

RADIO 1-120M

february 1979

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**David Bassett –
the sound of Plymouth**

first issue

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comment

Welcome to Radio Month — the first trade journal to be published exclusively for the British radio industry.

No one who reads this first issue can be in any doubt that radio is the growth medium in Britain today.

It is an industry on the brink of considerable expansion and this in itself suggests remarkable achievement at a time when other media are declining or, at best stagnating.

Last year saw the end of the moratorium on development of a local radio network which is now set over the next fifteen years to bring BBC and commercial radio to the entire nation. No one involved in radio in any way can fail to be excited at this prospect.

We at Radio Month are delighted to feel that we shall be participants in the growth of radio over the coming years — it is an infectious medium and one which seems to inspire enormous enthusiasm and care, as all those who work in it know full well.

It is also a medium for which there has so far been no serious forum — many of those things which are strongly felt about radio have previously remained unsaid for the regrettable reason that there has been nowhere to say them.

Radio Month now offers that forum and we hope sincerely that all of you will take advantage of its pages to keep abreast of events within the industry, to express your own views and to acquaint yourselves with those of others.

Radio Month is your magazine. Its aim is to serve and stimulate your industry at a crucial time in its development.

contents

EX-SERVICEMAN David Bassett found a second career in radio almost by chance. In the last three years he has developed a unique style of programming at Plymouth Sound which in 1978 sent the station to the top of the JICRAR league. Profile by John Grierson. **9**

THE GREATEST challenge to the ILR programmers lies in the field of entertainment, concludes Tony Stoller, the IBA's head of radio programming, in a look at the state of the industry's sound. **12**



TELERI BEVAN was the woman behind the experiments in community radio conducted by the BBC in Wales last autumn. Although the BBC did not exactly shout about them at the time, Anne Karpf caught wind of the venture and makes an assessment of its success. **16**

SINCE BROADCASTING was deregulated in Italy radio stations have been sprouting like a bumper crop of mushrooms. Peter Lewis examines the epidemic. **18**

PAT HAWKER reports on renewed American interest in the old idea of AM stereo. Could it be applied in the UK? **20**

NEXT MONTH: 1979 is International Year of the Child — what is radio doing about it?; a profile of Michael Barton; training for local radio; a hard look at AIRC.

RADIO MAGAZINE

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Gallagher at centre of LBC shake-up

Despite widespread speculation this week that Patrick Gallagher had been dismissed from his post as managing director of LBC, no official announcement had been made by press time.

However, reliable sources have provided information which would certainly indicate that this is the case.

To set the scene one should envisage a station which has been on air for five years. In this time it has had six strikes, an extraordinarily high turnover of top management and a total staff turnover, including freelances, of over 1,000.

Unrest in the newsroom has been almost continuous. The strikes have been largely over pay, staffing levels and job definition. But working conditions have also been a source of constant dissatisfaction.

A recent memo to Gallagher, company secretary and financial controller Brian Wallis and editorial director Ron Onions cited, amongst other things too few typewriters, too few chairs, live wires and dripping water in the studios, inoperable equipment, "carpet tiles thick with grease and gunge which turn up at the edges and trip people up" and phone-out interviews interrupted because of faulty indicator lights.

The memo was from the "federated chapel", signed jointly by representatives of the NUJ, ACTT, ABS and NGA — a sure

indication of the fact that broadcasting staff felt they had reached the end of their collective tether.

Other stories abound of fleas in the studios, mice, a light bulb exploding in a newsreader's face and the radio car repossessed by the hire purchase company.

Against this background it is understood that the facts leading up to Gallagher's reputed dismissal are as follows.

'Carpet tiles thick with grease and gunge ... slum conditions ... bulb exploding over the face of a newsreader ...'

Shortly before Christmas, it appears, Ron Onions was contacted by Sir Geoffrey Cox, the chairman. It is understood that Cox told Onions that he was concerned about the future of the company and suggested that Onions did not really relish his managerial capacity and would prefer to hold purely editorial responsibility. Cox then told Onions that a colleague of Cox's, journalist George Ffitch, had accepted a formal offer to take up the post of editorial director. Ffitch, concluded Cox, would stand up to the unions.

Onions then consulted a solicitor who agreed that Cox's offer of Onions' job to Ffitch was tantamount to constructive dismissal.

The day after Cox's alleged conversation with Onions, Gallagher left suddenly for a holiday in Spain.

Cox then received a letter from Onions' solicitor stating that unless he withdrew the offer of Onions' job to Ffitch, he would be sued for constructive dismissal. Apparently worried about bad publicity, Cox withdrew his offer to Ffitch and told Onions he would remain as editorial director.

At this point, it has been suggested, Ffitch threatened to sue for wrongful dismissal and was immediately put on a retainer at a reputed salary of £16,000 per annum.

By this time the London press had caught wind of events but had apparently elicited nothing but denials, as had Onions when he confronted Gallagher on his return from Spain.

However, on Monday 15, Cox is understood to have called Gallagher and told him that while the company had been pursuing a strong marketing course for some time, it was now going to switch its emphasis to the editorial side of the operation. To this effect Cox proposed to bring in Ffitch as managing director and Gallagher was therefore dismissed.

Should Ffitch's appointment be confirmed, it may well be seen as an attempt to save LBC's contract which is due for review shortly and which has, until now, been widely regarded as being unlikely to be renewed. Ffitch's strength is held to be his ability to negotiate with unions.

What is unclear at present, however, is the way in which the IBA might view Ffitch's appointment. Although it seems likely that the authority has been aware of the possibility, it is understood to hold certain reservations about such an appointment.

Finally there remains the question of staff management relations at LBC under whatever management there may be in the future. Clearly the unions will no longer tolerate the alleged lack of decision-making which compels them to issue joint memos to management in which they refer to "slum conditions", "long term plans for the basement — should they ever materialise" and minimum standards which have "deteriorated to a point which has become intolerable."

LOCAL RADIO ASSOCIATION

1 Day Seminar "Advertising" for ILR Consortia, 1st March 1979, Bloomsbury Centre Hotel, London W.C.1.

National Advertising: Mike Vanderkar (Broadcast Marketing Services Ltd)

Gerry Zierler (AIR Services Ltd) Dick Seabright (Radio Sales and Marketing Ltd)

Present Position on ILR: John Thompson (Director of Radio, IBA)

Lunch: Guest Speaker, Brian Nicholson, Joint Managing Director, The Observer.

Local Advertising: Geoff Moffatt (194 Radio City, Liverpool) Russ Stuart (Radio Tees)

Advertising Control: Harry Theobalds (Deputy Head, Advertising Control, IBA)

Further details from Mark Elwes, Secretary, Local Radio Association, Ltd., 34 Grand Avenue, London N10 3BP. 01-883 7229.

Colville attacks rental system

In a statement to shareholders in Radio 210's year-end report, chairman Sir John Colville has bitterly attacked the IBA's system of secondary rental which the station has incurred for the first time, as "inequitable".

The first of the small stations to incur this charge, 210 reported a turnover of £505,680 for the year ending September 1978 as against £366,680 for the previous year. The trading profit reported was £74,500, an increase of 85 per cent on the previous year. After writing off losses, paying tax and secondary rental however, the net profit was a mere £7,483.

In his statement Sir John said: "We have now reached the stage two and a half years after we began broadcasting that we have paid off our initial expenses. We have acquired the freehold of our station and we have established a profitable business which both serves the

community and should remunerate those who have backed its success.

"Now we must start paying secondary rental to the IBA. For 1977/8 it was only £1,750 but for 1979 it will be a great deal more unless the system is changed. I think it is wrong that we, one of the smallest and youngest companies in the ILR network should have to pay a levy on profits in the form of secondary rental at a time when we are unable to give our shareholders, who have been very patient for the last two and a half years, even a modest return on their investment."

He continued to state that he felt the present system was "clearly inequitable" and that it had been established by Parliament on the misconception that ILR shareholders might otherwise make unreasonably high profits on their investments. Unless some change was made shareholders in the

smaller stations could scarcely expect a reasonable return and this might discourage potential sponsors for the new ILR stations.

The need to set up a financial reserve and the uncertainty of the Government's future dividend policy meant that 210 did not feel it right to pay a small dividend which bore no guarantee of increasing significantly over the next few years.

A rise in operational costs also made it uncertain as to whether profits before secondary rental for 1978/9 would any more than equal those of the previous year.

Sir John concluded that he would be disappointed if he was not in a position this time next year to offer some return on investment, especially if an alteration in the present secondary rental arrangements was forthcoming.

Significantly, this attack on secondary rental has come at a time when a number of smaller

stations are also concerned about the level of their contributions to AIRC. While their basic share of the funding of AIRC is calculated according to their revenue, other costs, such as the annual JICRAR research, are borne equally irrespective of size.

At the time of going to press, AIRC was due to approve a new voting structure which would distribute votes according to percentage of total revenue accrued by each station. In order for this system to be completely fair it is widely felt that all costs of membership should also be apportioned in this way. Thus the smaller stations might have less say in the running of AIRC but they would equally incur less expense.

The latter, particularly in view of growing dissent at the way in which the association is functioning, might well be felt to compensate for the former.

1 & 2 separation

Saturday, January 27 will finally see the separation of Radios 1 and 2. At this date Radio 2 will become the first BBC network to offer round-the-clock broadcasting.

The split was originally scheduled to occur in November but plans had to be shelved because of a pay dispute with the ABS and disagreements over manning levels.

The dispute was solved just before Christmas when the BBC offered its ABS members an interim pay rise of 12½ per cent, bringing them into line with the independent television companies.

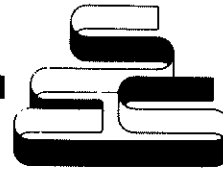
Negotiations are still in progress however for this year's pay award. This might add another five per cent to the bill bringing the total settlement to 17½ per cent.

Major features of the separation will be an extra hour for Radio 1 in the morning during the week with the breakfast show running from 06.00 to

09.00; a shift from pop music to rock music in the evenings; a phone-in; a late edition of Newsbeat; weekend live music from the north of England and Scotland and a disco show from Manchester.

Radio 2 loses Saturday morning Junior Choice to Radio 1, replacing it with a middle of the road show hosted by David Jacobs. The new 02.00 to 05.00 slot will be filled by You The Night And The Music, hosted by Colin Berry, Chris Aldred, Len Jackson, Ruth Cubbin, Bill Rennells, Sheila Tracy and Tim Gudgin.

Commented Aubrey Singer: "With these developments BBC Radio meets a long-felt need by its millions of listeners for its two popular music channels to assume completely clearcut identities of their own. They are part of a larger plan for Radio which is designed to cope with the demands of an ever growing and increasingly discriminating audience."

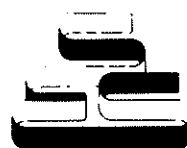


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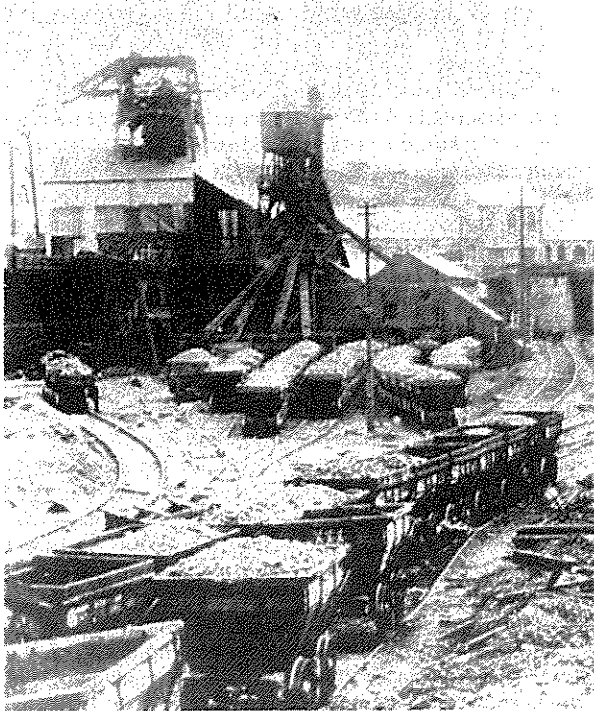
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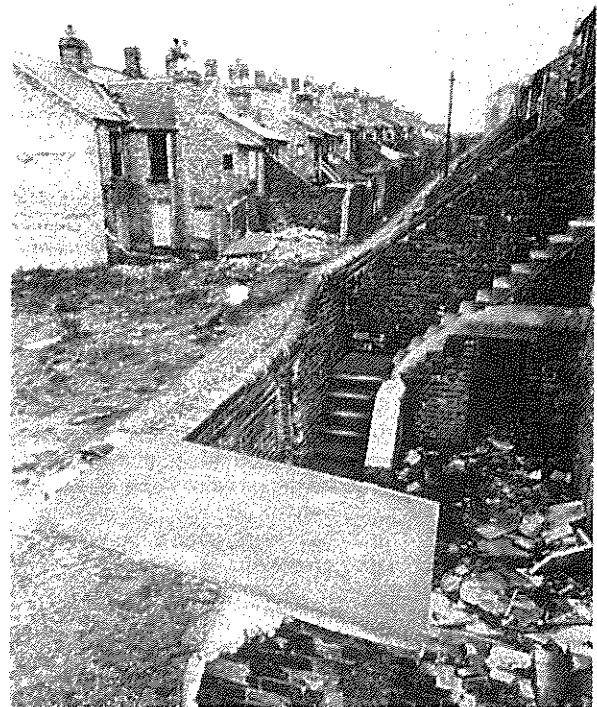
The Studio Shop, Oxgate Farm
Coles Green Road, London NW2 7LY
Telephone: 01-452 1979

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A



B



C



D



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CAPTURE THE NORTH EAST WITH METRO

Logie, research for Air Services

With the move to new premises, the establishment of a research service and the surprise arrival of Tony Logie from Radio Luxembourg, Air Services has had an eventful start to 1979.

The research department managed by Deanna Hallett who has worked for Albermarle Research and NOP as well as running her own research company, offers three principal services.

The advertiser will now be able to order relevant research at the same time as he makes his booking. The client radio stations will have the use of a free advice service which will increase the statistical and marketing information available on their areas and audiences; and a commercial service will be available to the stations as and when they want it.

Hallett reports that response to the service has been extremely good with six briefs being placed in the first five days of operation.

Mike Goodrich, who has switched positions from sales director to marketing director now oversees the research operation while also attending to Air Group business, a certain amount of which will involve giving advice to new radio consortia.

However, before moving from the sales side to the marketing side, Goodrich pulled off something of a coup by securing a commitment to ILR from the Central Office of Information, the biggest single advertiser in the UK.

The COI signed a contract for advertisements on all Air stations on December 30, agreeing at the same time that they would consider using all the other ILR stations as well. The signing was the culmination of 18 months in which, says Goodrich, his staff literally picketed the COI whose long-

standing reluctance to use any medium that was not fully nationwide had shown signs of weakening in the summer of 1977 with the booking of a number of police and prison officer recruitment advertisements.

