

# BROADCAST

25 AUGUST 2000

THE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE TELEVISION AND RADIO INDUSTRY

£2.40

## THIS WEEK

C4 and BBC 2 unveil their autumn slates 2

BBC seeks recruits for new net outfit 3

Eurosport to launch Skysports rival 5

Challenge TV seeks programme ideas 6

Fight to save Mill 10

## JARGON BUSTER

**Broadband** New media buzzwords debugged and John Raczka's plans for BT Openworld

## HOT TO TROT

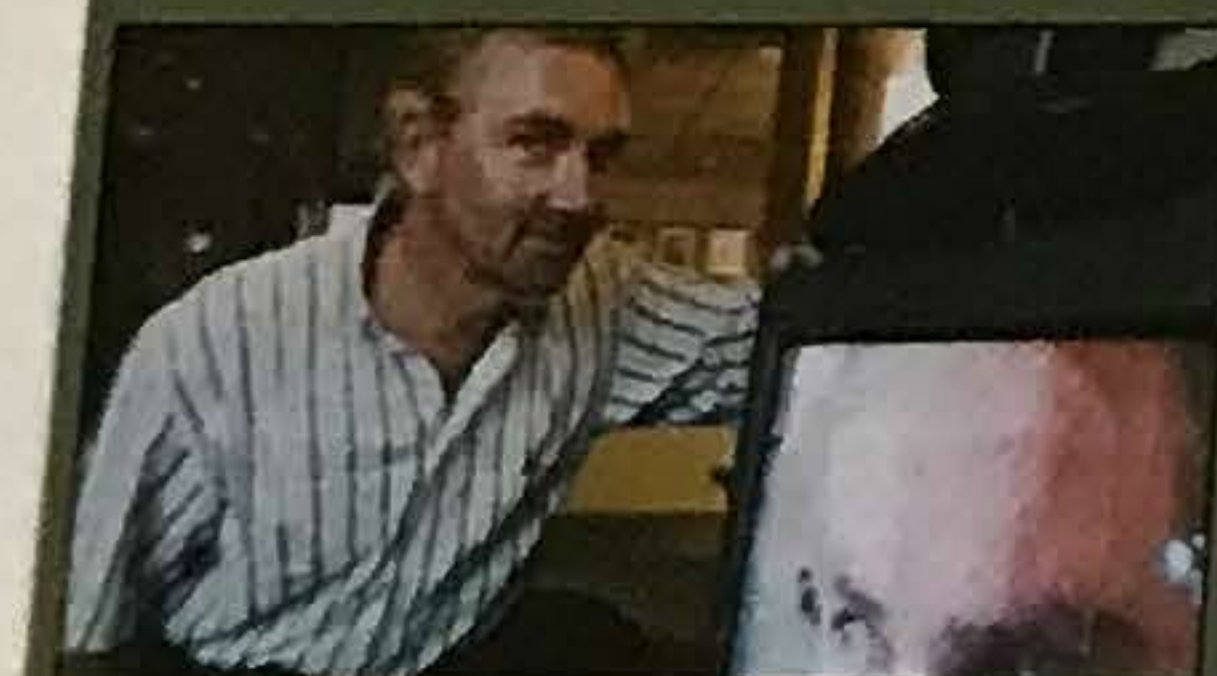
**BROADCAST HOTSPOTS**

The 20 to 30 year-olds who are forging the future of the industry 20

## MIDAS TOUCH

The passions and foibles of the wealthiest man in the Rich List of our broadcast fat cats 17

## OFF THE BOX



Noel Edmonds on pulling strings from behind the screen 26

## GOLDEN YEARS

**BROADCAST** The TV festival's changing face over 25 years in this silver anniversary special

## Dyke's MacTaggart confirms news at 10

BBC director general Greg Dyke is expected to confirm plans to move BBC 1's *Nine O'Clock News* to 22.00 in his MacTaggart lecture on Friday (25 August), despite confirmation that ITV is to take its *News at Ten* battle to the High Court, write Lucy Rouse and Colin Robertson.

The presiding judge stipulated that the ITV/ITC hearing must take place before the end of September – meaning it will

go to court in a fortnight's time, according to ITV sources.

