

A Concise History of
British Radio
1922 ~ 2002



Seán Street

Preface by Piers Plowright

A Concise History of British Radio

**HAVE FOUND A LOVELY "SET"
AT EXMOUTH**



A Concise History of
British Radio
1922 ~ 2002

Seán Street

Preface by Piers Plowright



KELLY PUBLICATIONS
6 Redlands, Tiverton,
Devon, EX16 4DH
2005

Also by Seán Street

Prose

A Hampshire Miscellany
Petersfield
Tales of Dorset
The Wreck of the Deutschland
The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (with Raymond Carpenter)
A Remembered Land
The Dymock Poets
Aural History - Essays on Recorded Sound (Contributor)

Radio Drama

The Drift of Time
Procession to the Private Sector (After David Gascoyne)

Musical Works (with Douglas Coombes)

The Winter Bird
The Benjamin Dream
Papa Panov's Christmas
The Treasure Trail
The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Starbirth (with Ward Gardner)

Apostle (with Donald Dumbell)

Plays

A Shepherd's Life
Wessex Days
Honest John
Beyond Paradise
Mathias
Day Trip to the Trianon
So Fair a House

Poetry

Earth and Sky
Figure in a Landscape
Carvings
A Walk in Winter
This True Making
Radio and Other Poems

First published by

KELLY PUBLICATIONS

6 Redlands, Tiverton, Devon EX16 4DH UK

2002

Second printing (with corrections) 2005

Copyright © Seán Street 2005

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrievable system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

ISBN 1 903053 14 5

To Joanne, Jemma and Zoë

Acknowledgments

Thanks to my colleague Hugh Chignell in the Bournemouth Media School for his helpful comments and advice on the text. Thanks also to Piers Plowright for his support and to Steve Buckley of the Community Media Association for clarifying certain dates. The late Frank Gillard and Desmond Hawkins provided unique insights through many conversations over the years. I am grateful to Tony Stoller, Chief Executive of the Radio Authority; Brian West, former director of the AIRC; John Gorst and John Whitney for their knowledge of the development of British commercial radio; the Science and Society Picture Library, the Science Museum, London who have been very helpful; Sam Bailey for photographs of the Sony Radio Academy Awards.

The Marconi Company generously permitted me access to their photographic archive and permission to include some fascinating images. My thanks also are due to the following for help with illustrations: John Bradford of the Radio Academy, Paul Brown of the Commercial Radio Companies Association, Kirsty Gunn of Northsound, Janet Lee of the Radio Authority, Richard Muir of Radio Clyde, John Perkins of Independent Radio News, Jenny Pibworth of Capital Radio, Camille Prague of Radio Forth, John Whitney, Jeff Towns of Dylan's Bookstore, John Idris Jones, and Jonathan Hill of the Sunrise Press.

Contents

Chapter	page
Preface	8
Introduction	9
I The Prehistory of Wireless, 1838-1922	11
<i>Significant Dates</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Prominent People</i>	<i>25</i>
II The British Broadcasting Company, 1922-1927	27
<i>Significant Dates</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Prominent People</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Key Programmes</i>	<i>38</i>
III Corporation and Competition, 1927-1935	39
<i>Significant Dates</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Prominent People</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Key Programmes</i>	<i>56</i>
IV Towards Darkness, 1936-1939	57
<i>Significant Dates</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Prominent People</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>Key Programmes</i>	<i>68</i>
V “Broadcasting Carries On”, 1939-1945	71
<i>Significant Dates</i>	<i>83</i>
<i>Prominent People</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>Key Programmes</i>	<i>85</i>
VI Change and Eternal Values, 1945-1959	87
<i>Significant Dates</i>	<i>99</i>
<i>Prominent People</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>Key Programmes</i>	<i>101</i>
VII Radio Revolution, 1960-1972	105
<i>Significant Dates</i>	<i>113</i>
<i>Prominent People</i>	<i>114</i>
<i>Key Programmes</i>	<i>115</i>
VIII Independent Radio, 1973-1989	117
<i>Significant Dates</i>	<i>127</i>
<i>Prominent People</i>	<i>127</i>
<i>Key Programmes</i>	<i>128</i>
IX Digital Dreams, 1990-2002	130
<i>Significant Dates</i>	<i>139</i>
<i>Prominent People</i>	<i>139</i>
<i>Key Programmes</i>	<i>142</i>
References	143
Further Reading	144
Index	146

Preface

This is a much needed book: a coherent and dramatic sweep from the first scientifically-based attempts to send sound messages over distance to the rich and sometimes rude complexity of 21st century digital broadcasting. Seán Street who is a scholar, a poet and a radio practitioner is ideally placed to lead us on this exhilarating journey and everything you need to know quickly about 80 years of British Radio is here. The style is crisp, clear and often witty. Read *A Concise History of British Radio* and keep it on a shelf marked 'WANTED ON VOYAGE'.

Piers Plowright, June 2002

Introduction

This little book is an attempt to distil the story of British sound broadcasting into a few pages; in so doing it cannot do justice to the many twists, turns and personalities which have together formed this extraordinary, complex journey. My hope is that it will provide at least a starting point, a glimpse at a picture observing which, at any point, the reader can pause, magnify and expand as need and desire require. For this reason, each chapter ends with a list of dates, personalities and programmes, by no means intended to be comprehensive – such a list would have turned this into a Who’s Who of Radio – but rather to give a flavour of the changing radio times of the past century.

Radio remains a magic medium, constantly re-inventing itself and proving itself to be increasingly a subject worthy of study at all sorts of levels. At the end of the book are listed some texts for further study which in themselves bear witness to this fact, and the keen student of radio will find many more to enrich the texture of the story further. The final pages of the book take that story to an intriguing landmark on the road - reached in the summer of 2002 - with Britain poised on the brink of a radical new digital and deregulated radio future. We stand dazzled by new technology and its possibilities. But technology was dazzling too in 1922. For the media historian, one of the most frustrating – and wonderful - aspects of his subject is that it never stops creating itself, and that the next chapters of this particular story are writing themselves and speaking themselves and singing themselves even as you read these words. Go and switch on your radio and you will witness it happening before your ears.

Seán Street



Marconi pictured shortly after his arrival in England
(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

I

The Prehistory of Wireless

1838-1922

On 15 June 1920, an historic event in the development of radio in Britain occurred at the Marconi Company's works in New Street, Chelmsford. On that date, the famous Australian singer Dame Nellie Melba gave a thirty-minute recital over the wireless airwaves, sponsored by the *Daily Mail*. Melba herself had been extremely doubtful about the whole enterprise, pouring scorn on the 'magic playboxes' which had been the preoccupation of the wireless amateurs of the time. She was in the end won over, largely due to the persuasive powers of Lord Northcliffe, and a makeshift studio was prepared. On the day of the broadcast, Melba was being shown around the works by Arthur Burrows, the Marconi Company's Head of Publicity, later to become a key figure in the BBC and European broadcasting. Burrows took the great lady outside to show her the transmitting antenna masts rising high above the building, explaining that from the top of the masts her voice would be carried far and wide; at this point Melba is reputed to have said:

"Young man, if you think I am going to climb up there, you are greatly mistaken."

Fortunately, the recital went ahead, and the world listened. Dame Nellie was heard 'live' in Madrid, The Hague, Paris, and in Sweden, Norway and Berlin. The most



**Dame Nellie Melba,
during the 'Melba' broadcast
from Chelmsford, June 1920**

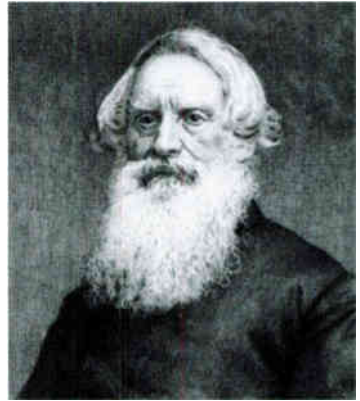
(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

distant reception report came from the *SS Baltic*, at the time some 1,506 miles away. The next day the *Daily Mail* assessed the experiment in the following terms:

Art and science joined hands, and the world listening in must have counted every minute of it precious.¹

It was a key moment in the history of broadcasting. That said, there were many steps on the road to the birth of scheduled wireless in Britain, culminating in the formal creation of the British Broadcasting Company on 18 October 1922. In this chapter, we shall examine briefly some of the landmarks on that journey.

In 1838 C.A. Steinheil, a German Professor of Physics was experimenting with railway tracks as conductors of telegraph messages. These tests were largely unsuccessful; however Steinheil's research led him to believe that there might one day be a means by which messages could be telegraphed in a totally wire-less form. In 1842, Samuel Morse, experimenting in Washington, D.C., found that wires laid alongside a canal utilised the adjacent water as a conducting medium. Twenty-two years later, in December 1864, a Scottish physicist, James Clerk-Maxwell delivered a paper to the Royal Society entitled *The Dynamic Theory of the Electromagnetic Field*, which explored the existence of electromagnetic waves and their ability to travel at differing rates through air and water.



