: Henry and Scholes are in the Arsenal and Man Utd first teams, Margaret Thatcher's legacy is being debated everywhere and a referendum on Scottish independence is top of the news agenda. Even Antony Worrall Thompson is back in the headlines – however unwillingly.

My solitary holiday tale is the observation that for the first time, iPads and Kindles appeared as ubiquitous as "real" books on the beach. More women had Kindles – is it because they are lighter and smaller? Among those reading old-fashioned books, it was clear many a male got a hardback copy of the Steve Jobs biography under their tree and (unlike me) could even be bothered to lug the giant tome halfway across the world.

Being in Asia, reading the *New Straits Times* and other papers, the contrast between their huge interest in, and ready embrace of, new technologies, science and maths education and our own ambivalence to such vital building blocks for our future was stark.

That said, ICT as taught in our schools today, should be scrapped (p19). Many children can already use technology to the level it is taught a long time before they get to senior school. It must be made more challenging. So, inevitably, my new year's resolution is to better understand, employ and embrace new technology both for i, and I – while being all too aware that millions of young Asians would find the need for such a resolution puzzling.

However you are reading this, a belated happy 2012 to you all.

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