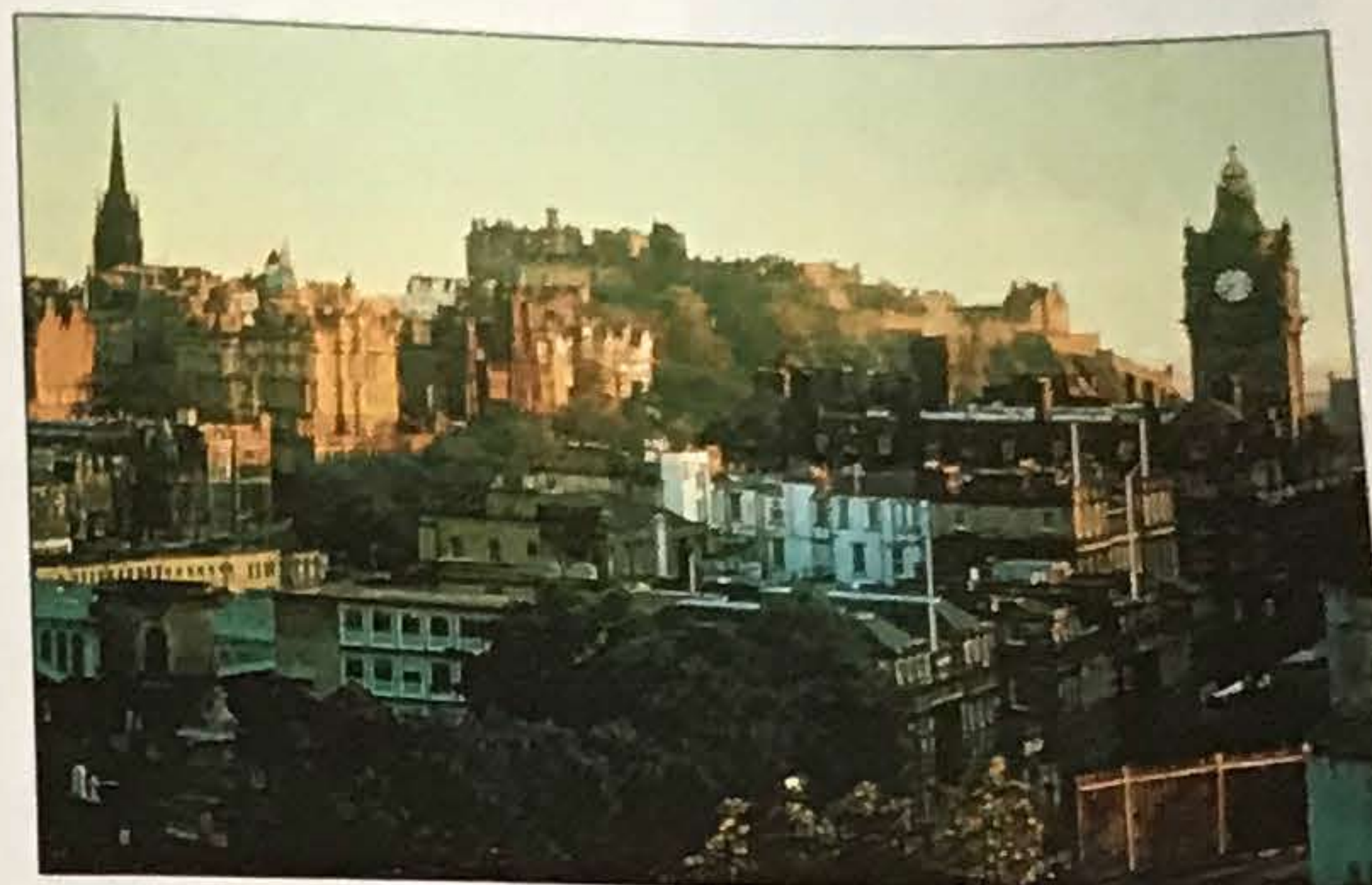
If the court rules in favour of the ITC, ITV would be forced to change its evening schedule immediately, with its 23.00 *Nightly News* brought to 22.30.

Meanwhile observers pointed out that if Dyke confirms his plans to air the BBC 1 news at 22.00, he does not have governors' or government approval for the move.

He is expected to use his

MacTaggart speech to promote his 'vision' putting the BBC channels into context within broadcasting, pre and post-analogue switch off.

*Panorama* – which may be spread across BBC 1 and BBC 2 in future – is not expected to feature, although queries about the BBC's current affairs programming may be raised at a follow-up Q&A session at Edinburgh on Saturday morning, where head of BBC news



Edinburgh: MacTaggart expected to confirm news move

Tony Hall is appearing.

Dyke's MacTaggart is not expected to address independent commissioning, leaving

indies still waiting to hear about the structure that will replace the Independent Commissioning Group.

