

Jackie Bird steps down from BBC Reporting Scotland

One of the most recognisable faces on BBC news, Jackie Bird, has presented her final bulletin.

The presenter has been the main face of Reporting Scotland for the last 30 years. However last night she left the studios with all but a few close colleagues unaware that she'd presented her final programme.

"I'm not leaving the BBC, I'm just vacating the news desk," she said. "I've been fortunate to cover most of the major news stories in Scotland over the last 30 years.

"I've been planning this for a while. I thought I'd give it until Brexit was sorted, but I fear I might have to stay for another 30 years," she joked.

"I've been privileged to be involved in so many memorable news events, from seismic political changes to reporting live from Afghanistan. I've presented the programme from Washington to Westminster and last year anchoring from France on the centenary of the Armistice was an honour.

"None of this would have been possible without some tremendous colleagues – and it's them that I will miss most, but it's time to move on."



The host, who shares presenting duties on Reporting Scotland with Sally Magnusson, also fronts many annual Scottish TV events such as Hogmanay, Children in Need and the World Pipe Band contest for the BBC, and said she wants to have more time to present, write and produce projects outwith news in future. In particular she's keen to get more involved in ad hoc current affairs specials which she has fronted in recent years, such as the investigation into the Glasgow bin lorry disaster. She also accompanied Korean War veterans back to where they'd fought, and followed the recovery of soldiers injured in Afghanistan.

Bird would like to become more involved in writing for both TV and radio while features involving in-depth interviews are also on her broadcasting wish list for the future.

"There's never been a better time to get involved in new TV and radio programmes in Scotland but being committed to Reporting Scotland for so much of my working week simply didn't allow me the time," she says. "I'm actually apprehensive about making such a big change – even last week I considered changing my mind and staying, but it's something I have to do."

Bird surprised senior colleagues when she told them she was ready to quit Reporting Scotland – but all attempts to get her to rethink were met with the steely resolve that newsroom colleagues have come to respect in one of the nation's most experienced presenters.

“Jackie is one of the most talented and committed journalists I've ever worked with. Her passion and energy for the job are unsurpassed,” says BBC Scotland Head of News, Gary Smith.

“As a TV news presenter, she is the ultimate professional, who copes supremely well with whatever comes her way. She's also great fun. For many in the newsroom – and the audience across the country – she just IS Reporting Scotland. I'll miss her, the team in the newsroom will miss her, Scotland will miss her,” he adds.

BBC Scotland Director Donalda MacKinnon also paid tribute: “I've had the pleasure of working with Jackie for many years now and it's been very reassuring for me and for many of us that she's been at the helm of the country's most watched news programme. She's a brilliant journalist and multi-talented broadcaster who will, I hope, continue to work with us here at BBC Scotland. She was an inspiration to many female colleagues particularly during her earlier years when newsrooms were largely dominated by men. I am certain that she will continue to inspire and influence in all she does next.”

Scottish Labour's shadow culture secretary Claire Baker said: “Jackie Bird is one of Scotland's most respected broadcasters.

“For over three decades she has reported on some Scotland's most tumultuous moments with impartiality and professionalism. “I'm sure many viewers will be joining me in wishing her the best for the future and look forward to seeing her on our screens again soon.”