Samuel Morse

(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

There were many more practical developments and theoretical discussions through the mid and late nineteenth century, some significant, others not. Wired – as opposed to wire-less – communication was demonstrated most dramatically on 2 April 1877 in a telephone conversation from New York to Boston between Alexander Graham Bell and Thomas A. Watson.

The concept of the telephone cable as a medium for sending artistic or editorial material was explored by a French inventor, Clement Ader who had the idea of the 'Théâtrophone' or 'Electrophone', a device which gave subscribers telephone access to live events and performances such as concerts and church services. After successful demonstrations in Paris in 1881, the project had a

considerable period of use; as late as the mid 1930s an Electrophone system was found to be installed in the United Reformed Church, Bournemouth, when the last subscriber to the network died.

At about the same time as Ader's initial patent, a British-born professor of music accidentally discovered that a contact of steel and carbon connected to a telephone receiver would create a sound – an electrical 'click' – which could be heard in the receiver when a circuit was broken in the contact, despite there being no physical connection between the two pieces of equipment at the time. David Edward Hughes went on to create a microphone that was to make the commercial development of the telephone a realistic possibility. Hughes also constructed what was in essence the world's first transmitter at his home in Langham Street, just a few yards from the site of the present Broadcasting House although he failed to persuade the scientific establishment that he could demonstrate practical



Heinrich Hertz

(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

evidence for the theories of James Clerk-Maxwell. This was left to Heinrich Hertz who between 1887 and 1889 was able to clearly show that electrical waves could transmit energy across space without the aid of a physical connection, leading the British scientist Sir Oliver Lodge to state:

He effected an achievement that will hand down his name to posterity as the founder of an epoch in experimental Physics.

So it has proved; today his name is concealed in the letters of transmission measurement, KiloHertz and MegaHertz. The next ten years were to bring the disparate efforts of a number of international pioneers to a climax; Edouard Branly's experiments in Paris led to the creation of a device known as a 'coherer', consisting of a tube containing metal filings which had the property of allowing a current to pass through them – but only when they were subjected to a high-frequency electrical wave. The device inspired Lodge, Professor of Physics and Mathematics at Liverpool University, to further practical tests notably in 1894 when he demonstrated the transmission of electromagnetic waves between two rooms. The following year, in Russia, Alexander Popov [or Popoff] created a system based on Branly's device, which

by 1898 he had developed sufficiently to transmit a signal across a distance of one kilometre. There are those to this day who claim that Popov was the true father of radio.

Through these remarkable years, a young man of twenty had been researching wire-less signalling in Bologna. Guglielmo Marconi took the same principles but went beyond Lodge and Popov's experiments. He came to England in February 1896 at the age of 21. In the same year, one Captain Henry Jackson RN was experimenting with the transmission of Morse messages between ships at the Naval Torpedo School in Devonport, moving towards the concept of wireless telegraphic communication between ships. When Jackson's dream was realised, in 1899, it was with equipment created by Marconi.

Arguments will always be voiced as to the true inventor of wireless telegraphy. The fact is that it was Marconi who applied for the world's first patent, on 2 June 1896, five months after his arrival in Britain. The documentation relating to 'Patent number 12039' began:

Whereas Guglielmo Marconi of 71 Hereford Street, Bayswater in the County of Middlesex hath represented unto us that he is in possession of an invention for improvements in transmitting electrical impulses and signals...

Exhaustive tests set about proving – or disproving Marconi's claims, and within months he demonstrated wireless telegraphy to the British Army on Salisbury Plain, and then went on to show the ultimate benefit of the invention – the ability to send signals over water. On 20 July 1897 The Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company Limited was created, its aim being to develop and market equipment associated with Marconi's patent commercially. In the meantime many locations in Britain became associated with wireless experimentation by the Company, among them Bournemouth, Poole and the Isle of Wight. On 11 May 1897 came the first message across water – from Lavernock to Flatholm in the Bristol Channel. In March 1899, the first cross-channel message was transmitted from South Foreland Lighthouse to Wimereux in France. Greatest of all, in terms of achievement and implication, came on Thursday 11 December 1901. On this date Marconi successfully transmitted the letter 'S' in Morse code from the Poldhu station in Cornwall to St John's, Newfoundland, some 1,800 miles across the Atlantic.

*

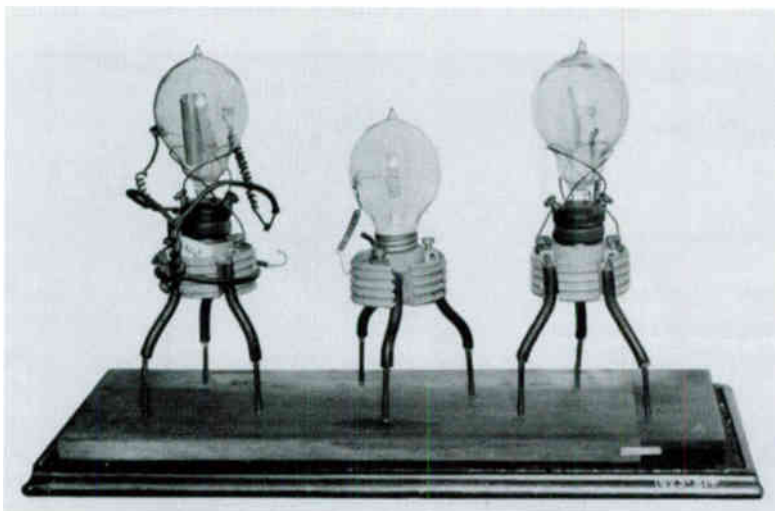
It is important at this point to understand two things that separated the invention of the late nineteenth century from the instrument of mass communication of the nineteen twenties and beyond. The first of these was that ‘wireless’ was not conceived as a means of public entertainment but of utilitarian ‘one-to-one’ messaging, of particular interest in its military applications. The second issue, linked to the first, was that the form of communication used was wireless *telegraphy* rather than *telephony*; the sounds transmitted were not words but signals, and further modification of the electromagnetic waves – making them continuous and consistent – had to be devised before wireless became a speech medium. This was achieved in 1902 by a Dane, Valdemar Poulsen, but the first



**A cartoon by R. MacBeaney, from 1912,
illustrating the public acknowledgement of Marconi’s achievement
in radio communication and its part in saving the Titanic survivors**

transmission of the human voice – indeed, the first radio programme – was by R.A. Fessenden in the United States in 1906. It was Christmas Eve, and the magic of the moment is evocatively caught in A.F. Harlow’s 1936 account:

Early that evening wireless operators on ships within a radius of several hundred miles sprang to attention as they caught the call ‘CQ CQ’ in morse code. Was it a ship in distress? They listened eagerly, and to their amazement heard a human voice coming from their instruments – someone speaking! Then a woman’s voice rose in sound. It was uncanny!...Soon the wireless rooms were crowded. Next someone was heard reading a poem. Then there was a violin solo; then a man made a speech, and they could catch most of the words. Finally everyone who had heard the programme was asked to write to R.A. Fessenden at Brant Rock, Massachusetts – and many of the operators did.²



The original diodes used by J.A. Fleming in 1904

(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

The principal item of technology that had made this amazing event possible was the thermionic valve, first invented in 1904 by J.A. Fleming of University College, Oxford, but crucially adapted and developed by the American Lee de Forest. This enhanced both the transmission and reception of wireless messages, enabling the radio signal to be heard at greater range, and to be captured by a new generation of more sensitive receivers. It was Fessenden who first embraced the technology in a practical sense, and pointed towards the future.

The technology also bred a new generation of wireless amateurs who combined a scientific hobbyist's passionate enthusiasm with an evangelical sense of awe at the near-miraculous nature of the device; this feeling of wonder was to characterise the writings of all the early pioneers in the history of radio. With the coming of the First World War, predictably, radio proved to be a highly valuable and significant tool in the hands of both sides; likewise, its potential dangers became evident for the first time. Amateur wireless experiments were banned on both sides of the Atlantic, although experimentation and research continued under the watchful eyes of governments. An official US station in New Brunswick was so powerful that it was said to have been received by American soldiers in the trenches of Flanders.

A key figure in the growing international development of radio was a former employee of the Marconi company, David Sarnoff, who in 1916 conceived the idea of what he called a 'Radio Music Box' with a range of wavelengths which could be changed at will to provide alternative signals. Sarnoff went on to found the Radio Corporation of America. Two years later, Arthur Burrows of Marconi wrote a prophetic article for the *Yearbook of Wireless Telegraphy and Telephony* in which he foresaw the use of radio as a means of transmitting news, live concerts and advertising. To both men, during the dark days of war, had come the realisation that this new wonder was about to be taken from the hands of scientists and given to the mass of the population; that there was a gulf between radio as a tool, practical and utilitarian, and the concept of 'broadcasting'. More to the point, and momentarily, they both in their own way understood that the reality of creating a bridge from one to the other was within reach.

