


# News at Ten: Back to the Future

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The return of [News at Ten](#) felt like a trip back in time in more ways than one. This was a solid slab of ITN's more populist journalism. They had a world exclusive interview with Princess Diana's 'love of her life', Bill Neilly live from under an Antarctic glacier and various reporters in helicopters and and at murder scenes.

Flicking over to the BBC's [Ten O'Clock News](#) and there were echoes of the old divisions between 'posh' BBC and 'popular' ITN, as Huw Edward's team led on an exclusive report from John Simpson in Zimbabwe in contrast to Trevor MacDonald's royal revelations.

The new News at Ten looks very much like the old one. They have replaced the 'theatre of news' with a much more traditional set. They have even restored the Old Man/Young Woman stereotype of mainstream network news with Julie Etchingham (pinched from Sky News).

ITV News at 10.30pm was a much-improved product thanks in part to the hard work and vast experience of ITN Editor-in-Chief David Mannion and the drive of Editor Deborah Turness. Now it is back in the comfy old armchair of a 10pm slot (except on Fridays and weekends) and it looks, well, comfy. There was one New Media reference ("go to our website for Bill Neilly's vblog about reporting from the South Pole") but no gimmicks and little graphics. The story selection was more populist but there was still a very solid piece by Tom Bradby on the Northern Rock story. It felt more varied as a programme than its BBC rival which is going through a rather flat phase. But whether ITN will be able to keep up the spending on all those helicopters and exclusives after the launch week remains to be seen.

Overall the retro feel is very much in keeping with the nervousness that surrounds the TV News business at the moment. ITV especially has seen its share price drop despite some bold tactical moves by Michael Grade. There has been a retreat from flashy experimentation in favour of more careful creativity across the channel. No doubt the unflappable and hugely authoritative Trevor with the charming and clever Julie will help shore up the ratings and safeguard the place of news in the prime time schedules – for now. But ultimately things will not stand still and in the long-term ITN's future will be secured by its tradition of innovation not nostalgia.

News at Ten Update!

The overnight [figures](#) seem to suggest that the new/old News at Ten lost out to the BBC's Ten O'Clock: Trevor got 3.8 million Huw got 4.9 million. In other words it maintained precisely the audience share of 18% secured by the royal drama (funnily enough considering the news lead last night) that preceded the news. That doesn't mean a whole lot until we see the ratings after a month but it suggests that despite all the promotion the public isn't flooding back to the past.

More reaction:

Another former ITN staffer (did I mention I used to work at Grays Inn Road?) [Adrian Monck](#) has also reviewed News at Ten and has spotted that it didn't have an ad break.

**Carnival of Journalism:**

This post is part of the [Carnival Of Journalism](#) – an international online gathering of media and communications bloggers hosted this month by [Adrian Monck](#). Click [here](#) for links to a variety of topical articles on how to improve journalism in a new media world.

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