## BBC offers Tranter top drama position

By Lucy Rouse, Tara Conlan and Barbara Marshall

BBC head of drama series Jane Tranter has been offered the corporation's top drama commissioning job, but her acceptance depends on a rethink of the commissioning and production structure, according to sources.

Insiders said this week that deciding the structure of drama commissioning and finding roles for existing executives is proving particularly complex. Director of television Mark Thompson is this week talking to a number of in-house drama executives about different models for drama commissioning.

He had been expected to appoint a single drama commissioner to sit alongside commissioners for entertainment, features and arts. But a source close to Thompson told *Broadcast* this week that it had not yet been decided whether there will be a single commissioner or a

## YENTOB POACHES GRANADA DUO

BBC director of drama, entertainment and children's Alan Yentob is this week expected to sign up Granada controller of drama Simon Lewis and deputy Sue Hogg as in-house executive producers, writes Colin Robertson. Reporting to Yentob, the pair have been given a guaranteed output deal to develop series and one-offs from an in-house department. They will not be given commissioning responsibilities for indies. Granada is understood to be gearing up to announce a replacement, with Granada controller of comedy Andy Harries tipped as the likely successor. The move puts an end to months of speculation about Lewis and Hogg who have been courted by the BBC since early June. Neither Granada nor the BBC would comment.

multi-layered structure.

Another source suggested any drama commissioning role might also involve some production duties, which would bring the drama commissioner closer to the BBC division now headed by director of drama, entertainment and children's Alan Yentob.

This week it also emerged that Yentob is about to hire

tion in the nations and regions and the strength of the drama in pre and post-watershed slots.

Current head of drama series Mal Young, who oversees *EastEnders* and *Holby City*, is said by insiders to be 'important' in the future mix, although his experience is not considered to be as broad as Tranter's.

Meanwhile, the BBC is understood to be considering long-term plans to develop Elstree as a drama centre as part of its wide-ranging property review.

Sources confirmed that talks about the future of the site are taking place but deny productions such as *Casualty*, currently in Bristol, and *Doctors*, in Birmingham, may move to Elstree.

The use of Elstree has been under scrutiny for a number of years despite being the home of long-running series *EastEnders*, *Holby City* and *Grange Hill*. Other productions, such as *Top of the Pops*, only use the studios for part of the week.

Granada controller of drama Simon Lewis and his deputy Sue Hogg as in-house executive producers, reporting directly to him (see box).

While commissioning structures for each of Thompson's four genre areas differ slightly from one another, the new structure in drama, has to address in-house and independent commissioning, produc-



WELL, YOU CAN JUST PAINT IT BACK IN AGAIN.

HEAD OF DOCUMENTARY AND INVESTIGATIONS

## Gibson takes BBC docs job after U-turn

BBC Bristol head of features Jeremy Gibson has changed his mind and decided to take the BBC controller of documentaries and investigations job, writes Georgina Lipscomb.

Gibson, who will report to BBC factual and learning joint directors Lorraine Heggessey and Michael Stevenson, pulled out of discussions at the start of August saying he wanted to stay in Bristol with his family (*Broadcast*, 4.8.00).

He was thought to be in line for a role as one of three new regional chiefs, overseeing BBC Bristol – a responsibility that he will still take on, alongside his new factual brief.

Gibson told *Broadcast*: 'I had time to carefully think it through and realised that I'd missed a fantastic opportunity to go forward.'

Based in Bristol, where he will spend the beginning and end of each week, Gibson will divide the rest of his time between London and Manchester, overseeing output such as *Watchdog*, *Inside Story*, *Vets in Practice* and *Modern Times*.

## UKTV boosts original factual output

UKTV factual channel editor Andrew Lowrey is gearing up to commission 120 hours of extra factual programming from indies and in-house producers and is also planning to reposition digital channel UK Horizons, writes Simon Ellery.

As part of the repositioning, Lowrey has hired two senior

staff. ITV2 broadcasting and strategy executive Rupert Morling takes a new role as scheduler across factual channels (UK Horizons and UK Style) while Jane Wilson, currently development producer at Flex-tech channel Living Health, joins as deputy editor of UK Horizons.

Part of Morling's brief is to reposition UK Horizons so it contains 'darker content with an edgier feel'. Under Wilson, the channel will also crank up its original commissions quota by 120 per cent to a total of 106 hours in 2001.