In December 1919, the Marconi company installed an experimental 6Kw telephony transmitter at its Chelmsford works in Essex, with the view to testing reception of long-distance speech signals, using the call sign, MZX. The twin masts of the transmitter soared 450 feet above the factory, but it was the nature of the content of the experiments that created a sensation. Up until this point, most speech testing had been routine and somewhat boring, often little more than the recitation of railway timetables and the like. The two engineers in charge of this new experiment, W.T. Ditcham and H.J. Round decided to be somewhat more adventurous, and on 15 January 1920 they gave the first ever true 'broadcast' in Britain, consisting of a programme of speech and music on gramophone records. Radio amateurs reported reception of the transmission from various parts of

Europe, with the greatest distance being 1,450 miles. Ditcham and Round increased the transmitter power to 15 Kw, and through February and March 1920, the broadcasts consisted of two 30-minute transmissions per day, and were picked up by a growing and increasingly delighted audience of radio amateurs, who by this time were forming themselves into organised societies consisting of thousands of members. The passion for wireless broadcasting was spreading like wildfire throughout Europe, and the culmination of the seemingly inexorable march of the new medium forward was to be on that evening of 15 June, 1920, at



Lauritz Melchior, known as ‘The Danish Tenor’ in the studio, Chelmsford
(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

7.15pm, when Melba sang for half an hour from Chelmsford to the world.

A further recital took place on 30 July, when the Danish singer Lauritz Melchior broadcast from the New Street works with a programme of songs aimed very much at the Scandinavian audience. This too was a huge success, although there were some initial technical problems; seemingly the great tenor found it difficult to grasp that in order to be heard in another country, it was not necessary for him to sing louder, and finally engineers only succeeded in achieving a satisfactory balance by placing him sixteen feet from the microphone. As with Melba however, the response from both the listeners and the press was ecstatic. It seemed like a true beginning. In fact, it was an ending.

*

In November 1920, the Postmaster-General, the Right Honourable Albert Illingsworth issued a statement to the House of Commons declaring that the Chelmsford recitals were to cease forthwith, on the grounds that they were interfering with “legitimate services”, notably communication between aircraft and airfields. The almost accidental discovery of radio as an entertainment medium had taken virtually everyone by surprise, and for the time being the use



The Chelmsford skyline with the New Street works and aerials visible

(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

of wireless was returned to message sending for official purposes only. In the meantime, the growing legions of wireless amateurs, united into large societies around the country, were dismayed that the main point of their new hobby had been removed. In March 1921, 63 of the societies met at a conference, the main item of agenda being the establishment of a station containing content of interest to them, which would not interfere with official and technical transmissions. The Post Office offered a compromise of a wireless telegraphy station, but the Societies persisted in their demands for Telephony – Speech Radio. A petition was presented at the end of 1921, and a month later a new Postmaster-General, The Right Honourable F.G. Kellaway MP, relented, agreeing to the transmission



The staff at Writtle

B.N. MacLarty – H.L. Kirke – R.T.B. Wynn – H.J. Russell
F. Bubb – N. Ashbridge – P.P. Eckersley – E.H. Trump – Miss E.M. Beeson

(Courtesy of Marconi plc)



Miss Nora Scott broadcasting live at Writtle in May 1922

(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

of a programme of speech and music to be broadcast once a week. Marconi's quickly set up a base in the village of Writtle, two miles from Chelmsford. The station call sign was 2MT, with a team of nine, led by Captain P.P. Eckersley.

It was Eckersley's eccentric, attractive style of presentation that characterised the Writtle broadcasts, which went out on Tuesday evenings at 7.30pm from 14 February 1922 until 17 January 1923, thus forming Britain's first scheduled broadcasting service. The programmes consisted of a mixture of music, recorded and live, doggerel poetry and fast-talking banter.

An example of Eckersley's informal broadcasting technique can be gained from the following transcriptions of Writtle transmissions:

Hello CQ, Hello CQ. This is Two Emma Toc, Two-ooo Emma Toc. Hello CQ this is Two Emma Toc, Two-oo Emma Toc, Wr-r-rittle calling....

...Well I think we're ready to begin now, and the first thing I've got to introduce is a record entitled...Why are records always entitled, why aren't they just called something? – So here it is – a record entitled....

...Four and twenty B valves standing on a shelf, Ash couldn't find one so I had to go myself. When the circuit opened the phones began to sing. Don't you think I was right to smash the beastly thing?

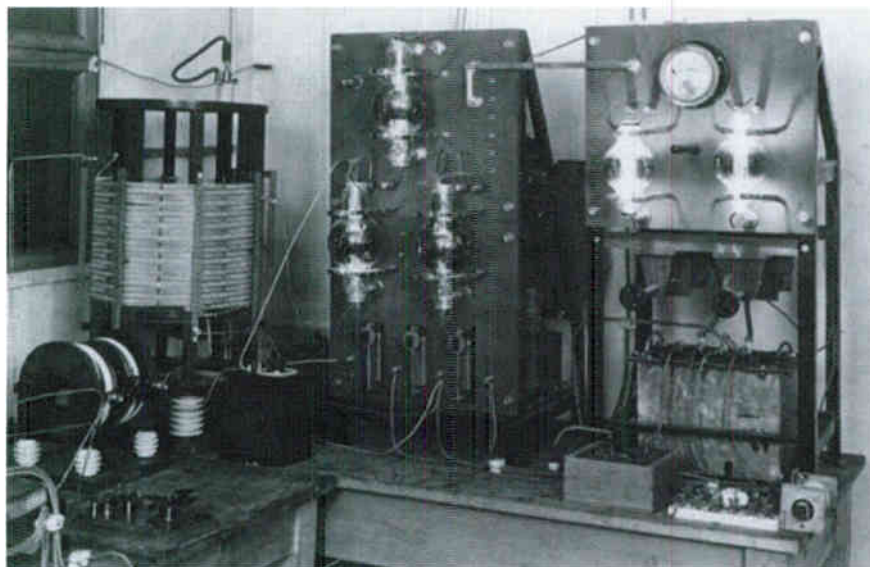
[‘Ash’ was Noel Ashbridge, one of the Writtle team and a future Chief Engineer in the BBC]



Peter Eckersley

The broadcasts were light-hearted, fun and entertaining, characteristics that did not please everyone, and there were critics who felt that an important, almost sacred new invention was being treated with unseemly frivolity. Peter Eckersley went on to become the BBC's first Chief Engineer.

Shortly after Writtle began broadcasting, the Post Office issued a licence to Marconi's to launch a second experimental station from their premises in London's Strand. The first broadcast from the new station, 2LO, was on 11 May 1922, and initially the transmissions consisted of two half-hour programmes



**The experimental transmitter 2MT
installed inside the broadcast station at Writtle, Essex**

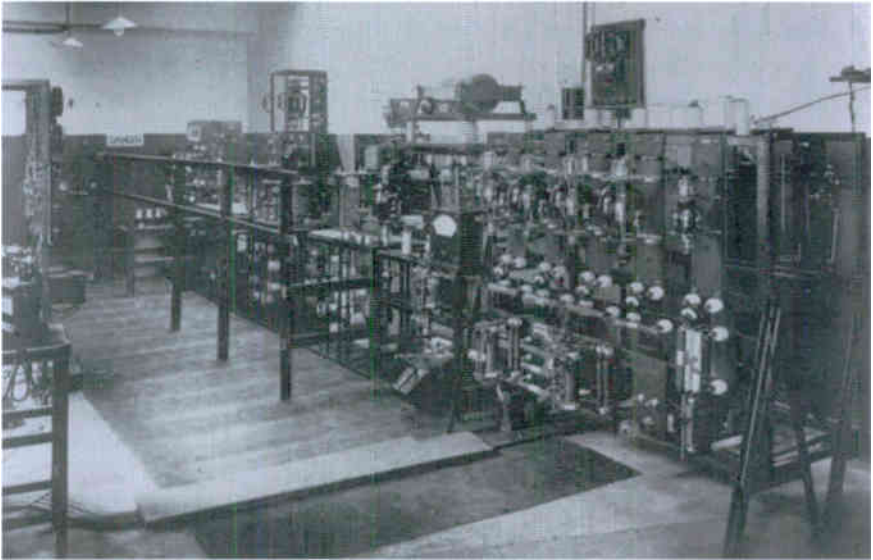
(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

broadcast on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, under the supervision of Arthur Burrows. Burrows was a very different personality to Eckersley, and 2LO's programmes were of a more sober nature, in marked contrast to Writtle's 'frivolity'.

