

NATIONAL



Spectacular deal: Chris Evans celebrates after getting "a bit of a divvy" from selling his TV and radio business to Scottish Media Group.

DJ Evans' £75m Ginger bread

By SIMON WATKINS
and PETER WALKER
Special Correspondents

Radio DJ turned media tycoon Chris Evans is to land a £75 million pay-out after selling his TV and radio business to Scottish Media Group.

But despite his fortune the millionaire will continue presenting his TV and radio shows after signing a contract binding him to the company until 2002.

The Scottish company, which also owns Scottish Television and the Glasgow Herald newspapers, is paying £225 million for Ginger Media in a deal clinched at 5.30am yesterday.

Evans celebrated the package by emerging after his breakfast show on Virgin Radio - the station he bought in 1997 from Sir Richard Branson - to declare that he was staying put.

Asked whether he would continue to present his breakfast show along with Channel 4's *TFI Friday*, he said: "That was part of the deal."

Evans said much of his £75 million would be paid in shares in SMG.

"I got a bit of a divvy, as my mum

From forklift driver to millionaire media tycoon

Chris Evans is a one-time forklift driver whose taste for controversy and talent for self-publicity have taken him from obscurity to vast riches.

The ginger-haired TV and radio host attracts love and loathing in equal measure for his brash style.

But it is his eye for a business opportunity which has propelled him from a jobbing DJ to a significant media player.

He first got his toe in the door of his beloved radio industry by working as an unpaid helper at Manchester's Piccadilly station at the age of 17, before later "doing a Dick Wittington" and moving to London to seek his fortune.

Fairytale success was not immediate for Evans, who was brought up on a Warrington council estate.

He found himself still working as a relatively unknown presenter for the

BBC's London station, GLR, ten years ago.

But his brand of free-flowing and laddish humour and a rapidly-growing rapport with the "yool" market propelled him into TV in 1992 - and he has not looked back since.

His big break came on the *Big Breakfast*, where his charisma signalled the beginning of his personal crusade to blow some fresh air into what he considered the fusty world of British broadcasting.

deal, but the group could face one obstacle in the shape of Granada Group.

Granada, which owns 18 per cent of SMG, said it was opposed to the deal when it was first mooted last year.

Mr Gary Hughes, group finance director at SMG, said Granada had been given the full facts on the deal yesterday and he hoped the group could be won round.

Mr Hughes said that SMG had the full support for the deal from its largest shareholder, TV channel provider Flextech.

The Virgin Radio business will form part of a new national media division at SMG which will also include SMG's cinema advertising sales company Pearl & Dean and its poster advertising business.

Mr David Campbell, chief executive at Ginger, will head the national division. Ginger Television will sit alongside Scottish Television Enterprises which makes a series of children's and drama programmes, including *Taggart*.

Eileen Gallagher, managing director of Ginger Television, will lead the combined TV production operation.

Gun culture's latest victim

A 17-year-old boy has become the latest murder victim in a city where a group of young people carry guns on the streets like fashion accessories, detectives said yesterday.

The teenager was gunned down on the street on Wednesday night in Manchester's eighth shooting in six months.

He was killed just one week after Roger Ormsby, aged 34, was shot dead in his car, another victim of the city's "gun culture".

Detective Superintendent Keith Radford, of Greater Manchester Police, said: "We have a relatively small group of young people who are into a culture where firearms have a great deal of importance."

Diana race aims to raise millions for charity



In the running: Liz McColgan

By ANJALI KWATRA
Special Correspondent

A road race in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, which is expected to raise millions of pounds for charity was launched yesterday.

The ten-kilometre race through London, from the late Princess's home at Kensington Palace to St Paul's Cathedral, where she was married, is open to 20,000 runners of all abilities.

Athlete Liz McColgan, actor Nigel Havers and anti-landmine campaigner Chris Moon will all be taking part in the event, to be held on Sunday July 30.

Money raised from the £29.50

entry fee and from donations will go to the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund and the British Red Cross.

Mr Moon, who received a bravery award from the Princess after losing half his right arm and part of his right leg as he was clearing landmines, said it was hoped the race would raise at least £2 million.

"That is a ballpark figure but we are hoping to raise much more," he said.

The two charities would take an equal share of 20 per cent of the income from the race, said Mr Moon, adding: "The opportunity to raise money for these two charities is excellent."

Independent MP Martin Bell, a patron of the race, hoped that it would become an annual event in the international sporting calendar.

"The race will raise money and importantly it will be accessible to all runners," he said.

There would also be events for young people and for the disabled.

The route will take runners past some of the capital's best-known landmarks, including Buckingham Palace, St James Palace and Westminster Abbey, scene of Diana's funeral.

Event founder Michael O'Reilly said: "The idea was to involve people and the buildings

that were relevant to Diana's life. The essence of this project is to provide a fun day for everyone and to pay tribute to the humanitarian work of Diana, Princess of Wales, and raise funds that will help the Princess's work to continue."

The race has been welcomed by the International Amateur Athletics Federation and the main political parties.

Mr Tony Blair said: "I am very pleased to support this road race to be held in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales."

There will be no prize money on offer, but jeweller Asprey and Garrard has designed awards for the winners.

He said he had warned the Home Secretary that if they tried to serve a warrant on him he would prosecute the Home Office for assault and he had written to Jack Straw a few weeks ago.

Professor Lindstadt and Penguin Books deny labelling Mr Irving in her 1994 book *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*.