Other first-time commitments to ILR secured by Air Services from January 1 include Kraft, Boots, British Airways and Fiat.

With Goodrich's move to the marketing field — a move which indicates the seriousness of Air's intentions to expand with the industry — the position of sales director became vacant and has been filled, to the surprise of many in the industry, by Tony Logie, who will now have Doug Pipe reporting to him as sales manager.

Logie joined Radio Luxembourg in spring 1977. He had previously worked for Border Television, the Daily Express and the Music Hire Group. During his two-year incumbency at Luxembourg he gave the station's sales department a much-needed shot in the arm, increasing revenue year-on by 400 per cent and breaking new barriers in selling methods.

An aggressive seller, his arrival at Air is greeted with delight. Managing director Gerry Zierler describes him as "the very best man available".

Logie quit Luxembourg because he felt he had gone as far as he could there. The opportunities now open at Air he sees as far greater since they embrace the certainty of real expansion. His primary aim at Air, as at Luxembourg, is to increase revenue. How, he will not yet divulge but he makes more than passing mention of the necessity to interest people in ILR as a brand selling medium rather than merely a promotional medium.

Visual transfer is another selling point for radio which he intends to investigate. This is industry jargon for the fact that 72 per cent of listeners (according to unrelated research in the US and Germany) can exactly recall the scenes of a TV commercial when they hear an identical soundtrack on radio. The ramifications of this are, of course, considerable.

"The work that Air Services and the others in this field have done has created a good bedrock for selling radio," Logie concludes. "Now that we've got that foundation we can go hell for leather for the rest."



TONY LOGIE

Victory sales

After creeping into profit for the first time in the financial year 1977/78, the first three months of 1978/79 have shown an extraordinary growth in local sales for Radio Victory.

Although sales director Tony Grundy was pleased with an overall growth in local sales of 69.1 per cent for 77/78 he was concerned that this level would not be maintained. However October, November and December 1978 showed growth of 54, 65 and 102 per cent respectively, reassuring Grundy that Victory's local revenue really is continuing to increase significantly. January, he estimates, will see at least a 50 per cent increase on last year.

Grundy puts the growth down to natural function of age and acceptance. In the past few months two major local trades, the car trade and the D-I-Y trade, previously staunch users of the two strong local newspapers, have begun to experiment on Victory and are generally pleased with results.

Growing confidence amongst the local business community has also contributed to the revenue growth, added to the fact that Portsmouth is considered a good campaign test area with the highest percentage of ABC 1s in the country.

In Victory's first year on air national sales accounted for 75 per cent of revenue but, says Grundy, national sales on the small stations have not grown as fast as was anticipated and, with the growth of local sales, revenue for Victory has levelled off at about 50 per cent from each source.

Although this growth in local sales is indicative of a general trend on the smaller stations, it does not necessarily mean that it will continue to erode the proportion of national sales revenue.

"We always need national sales," says Grundy, "and being honest, the growth we are experiencing now has really put the station where it ought to be."

CAPITAL radio has acquired a £76,000 grant from the government's Manpower Services Commission to finance its latest project to aid London's young unemployed.

As a back-up for its highly successful government-staffed Job-finder service, which has been operational in the foyer since September 1976, the station decided to use the facilities of the National Extension

College to offer extra help to job seekers.

Plans were submitted to the college for youngsters in need to be given individual counselling, for literature to be made available about opportunities and training and a system whereby job seekers could be put in touch with others in their area to alleviate the common feeling of isolation.

Possible Manx, LRP tie-up

Manx Radio may be the first recipient of a direct line feed from London Radio Productions' Fulham studio if its plans to attract programme sponsors materialize.

LRP, which has been in existence since last spring as a specialist radio production house, has just completed installation of Post Office stereo landlines and a control line with the aim of offering a London studio to any station which might need such facilities.

Since dramatically increasing its coverage after quadrupling transmitter power last autumn, Manx, through its London sales representatives, Radio Sales and Marketing, has been seeking to increase the number of

programme sponsors.

At present Manx airs three sponsored programmes. Two of these are half-hour shows sponsored respectively by CBS and Phonogram. On the strength of results between October and December, CBS has renewed its contract for a further six months for a Friday evening CBS music show voiced by the BBC's Pete Drummond. Response to a competition on the show, aired after Manx's boost in transmitter power, is said to have come from as far afield as Glasgow, Reading and Bristol.

Now, with the possibility of putting programmes live up the line to Manx from LRP, two or three major companies are

considering sponsorship, says RS&M's Brian Mellor. One of these is a record company, another a major financial enterprise which is interested in transmitting a 15-minute financial bulletin on Fridays.

Although the live programme will be more expensive, says Mellor, it will cut out the two and a half day delay incurred at present by having to post a tape. In the case of the financial bulletins there will be the added advantage that on the Isle of Man there are no restrictions on the broadcasting of suggestions, trends and advice in financial matters.

Although at present sponsored programmes only run on Manx on a once-weekly basis, Mellor reports that other companies are looking at the possibility of broadcasting daily shows.

With the possibility of a 12-month contract being worth up

to as much as £25,000 or £30,000, this could mean a dramatic increase in revenue for Manx. However, the problem exists at the moment of assessing the reputedly large spin-off audience on the west coast of Scotland, England and Wales which has resulted from the increase in the station's transmitter power.

This problem is compounded by the fact that Manx's official Home-Office approved audience is still confined to the population of the Isle of Man. Any advertiser therefore who wishes to take advantage of the claimed mainland audience will have to do so for the time being without the benefit of research.

Commenting on the possibility of linking live to Manx, LRP's managing director Charles Hoste stated that his company would produce and retain strict editorial control over any programmes broadcast.

Increased hours for two stations

January marked an increase in broadcasting hours for two ILR stations — Swansea Sound and Pennine Radio.

From January 8 Swansea increased its broadcasting hours by 30 minutes a day, transmissions now starting at 05.00 instead of 05.30 with a new programme called Morning Call.

Sarah Williams hosts the new show, to run until 06.45, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. She is a local freelance who has been presenting three late shows a week until now. Another local freelance, hosts the programme on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

From Tuesday January 2, Pennine began broadcasting one extra hour daily, taking Monday to Saturday output up to 20 hours a day and Sunday output up to 18.

The extra hour comes at the start of the day's schedules, with broadcasting starting at 05.00 instead of 06.00. This early hour is hosted by new presenter Ray Stroud, a local disco dj who came to Pennine's attention through a radio presenta-

tion course run by the station.

The new year also heralds three evening programme changes at Pennine. Meeting Place, the Asian programme, runs for one hour from 19.00, weekdays, as opposed to 21.00. From January 8 Peter Milburn presents a Monday night quiz Master Store, whose contestants will be local store staff. Also on Monday Julius K Scragg hosts Disco Mania, a two-hour look at the disco scene.

Over the Christmas period Pennine scored network success with the Christmas episode of its 30-part series Greensleeves. The History Of Christmas Music was taken by Manx, Metro, Clyde, Beacon, Downtown and Swansea Sound.

The series Greensleeves has been running since October, tracing the history of music in 30 weekly instalments. The series was produced and presented by Stewart Francis and researched by Nigel Schofield, a freelance who is now working permanently at Pennine.

Jamie and Radio Mouth:

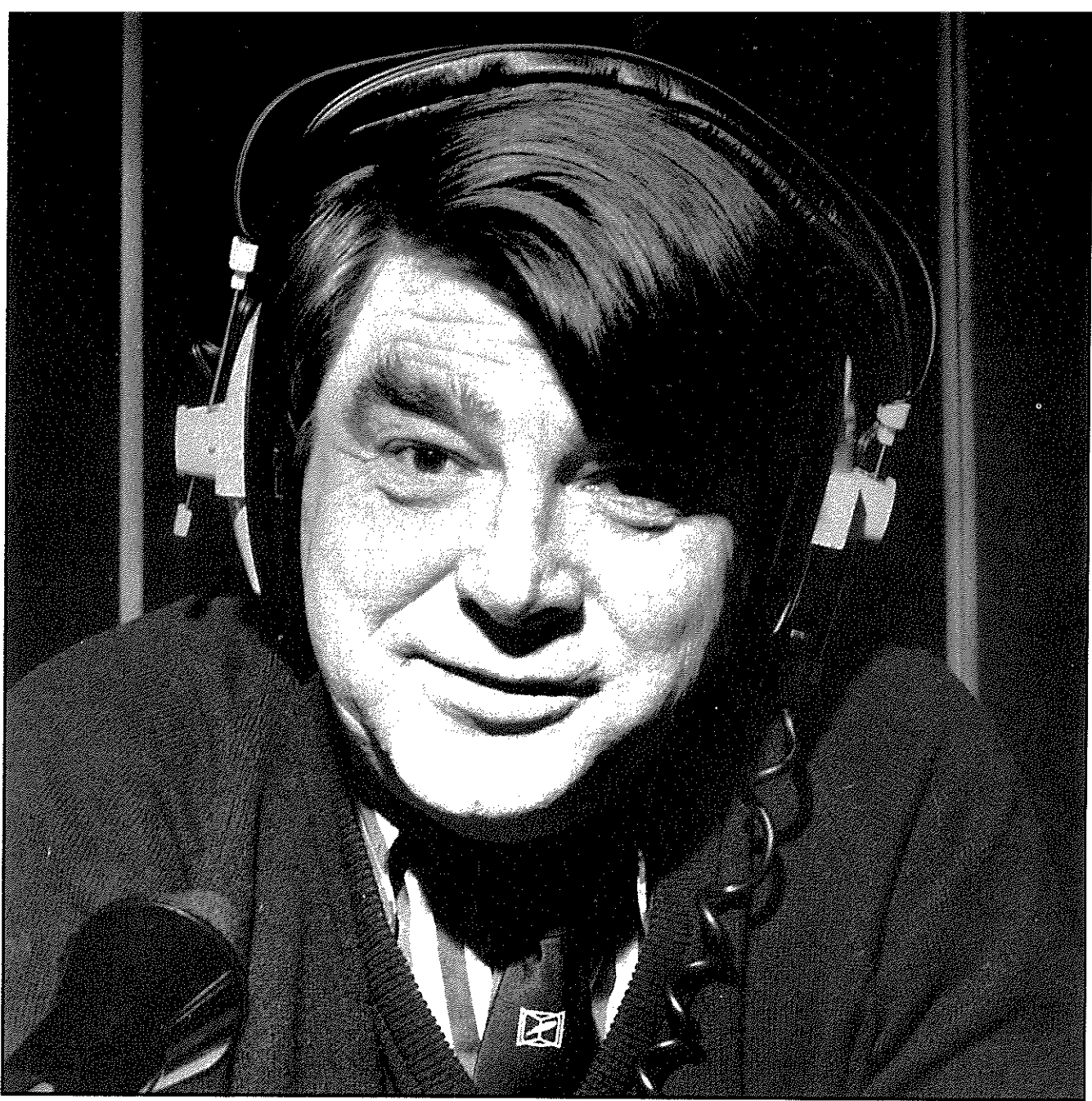
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David Bassett

The sound of Plymouth

The sheer nervous energy of the man is exhausting. The right hand clasps and unclasps to the rhythm of his speech . . . he never sits still at any time, and he doesn't seem to like the idea of relaxation at all.

Radio is not an industry . . . not a profession really . . . not even merely a way of life. It is a disease, a wavelength-borne virus, and David Bassett is a terminal case — an incurable.

Usually, radio-people are infected at a very early age — the disease is family-carried, or perhaps passed on through early contact with the local station in small communities (which accounts for that particular strain of the virus which can be identified in Canadians or Australians or Americans). With David Bassett however, radio came as a second career, relatively late in life by radio-people standards, and he has ridden to his personal success on a wave of his own making — a wave of ideas, and inventiveness, and energy.

Ironically, creeping myopia (the optical kind, not the intellectual variety) drove David from the Merchant Service in 1961, a second-

hand second-officer with a million miles of travel behind him, and a short future ahead. Among the places he had seen as a sailor was Montreal, where he had become aware of the sizeable British community, and, at the same time, of the exciting local radio industry. Putting two-and-two together, adding a touch of pioneering spirit, and several suitcases, he took himself and family off to Canada to sell an idea to a local Montreal businessman, who ran a chain of movie houses catering to the British ex-pats, by playing the old Ealing comedies and other British films.

The Bassett idea was to produce a weekly radio programme, which leaned heavily on news and comment from "home", sponsored by the local movie-house magnate. At that time, CFCF (one of the local Montreal stations) was failing spectacularly in its ratings and the station management bought the idea. Bassett (no previous radio experience at all) found himself with a weekly half-hour. . . "The worst radio ever heard, anywhere" according to the man — but clearly good enough to persuade the CFCF people to ask him to do more.

More turned out to be a 2-hour phone-in show called "phone forum" (not a bad name for a Phone Show, local UK stations please copy) which in turn led to a great deal more work both in Canada and in the USA, including, by this time, a host-slot on a Boston TV station, doing an interview programme with anyone and everyone who could be persuaded to come to the station (including one edition with a nun, which David still remembers fondly as the highlight of that series).

The second-career ex-sailor was now firmly part of broadcasting, and although he doesn't mind admitting that TV was fun and lucrative, the radio bug (which bit him first) was still nibbling away, and, he claims, it was always clear that his career in radio was first in importance.

North American broadcasting paid the rent for eleven years, and as far as he could see, was likely to do so for another eleven at least.

Now, however, it is 1972, and following the Conservative Party victory in the British General Election two years earlier, British local commercial radio was on its way. For Bassett, incidentally, it will always be "local commercial radio" . . . he doesn't understand what "independent local radio" means, and he is not alone.

He begins to find himself on the receiving end of overtures from various people involved, to lesser or greater degrees, in putting consortia together to bid for the new British commercial stations, Hughie Green among them. Not over-surprising,

this, given that Bassett was one of the very few Brits, anywhere, with genuinely local, genuinely commercial radio experience. Finally, he succumbed to an approach from Associated Newspapers Group, and in 1972, joined their London office as a Group Consultant ("whatever", he now says, "that was supposed to mean").

For the next three years, he spent time de-Canadianising himself, and getting back into the English way of doing (or not doing) things. Making contacts, reading everything in sight, and making himself totally familiar with every word in the legislation which set up the new industry. "At that time," he says, "I took literally, everything that the IBA was saying about Local Radio and I am afraid that this led to a measure of disagreement with the way Associated was going about its franchise applications — notably the London News Station effort."

By this time, Associated had lost the London application bid, and Bassett found himself with a lot of know-how and not much to do with it. He very nearly went back to Canada on the strength of that frustration. "People had persuaded me that I was important and had a contribution to make, but nothing came of it." He was joining a growing club, and bid a fond farewell to Associated.