Events at this crucial point in British broadcasting history were strongly affected by the development of radio in the USA. In November 1920 a Pittsburgh radio station owned by the Westinghouse Corporation, KDKA, broadcast election returns in the presidential race between Warren G. Harding and James M. Cox. At one bound, American radio had leapt from the experimental phase to broadcasting. The explosion that followed was extraordinary;

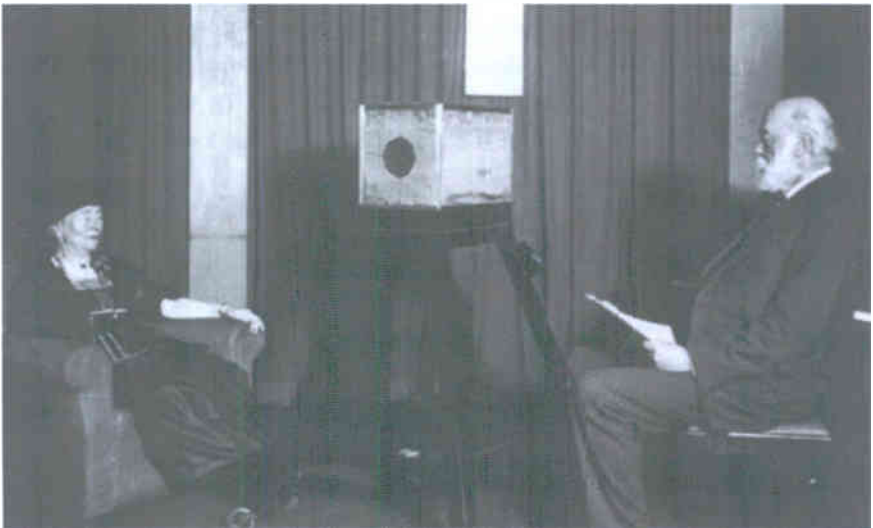


**Arthur Burrows
Head of Publicity
for the Marconi Company**



The 2LO transmitter at Marconi House, The Strand, London

(Courtesy of Marconi plc)



**Oliver Lodge using the 2LO transmitter at Marconi House
He is pictured with his wife Lady Lodge**

(Courtesy of Marconi plc)

it seemed that almost anyone who foresaw the power of this new medium was free to start their own station – and did. By May 1922, there were 219 registered radio stations in the US, and by the end of the year, there were 15,000 retailers selling receivers. Almost at once, the commercial opportunities afforded by the medium were noted, and in August 1922, the first advertisement – for real estate – was broadcast from Station WEAf. The more high-minded observers started talking in terms of “an avalanche” of programmes “drowned in advertising chatter” and the “chaos of the ether”. Herbert Hoover, Secretary of the American Department of Commerce, was forced to step in and devise regulation that would impose some sort of control. The British Government observed, and reflected. In April 1922, the Postmaster-General issued the following statement to the House of Commons:

It would be impossible to have a large number of firms broadcasting. It would result only in a sort of chaos, only in a much more aggravated form than that which arises in the United States, and which has compelled the United States, or the Department over which Mr Hoover presides, and which is responsible for broadcasting, to do what we are now doing at the beginning, that is, to lay down very drastic regulations indeed for the control of wireless broadcasting.

Those words, and the sentiment behind them, were to form the basis of the thinking that was to inform broadcasting in Britain for the next thirty-three years. In the short term, the statement put Britain on course for the establishment of a single broadcaster, which within months would take the form of the British Broadcasting Company.

Significant Dates

- 1830s-1840s** Developments in Morse code and the conducting of electrical impulses.
- Dec 1864** James Clerk-Maxwell delivered his paper, *The Dynamic Theory of the Electromagnetic Field* to the Royal Society.
- 2 Apr 1877** First telephone conversation.
- 1887** First transmission of electromagnetic waves without physical means of conduction.
- 2 Jun 1896** Wireless Telegraphy patent taken out by Guglielmo Marconi.
- 11 Dec 1901** First transatlantic wireless signal from Cornwall, England to Newfoundland.



Above: The Studio at 2LO

Below: Studio Microphone

1906 Triode valve developed, providing the ability to amplify electrical currents in wireless equipment.

24 Dec 1906 First broadcast by Reginald Fessenden in the US.

15 Jun 1920 Dame Nellie Melba broadcast from the Marconi Company's Chelmsford works.

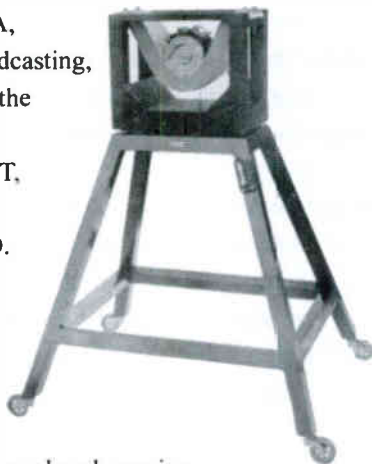
2 Nov 1920 Westinghouse station KDKA, Pittsburgh commenced broadcasting, seen as the birth of radio in the modern sense.

14 Feb 1922 Start of broadcasts from 2MT, Writtle.

11 May 1922 First transmission from 2LO.

Prominent People

Clement Ader — Creator, in 1881, of the Théâtrophone or Electrophone system, which gave subscribers an audio version of a live event, concert or church service.



Alexander Graham Bell — Inventor of the telephone

Arthur Burrows — Head of Publicity for the Marconi Company

James Clerk-Maxwell — Scottish physicist, devised the theory of electromagnetic radiation.

Lee De Forest — Devised the 'Audion' in 1906, which developed Fleming's Diode, permitting amplification of the radio signal.

Peter Eckersley — Member of the Marconi staff at Writtle, engineer and early broadcaster.

R.A. Fessenden — A Canadian, who conducted his experiments into radio in the USA in the early years of the 20th century, notably in 1903 when he transmitted speech over 15 miles. In 1906, he 'broadcast' gramophone records for some 50 miles to ships' radio operators.

J.A. Fleming — Discoverer of the qualities of the Diode valve in 1904, which De Forest was to develop two years later. The proximity of the experiments of the two men led to litigation. Ambrose Fleming was knighted for his services to science and industry in 1929.

Heinrich Hertz — German physicist, discoverer of electromagnetic waves.

Sir Oliver Lodge — Professor of Physics and Mathematics at Liverpool University, a major British pioneer of wireless telegraphy.

Guglielmo Marconi — An Italian with an Irish mother, who founded the Marconi Wireless and Signal Company in 1897, the year after filing the first London patent for a coherer detector – for many the founding moment of radio.

Samuel Morse — Developer of Morse code and pioneer in the use of conducting mediums.

Alexander Popov — Russians will always hail him as the true inventor of radio.

David Sarnoff — A Russian émigré to the USA, who joined the American Marconi Company in 1906 when he was 15, and at the age of 17 picked up messages from the *SS Olympic* on 14 April 1912 giving the news of the loss of the *Titanic*. He was a real prophet of the possibility of broadcasting, and became president of RCA, and in 1926, the force behind NBC.

II

The British Broadcasting Company

1922-1927

The Marconi Company was not alone in its attempts at establishing radio in Britain; two other firms, both with American connections, Metropolitan-Vickers in Manchester, and Western Electric in Birmingham, were working independently during 1922 towards the same goal. Thus, a complicating factor in the possible future of British radio broadcasting became an issue; on one hand, there was the threat of the American “chaos of the ether”, at that very time exercising Herbert Hoover. On the other, with the Marconi organisation perfectly capable of establishing itself as the sole provider of a broadcasting service, there was the risk of a commercial monopoly. The Post Office, under the Postmaster-General, F.G. Kellaway, sought to legislate for a system of programming “for the benefit of the general public but not for the benefit of individuals”, as he stated in May 1922. Added to the arguments of potential broadcasters, there came pressure from manufacturers of wireless sets, who rightly claimed that they would be unable to sell their product unless there was a schedule of regular programmes to entice potential customers to buy. To answer all these issues, on 4 May 1922 Kellaway announced to the House of Commons that “bona fide manufacturers of wireless apparatus” would be given permission to establish a number of broadcasting stations around Britain, under the eye of the Post Office, which would ensure there was to be, in his words “no danger of monopoly”. A meeting was proposed for 23 May on neutral ground, the Institute of Electrical Engineers on the North embankment of the Thames, by Waterloo Bridge. On that date, the major players met under the Chairmanship of Frank Gill, the Chief Engineer of the Western Electric Company. Among those represented were the ‘Big Six’ companies: Marconi, Metropolitan-Vickers, the General Electric Company, the Radio Communication Company, the Western Electric Company and the British Thomson-Houston Company. This group from now on steered the course of British broadcasting towards the creation of one service. At a subsequent meeting two days later, the name ‘British Broadcasting Company’ was agreed, the said Company to be established with £100,000 capital in

cumulative ordinary shares. The committee also agreed that the Post Office should be requested to approve for sale only sets made by companies comprising the BBC. Further finance should be raised by a ten-shilling licence payable by all those receiving the service, and a royalty on the sale of sets sold by member companies (which should be clearly marked with a stamp, 'BBC/PMG' to demonstrate authenticity.) It will thus be seen that the British Broadcasting Company as established in 1922 was a curious hybrid of commercial interest and government responsibility.

The first offices of the company were in Magnet House, on London's Kingsway, premises owned by GEC. Meantime the 2LO studios in Marconi House on The Strand were handed over to the Company, and it was from here, broadcasting from the existing 2LO facility, that transmissions began on 14 November on a daily basis

The next day Birmingham and Manchester Stations 5IT and 2ZY opened. To these were to be added further BBC stations in Newcastle (5NO, December 1922), Cardiff (5WA, February 1923), Glasgow (5SC, March 1923), and Aberdeen (2DB) and Bournemouth (6BM) both in October 1923, all providing individual localised programming but with the potential for the creation of a national network with regional contributors.

