

'Times journalism has never had more readers'

Editor Robert Thomson talks to PG, page 5

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Will Lewis: First interview with Telegraph editor



PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL ADAMS

EXCLUSIVE

By Ian Reeves

The top job at any national newspaper is a pretty precarious perch these days, but it has come to something when a newly installed editor isn't looking further than the coming weekend.

In Will Lewis's case, perhaps we can forgive this apparent short-termism, given that the weekend in question sees the crunch move of the majority of his staff from Canary Wharf to the new integrated "hub" newsroom at Victoria.

With 235 *Daily Telegraph* staff on the march not just to new desks but to an entire new way of working, Lewis — appointed to the job on Monday — is anxious that things go smoothly.

On Monday, the new conference structure at the heart of his revolutionary new way of working begins, with first gathering at 7am.

"Any move is stressful stuff — but we're also trying to do a lot more, trying to change the way they work and give them new roles and responsibilities," says Lewis. "So far it's gone remarkably smoothly. But this weekend with news coming in, news production — the really big one is arriving. I think I'll start sleeping again on Sunday night."

"There are a lot of targets. But really the honest thing, how I'd like to be judged in this short-term basis — two months' time, say — is if people are saying that not a lot has changed. If it seems to be working all right, then that's success for me — is the paper coming out to the same quality, the same standard, the same professionalism, is the website getting better?"

"We're absolutely determined for there to be no big bang. We're going to integrate an element of change each day and each week that nudges us methodically but reasonably fast towards an integrated newsroom."

"After that I'll be happy to sit down and talk to you about long-term targets."

Despite antipathy towards the move from some quarters, and the pain of losing some big names and a significant part of the headcount in a new redundancy programme, Lewis insists that the mood of the staff that he inherits is generally upbeat.

He says: "We've been around for more than 150 years, but it's almost like being at a start-up. That's the spirit we have now. It's a real entrepreneurial atmosphere. The mood change is fantastic."

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