1974 now, and with LBC having handed its immediate problems (most of them very immediate and very severe) to Marshall Stewart, Bassett found himself with some Easter on-air work, given to him by Stewart, who has always been able to recognise a good thing when he sees it.

The work in question was hosting the (then) all-night Night-line sessions on LBC — for which Bassett is entitled, at very least, to a long-service campaign medal with a mention in despatches. As he describes his feelings at the time, "My lust was in London, but my heart was in the West Country." And that, perhaps, explains the special formula that makes David Bassett tick. Born in Plymouth, with radio and the West Country in equal measures in his blood, he was destined to put those two irresistible factors together, and that is precisely what happened.

Well before the Easter 1974 Night-Line job, Bassett had re-established contact with Bob Hussell in Plymouth (they had been at school together) and they had promised each other that they would team up to fight for the Plymouth franchise when it came into contention. During mid-1974, the IBA called for Plymouth applications, and by the autumn of that year, awarded the contract to the Hussell-Bassett team. By Christmas 1974, Plymouth Sound was a going concern with David Bassett as its programme controller, as happy as a sandboy, living again in his beloved Plymouth, putting his experience to good effect in the perfect location for him.

However, for reasons best known only to radio-maniac types such as Bassett, he continued to do LBC Night-Line duty for six months of the year, commuting each weekend to-and-from London and Plymouth, earning at very least another campaign medal from British Rail (and, although he doesn't say so, probable dis-

Jeremy Rose and Yamco Radio Productions

would like to thank

Neil Robinson, Ray Davies, John Etchells, Jay Oliver, Madeleine Bell, Chris Yates, Tony and Jill Burrows, Mic Johnson, Russell Stone, Gerrio Evans, Sue Clover, Allen Mackenzie, Lawrence Juba, Tony Stoller, Paul Stevens, Donald Brooks, David Copping, Justin Hayward, Jeff Brown, Aidan Day, Jan Taylor, Dave Robson, Horatio Lonsdale Hands,

Gillian Reynolds, Richard Findlay, Chuck Blore, Tony Grundy, Lord Ferrand, Michael Fish, Richard Newton, Eddie Blackwell, Mark Elwes, Wyndham Lewis, Merlyn Rees, Paul Auden,

David Maker, Nick Inman, Barry Thomas, Don McPherson, Bob Kennedy, Roger Collyer, Andy Park, John Thompson, Bernard Mulhearn, Johnny Beerling, Keith Skues, Ziggy & Duncan, Mark Woodman, Cecelia Garnett, Kate & Jeff, Kyle Kimond, High Prince Azad, Arnold Swartzman, Terry Smith, John Perry, Peter Black

and wish everyone a very very Happy New Year.

approbation from his long-suffering radio-widow). He is still programme controller at Plymouth Sound. He is still commuting to do LBC's Night-Line. Unless and until you meet the man, it sounds like an impossible combination. But he wears well on it all. So does Plymouth Sound. So does LBC.

By several yardsticks, Plymouth Sound has been one of the IBA's non-headaches from the very first day, and Bassett must take a lot of the credit for that. It moved into operating profit ahead of forecast. The staff turnover is almost non-existent which does not imply an over-cosy set up at all, for the simple and sufficient reason that the managing director and the programme controller have managed the neat trick of instilling fierce loyalty coupled with a constant search for improvement. You can't argue with the fact that Plymouth Sound is No 1 on the JICRAR weekly reach table and has been for a long time, with a near-constant 63 per cent.

It may have something to do with the determination of Hussell and Bassett to recruit and train local people to the near total exclusion of non-Plymouthians. Says Bassett, "Our chief engineer Tim Mason is the only grockle among us. Us godma keep them ruddy grockles out . . . yus, my dear." I am sure that Mason has been made to feel at home by now, all the same, and for the non-Plymouthians, a "grockle" is, of course, a furriner, or what the Manx would call a "come-over" (which I discovered to my cost when I went over to the Isle of Man to open up Manx Radio a million years ago).

With future generations of local commercial radio programme controllers in mind, it is worth delving a little more deeply into the Bassett philosophy. On applying for a station: "I did not want to write a lot of franchise-getting insincerity in section E of the Application. I intended that what we wrote in that section, what we did on Day One, and what we would go on doing, would be essentially the same thing. And they are the same. We can claim more fidelity to our application promises than any other station. We agreed that the (IBA's) specifications said what they meant and meant what they said. We assumed that the people who would be reading the applications would be able to divine bullshit quickly."

In the Plymouth case at least, the Bassett philosophy seemed to have paid off . . . but in other places and for other applications . . . the divining rods were not quite so sensitive.

On musical format: "A North American station manager would describe our musical format as a mess. We haven't got a musical format. The station's announcers are told to go out and get an audience and it is left at that. If it works, and it seems to, I don't interfere. We have no playlists, other than a once-weekly Plymouth Sound top-thirty, but that is a totally local top-thirty, calculated on local sales figures. North American radio relies on music to bring home the bacon, whereas music is of secondary importance to us. The body is of



primary importance . . . and the words issuing from that body."

On staff relations and motivation: "We do not regard ourselves as very good broadcasters, but we *do* regard ourselves as people privileged to be serving the public . . . in the way of a happy waiter, or railway porter or sub-postmistress in a post office, happy to be of service, and not very special. Of course I have to think about things that way, because we all tend to be egomaniacs in this radio business and we have to have something to keep our heads from swelling."

On networking and programme-sharing: "I think that there is going to be more and more reliance on this, but I don't see it as a good development at all. We (local stations) *ought* to be backyard. We *ought* to be parochial. We *ought* to believe, as we believe in Plymouth that the world stops and starts at a line we have drawn around our transmission area." This, remember, from a man who has seen more of the world than most people, who has lived and worked, in radio, in two major North American metropolitan markets.

One is inclined to think that he has exaggerated a little for the sake of effect, but then one remembers his audience ratings, his station's turnover, his relatively rapid movement into profit, and his trouble-free ride so far. Must be something to it . . . and then there's that bit about grockles.

On the cost of programming: "One of the Local Commercial stations produced a series about alcoholism, called 'Dying for a drink'. Good stuff, no question, but what a performance to put over a point we in Plymouth managed to drive right home, without any BBC-style production techniques. I downed ten large whiskies, and we did some experiments, live, on the air, with the help of the local police. It made the point about drunken driving better than anything could have done and in 1977 there

wasn't a single prosecution in the Plymouth area for drunken driving on New Year's eve. What's more, it received national and even international publicity, with very little effort, at virtually no cost. It was local, live, entertaining and it did a job."

And on the general business of local Radio. "We have a problem in Plymouth in that we are regarded as a hotbed of social rest . . . which is bloody dangerous and potentially unhealthy. So, we have taken it upon ourselves at Plymouth Sound to stir things up a bit, and I think we have, in modest ways, actually improved life. In places like London, you don't need arousal. It already has all the social problems in the world, and the problem there, and in other main cities, is that you need a calming effect from local radio, a little reassurance if you like."

The hands clasps and unclasps another dozen times. The Bassett trade-mark (a cigarette holder) is filled for the umpteenth time since we started talking. We think about the future . . . where to now for the ex-sailor radio maniac? Two careers already, and who knows, perhaps a third somewhere in the scheme of things. Possible, but unlikely in my view. I can see a change of venue, perhaps (although it would take something really irresistible to draw him from the West Country) but I will wager a lot of money that he will never leave radio. He has a singularly advanced form of the disease.

I sink, exhausted, onto the nearest chair as he bounds out into the London night. I am grateful for the opportunity of putting my mind into neutral after 2 hours with David Bassett. David Bassett is going to do battle with an LBC phone-in show for 4 hours.

That's what I mean. No cure for that, is there?

JOHN GRIERSON

Radio Month 11

ILR

Programmes -

The Third Day

Tony Stoller, the IBA's Head of Radio Programming, reviews the programming progress of Independent Local Radio (ILR).

And it was the morning of the third day, and God was busy encouraging the newly created dry land to bear fruit. Behold, there cometh the first journalist who asked Him 'how's it going?'. And God replied, 'I think I'm about half way there'.

At the genesis of a new — and very welcome — magazine on radio, some Biblical plagiarisms may be allowable. For the IBA, in its own modest work of creation, might give much the same answer. So also, an outside observer may feel that ILR is in a sense well into its 'third day'.

Much of the work — and critical attention — so far, has been given to fundamentals: money, structure, politics and audiences. By and large, it is now clear that the system can survive and flourish, and that the further expansion will be able to draw strength from the present structure. The basic work of building continues. The first nineteen stations are now bearing fruit to a notable extent in the programming output.

In recent months there has been a distinct — if difficult to define — sense that ILR programming has taken a significant step forward. Up to now, the newness of the system has sometimes been reflected in a rather unsure approach to the essential end-product, the output. Now, there is an evident increase in both confidence and competence.

It may be convenient to examine the nature of ILR's recent progress and the lines for future development, according to some of the apparent paradoxes which the stations and the system must reconcile in order to achieve broad success. Put simply, these are the conflicting demands of 'service' radio and 'produced' output; of local orientation and the sharing of programmes; of public service and commercial success; of popular appeal and minority needs; and of spoken output and music.

ILR is essentially service radio. This means that a local radio station should offer the correct balance of practical knowledge, enlightenment and diversion at all times of day, suited to the life style of the listeners. Much of the companies' attention during the early years has been directed to finding sources and systems for news and information, and blending this effectively into a highly personal radio service. Few informed critics now doubt the achievement of ILR in adding this extra dimension to local life. Part of the stations' progress has been to consolidate and make widely credible their role as an essential local service.

This is generally no more evident than, for example, traffic lights or road signs are to a motorist. ILR listeners accept these essential but not intrusive elements for what they are: information about guidelines and regulations of local life. They are no less necessary for being usually routine.

It is in exceptional times that the role of ILR as service radio is highlighted. Over this Christmas and New Year, Radio Forth has co-ordinated the whole of the efforts in East Central Scotland to combat the snow crisis. All ILR's usual tasks were highlighted. Forth became the centre for tactical information, quite literally a lifeline. It offered the only wholly local report on what was happening. And it provided comfort and reassurance when the dislocation of the community left people isolated and afraid.

Such circumstances show ILR for what it is, at a lower key, all the time: service radio. Perhaps every station needs its annual ecological disaster to get this point understood!

However, service radio cannot always be elegant. It needs to be effective and accepted, but allows relatively little scope for the stylistic triumphs of produced radio programmes. During 1978, the ILR companies have managed to make their mark in

this opposite form of radio as well. John Woodforde, writing in the Sunday Telegraph identified "a trend noted by the jury of the Imperial Tobacco Awards for Radio which listened to numerous thorough documentaries submitted by the commercial radio stations".

The growth in number and excellence of produced programmes in ILR is a welcome one, which is to be encouraged. Yet this should not be at the expense of service radio. How to reconcile the demands of these two forms of radio is part of the difficult art of the programme controller. It is also one of the main challenges of 1979 for all the ILR companies.

In developing the use of produced programmes shared by ILR stations, the system faces its second conflict: between local identity and shared output. The high cost of produced programmes means that, in order to have any significant growth — especially in the schedules of smaller companies — much of the material will have to come from outside.

Yet ILR sets its face resolutely against a network. It is not the purpose of local radio to go along the ITV road in this respect. What may be hoped for is a growth of programmes produced by one company for its own needs which then can be offered to others as relevant: and for the receiving company to use the material in a way appropriate to its local circumstances.

It is unlikely that such shared programming would ever make up for more than a small proportion of ILR output. However, in due amount it can offer a broadening of schedules and can help set high standards of quality for local output (and the necessarily more prosaic service output) to reach towards. Perhaps the greatest opportunity, and that least exploited, lies in programmes with an entertainment base. No doubt 1979 will hear its share of concerts, documentaries and drama: will it also enjoy more comedy and light entertainment?



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"The apparent contradiction, cited by the fashionable sceptics, between advertising finance and public service is now largely resolved."

"Perhaps the greatest challenge will be in the field of entertainment — that most difficult of the

"Perhaps the greatest challenge will be in the field of entertainment — that most difficult of the hallowed triptych of the broadcaster's tasks."

"Even BBC local radio, despite its 'minority' stance, likes to have audiences to broadcast to."

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The apparent contradiction, cited by the fashionable sceptics, between advertising finance and public service is now largely resolved. It is evident that even in terms of commercial self-interest — and this by no means predominates — a large and representative audience is desirable, and that broad and good local public service programming is an essential ingredient in achieving this. Even BBC local radio, despite its 'minority' stance, likes to have audiences to broadcast to. The ILR companies have been strenuous in resisting the allure of below-the-line promotional budgets, which seek as insidiously as ever the lure of indirect advertising. There is little doubt that the ILR companies recognize that such money is more happily spent in regulated spot advertising: perhaps the promoters may come to understand that as the line holds firm in 1979.

If it is comparatively straightforward to reconcile mass-audience and minority output in advertising terms, it is by no means simple for the programmer. While service radio can incorporate elements to meet most needs in the fast pace of mixed daytime output, the judgement at other times is difficult. In playing specialist music, for example, how much time should be devoted to jazz, a specific and important genre with a devoted but small following: and how much to rock music which is sufficiently close to the daytime mix to get a fair exposure already but which attracts far larger audiences?

Similarly, can an ILR station, with a single channel, afford to ignore the unique needs of ethnic, cultural or other minorities: and yet can it serve some of these to the exclusion of others, and of its wider public?

It may be that more data is needed about the amount of genuine selection made by listeners in the supposedly discretionary listening times of evenings and weekends. Such a study could help answer a question which is not yet susceptible to a ready generalization. Clearly, the correct mix will vary from place to place. But increasingly evidence suggests that listening habits — as distinct from taste — show important similarities across the UK.

The splitting of medium wave and VHF channels has often been touted as one way of alleviating the pressure to broadcast exclusive output. It is unlikely to be significant. In the deteriorating conditions on the medium wave band which will probably characterise the coming years, transmission on VHF to support MF will be most important in the evenings, just the time when separation to serve minority tastes seems most attractive. Although there may be some limited, experimental splitting in 1979, it is unlikely to help solve this fundamental and elusive problem any better than the notable skill of most companies has done: and will continue to do, with an increasingly sure touch.

It has too often seemed that the main conflict in the history of the development of radio has been between the need for

speech and the public demand for music. This is highlighted by national radio, with three music and one speech channel, but is increasingly irrelevant on ILR.

By a statistical nicety, the proportion of music to speech on ILR is close to 50/50. That is right, because they are effectively two sides of the same coin. (Perhaps Radio 1 has a double-headed or double-tailed penny, but ILR has not.) It is essential to keep the balance right, and to award proportionate importance to each. But they are fused in a single entity which is not unlike an alloy of metals. Good quality ingredients in due proportions are inescapably necessary.