The first Chairman of the British Broadcasting Company Ltd was Lord Gainford, a former Postmaster-General, but at the time of its first broadcasts the new organisation still lacked a General Manager. Advertisements had appeared in mid October, and had attracted the attention of among others, a 33 year-old Scotsman named Reith who had recently resigned as General Manager of a Glasgow engineering firm. John Charles Walsham Reith, the son of a Presbyterian Minister from Glasgow, responded to the advertisement, and was placed on a short list of six. On 13 December, he was summoned for interview at Magnet House, and after a second interview some days later was appointed as General Manager of the BBC with "full control of the company and its staff" at a finally agreed salary of £1,750 per year. He took up his position on 14 December, and less than a year later – on 14 November 1923, he became Managing Director, by which time he had stamped his character firmly and forever on the BBC. He was to remain in charge until 1938.

*

It was clear from the start that the capital's operational facilities were too cramped to allow for the development of a central 'Head Office'. In addition, the placement of the London administration offices and broadcasting studios in two separate premises was far from ideal, particularly as some of the executive staff (including Arthur Burrows) doubled as broadcasters. The Institution of Electrical Engineers' building on the Embankment, home of that first historic meeting in May 1922, offered an alternative, although in Reith's memory, it had not at first seemed prepossessing. He was to write in 1924:

We went to inspect sundry possible sites for the launching of our enterprise. Finally, as dusk was falling, we came to Savoy Hill. It seemed the worst of all...what a depressing place it was.³

Notwithstanding Reith's initial doubts the building, designed in 1889 and first occupied in 1909, had much to commend it, containing as it did a considerable amount of space available for letting, in particular in its West wing, accessed by an entrance at 2, Savoy

Hill, a small insignificant road which separated the building from the Savoy Hotel. In April 1923, the move took place, by which time the demand for the new medium was beginning to create problems, which generated tension between the BBC and the Post Office over licences. The number of wireless manufacturers comprising the BBC had grown to 260, and the number of models registered with the BBC/PMG stamp was 1,450. Although the licence system charged ten shillings for operating one of these sets, a major problem developed with the many enthusiasts who built their own wireless receivers, for these people were paying no licence fee at all. In addition, there was a huge backlog of licence applications relating to purchased sets, which the Post Office seemed unable to cope with; this in turn persuaded more and more would-be listeners to make their own sets, rather than buy radios from BBC member companies. The issue was



J.C.W. Reith
General Manager of the
British Broadcasting Company

made worse by the almost daily growth in interest, fuelled by such events as the first Radio Exhibition organised in London by the National Association of Radio Manufacturers as part of the Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition in March 1923.

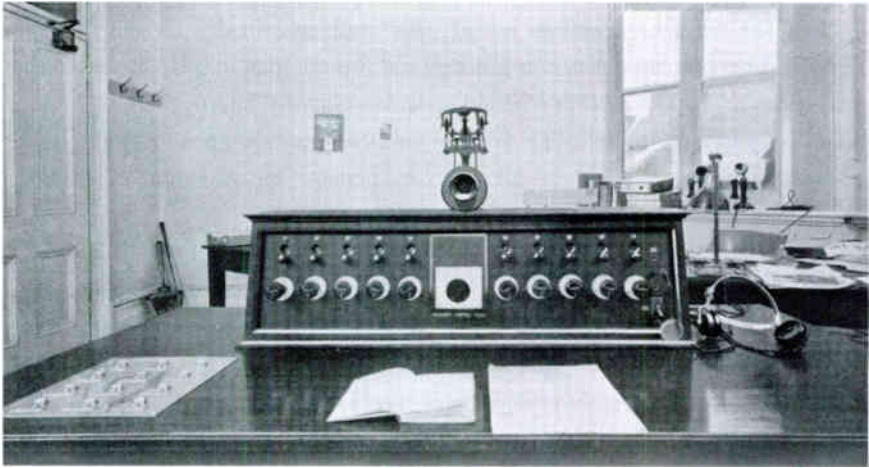
It was decided therefore at Government level to establish a committee of enquiry to explore the issue, under the Chairmanship of Sir Frederick Sykes. In the process of its deliberations, the Sykes Committee went a long way towards defining the nature of British broadcasting in the 1920s, supporting as it did the work of the BBC, and extending its licence to broadcast until the end of 1926. It also recommended the abolition of royalties on wireless receivers sold by BBC manufacturing members, as well as an increase in the Company's share of Licence revenue from 50% to 75%, thus considerably reducing the BBC's dependence on the manufacturing industry. Importantly the Sykes Committee put forward a recommendation that there should be a single form of licence giving listeners the legal right to listen to BBC programmes, whether or not their receiver had been manufactured by a BBC member company. This however, did not become law until 1925, and interim licence arrangements were introduced to

cover the problem of illegal listening.

On 1 May, the new studios were opened, and the legendary 'Savoy Hill' years began, and with it a catalogue of 'firsts' in British broadcasting. On 24 May came the first outside broadcast of a dance band (from London's Carlton Hotel); four days later, the first full-length studio presentation of a play (Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*); and on 21 June, the first broadcast of a symphony concert. In September 1923, Reith



Savoy Hill
The BBC Headquarters, 1922-32



Control Panel at Savoy Hill

conceived the idea of a journal which would publicise the BBC's programmes, and which would also enhance the image of the fledgling company. So was born the *Radio Times*.

Throughout 1923 and 1924, the BBC consolidated its coverage of Britain by completing a series of transmission relay stations. On 5 February 1924, the famous Greenwich Time Signal was introduced, and listening at home became easier with the development during this time of valve receivers, which gradually replaced the old crystal sets. To compare receivers from the first and second half of the decade is to see a movement in design away from machines towards furniture. It was an important aspect of the acceptance of radio into the home.

On 15 January 1924, another radio landmark occurred, in the form of the first play written for radio. There had of course been other radio broadcasts of existing drama, adapted for radio, however slightly. *A Comedy of Danger*, created over a weekend by Richard Hughes, was different in that it considered the listening audience as a unique one, raising specific issues. Hughes hit on a defining concept. The radio audience is 'blind', it only 'sees' through the power of the imagination. Hughes therefore placed his characters in *A Comedy of Danger* in the same situation, by setting the scene in a coal mine during an underground disaster; the opening line in the play is "What's happened? The lights have gone out!" Out of this way of thinking grew more than a powerful dramatic concept. Hughes had created a genre.

In other ways broadcasters honed their craft specifically for the medium. Early speakers on radio had sounded stiff and formal; then in 1923 came the first broadcasts of A.J. Alan, with a casual style and personal approach. Alan became hugely popular; the secret of his success was that while he spoke to millions, he conveyed the sense that he was talking to one person – an art which has remained one of radio’s greatest strengths.

Memories of those involved with the pre-1927 BBC frequently convey a sense of the fun and excitement of pioneering. There was a strong desire to experiment, to demonstrate just what the new creation could do, and this led to a proliferation of stunts, many of which seized the public imagination in the most extraordinary way. Notable among these was a 1924 broadcast by the ‘cellist, Beatrice Harrison, who was broadcast playing in her Surrey garden, accompanied by the song of a nightingale. As a result of the outside broadcast, Harrison received 50,000 letters, a commercial recording was made and the duet for ‘cello and bird became world famous. On one occasion, while she was engaged in making the first recording of Elgar’s ‘Cello Concerto at the HMV studios in Abbey Road, she met King George V who was on a tour of the building. When introduced to her, he said: “Nightingales, nightingales! You have done what I have not yet been able to do. You have encircled the Empire.”

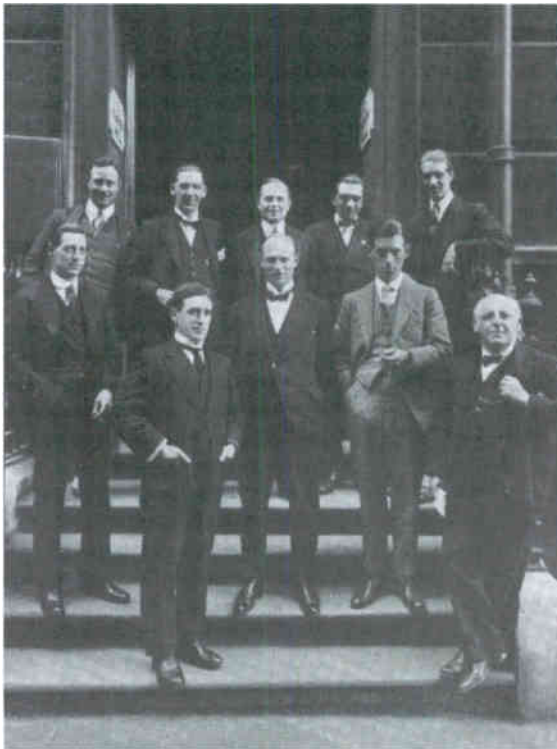
From radio’s early days, the concept of broadcasting to children and young people was a major factor in programme policy-making. *Children’s Hour*, traditionally broadcast between 5.00pm and 6.00pm (although frequently 45 minutes in duration rather than 60) was, for several generations, their introduction to radio. The name was taken from a poem by Longfellow:

Between the dark and the daylight,
When the night is beginning to lower,
Comes a pause in the day’s occupations,
That is known as the Children’s Hour.

