

XIII COMMONWEALTH GAMES SCOTLAND 1986



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 **ENG INF**

SUPPLEMENT

BBC-HOST BROADCASTER

The XIII Commonwealth Games are going to be the BBC's most complex and exciting Outside Broadcast reaching an audience all round the world and involving one thousand BBC staff on duty in Edinburgh. This supplementary issue of "Eng Inf", the BBC's engineering quarterly presents the background of the Host Broadcaster operation, some details of the various OBs and the preparation of the purpose-built Broadcast Centre.

We cannot expect our vast audience to appreciate the enormous efforts of planning, engineering and production that are going into the Games. Broadcasting is at its most effective when its techniques are least conspicuous — if the audience is made conscious of technology it usually means that there's an error in production or a failure of equipment. If this is true of broadcasting in general, it is even more true of broadcast engineering in particular. As engineers we provide the framework which sustains the skills of our production colleagues. The engineering for the Host Broadcaster operation at the XIII Games is on a massive scale and, for the broadcasts to be successful, it has to be right — first time!

The Host Broadcast team has been able to call on resources from all parts of the BBC. Brendan Slamin, Project Director, acknowledges that the size of the Corporation has been a tremendous



Meadowbank Stadium

asset in planning the Games coverage. As early as 1982 he was able to sketch out the pattern of the OBs and relate them to the vehicles and crews that are available. Without the strength of centralised planning within a single organisation the operation would have been virtually impossible. As it is other calls on BBC resources have been reduced to a minimum for the period of the Games although all the other regular sports events are being covered — as is the Royal Wedding.

The Host Broadcaster operation is no showcase of new and untried technology but the scale of the operation needs a Broadcast Centre designed to suit the Games. The BBC has never built a temporary operations centre on this scale

before and so to design, build and test all the studios, working areas and circuits has been a major challenge to the ingenuity of the PID Television team working under the guidance of Geoff Key of OB Section. The entire process has taken three years.

The largest number of broadcast engineers in Edinburgh for the Games consists of the BBC operational staff who work in the scanners, man the studios, operate VT machines and staff the Central Technical Area of the Broadcast Centre. Last, but by no means least, are the Communications staff who are mounting a huge operation in co-operation with BT to link together the venues, the Broadcast Centre and the home countries. Edward Trickett.