ILR seems to be getting the proportions about right. The achievement of the equilibrium is part of the progression of ILR programmes. Effort now needs to be directed to raising the quality of the individual parts, probably without disturbing the balance. It is a matter of fine tuning, and achieving it will be no easier than reaching the present amalgam. Here, as in the other demands of ILR programming, the system may be 'about half-way there'.

"Good programming must come from the ideas and skill of the men and women who will run the station, and must respond to the needs and tastes of those who live in the locality. Programming objectives are likely to be different for each company, and for each year of a company's existence. In assessing applicants' programming proposals, the Authority will be looking for companies that combine practical realism with the ability to provide an imaginative and steadily developing local radio service." . . .

IBA contract specification

The stations which are by no means 'half-way there' will be the new ones. In Cardiff and Coventry — with the other seven following soon and many more before long — there will no doubt be some learning from the mistakes of their seniors; and some failing to learn.

Will it take so long for the new companies to reach the 'third day'?

Before too long, though, the new companies may be able to add their own

Probably not, though it would be unjust to expect them to get everything right at the first attempt, and unwise to demand that they attempt everything at once. Much of the speed of a company's development depends on its economic fortunes. With many people predicting recession at the end of 1979, optimism needs to be kept on a tight rein.

creative initiative to ILR. This is unquestionably the essence of the system.

The local skill, creativity and diligence of each company is ultimately its main resource. In its contract specification for the new franchises the IBA stresses its view that it is for the companies to make programmes and make them well:

"Independent Local Radio is essentially a local system. The Authority does not seek to impose a uniform pattern upon either the form or the content of the programme output. Good programming must come from the ideas and skill of the men and women who will run the station, and must respond to the needs and tastes of those who live in the locality. Programming objectives are likely to be different for each company, and for each year of a company's existence. In assessing applicants' programming proposals, the Authority will be looking for companies that combine practical realism with the ability to provide an imaginative and steadily developing local radio service."

This applies as much to the existing companies as to the new ones. Each year, new challenges, which may vary for each company, make new demands.

For ILR as a whole, we may indeed be about half-way through the process of creating and establishing a unique style and source of radio programming. As we come to the 'evening and morning of the fourth day' certain objectives are apparent. Others will appear.

The development of produced output to complement — but not to displace — service radio, is already underway and will grow. It needs to be helped by a controlled development in the exchange and sharing of programme material without losing the paramount local identity of the service.

Sustained resistance to illicit commercial influence is a clear priority: less easy to ensure, but equally important, is the continuing need to reconcile with growing facility the demands of mass audiences with those of exclusive minorities. The new companies and the old will also look to develop music and speech programming without splitting the unity of their output or disturbing the delicate balance.

But perhaps the greatest challenge will be in the field of entertainment, that most difficult of the hallowed triptych of the broadcaster's tasks. In all aspects of its output — service radio, produced material, local and shared programmes, mass and minority material — there is room for more of this missing ingredient.

Creating a new system is a serious business. Nothing is more serious than good humour (in its broadest sense), nothing is harder work than light, fluent entertainment, nothing more carefully prepared or worked on harder than the 'spontaneous' quip.

ILR needs to avoid any over-reliance on commercial music, through investment in live and local music and musicians. It could also now make similar, intuitive investment in entertainment.

After all, nobody should go through another day of hard creative work without a few laughs.

Radio Clyde

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The BBC's community radio experiments in Wales last autumn proved highly stimulating for all concerned, particularly since they gave broadcasters and public an unusually close look at one another. But can the BBC break from its traditions to a great enough degree to provide a true community service? Anne Karpf investigates.

If there were ever a word more drained of meaning than ongoing, situation, or hopefully, it must be community. This onetime useful little noun has speedily become hardly more than shorthand for 'on the side of the angels', oozing instant unction. So it is with extreme trepidation that I venture into the subject of community radio. . . .

Yet it is worth braving the mists of jargon to consider a form of broadcasting with increasing appeal and highly topical. Even the BBC wants to get in on the act, and has been having a dress-rehearsal in Wales. They carried out four community broadcasting experiments there in October and November last year, and are also floating the idea of a number of community stations for London.

The Welsh experiments actually germinated in Ireland: two and a half years ago, the Controller of Programmes at RTE went to Cardiff with his infective enthusiasm for the RTE community radio van. Whereupon the BBC, borrowing the van from RTE and a VHF wavelength from the Home Office, tried out neighbourhood broadcasting in six places to publicise the split between Radio Wales and Radio Cymru.

This time round, they were moved partly by the desire to alert far-flung localities to the existence of New, Improved, Full-size Radio Wales, and partly by a commitment to community broadcasting by people like Teleri Bevan, editor of Radio Wales, who orchestrated the experiments.

Tonypandy (Rhondda), Merthyr, Pontypool, and Wrexham each had four days of neighbourhood radio from a caravan studio which BBC Wales had built, on medium wave this time. In each place first, there was local publicity. Then, a researcher arrived to make contact with local people and pick participants. Finally, on Tuesday, three engineers and a driver set up; and on the Wednesday, producer, trainee producer, researcher, and secretary started broadcasting.

Teleri Bevan produced the Rhondda station. What was her aim? "I think there's a terrible danger in the BBC to centralise: it is important that communities and people learn to talk to each other, and all people should have access to something as simple as a microphone — to know of the power and effectiveness of radio."

From Wednesday-Saturday, the stations were on the air several times a day. In Rhondda: 07.30-14.00, 16.45-18.45 Bevan started her brew with local information — weather, traffic, Job Shop, etc. At 08.30, she brought on a local personality. At 09.00 they moved to Up Your Street/Hospital/Factory, with pre-recorded interviews with residents/workers and record requests (and — not to be scorned — a chance for the production team to have breakfast). From 10.00 on, there was a rolling sequence with phone-ins, the local CAB, the Tonypandy Action Group complaining about the route of the by-pass, etc.

The stations broadcast to a radius of five to eight miles. Rhondda has a population of 88,000, but "there's a much closer community feeling in Tonypandy than Rhondda — it would have been better on a smaller scale".

Even cynics within the BBC's ranks concede that the experiments were remarkably successful. The studio parked in the Civic Centre or High Street appealed: people listened to it, were anxious to talk through it, and praised it profusely. Says Bevan, "we know that people at last found that sense of community again: they talked to each other in a way that I don't honestly think the local press touches".

THE V EXPER

As for the professional broadcasters, they evidently got a shot of energy and enthusiasm from it all — perhaps because they were exposed to ordinary people at unusually close quarters. Bevan: "I think that the woman with curlers and headscarf is just as important as the head of a nationalised industry. The trouble is that the BBC builds these huge glass palaces and removes us inside them — we're inaccessible. With community radio, the woman in the curlers is relating for the first time to the glass palace."

It seems churlish to snipe in the face of such commitment, but . . . number one: the researcher of the Wrexham station was asked if he had called a public meeting before the experiment started, to encourage wide participation. "Did I hell?" he replied, adding that as a local journalist he knew who in the town could speak. This is aggressive paternalism, the hallmark of Reithianism?

"The point at issue is one of the central ones in the whole notion of community radio: is it to be merely another form of communication, filtered and mediated by the professional for the non-professional?"

But number two: According to Ms Bevan, "we were looking for people who could introduce various sequences. I ran for four days a Top of the Form among local schools. The quizmaster was the local fishmonger — he was super. You had to nose them out. I used two or three of these local people, but you could only take them in small doses. . . . We tried to fit in anyone on the station who came. The trainee producer spent all day talking to people: if it was worthwhile, it got on. Of course there had to be a bit of editorial control. . . ."

This is BBC caution. Compare them both with the RTE procedure, in which a public meeting is called three months before broadcasting starts. From it, a town committee is formed, which has responsibility for the programming, with assistance from RTE's Head of Community Radio. The station is literally run by the people: in Roscrea, Co Tipperary, for example, visited by the community radio van in August 1977, the 11 presenters were trade clerks, shopkeepers, policemen, technician, porter, teacher, chemist, and a student — none with any professional knowledge of radio.

But isn't this just sour cavilling from a professional malcontent? Not at all. The point at issue is one of the central ones in the whole notion of community radio: is it to be merely another form of communication, filtered and mediated by the professional for the non-professional?

It is no academic quibble, for the BBC aims — subject to the Home Office giving them a wavelength — to set up a permanent peripatetic neighbourhood broadcasting van travelling Wales, with a week in each place. Moreover, two BBC men (Tim Pitt from Radio Carlisle and Frank Mansfield, Radio London's local government correspondent) have prepared a report which even now is passing from the desk of Michael Barton to that of Aubrey Singer

WELSH MOVEMENT

"Remember the North Sea pirate radio stations, summarily illegalised after pressure from the Post Office? Not enough space in the frequency spectrum, they told us. And then magic: we got the ILR stations."

about the feasibility of BBC community radio for London.

So the idea of community radio has finally acquired respectability — after years of having merely induced scoffing and NESTing in most professional broadcasters. Now NESTing is nothing like feathering one's nest: it's a much more cosy, British habit. For to NEST, dear reader, is to chirp repeatedly 'Not Enough Space or Time'.

Remember the North Sea pirate radio stations, summarily illegalised after pressure from the Post Office? Not enough space in the frequency spectrum, they told us. And then, magic: we got the ILR stations. The space, they tell us, is lacking for Citizen's Band; the frequencies aren't there for private radio Italian-style. Or are they. . . ?

Then, there's time. Michael Barton, BBC Controller of Local Radio, gave an exemplary display of NESTing at the press conference last year for the projected new local radio stations. "In all our new areas, we intend to 'go public' and let people have their say about what they want," he announced. "We didn't have time to do this last time round — it's a pity." Spot it?

For the moment, the BBC is not revealing anything of its plans for community radio, treating it not unlike the Top Secret new product of a multi-national. What is known is that they considered three possibilities: about six eight-person stations covering separate geographical areas of London, eg Radio East End; some 50 very small stations servicing much smaller communities, eg Radio Battersea, with few BBC staff and mainly non-professional broadcasters; special interest stations covering the whole of London, eg Radio Sports, Radio Arts.

It's encouraging that the BBC is at last waking up to community radio. But are they the right people to do it? Particularly since Tim Pitt was quoted as saying he foresaw "a low level of popular involvement" in the stations, apart from record requests and phone-ins. *Community* broadcasting? Of that kind, who needs it most — the community, or the professionals?

The Annan Report didn't opt for BBC suzerainty: it advocated a Local Broadcasting Authority (rejected by the subsequent White Paper) to oversee genuinely local stations, some operated by profit-making trusts, as did the report on the IBA from the Select Committee on Nationalised Industries.

ComCom, the community communications pressure group, also has its doubts: in its comments on Annan's recommendations, it calls for a 'third force' in British broadcasting, as a way of breaking the present duopoly. The stations would be autonomous — ie unlike BBC community radio, not part of any national network.

Unlike ILR stations, they would be non-commercial, and run as (deliberately) non-profit concerns. Local people would have access to production facilities — not just record requests and phone-ins. And above all, unlike the BBC and ILR stations, they would be under local democratic control. To oversee and regulate them, ComCom wants a Community Broadcasting Agency.

Now all this is indigestible idealism to some: I can hear them belch with the veritable naïvety of it all. Yet one country's idealism is another country's realism, and there are some 70 such stations running extremely successfully in Canada, Australia, and America.

But what of over here? A start has been made with the cable stations, six community experiments licensed by the Home Office. Otherwise, there are five traditional objections. First, in order to accommodate sufficient stations, the British custom of simulcasting must end, and the community stations must go out on VHF alone. To this comes the familiar bleat of the low take-up of VHF.

ComCom points out that during the first round of community radio experiments in Wales on VHF, the sets were disappearing from the shops like pumpernickel during the bread strike, for they were offering something precious to the public. Until broadcasting agencies and dealers mount a massive publicity campaign, and VHF starts to offer something attractive to the public, the anti-VHF platitudes will prevail.

The frequency argument has already been considered. Then, cry the detractors, the audiences *like* their present pop'n' prattle diet, they don't want the heavier fare. Yet the evidence — particularly from Wales last year — suggests the contrary.

And who would pay for them? ComCom admits that if you insist on stations designed to IBA and BBC standards, then you do need to shell out a quarter of a million a go. But, they maintain, you can do it much cheaper with less costly technology, and they suggest multiple sources of financing.

The crucial argument is staffing. In *ABSTRACT*, the *ABS* journal of November 11th 1978, Tony Hearn stated that they are opposed to a staff of "only eight" at the proposed BBC stations at Barrow and Taunton. So how would they accept the even smaller staffs which the community stations would want?

There is no easy answer. ComCom says it requires long-term talks with the unions, to protect staff from being exploited by long hours, etc, as well as a radical change in thinking among broadcasting workers. But they also believe that if the stations proliferate on the scale they envisage, there will be more and not less work for professional broadcasters.

None of this will be easy. Given the need for community radio, for giving people real access to the airwaves and a proper chance for minority opinion to be voiced, why not leave it all to the BBC? One powerful argument against is the 'voice' of the BBC — very hard to define, except to say that it seems to permeate all of the BBC's output, from local radio to the World Service, with the same middle-aged, middle-class comfortable aura (as if Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard were hovering somewhere nearby).

Now there's nothing wrong with being middle-class — I'm even it myself — or middle-aged, but if community radio is to serve those presently excluded by broadcasting, it needs to find a different voice or rather, voices. In community radio, Pluralism Rules, OK?



First find a spare frequency

It is a quarter past six on a summer evening at Radio Canale 96 in Milan.

In the tiny studio a volunteer is presenting his regular rock music programme, while in the news room and offices all hell is let loose with phones ringing, messengers coming in and out. A demonstration has turned violent, a policeman has been shot, a bus burned. In the Cathedral Square students are setting up barricades. The station's staff and volunteers are keeping track of events perhaps rather better than the traditional news media, since they have the contacts. Later that evening, a number of Milan free radio stations will link programmes to piece together in a phone-in what happened, and to discuss on the line to Radio Citta Futura in Rome how the news was received in the capital.

Radio Canale 96 — "The oldest and the newest free radio in Milan, an original and complete service, 20 hours a day of information, culture and entertainment" — was started by a Marxist-Leninist group in September 1975. Information for them, as for most politically motivated stations, is the main plank in the programming. It is a response to nearly 20 years of national broadcasting (RAI) controlled by the Right.

By contrast, Radio Canale 96 makes a point of offering access to a wide variety of opinions: you don't have to be a Marxist-Leninist to get on air. A study of its schedules and that of other Leftist stations showed the kinds of groups who do — women, students, trades unionists, policemen, prostitutes, ethnic groups, homosexuals, unemployed people — a broad spectrum of society which felt itself excluded from RAI.

