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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1979

9p

COUNTY
FINAL

Factory switch-off for 550 TV jobs

by Mike Merritt and Bob Wells

HASTINGS, birthplace of TV, was today at the centre of a television redundancy shock.

ITT Consumer Products will stop production of TV assemblies at their factory (UK) Ltd. on the industrial estate at St Leonards by the middle of next year, ending 550 jobs.

The redundancies will be phased and the firm hopes to find some of the workers other jobs

ITT plans to concentrate production of colour TVs at its Basildon factory. The company, which has been in Hastings for nearly 20 years, says that during the past year Hastings and two other production units have been operating well below capacity.

The management says its axeing of the Hastings factory and another near Bolton,

Lancs., is "regrettable" but the TV industry worldwide is suffering from over-capacity which has led to unrealistic selling prices.

The biggest union at the factory, the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, says that while morally it cannot accept people being put on the dole, it will negotiate for the best redundancy payments for its members.

Unions and management spent yesterday in redundancy negotiations.

There are few protests from staff, who say they knew the closure would come.

"There have been rumours about the factory's future going back as far as 1974," said factory AUEW convenor, Mr

Alfred Carpenter, 63.

"We are in an industry that has been fading since Japanese televisions began to flood the market.

"The work force here used to top 1,000 and has gradually fallen.

"Recently the factory has been over-manned.

"It is sad that the factory has to close, especially in an area already suffering from high unemployment.

"I envisage much hardship, particularly among older staff who have specialist skills and will find it difficult to find similar jobs.

"But there will be no protest. The staff are almost relieved that the date has at last been set.

"The fact is that the market cannot support us and

news from Boris this morning.

"It is a terrible shock because we were all looking forward to seeing Gracie at the end of the month," she said.

"Doctors had marvelled at her miraculous recovery from pneumonia at such an age and the last I heard she was up and about.

"Gracie was a fighter. She would never give up. Even when she had pneumonia doctors had a hard time getting her into hospital. She was so full of zest for life. Everyone loved her."

Shock

Mrs Mary Davey and husband Leon, pals of Gracie for 50 years, who live at the Haven and looked after it while Gracie was abroad, were getting the house ready for Gracie's homecoming when they heard today's news.

Said Mrs Davey: "The news is a complete shock because everyone thought she was doing so well.

"She was not one to give up. She was a wild thing, even for her years, very unpredictable, but such a generous warm person.

"It will be a loss to the whole world."

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