

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 30, 2002

Media Contacts: Peter Bridgman
Matthew Causon
Lightworks Inc.
+44 (0)207 864 9600
peter.bridgman@lwks.com
matthew.causon@lwks.com

Mersey TV Choose the Lightworks Touch

LIVERPOOL, 30 September 2002. Liverpool's Mersey Television, creators of TV soaps *Brookside* and *Hollyoaks*, recently took delivery of four Lightworks Touch systems. Graham Deaves, technical director at Mersey, explains their decision.

"To be honest, we've looked at everything else out there," says Graham. "More than that, we've had them all here on trial, so we know them very well. They were okay, I suppose, but even though it's now nearly ten years old, our Lightworks is still the best machine for single-camera drama, and that is what we do. Lightworks is simply unparalleled for what we do every week. That's due in part to the fact that Lightworks was originally built as a film-style editor for single-camera production. It has remained true to its roots and is simply the best. It has all the right tools, and it is so fast! We've got guys here who can edit a half-hour drama in a day on a Lightworks. One of our guys can do it in pretty much half a day. Suffice it to say that our editors can really move on the Lightworks systems."

With the amount of work that goes through Mersey TV each and every week, there is simply no time to be sentimental about equipment. Founded by Phil Redmond in 1982, Mersey is one of the largest, most successful and respected independent production companies in the United Kingdom. Much of the company's success is the result of its two long-running serial dramas, *Brookside* (www.brookside.com), now in its eighteenth season, and *Hollyoaks* (www.hollyoaks.com), a teen serial drama which hit small screens in late 1995. Both programs are produced for the UK's fourth national terrestrial channel Channel Four.

"*Brookside* is three half-hour episodes per week," says Deaves matter-of-factly. "A little over a year ago, we got the go-ahead to create another *Hollyoaks* episode, which makes four half-hour episodes per week. And that's every week. On top of that, we have things like Christmas specials, late night extras, videos and DVD issues. So, while we do a minimum of 3½ hours of drama every week, most weeks it's much more than that. That is an awful lot of throughput. Everything is shot single-camera and edited on Lightworks. We currently have five Lightworks Turbos and two Heavyworks in use, and we've now

added the four Touch systems on a fibre channel network.”

With such a heavy workload each week, every minute is precious and at a premium. For Deaves, a veteran of nearly four decades on the technical side of the television business, it became a foregone conclusion that Mersey’s way of working had to change,

“We were recording on tape, then digitizing the recorded material into Lightworks,” Deaves explains. “That material would then need to be reconformed in an online suite. All of that takes a lot of time, too much time. The more production we do, the less time we have to do all these transfers. What we wanted to end up with was a system that recorded as much as possible straight to disk. When we saw a prototype of the Touch a couple of years ago, when we saw that it would work on a Storage Area Network, we knew it was the way to go for Mersey TV.

“We saw that we would be able to record straight into the SAN, then edit the material immediately. I then started looking at servers to see if we could match up another server as an input device for the Lightworks and found the Thomson Nextore. When we got the go-ahead to do an extra episode of *Hollyoaks* each week, we also got the financing for the new system, which now includes 200 hours of storage, three servers, and four Touch systems. For back-up and archive we then added an SGL Flashnet System coupled to a Scalar 100 LTO Robot and to finish we are about to add a Telestream Flip Factory for Browsing and Streaming. That system started to come in nine months ago and is currently being commissioned.”

Deaves and the Mersey TV team have a clear enthusiasm and high hopes for the new generation of Lightworks systems. Like so many others out there, Mersey has been very loyal to Lightworks over the years. In the final analysis, however, it has been a purely practical choice:

“We’ve tried everything else, but nothing else works as well,” says Deaves. “It’s that simple. Other systems might have lots of extra bells and whistles, but not what we really need. Things like the Clipboard are absolutely invaluable. When we were evaluating other systems, we told all these other companies that their systems were too slow, but if they had a Clipboard they might be better. No one else paid any attention.”

Beyond everything else, one thing is certain: Lightworks is, and will always be, paying attention.

For Further information on the Lightworks Touch please visit www.lwks.com.