Radio Canale's 300w VHF transmitter has an effective range of about 10 kilometres, and surveys show the audience is between 200,000 and 300,000. A fraction of this number supports the station with subscriptions (£1.50 p.a.) and money is also raised through advertising and concert promotions. Equipment is supplied at low-cost by manufacturers in return for brief on-air mention. About 100 people work

regularly for the station and these meet in an assembly which elects a committee; the committee employs the 10-15 full-time staff — "we try to practise democracy, unlike RAI or NBC". The studio is on the fourth floor of a tenement building, occupied by squatters who act as look-outs for any raids by police or right-wing groups.

But Radio Canale 96 is not illegal. It was indeed a 'pirate' when it started, but since then the Italian Supreme Court's 1976 decision has ruled that the state monopoly does not apply locally. The result has been an incredible explosion of local broadcasting. An official survey last year counted 2,275 radio and 506 TV stations, giving Italy a world record in numbers of radio stations per head of population (1 per 24,747). In terms of geographical coverage the figures are even more striking: Italy has one station per 132 square kilometres compared to the runner up, the USA, with one per 1,170 square kilometres.

Most of Italy's local radio stations use the VHF band only and either by intention or for reasons of economy low-powered transmitters. But in the absence of any control (the law simply permits local broadcasting, there is no regulatory machinery), the strongest transmitter wins out and the situation favours the rich and powerful. An instruction manual on setting-up a radio station begins: "Before erecting your transmitter, first find a spare frequency . . ." Sweeping the dial in any of the big cities between 88 and 104 MHz you realise this could be a hard first step. Three quarters at least of the free radios are commercial ventures, many supported by the music and electronic industries.

From a political point of view they represent the side-bet of the Christian-Democrat party, an attempt to compensate for the loss of control of RAI as power-sharing at the centre became necessary. The Communist Party's attitude to free radio has been equivocal. The spread of local radio has tended to distract attention

from the reform of RAI, long overdue. But much as it dislikes some of the far left stations, the party sees the importance of protecting the non-commercial sector and bringing it into some relationship with the national system on which it believes it would act as a healthy, innovative influence. A Bill is at present before Parliament which proposes setting up a National Broadcasting Committee to define service areas, approve a frequency assignment plan, allocate licences and compile a list of authorised stations. It is contentious and has only added fuel to the debate, while the consequences of deregulation run unchecked.

The Italian example is held up in other countries as an awful warning of what can happen if the Pandora's box of 'deregulation' is opened. Obviously it suits a regulatory authority intent on preserving a monopoly to have such a scapegoat. But one can admire the full use of the airwaves without having to applaud the chaos: countries such as Australia have, in admittedly easier circumstances, been able to devise a system for encouraging local autonomous initiatives. Italy shows too how the desire for local expression, when thwarted, will find an outlet, and powerful allies, as has happened in Britain and France. In fact, the transformation from 'piracy' to legality recalls the old rhyme:

'Treason doth never prosper. What's the reason?

For if it do, there's none dare call it treason.'

Free radio in France is far from prospering, except in so far as harassment from the law makes for solidarity among the persecuted. A later flowering than the Italian, it was not until 1977 that the first of the recent wave of free radios, Radio Vert, received spectacular publicity in the course of a TV programme. One of its Ecologist supporters produced a transistor tuned to Radio Vert's frequency and played some of the station's first live programme before he could be stopped. Thereafter Government

jamming interrupted most of Radio Vert's broadcasts and those of the other stations which followed.

Radio Vert has been mistaken for a vehicle of the Ecologist party, but the motivation of most of French free radio has been less party political than stemming from a desire to open up the airwaves to a broader range of opinion than is allowed access to the national broadcasting system, a system which also singularly fails to reflect local expression.

Italy showed the way; and the founder of Radio Vert, Antoine Lefebure, had also worked in Pacifica's KPFA. Speech is thus the main ingredient of free radio transmission, and with the French authorities' curious connivance and involvement in the 'radios peripheriques', the commercial advertising lobby has, at least for the moment, sufficient outlet for advertisements and music without needing to risk illegality.

The main political parties have displayed the same ambivalence towards the phenomenon as their Italian counterparts. During 1977, the left were not keen to back a development which might be used against them if they won the 1978 elections. With their failure at the polls, the political choices clarified and free radio enjoyed a brief honeymoon, subjected to surveillance and government jamming but nothing worse.

Meanwhile, the forces of the right and centre, not wishing to see the tradition of central control abandoned, supported Government moves to seal off the legal loophole which was causing a hold-up in prosecutions against free radio. A deliberate test case was set up against Radio Fil Bleu in Montpellier, a rare example of a pro-Government station. The defence claimed that the law forbidding unlicensed transmissions referred only to point-to-point, not broadcast signals.

But in June 1978 a bill clarifying points such as this was presented by the Government. The Association pour la Liberation des Ondes (ALO), the main free radio organisation, countered with proposals which the Socialists were finally persuaded to support and which are of considerable interest as a French attempt to improve on Italian experience. But the Government's Bill was hurried through to become law. For free radio it has now become a matter of police raids, fines of up to £10,000 and imprisonment.

Understandably a number of the more political groups have ceased transmissions and reverted to more traditional forms of publicity. Some 20 to 30 stations survive, determined to keep alive till the Presidential Elections of 1981 the idea and practice of local, autonomous, non-profit radio, in the hope that a Government which includes the Socialists may legalise

this sector, following ALO's basic principles:

- (a) Limitation of transmitter coverage area to 30 kilometres radius, and no organisation to be allowed use of more than one transmitter.
- (b) Reservation of frequencies for communal use by groups sharing time on low-powered transmitters — 'radio-villages' or 'radios de quartiers'.
- (c) Licences should be granted only to non-profit organisations or worker co-operatives.
- (d) Advertising should be permitted as a source of income but limited to five minutes in the hour.

What these proposals aim to avoid is state control on the one hand and the kind of 'capitalist anarchy' (ALO's phrase) which in Italy threatens the existence of the interesting and innovative non-commercial sector.

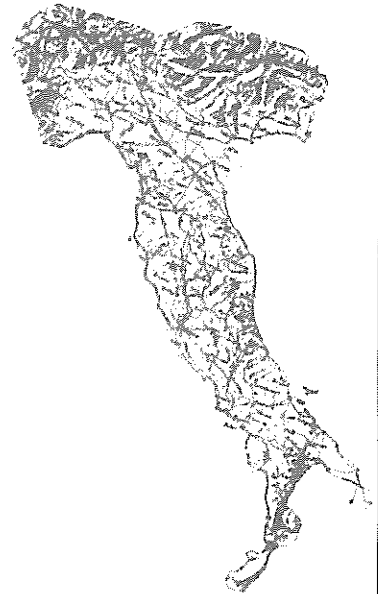
As one looks at these developments from across the Channel, the question arises have we got it right? Was the whole North Sea pirates-Radio 1-ILR story yet another example of the British getting their revolutions over early and decently defusing them? After a period of stop-go imposed by a succession of different governments, for the first time both halves of the duopoly are being offered an equal share in the next stage of local radio's development.

On the face of it, the system seems an admirable British compromise, giving scope for the commercial dynamic as well as protecting the public service element. Why then Radio Jackie's fulminations to the south of the Thames and Radio Amy's persistent search for respectability to the north? Why are there over 2,000 illegal users of US-type CB equipment in the London area? It may be possible for the authorities to dismiss these as the protests of radio-freaks, so long as British free radio remains rooted in the North Sea era and for the most part barely politicised.

But it is less easy to ignore rumblings from the broadcasting unions about lack of representation on the Home Office Frequency Working Party. A system one half of which is under-financed and the other dependent on advertising revenue has yet to show that it can adequately respond to the needs of urban minorities and remote rural regions. Annan's vision of a third force in local radio, eagerly endorsed by the Community Communications Group, has dwindled in the white Paper to "at least one" non-profit franchise to be doled out by the IBA, who also corner all the loose ends of student, hospital and cable radio and cable TV.

Such neatness combined with such parsimony smacks of a bureaucratic rather than an imaginative approach to the planning of this country's most underused natural resource — the radio-frequency

ITALY



55,810,000 population

2,275 radio stations

506 TV stations

1 radio station per 24,747 head of population

1 radio station per 132 kms

(USA: 1 radio station per 1,170 sq kms)

spectrum. It might be wiser in the long run to allow, as a recent SCNI Report on the IBA recommended, and as other countries such as Australia and Canada have done, a few untidy crumbs to fall from the exclusive table at which the broadcasters and the Home Office sit carving up our airwaves.

Peter Lewis formerly worked in educational broadcasting and cable TV, and is the author of several international studies for the Country Europe and UNESCO. His book *'Whose Media? A Citizen's Guide to Radio & TV'* was published by the Consumers Association last year.

The outlook for AM stereo

The success of stereo broadcasting in the United States has prompted interest in the possibility of bringing out of storage an idea that has been around for some time — AM stereo. Pat Hawker examines recent manufacturing developments and the attitudes of American broadcasters and the F.C.C. He also considers the potential for AM stereo in the UK.

Technical development in radio broadcasting is a continuous process — although its impact on the public is usually in fits and starts. It is easy, for example, to believe that nothing very dramatic has happened in medium-wave (MF) amplitude-modulated (AM) broadcasting since it started almost 60 years ago. This ignores the profound changes that stemmed from the development of the portable high-quality tape recorder and the later cassette inserts, or the boost given to local radio in the UK by the use by the IBA of directional transmitting antennas.

Now in the wings is a further technical development that could give a new sound to AM radio and make it more competitive with the VHF/FM system: multiplexed stereo. Technically the outlook for such a system is promising: but still to be settled is not only which of several possible techniques would be the most satisfactory but also, more importantly, whether any such system is wanted or could be fully satisfactory in the UK with its interference-prone medium-wave band and the lack of direct commercial competition between the MF/AM and the VHF/FM stations. There are also the exhortations given to broadcasters by Annan and other official committees recommending they should encourage listeners to depend primarily on VHF/FM.

In the United States, these conditions do not apply and the AM broadcasters (since Americans have no broadcasting on long-waves, it has become the standard practice

in North America to refer to MF/AM just as AM and VHF/FM as FM) have recently become concerned with the gradual erosion of their audiences to FM, where one of the attractions is the availability of stereo.

A result has been a revival of interest in what is basically an old idea: AM stereo. If stereo is attracting audiences on FM why not give it to them on AM? Technically the idea has been around, at least in embryo, for many, many years — but now during the past few years there has been a flurry of interest by equipment manufacturers, by broadcasters and by the FCC, the American regulatory body.

Firms including RCA, Harris, Kahn Communications Inc, Belar, Magnavox and Motorola have all announced, demonstrated and mostly field-tested AM stereo systems. RCA subsequently opted out of the competition but there are still five current contenders:

A Belar "AM/FM" system, frequency modulating the carrier with a pre-emphasised L-R signal while simultaneously transmitting the L+R signal with conventional AM. This system is basically similar to that proposed earlier by RCA.

A Harris "modified quadrature" system using AM modulation of two carriers (L and R) having a 30° phase difference.

A Kahn/Hazeltine "independent sideband" system which phase modulates the carrier with an L-R signal in such a way that an L signal is carried on the lower sideband and the R signal on the upper sideband (with this system it is possible to obtain some stereo effect using two separate conventional AM receivers although better stereo is achieved with a special receiver).

A Magnavox "AM-PM" system using an L-R signal to phase-modulate the carrier.

A Motorola "compatible quadrature" system with two carriers separated in phase by 90°, modulated by L+R and L-R signals. These signals are added, clipped and amplitude modulated again by L+R.

The precise technical differences between these various systems are probably of interest only to the engineers and receiver designers. Further it is expected that sooner or later FCC will choose a single system (which include features of more than one of the five rival systems). It has been analysing results of field trials organised by the National AM Stereophonic Committee of the Motorola, Belar and Magnavox systems; and independently by Kahn who refused to work

through the Committee but instead petitioned FCC directly. Harris also submitted information directly to FCC.

In a Notice of Proposed Rule Making released in October 1978 the FCC surveys results achieved but notes areas in which there are still outstanding technical questions and is encouraging additional tests of all these five systems. These further tests are expected to place particular emphasis on compatibility with existing AM services.

The FCC also expresses concern with certain aspects of the Harris and Belar systems and with reception of the Kahn/Hazeltine transmissions. There also seems to have been difficulty in achieving in practice the claimed stereo separation on all five systems. Costs for the broadcaster to implement stereo AM with existing modern AM transmitters would not be unreasonably high.

While there is little doubt that all systems are capable of providing a moderately good stereo effect in favourable circumstances, there are differing opinions on whether this remains true for sky wave reception or in the presence of interference or selective fading or with receivers having the usual degree of selectivity. Some people see AM stereo as a means of resurrecting the American radio receiver industry (currently most receivers are imported).

To provide stereo decoding at reasonable cost it is widely anticipated that special-purpose integrated circuits would be developed by component makers: but these firms are clearly anxious to see a single system adopted before committing themselves. Indeed while some sectors of industry are pushing for AM stereo, others are less than enthusiastic. The main impetus is coming from such organisations as the National Association of Broadcasters, the National Radio Broadcasters Association and the Electronic Industries Association. Trade comments reported by the magazine *Electronics* range all the way from "No one needs AM stereo" to "It's the first thing that's happened in AM in 50 years and it's nice to see it happening to a stodgy old product."

In the submissions to FCC, a few claims were made that AM could become a "high fidelity" medium but it was generally conceded that FM is likely to remain the high fidelity medium of choice in most urban homes and that the main appeal of AM stereo is for reception in cars and in areas not served by FM.

Where does this leave Europe and the UK? In the first place Europe uses 9 kHz rather than 10 kHz AM channels and accepts far higher levels of night-time co-channel interference than in North America. The benefits of AM stereo here would hardly extend into the hours of darkness. Further the BBC has been developing an automatic station identification system applicable to medium-wave stations which

if adopted would virtually rule out the use of AM stereo on their transmission.

For several years the IBA has kept a watching brief on the AM stereo situation as it is developing in North America and has carried out some limited closed-circuit experiments but clearly would need some evidence of a real demand for such a system before initiating full-scale research. Home Office authorisation would of course be needed for any on-air transmissions.

There is thus an element of the classic chicken-and-egg situation: the industry cannot move far or fast unless there is more evidence of public demand; yet there is unlikely to be such demand until the system has taken off in North America. And there is a further built-in delay-factor in the absence of any real competition (in programming) between the duplicated UK AM and FM services.

Yet, it seems a waste of opportunities if Europe were to stand aside from the investigation and development of the system most satisfactory for Europe with the prospect of later being forced to adopt a purely American system, developed to meet different standards and different broadcasting practices.