Lowrey said he is looking for new ideas and interactive

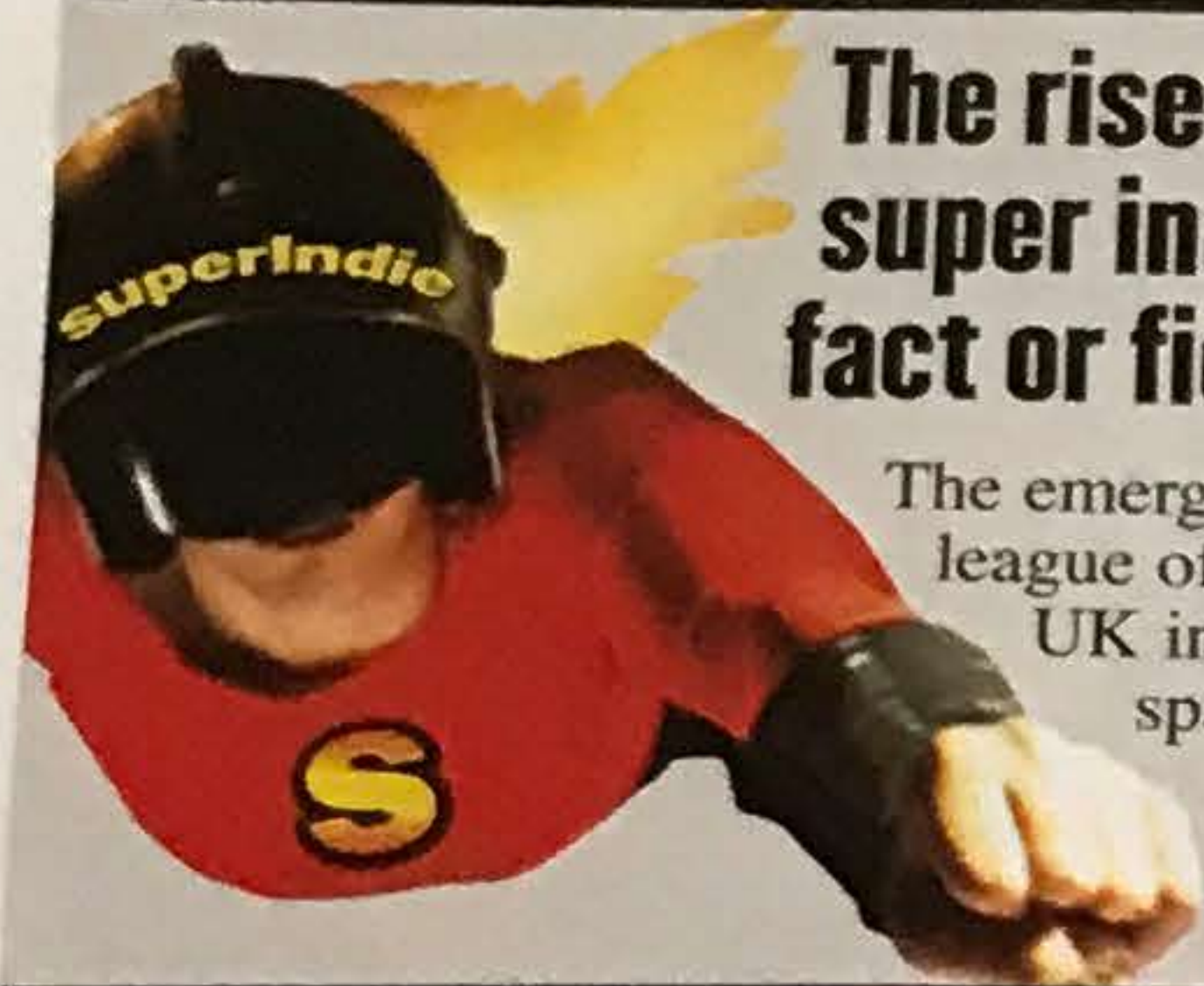
proposals as well as output in its traditional genres: history, science, docu-soap, travel, natural history and adventure.

UK Style will double its original factual quota to 124 hours and is looking for food programmes. Commissioning for both channels will start imminently for transmission in 2001.



# BROADCAST

www.produzion.com



## The rise of the super indie – fact or fiction?

The emergence of a league of dominant UK indies has sparked fears of a power imbalance **Page 18**



## Into the unknown

An exclusive behind-the-scenes look at the BBC NHU's biggest ever project, the £7m *Blue Planet* **B+ Supplement**



## The back seat driver

After proving her mettle as the first woman editor of *Newsnight*, Sian Kevill is to review BBC political coverage **Page 16**



## Safeguarding the future of broadcasting

Following an illustrious career at the forefront of UK television Roger Laughton is honing the media skills for tomorrow **Page 23**

# TV CHARTS TERROR

## BBC services may come with strings

### A PERSONAL VIEW



The debate between the two CNN network heads lasted 10 seconds.