Many of Radio’s leading executives broadcast in these programmes, and were known as ‘the Wireless Uncles and Aunts’: Arthur Burrows, the BBC’s first Director of Programmes was ‘Uncle Arthur’ and his deputy, C.A. Lewis became ‘Uncle Caractacus’ for example. As always, children were first to accept the new medium, and grew with it. Reith took the responsibility of broadcasting to children very seriously, and across the Company’s regional stations, the content of such programming was closely monitored. On the Bournemouth station, 6BM,

Louie Agnew – ‘Auntie Lulu’ – was to remember being strongly censured by the Station Director for ad-libbing ‘Yo Ho Ho and a Bottle of Rum’ during a broadcast of a play about pirates on the grounds that “You should never mention alcohol during the *Children’s Hour*.”

The evangelical desire to prove radio’s power to educate, entertain and inform made for a community and unified purpose, and gave the cramped premises of Savoy Hill a potent atmosphere which some felt was lost when the move to a purpose-built Broadcasting House came in the early 1930s. At the same time, the BBC was not broadcasting its programmes in isolation. With the ability to listen on increasingly sophisticated receivers, came the realisation that there was a range of programming available other than the BBC. By 1925, some forty



Staff members outside 2 Savoy Hill – 1923

D Godfrey, H Carruthers, Arthur Burrows, Percy Edgar, Cecil Lewis
 Bertram Fryer, Rex Palmer, LS Jefferies.
 A Corbett Smith, Percy Pitt

broadcasting stations were operating around Europe, and the concept of ‘searching the ether’ for distance signals began to grow in popularity. In March, a conference was held in London to address the growing problem of crowded wavelengths across the Continent, and out of this came the formation of a body to attempt regulation: the International Broadcasting Union (IBU). In the same year a seemingly small event occurred, which would in time grow to exercise the IBU and the BBC in the 1930s – the development of commercial radio across Europe.

A notable experiment in this field had been set up in 1925 by one Captain Leonard Plugge, a British entrepreneur who persuaded Selfridges Oxford Street Department store to sponsor a 15-minute fashion talk, which was broadcast from the Eiffel Tower in Paris. In the event the transmission received virtually no pre-publicity, and only three listeners acknowledged hearing the programme. Nevertheless there was a warning in the event for the BBC; the issue of competition will be one to which we shall return in subsequent chapters.



Captain Leonard Plugge

In July 1925, an even more far-reaching change was set in motion when the Postmaster-General announced a new committee of enquiry into broadcasting, to be chaired by the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres. The Crawford Committee, as it became known, published its report in March 1926. Its conclusions were that the system of broadcasting in the United States was wholly unsuited to Great Britain, where a far more appropriate answer would be a monopoly “controlled by a single authority”. Further, it recommended a broadcaster without ties to industry, as presently existed in the British Broadcasting Company, instead proposing that this should be replaced by an organisation run by “persons of judgement and independence, free of commitments...” in other words the new service should be “conducted by a Public Corporation acting as a Trustee for the national interest”. The Committee suggested that this body should be called “The British Broadcasting Commission”.

In the meantime, the BBC endured its first major crisis in its relations with the government during the General Strike of 1926, which began on 4 May. Most newspapers ceased publication and radio became the only real source of information as the country came to a standstill. While left wing activists criticised the BBC for pro-government activity, Reith struggled to keep the broadcaster free from the influence of right wing politicians. Winston Churchill demanded that the

BBC be commandeered as the voice of the Government, and although this did not happen, there were times when it appeared to some that it had. Ultimately, the Company survived what Reith called “those exciting but very difficult days of the General Strike”. Indeed Reith himself, speaking later in the 1961 radio programme, *Scrapbook for 1926*, explained clearly the problem and the opportunity presented by the Strike:

It was a tremendous opportunity to show what broadcasting could do. Hitherto the BBC had not been permitted to give news before seven o'clock in the evening; now arrangements were made for bulletins at 10.00am, 1, 4, 7 and 9.30pm. The major issue was whether or not the BBC was to become part of government, broadcasting only what was passed by some government representative, or whether BBC independence was to be preserved, the BBC being trusted to broadcast or not to broadcast as it thought in the best interests of the country.

From 1926 onwards, Reith and his Chief Engineer, Peter Eckersley (he of the early Writtle Marconi broadcasts), worked towards the idea of a unified BBC National Programme, available to everyone, supplemented by alternative Regional Services. The scheme involved the creation of a series of high-power transmitting stations around the country. It was a major undertaking, and occupied the latter part of the decade. It is true to say that the dream of a national programme had long been present among BBC broadcasters. In 1924, Arthur Burrows, in his book *The Story of Broadcasting*, wrote of the ability of the London station, for specific important news bulletins, to be linked to the BBC's Regional transmitters “by thousands of miles of copper telephone wire, passing over mountains, down valleys, along coasts, and across moorlands...” Burrows gives us a picture of the radio announcer in which he conveys a romantic sense of the wonder at “a young man, seemingly undisturbed by his responsibility...addressing an unseen audience of perhaps two or three million persons”. How much better if this young man could be heard reading his news bulletin to the nation directly via high power transmitters rather than the combination of copper wire and local low power sites.

On 14 July 1926, it was officially announced that most of Crawford's recommendations for the future of broadcasting in Britain were accepted by the Government, and that responsibility for the service “at present conducted by the Broadcasting Company” would, on 31 December that year, be handed over to the new authority, which would not be “a creature of Parliament and connected with

political activity” but which would have its power derived from a Royal Charter. One of the few recommendations of the Crawford Committee to be rejected was the name of this new body; it was not to be “The British Broadcasting Commission” but the “British Broadcasting Corporation”.

Significant Dates

- 18 Oct 1922** Formation of the British Broadcasting Company agreed by the Post Office and Radio Manufacturers.
- 14 Nov 1922** Daily broadcasting started from London Station 2LO of the British Broadcasting Company Ltd.
- 15 Nov 1922** Birmingham Station 5IT and Manchester Station 2ZY opened.
- 23 Dec 1922** First regular general news bulletin from London.
- 24 Dec 1922** Newcastle-on-Tyne Station 5NO opened.
- 8 Jan 1923** First Outside Broadcast. (Excerpts from *The Magic Flute* from Covent Garden.)
- 15 Feb 1923** Cardiff Station 5WA opened.
- 6 Mar 1923** Glasgow Station 5SC opened.
- 19 Mar 1923** BBC London Station moves from Marconi’s Magnet House to 2, Savoy Hill.
- 1 May 1923** Savoy Hill Studios opened.
- 28 Sep 1923** *Radio Times* first published.
- 1 Oct 1923** Publication of the Report of the Sykes Committee on Broadcasting.
- 10 Oct 1923** Aberdeen Station 2DB opened.
- 17 Oct 1923** Bournemouth Station 6BM opened.
- 5 Feb 1924** Greenwich Time Signal inaugurated.
- 17 Feb 1924** Big Ben daily Time Signal introduced.
- 4 Apr 1924** First broadcast to schools.
- 1925** Fashion Talk in English sponsored by Selfridges, organised by Captain Leonard Plugge and broadcast from the Eiffel Tower, Paris
- 3 Apr 1925** BBC represented at the first General Assembly of the International Broadcasting Union at Geneva.
- 5 Mar 1926** Publication of the Report of the Crawford Committee on Broadcasting.
- 4 May 1926** General Strike began.

- 11 Nov 1926** Publication of agreement between the Postmaster-General and the British Broadcasting Company Ltd providing for the transfer of the Broadcasting Service to the British Broadcasting Corporation on 1 January 1927.
- 14 Nov 1926** Under a plan drawn up by the International Broadcasting Union, the number of wavelengths available to the BBC was reduced. This resulted in regional, as opposed to local, broadcasting.
- 31 Dec 1926** Expiry of the licence of the British Broadcasting Company Ltd.

Prominent People

- A.J. Alan** — The pseudonym of Leslie Harrison Lambert. As Alan he gave talks of intrigue and mystery, and conveyed through his great gift for apparent spontaneity the sense that he really was talking to listeners rather than reading from a script.
- Arthur Burrows** — Moving from the Marconi Company, Burrows became Director of Programmes for the British Broadcasting Company, and doubled as ‘Uncle Arthur’ on *Children’s Hour*.
- Peter Eckersley** — Now the BBC’s first Chief Engineer, with the reduction of wavelengths in 1926, he devised the Regional system of broadcasting, creating the main broadcasting centres as London, Manchester, Birmingham, Cardiff and Glasgow.
- Sydney Firman** — First conductor of the 2LO Dance Band.
- Carroll Gibbons** — Leader of the Savoy Orpheans, the dance band much associated with the early days of radio, which broadcast first from the Savoy Hotel on 3 October 1923
- Stuart Hibberd** — Became the BBC’s Chief Announcer in 1924, a post he was to hold until 1951.
- Cecil Lewis** — An important figure in the early days of the BBC as “Organiser of Programmes”, writing the first book about British radio, *Broadcasting from Within*. For *Children’s Hour* he became ‘Uncle Caractacus’. He later moved to television and ultimately to film in Hollywood.
- J.C.W. Reith** — General Manager of the British Broadcasting Company.