PROS AND CONS OF AM STEREO

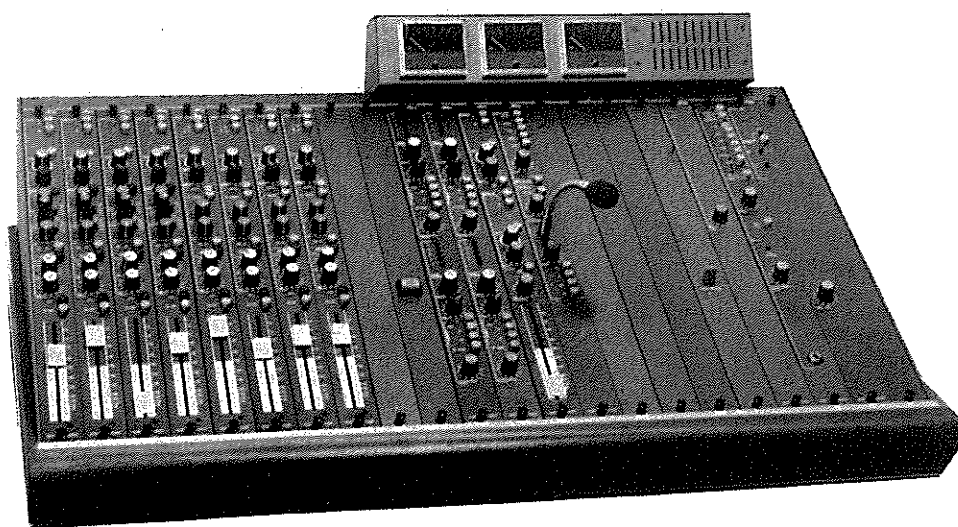
Advantages

1. Would be available to the majority of home listeners who still depend on AM.
2. Would be available to the vast majority of car-radio listeners who depend on AM.
3. Appears capable of moderately effective stereo performance without degrading monophonic reception.
4. Could be implemented on existing modern AM transmitters.
5. Would encourage development of AM tuners of improved performance.

Disadvantages

1. Unlikely in practice to compete seriously with FM stereo in terms of audio frequency range of dynamic range.
2. Other than for local "ground wave" reception would be subject to selective fading, co-channel interference, static and electrical interference.
3. Proposed systems still not fully evaluated in terms of stereo performance (distortion, crosstalk, signal-to-noise ratios etc) or compatibility (mono/stereo coverage areas and effects of receiver mistuning).
4. Additional receiver costs of stereo decoders etc would depend on size of market.
5. If successful would lessen appeal to listeners of VHF/FM stereo transmissions.
6. Poor state of AM reception in Europe with narrower more congested channels and super-power transmissions directed across national frontiers makes AM stereo less attractive than in North America.

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'DISGUSTED, LONDON'

The cardinal rule observed by journalists is, dog doesn't eat dog; but may one be permitted to have a go at the kennel? The kennel, in the case of radio critics, is the newspapers and arts editors who have helped create a situation where, in spite of the majority of critics being accomplished writers and broadcasters, we have a shamefully low level of radio criticism.

If I start by roundly accusing the editors, it's not because I'm a pup fearful of being gnawed in revenge by the pack. It's simply that most newspapers, while subscribing to the notion that 'television makes good copy' (vide the flood of asinine 'personality' profiles and puff previewing), evidently regard radio as worthy of fewer column inches than even gardening and religion. Which two subjects, though of quintessential world importance, are hardly hot news, and are therefore accorded limited space in papers.

So it is with radio. And though it's the familiar refrain of any specialist journalist, radio critics can bemoan their lack of space with particular justification: for radio, broadcasting many more hours than television, and a medium of obvious growth and importance, gets barely more than 500 words coverage a week in most national daily and weekly papers.

One crucial result of this is the almost total neglect of local programmes by national critics. There are, of course, practical problems here. First, they don't get to hear most local programmes unless stations send them tapes. Or unless they're given whistle-stop tours round some of the stations by the BBC or IBA — and after such fleeting contact, even the most astute must find it hard to form sharp, critical judgements.

Otherwise, when they do lend an ear to local radio, they listen to their local stations which, mostly, are the London ones, so reinforcing the south-eastern bias of most supposedly national papers.

Yet are national papers a suitable forum for local radio criticism? How can national critics judge the relevance and effectiveness of programmes intended for a different, specific locality (in theory, at least)?

It's a difficult issue, but it needs a solution because at present the content and style of local radio is largely escaping informed national discussion — a situation always favourable to the status quo.

As for networked programmes, here again there's an imbalance. No 'popular' (ie. tabloid) papers have radio critics. And those from the 'quality' papers, in keeping with their AB readership, tend to review almost exclusively Radios 4 and 3 programmes. So, except for the odd new comedy series or profile of a rock-star, most of Radios 1 and 2 is never subjected to critical scrutiny.

Even from the Radio 3 and 4 output, the range of programmes selected for review is pitifully limited. They tend to be the 'one-offs': the special documentary or feature, the major play or drama series. Some critics go out of their way to avoid this narrowness — and one is known to be a passionate devotee of *The Archers* — but mostly, they have little choice. The prestigious programmes *demand* to be reviewed, and there just isn't the extra space to cover the regular stuff.

This means that staples like *Wildlife*, *Woman's Hour*, *You and Yours*, *Science Now* (Radio 4), and *In Short*, *The Arts Worldwide*, *Music Weekly*, and *Sounds Interesting* (Radio 3) almost never get reviewed, unless they've a special edition. Yet it's the ordinary on radio that, in a sense, particularly needs critical comment; the special can take care of itself.

Moreover, when — except after a major change in format, as during the MacIntyre reign — do you read a review of the *News*? To some, asking for a review of the *News* is like asking for one of the Bible: both are the Word of God. The news happens, the BBC reports it. But critics are not so naive, and since the Glasgow Media Group's report 'Bad News', they must be especially aware of the possible alternative ways of selecting and treating news (and of the news values implied in even the order of news stories). So it's quite a modest demand to ask critics to monitor the *News*.

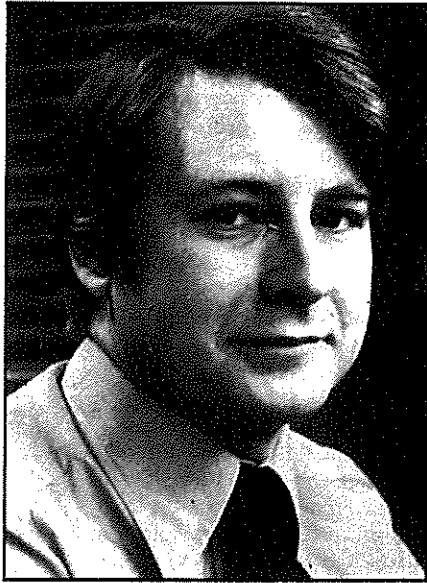
But perhaps the greatest inadequacy of much radio criticism is the tendency to treat programmes as a window, ignoring the frame — to consider content to the exclusion of form. Many reviews read like synopses of programmes, with critical comments limited to subject-matter; and you could often be misled into thinking that a piece of written literature or a theatre performance is being discussed, the broadcast form is manifestly avoided, and the use of radio ignored.

Aren't I asking far too much of the humble little review — and, anyway, who'd read it? This is central, because critics can only be one step ahead of the public's critical consciousness. Yet there are deplorably few avenues through which the public can develop their critical views of the medium — except for the late 'Disgusted, Tunbridge Wells', whose title implied that anyone caring enough to opine about radio must be of the dyspeptic, blimpish variety. There is scarcely any radio and television comment about radio, except for the odd Kaleidoscope item and occasional Critic's Forum discussion. And until the public gets a chance to sharpen its critical perception, critics can only do so much.

There also needs to be more work done by specialist media writers and researchers about radio, which will filter through to critics and public. As Charles Parker, that impressive exponent of the art of radio, wrote in *The Listener* last November, "I am always astounded at the paucity of critical work on radio form", except for that by McLuhan.

Perhaps it depends on what one sees as the function of a radio critic. Jilly Cooper once said that all one needed to be a television critic was a television in the living-room. Sadly, the view still prevails among some people that all that is needed of a radio critic is possession of a tranny. But if we agree that critics have more skills than that, and could actually help raise the standard of programmes, then they need space and encouragement from newspapers.

Anne Karpf



Have we arrived or are we still travelling?

Do current ILR programmes foster enough audience loyalty to create a real long term benefit for the station or the advertiser? Christopher Nutbrown, account director of the Media Business, fears that the programmes are not taking full advantage of their medium.

'There are terrible temptations that it required strength and courage — to yield to' — Oscar Wilde

I begin with this quotation from *An Ideal Husband* because it seems to me an accurate statement as well as a witty one and particularly relevant to the current position of commercial radio in the UK. This year will certainly be the most important for the medium since the inception of the ILR Network in 1973.

The last five years has seen considerable achievements in the successful birth and infancy of a new medium, difficult years, with economic obstacles to be overcome initially, in addition to the ones that confront all new arrivals in our industry — inertia, pessimism, fear and of course plain ordinary incompetence.

So to have come through with a profitable network of 19 stations and a sophisticated functioning administration is a very real achievement in itself. One cannot for example forget the initial lack of interest of even the record industry in the medium and my own battles to convince music clients to use a music based medium.

But this brings me back to my central, simple theme which in the vernacular would be — is this it then folks? Have we arrived? Is this what commercial radio is going to mean when the new stations join the present network and transform it into a truly national medium?

I hope that we have not arrived, as I feel the medium lacks a heart and its unique qualities are not sufficiently appreciated by those who produce, sell and use it today.

Five years of development have brought us to this point; the network flourishes; stations make money: a bureaucracy has been created and a method of selling established. However, I remain uneasy, or perhaps expectant would be a kinder word, waiting — still waiting, for the 'big leap forward' to commence.

What would be the content of this big leap? I think nothing less than the temptation of my Wilde quotation, to yield and accept for the first time the true power and potential that the enlarged medium will be able to offer if and only if a substantial audience can be won and held over time by specific programmes of quality.

To appreciate more fully what the potential of radio truly is we must go back in time. Looking at a twenty-one year old copy of the *Radio Times* recently I was struck by the similarity between the *Light Programme* schedules of 1957 and those of the *ITV Network* today. There it was all neatly placed and looking similar to the present *TV Times* — easy listening for women through *Woman's Hour* and *Mrs Dale* into *Top of the Pops* then the news; a *quia* show; a situation comedy at 8.00 pm; a variety show; the *National News* at 10.00 pm and at 10.45 pm *Armchair Detective*.

The stability of this programme structure over a twenty one year period and surviving a switch from one medium to another was the impressive professional fact. I stress professional because much media investment is against a medium of long-term objective and it is in this area that commercial radio will have to eventually make its mark, with promotional and regional advertising forming the essential ever-present and accessible stable revenue for each local station.

In order to attract and hold medium- and long-term investors however, I believe the stations must first grasp the nettle and examine exactly what would be possible with truly original programming and some network scheduling.

The current schedule of the commercial companies and those of the BBC popular stations of course are simply echoes of *Caroline* and *London* in the mid-sixties.

Naturally, they attract an audience by virtue of the vibrance and importance of the music industry in the home today. The content itself has a following but do the

programmes in which they appear really have a long-term benefit for either advertiser or the station themselves in terms of a growing and loyal following?

Again, one must acknowledge the fact that this format has seen us through the first five years but now with the full territorial scope of the medium about to be realised it must be time to seriously consider what the eventual stature of the radio medium as a national/local force is going to be. Will it finally emerge as a front-line national medium with useful regional flexibility or

'Five years of development have brought us to this point; the network flourishes; stations make money; a bureaucracy has been created and a method of selling established.'

just a network of local stations fending increasingly for themselves and bound together by their national selling agents in London?

Do those who work out of the station at source for example really want the former option to happen, as we who work in the business of media selection in London do? I sometimes doubt it.

In a copy of *Clyde Guide* in front of me appears a photograph of three smiling creative people who work for *Clyde* in *Glasgow*, the caption reads; 'meet the people who bring you the adverts on *Radio Clyde*. The threesome write and record most of 261's ads sometimes getting through a 100 in a day' (my underlining). Well, well, if this is true, God help radio as a medium, if not it is still symptomatic of the unhealthy and petty rivalry clouding the relationships, already complicated enough between the advertiser, the station and the listening public.

The weaknesses in the selling methods that have emerged over the last five years and the pressures and limitations they impose on the use of the medium are a subject on their own and outside my present theme. It is in any case a secondary subject since all selling activity derives from the nature of the product on sale and that is what this article is concerned with.

Why is the status-quo on programming so readily accepted by those involved at any level with the medium I wonder? Investment cost? Profit? or just sleeping dogs perhaps, I don't know, but I am certainly unhappy about the tenor — of the medium at present. There is too much 'hit and run' in the content and this is precisely reflected in the use the medium is put to by the majority of advertisers.

My belief was, when I started buying radio in the early and mid sixties; researching the commercial potential in the early seventies; and is still today in the establishment and development of the unique personal link with the listener through varied, consistent programming.

'In order to attract and hold medium and long-term investors however, I believe the stations must first grasp the nettle and examine exactly what would be possible with truly original programming and some network rescheduling.'

The larger audience however remains untouched and will only be drawn towards the commercial network when original — truly original programme is transmitted — since I am certain that only new as opposed to derivative programming will achieve the major advance in listening; the X factor without which the potential of this most exacting of media developments will simply not be realised.

If it is a fact and I hope I have demonstrated that public taste en-masse does not vary over the years in broad terms but only in detailed content, then why should not the programme content of the larger network benefit from its good-will by making a positive move in this direction now on a shared cost basis. I cannot believe that finance can really be a problem any more than it is for the ITV Network.

Naturally the peaks of a 24 hour commercial radio station will not be the same as those of the BBC Light programme in 1957 and the A.M. programme content is currently the strong point of all commercial schedules. But here-after ratings decline until at 8.0 pm even on the most successful station (Clyde) we are down to a three per cent adult audience rating compared to a gross TV (BBC and ITV) share of 70%.

This split will not of course surprise anyone when the programming is compared — Radio Clyde's Clyde Climbers — Dave Jamieson with the Best of Chart Bounds Sounds says Clyde Guide — up against *George and Mildred* on ITV and *The Good Life* on BBC.

I am not suggesting that commercial radio will ever be in the 40% total share of audience league, but I do believe — optimistically perhaps — that a 10 or even 15

rating for a specific programme series is by no means unrealistic.

Having made a daily study of the British public and its media preference over the last 18 years my belief is really a conviction for these reasons:

- The British public are a tremendously loyal audience and their entertainment traditions and preferences are not substantially different today to those of 120 years ago let alone an earlier example of 21. In drama and comedy in particular this is a simple fact and if a programme is original, consistent and well produced they will come back for more — ad-infinity. The historical pattern of all our major channels of communication illustrates this fact sufficiently.

- In radio specifically the memories of many team with the giant BBC programmes of the post-war years: the Goons, Hancock, Educating Archie, Round the Horn, Journey Into Space, Does The Team Think, etc., not by any means appealing to all ages or tastes or indeed slotted into similar time bands but all immortal and all having two vital common factors — originality and continuity or expressed in another way: faith and rapport with the listener.