Mr Irving, of Duke Street, Mayfair, central London, says the book alleges he has denied the Holocaust and has distorted statistics and documents to serve his own ideological purposes and reach historically untenable conclusions.

The hearing was adjourned until Monday.

SALE NOW ON
BIG DISCOUNTS

Oriental Rugs & Carpets

From Floor to Room Size
Three Floors of Hand Knotted
Pieces at prices
SECOND TO NONE

PERMANENTLY
CHINESE
AFGHAN
TURKISH
INDIAN

Please contact
Jan & Matthew Hone
on 0121 744 1001

A.W. Hone & Son
1486 Stratford Road, Robin Hood Island,
Hull Green, Birmingham

Adams and McGuinness will be allowed into Commons

Sinn Féin MPs looked set to start using Westminster facilities for the first time as the row over IRA decommissioning continued to loom over the Northern Ireland peace process last night.

The Government is to propose a motion next week to let West Belfast and Mid Ulster MPs Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness have offices and allowances in the House of Commons.

But Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble, who met the Prime Minister in Downing Street yesterday, said the IRA must start dismantling this month or risk plunging the process into "default".

"We expect them to implement

the agreement and to honour what was understood by us all," said Mr Trimble.

Mr Trimble has threatened to resign from the power-sharing Stormont executive if there is no progress on arms. He will call a meeting of the UUP ruling council in February to assess matters.

Meanwhile, Ulster Secretary Mr Peter Mandelson has written to Northern Ireland political leaders to ask for their views on letting Sinn Féin use the Commons.

"It's no less than what we were entitled to from the day and hour our MPs were elected," said a Sinn Féin spokesman.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman later said that discussions had taken place with

Speaker Betty Boothroyd, over the possibility of a motion to allow Sinn Féin MPs to use Palace of Westminster facilities.

Miss Boothroyd previously barred Sinn Féin from the Commons because its members refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen and would not take their seats in the House.

Fierce critics of the IRA, which bombed Downing Street in 1991 and Margaret Thatcher's Cabinet in Brighton in 1984, were furious at Mr Mandelson's move.

"No democrat can be comfortable with the idea of Sinn Féin staff occupying office suites in the Palace of Westminster," said Tory Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary Mr Andrew Mackay.

Judge's maintenance warning

A judge warned magistrates yesterday not to impose unrealistic orders on estranged fathers in arrears with their maintenance payments.

The High Court ruling outlawing such orders could also benefit those who owe large amounts in other forms of civil debt, such as poll-tax and council-tax payers.

Mr Justice Keene laid down guidelines when he allowed an appeal by a father from Stafford against a magistrates court decision in 1998 to impose a 28-day suspended prison sentence to force him to keep up maintenance payments for

his daughter, now aged 15, and pay off his arrears of nearly £800 at £1 a week.

The magistrates made an order after rejecting his claims that he could not afford to pay maintenance and found he was guilty of culpable neglect in not paying.

Mr Justice Keene said he agreed with lawyers for the 52-year-old father that it was wrong to make an order which would have meant him having the threat of prison hanging over him for 16 years. He sent the matter back to the magistrates in the light of his judgment.

Germans want to extradite me - Irving

Controversial historian David Irving yesterday revealed that the German government was seeking his extradition for alleged racial incitement.

The 62-year-old author told the High Court in London that it was another example of "the kind of hatred I face and the problems I face because of the repugnant allegations against me".

On the third day of his libel action over claims that he was a "Holocaust denier", Mr Irving told the court that "the German government has asked for my extradition to Germany on an alleged offence that I committed in 1990".

He referred Mr Justice Gray, the judge hearing his case against American academic Deborah Lipstadt and Penguin Books, to a January 12 press clipping from a German newspaper about the extradition request.

Mr Irving said he drew the article to the court's attention in case "this end of the bench should suddenly be empty".

The judge said it was unlikely that would happen.

The article shown to the judge, from *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, stated that "Weinheim magistrates court has requested the British Government to extradite David Irving".

It further reported that "there has been since 1996 an indictment for racial incitement" relating to a lecture Mr Irving delivered in Weinheim in September 1990.

The article stated that Mr Irving "had made a name for himself on that occasion among the circles concerned because he challenged Hitler's blame for the war and among other things maintained that the Holocaust had not occurred".

And it added that it was "doubtful that there will be any trial of Irving as the allegations against him will run out of time in September this year".

After the end of the sitting, Mr Irving said that the controversy arose from a comment he made during a talk at Weinheim that the gas chambers at Auschwitz were a fake and built after the war. Such a statement was a criminal offence in Germany, he said.

He said he was fined the equivalent of £15,000 in 1992 for making the same statement in Munich in 1990. He was also banned from Germany.

The extradition proceedings revealed in court were launched in August 1998, said Mr Irving. No attempt had been made to serve the warrant against him but the British Government had agreed to co-operate with Germany.

SALE NOW ON

Substantial discounts and promotional offers on all Cabinet Furniture, Upholstery, Soft Furnishings, unusual Mirrors and interesting Accessories.

MOORCROFT POTTERY
ALL LESS 25%

A collection of signed Limited Edition, framed prints by David Shepherd at less than 1/2 price.

ALFRED ALLEN INTERIORS

10-12 Bristol Street, Birmingham B5 7AD
Telephone: 0121 622 1885 Fax: 0121 622 1207
Open Monday to Saturday 9.15am to 12.15pm
Located on A38 opposite The Dome
Free parking outside until 4.30pm