Key Programmes

Children's Corner — First programme for children, lasting 15 minutes, broadcast by 5IT, 5 December 1922

Children's Hour — First broadcast from London, 23 December, 1922.

A Comedy of Danger — Richard Hughes' play, specially written for radio, and broadcast, taking into account the requirements of a 'blind' audience, on 15 January 1924.

The Surrey Nightingale — On 19 May 1924, 'cellist Beatrice Harrison created a sensation when she played a duet with a nightingale in her Surrey garden.

The Week's Good Cause — The longest running programme in the history of British radio was first broadcast on 24 January 1926.

Broadcasting From the Barricades — On 16 January 1926, a talk by Father Ronald Knox simulated reports of (fictitious) rioting in London by the mass unemployed. Twelve years before Orson Welles' famous *War of the Worlds* broadcast on American Radio, the event actually convinced some listeners that Britain was in the throes of revolution.

III

Corporation and Competition

1927-1935

On 1 January 1927, the number of licence holders in Britain numbered 2,178,259, served by a broadcasting corporation of 773 employees led by John Reith, whose title now became Director General. Lord Clarendon, Chairman of the Board of Governors wrote in the first *BBC Handbook*:

The issue of this Handbook is a reminder that Broadcasting is an established and accepted institution. People may still marvel at the wonder of wireless, but perhaps they should marvel still more that in so short a space of time this new Public Service should have become so essential and so powerful a factor in our lives.⁴

The same publication demonstrated how the BBC had expanded since 1922, carrying as it did articles about broadcasting in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, the Midlands and the Industrial North. In the capital the centre of operations remained Savoy Hill, where in 1927 “London’s newest studio, the seventh studio” came on stream, with “many novel features in design and equipment”. Drama producers in particular seized on the possibilities for innovation afforded by the medium and its developing technologies; as early experiments such as *A Comedy of Danger* and Reginald Berkeley’s *The White Chateau* (1925) had shown, a new style and a new philosophy was not only possible, but necessary; indeed radio was shaping a new genre in the field of plays and dramatic features. This aspect of radio was developed actively with the arrival in 1929 of Val Gielgud as Head of Drama. L. du Garde Peach was among a number of contemporary writers who seized on the possibilities of the medium, creating plays that could only work in a sound-only medium. Among notable producers of the time was Lance Sieveking, whose colossal 1929 experiment, *Kaleidoscope I* utilised over a hundred performers and eight studios in what *Radio Times* referred to as “a play too purely radio to be printed for reading”. This was radio as art, lofty in its aspirations; it was not, however, to everyone’s taste; there was for some a feeling that a certain amount of this experimentation and huge consumption of resources was a rather self-conscious indulgence, luxuriating in

minority-interest programming. The period was to raise issues relating to the radio audience, issues which would be central to the idea of public service broadcasting and popular mass entertainment that would put the BBC's monopoly under scrutiny.

The first year in the life of the Corporation saw a staggering increase in the number of Outside Broadcasts, largely due to the dynamic leadership of the Director of this department, Gerald Cock. Every month during 1927 brought major sporting events into the home for the first time – the Cup Final, the Boat Race, the Grand National, Cricket, Boxing – and with them came the voices of men who were for a generation to become intimately associated with the sport they commentated upon. Among the personalities developed by Cock were George Allison, Freddy Grisewood, Howard Marshall, as well as John Snagge, who would still be providing commentary on the Varsity boat race up to 1980.

During the late 1920s, a number of Continental stations began broadcasting commercial programmes in English, directed at the British audience. These included transmissions from Holland – a weekly Sunday concert of light music sponsored by the Kolster Brandes wireless manufacturer that lasted from 1928 to 1930 - and Radio Toulouse. The BBC, alerted to these developments debated internally its response. A comment on a BBC memo of November 1928, handwritten and believed to have been by Reith himself, was to prove ironic in its casual indifference to the matter:

My reaction is why worry when 10% of our listeners are affected? Are we so afraid of competition?

The situation did, however, become more serious quite quickly; the impetus to commercial operators from these initial experiments was significant and encouraging. The principle was that of British entrepreneurs buying airtime from existing European radio stations, and then selling that airtime on to advertisers who would sponsor programmes. In 1929, Radio Publicity Ltd began canvassing British manufacturers, and in March 1930, Captain Leonard Plugge (the man behind the 1925 Selfridges' broadcast from Paris) formed the International Broadcasting Company (IBC) with the express purpose of transmitting sponsored programmes from the Continent to Britain.

Crucial to Plugge's plan was a chance meeting he had had while motoring through Normandy; while in the small town of Fecamp, he had met Fernand Legrand, the director of the Benedictine factory there. Legrand was himself a

dabbler in radio, and the two men quickly came to an agreement by which his small enterprise would be expanded and transmitter strength increased to create viable programming possibilities for an English audience. Thus, in October 1931, a series of gramophone record programmes were to be heard under initially the banner of Radio Fecamp, although the station's name soon became Radio Normandy. A number of major broadcasters, who were to become famous to later generations of listeners, began their careers with the IBC, including Roy Plomley, Bob Danvers-Walker and Stephen Williams. In the early summer of 1933

Radio Luxembourg began transmissions from a giant and powerful transmitter on the Junglinster Plateau above the city of Luxembourg. The station was broadcasting illegally on the Long Wave, and it was to prove even more popular than Radio Normandy. The programmes grew more sophisticated; many were recorded in London by major agencies such as J. Walter Thompson, and they began making major inroads into the BBC audience, notably on Sundays, when Reith's strict sabbatarianism had resulted in an output which excluded any form of popular entertainment.



**First edition of *The Listener*
16 January 1929
Published by the British Broadcasting Corporation**

A son of the Manse, whose father became Moderator of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland, Reith believed that Sunday was an institution “which belonged to the maintenance of a Christian presence. He would defend the working man against being exploited and expose him to the best preaching which the churches could provide”.⁵

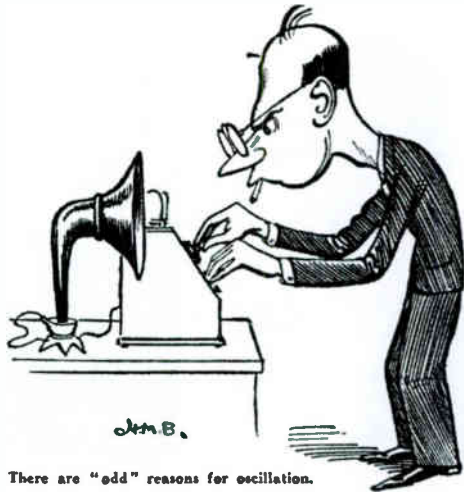
Reith made his position on Sunday broadcasting very clear in his 1924 book, *Broadcast Over Britain*:

The surrender of the principles of Sunday observance is fraught with danger, even if the Sabbath were made for man. The secularising of the day is one of the most significant and unfortunate trends of modern life of which there is evidence...It is a sad reflection on human intelligence if recreation is only to be found in the distractions of excitement.³

How this thinking translated into programme terms is best illustrated by an examination of *Radio Times* of the period; the National Programme page for Sunday 5 April 1935 gives a good picture of what the BBC audience of the time could expect. Station opening was at 10.30am with a weather bulletin for farmers, followed by a fifteen minute interlude. Next came Part One of Bach’s *St Matthew Passion*, a programme of classical music and a chamber recital by a string quintet. Most of the afternoon was devoted to the second half of the *St Matthew Passion*, followed by a talk for children entitled *Joan and Betty’s Bible Story*. This took listeners to 4.55pm and programme ten in the series, *Heroes of the Free Church*. At 5.10pm came *How to Read an Epistle* prior to a performance of Sheridan’s *The Rivals*. Thereafter the diet of religious talks and chamber music resumed until close down with a Religious Epilogue at 10.45pm. Rigorous as this may seem, it actually represented a *liberalising* of BBC Sunday policy compared to the output of a few years earlier. The commercial enterprises transmitting their wares from the Continent did not share Reith’s principles, with the consequence that throughout the 1930s the BBC suffered at the hands of its competitors, whilst striving to demonstrate to its audience in Britain that it was indeed a monopoly.

This issue was heightened by the growth of the phenomenon of Relay Exchanges, a technology which dated back to the end of the 19th century, and which revolved around the concept of wireless signals being sent to subscribers along telephone cables. In 1929 8,592 subscribers in Britain were tuning in to 34 Relay companies, a figure which doubled in 1930. Over the first years of the new decade the number rose consistently until at the end of 1935 the number of

exchanges was 343, and the listening audience 233,554. The advantages for listeners who paid their subscription – then as now – were those of choice and quality; the signal which came to them down their telephone line was not subject to the vagaries of the aerial-received sound. Subscribers could receive the BBC National and Regional Services, and in addition, one other – which inevitably meant a Continental broadcaster. Reception became crucial here; many of the commercial stations, notably Radio Normandy, could only be



There are "odd" reasons for oscillation.