How many competitors to radio can match that relationship? Not many and it is against this background that programming for the future should be considered, not what happens in — Winnipeg — Los Angeles.

- The final factor is that the ratings are there if the right key is turned; for the in-home leisure market.

Virtually every UK has a radio and significantly the quality and technical aspect continues to improve with better reception; no competition from the BBC channels with new programming; and against the background of an escalating quest for alternative in-home entertainment; I believe that radio could be set for a major renaissance. The first step however, must be to give the current audience something to listen to.

How does this relate to the advertiser? As with all media evaluation through a series of over-lays through which the final picture eventually and perhaps ponderously emerges.

Good original programming, given time to breathe and win loyal listeners would form an important alternative audience to television.

'The larger audience however remains untouched and will only be drawn towards the commercial network when original — truly original programme is transmitted — since I am certain that only new as opposed to derivative programming will achieve the major advance in listening ...'

The quality of the ITV and BBC Network TV programming is now at a stage where some dangerous gaps are waiting to be exploited — 8.00 pm on Monday nights for example. Well, Mum may stick with Robins Nest but Dad or the kids must represent a

very good target for a new radio thriller series or an alternative comedy style; they are certainly not rushing off to listen to Clyde Climbers at any rate.

So much current programming is simply derivative and therefore self-consuming, flagellating and ultimately destroying the most precious asset of any medium — loyalty.

'Good original programming, given time to breathe and win loyal listeners would form an alternative audience to television ... the quality of the ITV and BBC network TV programming is now at a stage where some dangerous gaps are waiting to be exploited ...'

ILR Network programming has always reminded me of those infuriating word puzzles of the — 'how many words can you make from this simple sentence' type. In the case of ILR the sentence is The Top Sixty and the answer is — I believe — ennu.

I am of course projecting my ideas ahead. But unless we seriously consider the big leap forward now, I believe the medium will simply continue revolving around the turntable — to the cost of the public, stations advertisers and would-be investors in the medium.

I want to see creative out-put from the medium to fire the imagination of the public and the advertisers. I have just played a tape of current new commercials, it sounded like a cross between some lost BBC comedy show of the late fifties and a down-town New York S/H car lot tape.

Only three of the sixteen commercials seemed to me to have established a *positive* personal link with that single very human listener the essence of the medium's strength. In fact, several even on a single hearing establish a negative presence — irritating and boring the listener and in the context of a high frequency campaign it's a little surprising that these companies are still trading!

My comments may fall harshly on the ears of colleagues on the production and selling side of the medium. I do not wish to put down their achievements but rather to point out the very real dangers of leaving the medium to carry on without regard to the long-term stature of the medium.

The low growth of average listening hours for 1978 over 1977 is one pointer that a plateau of listening habit may already have been reached.

To ossify after only five years of life would be a sad fate and, I think a ridiculous one if you believe as I do that the untapped reserve of programme talent in the UK is second to none and that we, in the industry of communication need the medium to realise its *real* audience potential — and not to simply drift along on the back of a song and a phone call.

I started with a quotation from Wilde and conclude with more of his cautionary words:

'The only horrible thing in this world is ennui. That is the one sin for which there is no forgiveness.'

It's not human but it sells

Well almost. It is in fact Radio City's computer — the first in the UK to offer a totally computerised management information traffic availability and accounting system. Geoff Moffat, City's sales director has had his new member of staff for six months now. He talks to Radio Month about the effect the computer has on his traffic and sales department.

For someone whose idea of a computer is a giant filing cabinet with tape reels spinning, lights flashing and dials twitching, Radio City's sales computer comes as something of a surprise.

Admittedly what City has got is not the actual *brain* of the system but merely the terminals to which questions are posed and which then disgorge the appropriate answers. Even so the machinery looks a lot more simple than one might expect.

The two TC 500 terminals sit at one end of City's large, open plan sales office. They look not unlike a couple of Telex machines, the size of an average office desk-top on legs with typewriter keys, a number of code buttons and a print-out roll.

Linked by Post Office lines to the central processors and memory in London, the terminals can transmit and receive information almost instantaneously. The London end of the system handles 10 million bytes of memory (items of information) for Radio City and the two terminals in Liverpool can withdraw or feed in pieces of information simultaneously.

City's computer is, in short, the most sophisticated in use in UK radio at present.

Very impressive so far. But what does it do and why does Radio City need it? Geoff Moffat, Radio City's sales director, sums up its value thus: "It enables us through the speed with which it provides information, and the quality of that information, to sell more better. It offers flexibility which is simply not available in a manual system."

The amount of physical time and paperwork involved in booking and placing ads on a radio station is enormous. Even more time consuming is the process of replacing them at a later date to optimise use of available space. Analysis of forward bookings on a manual system is also awkward as are many other management decisions that are based on the information contained in innumerable files.

City's computer is able to give literally all the information necessary for placing or replacing an ad at the touch of a button. Given a starting day and time it can automatically schedule the rotation of the individual ads in any package, jumping backwards and forwards where necessary around previously booked slots. It can tell in advance how much time is left available in any given week.

It can be the salesman's scourge by

divulging how much time he has sold during a week, how much he has sold for the coming months, what the average price was for each 30-second spot he sold and how that figure compares with the previous year. A series of clash codes alert the sales department when an ad is booked into a time slot already containing another ad for a similar product. And so its many functions continue until the point occurs where the ad has been broadcast, all information about it is wiped and it becomes automatically translated into a sum of money on an invoice, which includes a transmission certificate.

"It has taken a lot of drudgery out of the work that used to be done — much of it purely scribing. It has freed people's time to look more deeply into the way in which we sell," says Moffat.

City had been aware of the shortcomings of the manual system for some time before the TC 500s arrived. Discussions about the possibility of installing a computer began in July 1977. Moffat was already aware of the system they now have, but wanted to examine the UK possibilities before going overseas.

However, after checking out a number of British hardware suppliers and software and systems companies he and Walter Nelson, City's financial controller, flew to Memphis in November 77 to look at the Data Communications Corporation, part-owners of the UK-based Broadcast Data Services. Moffat assessed the BDS system as "the only available complete system". By August 1978 the TC 500s were installed at City.

BDS was essentially the brainchild of UK radio veteran and founder of Broadcast Marketing Services, Terry Bate. Realising there would be an opening in the UK for computerised sales administration systems aimed specifically at the broadcast industry, Bate brought in the software and systems expertise of DCC (which has more than 200 US radio and TV stations on line) and set up a London bureau using hardware supplied by Gordon and Gotch.

London Weekend Television was BDS's first client, hooking up with BDS four years ago into a totally computerised management information, traffic-availability and accounting system. At that time Bate sounded out the radio market but reckoned it was not ready for computers. However,

once the stations started to make money, Bate made further approaches and was accepted by City.

The system used by City and LWT, explains Bate, is called real time on-line. This simply refers to the fact that the users only have terminals which are linked into the central memory and processing equipment. It is distinguished from the standalone system in which the user has the entire works, so to speak in his own back yard.

The principal disadvantage of the standalone system is that the user can only usually physically accommodate enough equipment to provide a limited service whereas the real time on line user only needs to have the terminals.

Standalone systems, such as that used by Radio Clyde (Systime 1000) are generally limited to establishing their data base by accounting. This, Bate points out, is purely historical in its application, offering no forward-looking information. Capital also employs standalone systems (Burroughs), for accounting and royalties. In the next few months it will also introduce a standalone traffic system, capable of providing forward-looking management information. But it will not be integrated with the accounting system.

The BDS system is based on traffic and availability. The forward-looking information it can provide is really the most valuable point of the system enabling management to make snap decisions on the optimum placement of ads up to six weeks in advance.

The system would in fact be capable of handling bookings much further ahead than six weeks but at the moment, says Moffat, six weeks is enough since the station does not carry an enormous number of advance bookings.

The labour saving properties of the system are, of course, tremendous. A detailed availability report for the coming six weeks is there almost instantaneously. Previously it would have occupied ten to 15 man hours. The production of the monthly statements and invoices can now be done overnight where previously it took a week to 10 days. The daily log is turned out in 20 minutes. On the manual system it took two hours.

The appearance of the computer at City was not without its psychological effects on staff. The initial feeling was one of resistance, recalls Moffat. People were

afraid of losing their jobs or simply of some kind of overwhelming upheaval.

"Overall," he says, "they were suspicious and apprehensive about the effects on their job functions and job security. We went to great trouble to reassure them that it would actually make their jobs better. I'm glad to say that now everyone is quite at ease with the computer although it took three months for the people operating it to feel really happy about it."

The basic operation of the terminals is extremely simple, says Moffat. The booking procedure could be learnt in a day, although other aspects, such as the juggling around of spots might take up to a month.

On a technical level Moffat points to the lack of necessity for trained programmers and technical staff as the main advantage of the on-line system. He is sure that the rapid growth of computer technology will soon throw up a standalone system capable of performing all the functions of the on-line system. But the standalone will still always need its own little army of programmers and engineers.

Despite the initial, unfounded fears of the traffic staff, no staff changes have resulted from the introduction of the computer. What will happen, says Moffat, is that job specifications will change as everybody settles in with the new member of staff. The traffic manager will eventually assume more responsibility for inventory control and his assistant will then start running the basic functions of the system

in more detail. The third member of the traffic department will take over some copy-chasing responsibilities and will also look after copy in the system.

Apart from the traffic department there are four other people who can operate the system: Moffat himself, the chief accountant and two secretaries who, say Moffat, could handle it in an emergency.

As soon as the Post Office can instal more lines, BMS, City's national sales representatives, will hook into the system in London. This has advantages — City's traffic staff will no longer have to process and enter BMS's orders. It also has one potential disadvantage — if BMS have access to the availability information in the system they can then pick the prime spots ahead for their national orders at the expense of City's local orders.

When BMS come on line, they will therefore be allowed access to the system only on a need-to-know basis. To start with they will be limited to ordering and booking procedures. Ultimately Moffat realises that they will have to have greater access for the system to be used to its best advantage, but when that time comes they will have to keep in line with his policies.

"It's important that they should have access, but it's also important that they should realise why I didn't want them to have it initially."

Looking further ahead, Moffat is thinking of other ways to use the almost limitless capacities of the system. One such way would be to feed in audience research data. This would allow City to indicate to a

potential buyer what he would receive in terms of reach frequency, gross numbers of listeners and cost per 1,000.

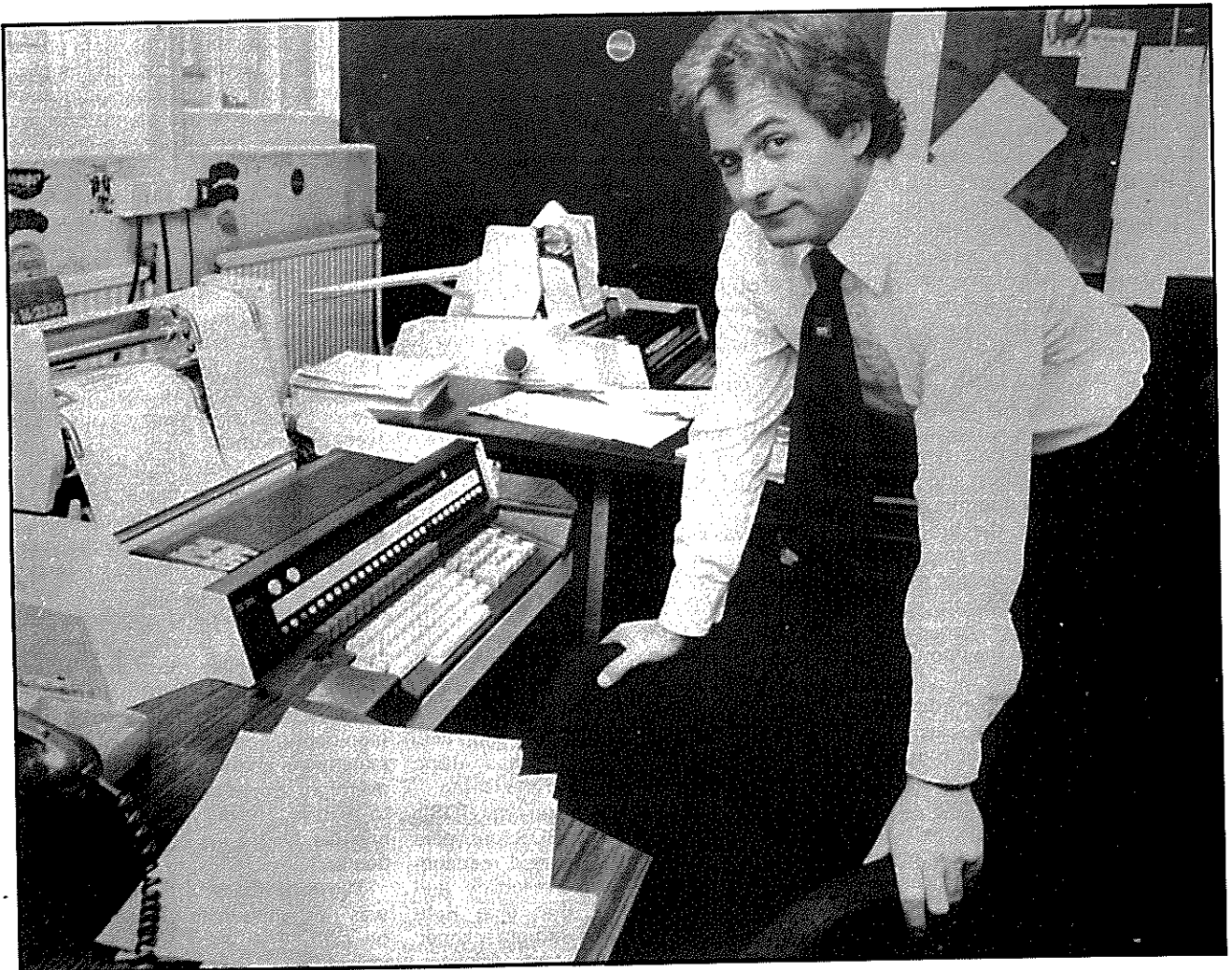
At the moment however, the only noticeable change the computer has brought to the buyer is that he now receives a transmission certificate as part of his invoice. "Otherwise," says Moffat, "it has made no difference to the buyer at all and I'm glad of that, I wouldn't want them to feel any great change had taken place."

Visual display units and a higher speed print out are refinements which Moffat may indulge in shortly, but for the time being he is happy with the system as it stands.

The five-figure annual rent for the system is considered both by Moffat and his managing director, Terry Smith, to be well worthwhile. Although it is an annual outlay which will not directly pay for itself, the increased efficiency of the traffic department and the resulting management information which will be readily available will undoubtedly help City to increase its sales revenue.