'Is it appropriate for us to use the phrase "America Under Attack" on the screen?' asked one. 'Well, what the hell else is this?' was the response. Here at CNN's Atlanta HQ, the first airliner crashed into the World Trade Centre during our morning editorial conference. Within minutes the 35 US News Groups and overseas services were covering the tragedy. We decided that a single CNN channel should broadcast to audiences around the world. CNN has undergone some painful and necessary restructuring in the past year. Ten per cent of the workforce has been made redundant. Yet on Tuesday dozens of those laid off rang to offer their services. A humbling experience. Chris Cramer, president, CNN international networks



MEDIA SECRETARY Tessa Jowell was due to announce her approval of the BBC's proposed new digital services on Thursday, with one senior source suggesting the conditions imposed on the corporation in return would be 'tougher than anticipated', writes LUCY ROUSE.

As *Broadcast* went to press Jowell was set to address the Royal Television Society convention in Cambridge on Thursday (13 September) unless recalled to a reconvened parliament following the terrorist attacks in the US earlier this week.

She was widely expected to approve the plans for four new digital channels and five digital radio stations while imposing conditions on the corporation. These were expected to focus on either ensuring the BBC keeps to the programme and budget proposals it has outlined or dropping one or more of the proposed services. One source close to the government also expected Jowell to address industry concern over the role of Ofcom in relation to the BBC.

A BBC spokeswoman told *Broadcast* on Wednesday (12 September) that the corporation was still waiting to be briefed on Jowell's decision and did not expect to get much advance warning of the content of her speech. 'We don't think it's going to be that complicated. We've made a phenomenal amount of commitments,' she said.

Jowell had been expected to address the BBC's digital plans in a speech at the Edinburgh Television Festival two weeks ago, but cancelled her appearance at the last minute for personal reasons.

The RTS event is scheduled to go ahead as planned, although the RTS has said key US speakers News Corp chairman Rupert Murdoch and Liberty Media chairman John Malone have pulled out.

## 'The biggest story we have ever covered'

BROADCASTERS WERE quick to react to Tuesday's disaster, producing blanket coverage across almost all main channels within minutes of the tragedy. News 24 went live with the story at 13.53 and played out live on BBC 1 from 14.09 to 18.00. BBC 1 continued with news coverage throughout the night, stalling only between 19.30 and 20.30 to air *EastEnders* and *Changing Rooms* as News 24 switched to BBC 2. BBC 1 returned for a special hour-long programme presented by David Dimbleby. News 24

continued on BBC 2. The 22.00 *News* pulled in 5.9 million viewers and a 30 per cent share and BBC 2's *Newsnight* doubled its audience. BBC head of TV news Roger Mosey said news teams were working at 'maximum capacity', adding: 'This is the biggest story we've ever covered.' BBC news chartered a US-bound flight with ITN on Tuesday (11 September) but as *Broadcast* went to press the plane was still unable to take off, awaiting a decision from the Federal Aviation Authority to reopen US air space.

Over at ITN, the entire staff of 960 worked on the story. The organisation used its partners Reuters, NBC and CNN to ensure it was covering the story effectively. ITN editor in chief Richard Tait said: 'This is arguably the most important story since the advent of television news.' Blanket coverage ran on the ITN News Channel. The ITV network screened live coverage from 14.24 until 19.00, breaking for *Emmerdale*, with a news special from 19.30 to 20.00 followed by *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?*, then news again at

21.00 with a 90-minute special. ITV's 22.00 bulletin picked up 7.6 million, a 35.6 per cent share. ITN's output on C4 went out from 14.29 until 16.30, then again from 19.00 to 19.50 with a news special at 21.00. Channel 5, which has commissioned LWT to produce a 60-minute documentary, *The Day That Shook the World*, to air this Friday (14 September), screened live ITN news from 14.20 until 17.30, then special news programmes at 17.30 and 19.00. Sky News split its six-strong Washington bureau team into two,

with half going to New York. Some on-screen Sky News presenters worked for up to eight hours with no scripts 'and will keep going until they fall over', said Sky News head Nick Pollard. Online broadcasters' news services were swamped. Although CNN.com trebled its capacity to cope, the site was down throughout the afternoon as demand surged from the usual 14 million hits a day to 9 million an hour. The BBC, ITN and Sky sites all experienced problems keeping up with demand for news.