Accounts can now be sent out and, hopefully, paid quicker than before. And the sales chief's moment critique — juggling around with heavily booked advance slots — can now be handled quickly and efficiently.

Files and mounds of paperwork have now been dispensed with and Geoff Moffat looks forward to the 1980s in the knowledge that he could never be accused of slipping behind the times.



THE WORDS MATTER MOST

A few days ago, I happened to see a reel of some of the first TV ads screened by ITV back in the fifties — and, by comparison with today's best, yesterday's best were comprehensively awful. If the memory serves, furthermore, that's the way they stayed for several years.

So, with that in mind, I shall try to remember that local commercial radio in the UK is only just five years old, and when one listens to the radio commercials, it shows.

For this first issue of Radio Month, I have taken a random sample of some of the messages which Capital Radio and LBC have been broadcasting — and although I appreciate that this may not be the most scientific way of going about things, I believe that it has given me a reasonably good starting point. In later issues, and with the help of the local stations in the provinces, I will spread the critical net wider and wider.

I wonder if the agency copywriters ever listen to the way people actually speak to one another. Not an idle question — a great many commercials use the "overheard conversation" approach, and the sort of "conversations" the poor actors are required to hold, can, and have produced flushes of high embarrassment in me. About the worst of a recent crop is one for Peugeot cars, linked to a local dealer whose name the awfulness of the message caused me to forget instantly. It was one of those husband-and-wife-things, with a lot of stuff about . . . "yes, and what about the wonderful Peugeot double-action knee-lift de-compensated overhead wham-shaft". It was awful stuff, and, worse, the voices used were of an unprofessional deariness that did no justice at all to the product.

Next, a pet complaint of mine, and examples abound. Why is it felt necessary to use either American or Canadian voices (or, what is even more peculiar, sort-of North American imitation accents) for perfectly straightforward British products or goods? Is it supposed to add some kind of urgency to the words? Or what? Inter-seal 2000m double-glazing does it (exceptionally badly). RAC Travel services are doing it, using an imitation American Fenella Fielding type, if you can imagine anything so odd.

There seems to me a simple test for this business. If the product is American, or Canadian, then there is at least some justification for going the whole hog and using a North American selling voice. MacDonalds Hamburgers, for example. Or Air Canada. Otherwise, what's wrong with a good English voice? Plenty of them

around, provided that the agency producers can tear themselves away from Richard Briers for a month of two. Personally, I am devoted to Richard Briers, but not every five minutes.

I may as well confess it. With very few exceptions indeed, I loathe jingles, even when they are well produced. The bad ones drive me into near frenzy, and certainly cause me to turn off the radio set.

However, I recognise that they are probably here to stay, and so I will bite on the bullet, and do what I can to assess them for what they are, as objectively as possible, within the context of the commercial message they are trying to put across. Which gives me, right off the bat, a chance to be honest. There is a commercial currently on the air in London for a retail outlet, selling, I think, paint, and the name of the outfit is Outwergh. Or Argwurr. Or Artwool. The commercial does a lovely little job of mixing music with words, most pretty does it sound. But if I were bursting to purchase the product they mention, I could not identify the retail outlet at all. The lesson — make certain that the name of the game you are selling can be heard, and I'm afraid that a liberal coating of music obscures even the simplest name. I was, incidentally, listening to this particular commercial, on a VHF set, in sparkling stereo. Still didn't catch the name.

Tim Brooke-Taylor must be giggling all the way to the bank. For some reason, the good people at Chrysler, together with others at Warwick Wright (a well-known London Chrysler dealer) and assorted ad-people came up with the idea of using him to introduce the latest commercial for the product and the outlet. So, that's what he did. He introduced it. He said, "This is Tim Brooke-Taylor, and I want to tell you about the new . . . etc etc etc". He said nothing funny. He made not a single funny noise. In fact he was dead boring for 60 seconds, and for the life of me I can't see why anyone bothered. In fact, without wishing any ill upon T. B-T, there must have been several thousand people among the listeners who said: "Tim Who-Watter? If one is going to do that kind of personal testimony commercial, one has to have the advantage of instant recognition (name, or voice, or whatever) and then carry it through with, at very least, a further identification somewhere in the body of the commercial. In the Chrysler-Warwick Wright case, the poor man said "This is . . ." and was never heard of again, disappearing under a welter of product attributes and retail addresses.

Shame, really. As a Goodie, he's good. As an ad, He's bad.

And then the light shone through. A very big bouquet for the people who wrote and produced a commercial for Atrixo Hand-Cream. For a start, it positively revelled in the 60 seconds allotted to it (more on this in a moment or two) and better still, it used radio's greatest asset perfectly, in letting the imagination do the work. The gist of the message was the creation of a contrast between the nastiness of life which can roughen the hands of otherwise Mrs Perfect . . . and the miraculous softening job which Atrixo can then do on them. Never mind the blurb, feel the quality. A really good montage of sound to conjure up a busy day's work, with intelligently placed, well-read words to link them, and a short, simple, sell, at the end, to wrap up a model commercial.

Finally, and ever anxious to help, I thought I would give you the benefit of the Grierson rule book on radio commercials (abridged version) designed to act as a litmus test for quality. And, for that matter, cost-effectiveness too. Good commercials also move product, amazingly enough.

1. Jingle only when really necessary, and spend money if you decide to use one. Cheap jingles are death.
2. Radio is *the* body-copy medium. The words matter more than anything else, because radio talks to people.
3. Don't shout. Talk. You would not shout when selling your product at the door, so don't do it inside the room, from the radio set.
4. Avoid bad voices . . . they embarrass everyone. Which does not mean you have to sound like constipated Radio 3.
5. Please don't cram your message into thirty seconds when the product and the idea are crying out for sixty. On top of which, a sixty-second commercial usually winds up with a solus position.
6. Don't ask anyone to read a press-ad and then call it a radio commercial. So-called adaptation is a radio no-no, and just not necessary.
7. Be prepared to spend a little money on making your radio commercials sound professional and good. Cheapskate production is sad, irresponsible and insulting.

Last word. Would all radio stations institute, forthwith, the practice of presentation pauses between commercials. Not dead-air, just a beat, so that we all have time to digest Mr Pizza-man before being forced to swallow the Dinnafords.

JOHN GRIERSON

Radio Month 27

RADIO MONTH

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RADIO MONTH

Crisis programming

At 21.45 on Saturday, December 30 Radio Wales news editor Gareth Bowen floated the idea of a Snow Special. A hasty consultation followed between news and current affairs editor Arwel Ellis-Owen and head of programmes, Geraint Stanley Jones. Freelance Emur Daniels was dug out of the BBC club and whisked to the studio where an audio assistant and continuity man Richard Thomas were already on duty and at 22.00 Radio Wales opted out of its scheduled Radio 2 link and the Snow Special was on air.

Earlier that afternoon a chance remark from a coastguard suggested a weather story as a gale warning had just been sounded. The meteorological officer at Wales Airport confirmed that a force eight south-easterly was on the way and added that this, combined with the snow expected that evening, could mean trouble for many parts of Wales. Local authorities, he said, had already been warned to expect serious drifting.

At that time Ellis-Owen was at home preparing for an evening out. The bulletin reminded him that ten months earlier a Saturday night blizzard had brought chaos to Wales which had gone unreported until the following day because it had been impossible to assemble radio or TV news teams on the spur of the moment.

Requesting the news team to stay on duty he returned to the studios and began monitoring the weather reports to issue bulletins at intervals throughout the evening's viewing and listening.

Seconds before the special went on air the North Wales Police announced that 10 adult Rover Scouts were missing in Snowdonia and a massive search had been launched for them — a dramatic start to the programme.

Within a few minutes information started to pour into the newsrooms at Llandaff from all parts of the principality. The Five Mile Lane at Barry was closed; driving conditions on all gradients was dangerous; the Rhigos Mountain Road was impassable; it was not possible to reach Penrhys; Cardiff buses were unable to travel to certain outlying estates . . .

Then came a surprise appeal from South Wales police to all pubs, clubs, nightclubs, cinemas and other places of entertainment to close early and send their patrons home.

A correspondent from the market town of Pontypridd telephoned to report that this is just what happened there. People poured out of the various centres in their hundreds and within 20 minutes the town centre was deserted.

Meanwhile the search for the scouts was continuing and there was great anxiety for many parents who had young people staying in that area.

Back in South Wales the newsroom received a report that a service bus was missing on the Llanelli to Cardiff route; the registration number was broadcast and almost immediately a motorist telephoned to say that the vehicle was stranded near Stormy Down, Cowbridge. This information was broadcast and seconds later a listener had telephoned to say that he lived near the spot and was on his way to the bus with hot drinks and blankets.

BBC staff and correspondents from many parts of Wales caught the spirit of the programme and telephoned reports from every county. The Automobile Association kept information flowing into the newsroom as did the police, the fire brigade, the coastguards and ambulancemen.

Relatives of five old age pensioners at Bargoed were assured via the radio that the old ladies who had been left stranded after a bingo session were being safely cared for by the police.

News of a new drama came from North Wales as high tides pounded the sea wall causing flooding at Colwyn Bay. There were preliminary reports of four people missing on the snowbound Denbigh Moors, and the search for the missing scouts was intensified.

Originally the Snow Special was planned to run for an hour, but at 22.45 the head of programmes telephoned to ask that the programme of music and bulletins be continued until midnight.

A County councillor telephoned from the Vale of Glamorgan Village of Llantwit Major to say that a party of coach travellers heading west had been stranded and that the town hall had been opened as an emergency centre for them and anyone else who was stuck in the area.

Another group of people had found shelter at the Cardiff Central Police Station while many villages which had been alerted by the radio programme mounted their own emergency plans to deal with stranded travellers.

And as midnight approached the drama of the lost-scouts ended. They were found safe and well although two were suffering from exposure. As they were led to safety a BBC camera crew filmed the rescue.

The Snow Special team slept the night at BBC headquarters, Llandaff, and a programme was launched at 07.30 on Sunday to give listeners the up-to-date situation. Further Snow Specials were slotted in through the day and by Monday morning everything at the studios was back to normal.

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

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people
don't know
their brass
from their
oboe.



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news

Mason joins Standard

COLIN Mason, programme director of Swansea Sound, is to leave the station as soon as a replacement is found and will join Standard Broadcasting (UK) as assistant managing director.

"I'm thrilled at the appointment," he said, "because I have been involved in local radio for many years and will remain so, though from a national aspect." Mason's appointment means a move to London as well as financial gain.

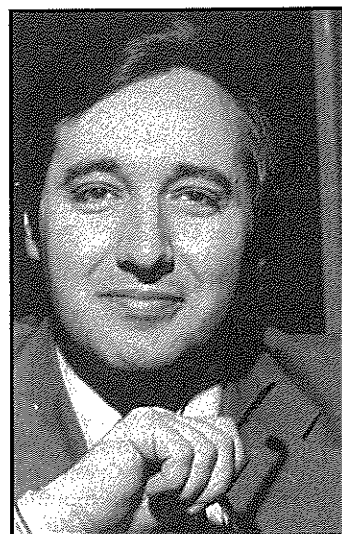
During his five years as programme director the station has achieved consistently high audience levels and managing director Charles Braham said he was particularly sorry to see

Mason go after helping to bring the station such success. "On the other hand," he added, "we're lucky to have had him as part of the team for so many years.

"But it is inevitable in radio that people should move on," said Braham, "and I must stress that his departure is a very amicable one.

"Now all I have to do is find someone as good," he concluded. The position is being advertised this week.

The Canadian-based Standard Broadcasting, which has interests in a number of ILR stations, has to date largely relied on managing director Bob Kennedy to oversee its UK



commitments; he is on the board of directors of Swansea Sound, Metro and Trent.

With the expansion of ILR on the horizon, Mason's appointment appears well timed.

"We needed more help here," Kennedy said, "and were looking for someone with a relevant experience to provide some assistance. His BBC and ILR experience will prove very valuable to us in our involvement in ILR's development."

The fight for an improvement of BBC Radio Birmingham's unsatisfactory medium wave signal is to be continued by the new chairman of the station's Local Radio Council, Alan Cattell.

The Council has been concerned for several years about the poor reception in a number of areas, particularly in the south and southeast of Birmingham.

The matter was raised in the House of Commons and last November Dr Shirley Summerskill, Under Secretary of State for the Home Department, agreed to meet a deputation for the Local Radio Council.

At its last meeting the Council decided to seek an early meeting with the Minister so that, once again, the question could be discussed.

Cattell, inspector of schools for Dudley, took over the chairmanship in January. "The council has been pestering the Home Office for three years now," he said. "Reception in these areas has always been bad — three miles south of Pebble Mill the signal degenerates badly. We are prepared to accept any solution."

FOR the first time Radio City is liable for IBA secondary rental on its profit for the financial year ended 30 September 1978 to the tune of £66,400.

It is the fifth ILR company to earn enough profit to become liable. Clyde, Capital, BRMB and Piccadilly have all paid secondary rental for the year ended September 1977 — Clyde being the only station liable for the year ended 1976.

City has increased its pre-tax and pre-secondary rental profits by 91 per cent over 1977 with £403,800 as opposed to £211,142. In its first financial year City lost £135,550 and turned it into £33,170 profit for the year ended 1976.

After secondary rental and corporation tax (£95,300) a net profit remains of £242,100.

In his annual speech, chairman Ken Medlock welcomed ILR's expansion and praised both City staff and the IBA. "We expect to play a full part in the extension of the system," he said, "and the vital training of the additional staffs who will be required.

"We have now embarked on a substantial programme of refurbishing and re-equipping our Stanley Street premises to enable us to produce a wider and deeper range of news, sport and general programming as part of our policy of developing still further what can only be regarded as a very successful local radio station."

How we live

THE BBC'S audience research department has recently published a 700-page, £30 volume of research into how the British public spend their time throughout the day.

People's Activities And Use Of Time is based on statistics from a random sample of 3,500 and illustrates the changes in people's activities since 1939. Although it gives much information on radio listening and TV viewing habits, it

also covers a wide variety of other activities.

People now get up later — only 30 per cent of adults are up between 7.00 and 7.30 now, as opposed to 40 per cent in 1952. Men have more leisure time than women and their average time spent on domestic chores is just over one hour a day while 20 per cent of males between 20 and 30 visit a pub at least once during the average day.



The award winning station

-
- 1976 Campaign Top Award for Best Radio Station Produced Commercial
-
- 1977 Queen's Jubilee Medal for Broadcasting
-
- 1978 Radio & Record News Top Award for Best Phone-In Presenter
-
- 1978 Radio & Record News Top Award for Top Music Programme
-
- 1978 Radio & Record News Top Award for Promotion Person of the Year
-
- 1978 The Imperial Tobacco/Society of Authors Award for Radio.
The best documentary programme among national BBC and ILR
Radio Stations
-
- 1978 The Radio Industry Award for Top Station Community Service
-

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CAPITAL RADIO 194

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