Drawing by H.M. Bateman
Oscillation: Explanations and Suggestions
(BBC publication)

received well in the South of England. The Relay Companies – under the collective name of Re-diffusion – enabled populist entertainment programmes into the homes of thousands of new listeners. Peter Eckersley, the BBC’s first Chief Engineer, left the BBC under controversial circumstances and in 1931 joined one of the largest companies engaged in this work, Rediffusion Ltd. By 1933 the BBC was claiming to the International Broadcasting Union that “the systematic diffusion of programmes or messages, which are specifically intended for listeners in another country and which have been the object of a protest by the broadcasting organisation of that country, constitutes an ‘inadmissible’ act from the point of view of good international relations”.

From early in its career the BBC had had a turbulent relationship with the live theatrical arts, particularly variety. During 1927 there had been a vigorous campaign against the BBC employing variety artistes without the permission of theatrical management, led by Charles Gulliver of the London Theatres of Variety, Sir Oswald Stoll of the London Palladium and R.H. Gillespie of Moss Empires. The issues were complex; variety performers distrusted the medium of radio because it consumed material at a huge rate. This in turn was seen by the



**Portraits of Radio Celebrities – Early 30s
Cigarette Cards issued by W.D & H.O. Wills**

theatrical unions as a threat to live performance. In addition the microphone – what the entertainer George Graves referred to as “that soulless and appallingly unsympathetic gadget” – and the unresponsive silence of the radio studio intimidated many. There was also the censorious nature of the BBC itself: jokes were vetted; whole acts were edited and in some cases banned. In a famous case



Radio Circle card – 1933

from 1935, the comedy partnership of Clapham and Dwyer posed a riddle:

“What is the difference between a champagne cork and a baby?”

“A champagne cork has the maker’s name on its bottom.”

For this the pair was banned from the BBC airwaves for five months and the Corporation broadcast a public apology in its evening news bulletin.

Meanwhile there were many positive examples of the BBC expanding its influence both in terms of its content and its capital position. In October 1930 there was the first broadcast (from Queen’s Hall) of the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Adrian Boult, July the following year saw the inauguration of the BBC Studio Orchestra conducted by Constant Lambert followed a month later by the BBC Theatre Orchestra under Leslie Woodgate, and in December by the arrival of the BBC Chamber Orchestra. The great tradition of the BBC Orchestras was thus largely accomplished within one year.



On May 14 1932, broadcasting ended at Savoy Hill with much ceremony, and a feature, *The End of Savoy Hill*, “an historical pageant in sound covering 1922 to 1932 – ten years of broadcasting in one hundred and sixty one and a half minutes”. The programme ended with the striking of Big Ben at midnight, and the first real home of the BBC fell silent.

The next day saw the official start of programmes from Broadcasting House in Portland Place, although in fact there had been a certain amount of cross-over of material during the days up to the transfer.

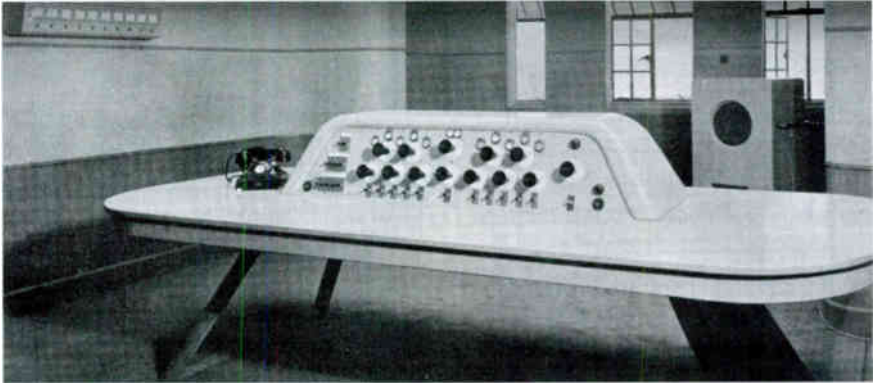
The new building had been designed by G. Val Myer, in association with the BBC’s Civil Engineer, Marmaduke Tudsbery. Originally the preferred site had been on Park Lane; however in 1928

Tudsbery learned of the proposed demolition of a private residence on the corner of Portland Place and Langham Street, called Foley House. The estimated cost of the site being considerably less than that of the Park Lane plot, an agreement was signed, the plot cleared, and building soon commenced. When the work was finished in 1931, the BBC purchased its new home for £650,000.

This was the first purpose-built set of premises for radio in Britain; the design, so often compared to a ship sailing down Regent Street, housed the studios in a central tower, insulated from outside traffic noise by a layer of offices running round the sides. There was formality and style here; the Religious programmes studio was designed to have the appearance of a chapel, the Talks studio was a book-lined study. There was also a class consciousness about the place. Even today, the visitor when entering the foyer has the choice of two sets of lifts; the



**Broadcasting House
BBC Headquarters from 1932**



Control Panel at Broadcasting House

first set, facing the entrance doors, was designed for staff, while the second set, concealed from outside gaze behind a wall, and placed in a comfortable lounge, were for the use of artistes. It was not considered seemly for the two to mix.

The whole experience of entering the building was designed to create the sense of the almost religious nature of radio. From Eric Gill's statue of Prospero and Ariel over the main doors, the visitor's sense of divine purpose was enhanced on entering the marble Art Deco foyer with the image of the Latin inscription:

To Almighty God. The First Governors of this institution dedicated this Temple of the Arts and Muses under the first directorship of John Reith, Knight, praying for Divine help that a good sowing may have a good harvest and that everything impure and hostile to Peace may be banished from this building, and that whatsoever things are sincere and beautiful and of good report and lovable, the people, inclining its ear to these things with a contentment of mind, may follow in the path of virtue and wisdom.

Lofty as the sentiment read, and imposing as the new purpose-built home of radio undoubtedly was, there was growing evidence as the decade proceeded that "the people" was "inclining its ear" increasingly towards the commercial stations broadcasting from the Continent. The BBC in its Metropolitan incarnation was becoming divorced in its thinking from a troubled working class at a time of depression and unemployment on a huge scale. It was also out of touch with the mood in its regions. When E.A. ('Archie') Harding produced a Christmas Day feature in 1932 which caused some political controversy he was dispatched to Manchester by Reith, who was reported to have said, "You're a very dangerous man, Harding. I think you'd be better up in the North, where you can't do so

much damage.” The idea of ‘The North’ as some kind of cultural Siberia to which troublesome staff could be dispatched to save Corporate embarrassment was as ignorant as it was patronising. In fact, Harding was to create a team of left wing programme makers, which would reflect the reality of industry and unemployment, whilst at the same time creating a genre of location-based features under such producers as D.G. Bridson, Olive Shapley and Joan Littlewood.

Meanwhile populist broadcasting in the form of Radio Luxembourg was



continuing to make major inroads into the BBC's audience. Luxembourg, unlike Radio Normandy, had a transmitter capable of blanketing the North of England, and *The Ovaltineys' Concert Party*, which began in 1934, had an unprecedented success, producing in the process arguably the most famous advertising jingle of all time:

We are the Ovaltineys, happy girls and boys
Make your request, we'll not refuse you,
We are here just to amuse you.
Would you like a song or story,
Will you share our joys?
At games and sports we're more than keen,
No merrier children could be seen,
Because we all drink OVALTINE
We're happy girls and boys.

Recorded at the J. Walter Thompson studios in Bush House, and broadcast on Sunday evenings from 5.30pm to 6.00pm, the programme was tied in with a club run by Radio Luxembourg, *The League of Ovaltineys*, which supplied merchandise and publications to its members, and which reached at its peak over five million children. It was revived after the war, with virtually an identical format, and succeeded in capturing a new generation of young listeners.

In technical terms, both the BBC and the competing commercial interests of the time were responsible for the development of sound recording for radio during the 1930s. The BBC had explored the Blattnerphone steel tape machine, which was developed during the early part of the decade by the Marconi Company into the Marconi Stille recorder. It was the use of this device which permitted some of the earliest edited features in radio, including parts of the previously mentioned *The End of Savoy Hill*. It was however a heavy and cumbersome piece of equipment, and not suited to the purposes of the companies behind the Continental broadcasts, who needed something which would transfer to a portable sound carrier. For them – and increasingly for the BBC – the ideal medium proved to be the Cellulose Nitrate disc, developed by Cecil Watts, a musician and entrepreneur who pioneered the concept of an instant play-back metal-based lacquer-coated disc and formed a company, the Marguerite Sound Studios, to manufacture the product in sufficient quantity to satisfy the demands both of the BBC and their competitors. A third recording technology was also developed at the time, and was indeed indisputably the highest quality recording medium of the time. This was the Philips Miller sound-on-film device, and a number of these machines were owned by the BBC, in addition to those purchased by the IBC, and the J. Walter Thompson organisation for their radio studios at Bush House, The Strand. All three of these media had their own use during the 1930s, at a time when the German development of magnetic tape was in its infancy and the resultant product was deemed to be of too inferior quality for transmission. For a time, the IBC experimented with recording their programmes onto the sound track of cinema film, and even installed Western Electric projectors in their Fecamp studios.

For the BBC, in addition to the Watts disc, the Marconi Stille machines, with their extended recording time proved invaluable in the launching of their Empire Broadcasting Service, which began on 19 December 1932. The technology meant that now a programme could be repeated and made available for different time zones.

On Christmas Day 1932 came the first *Round the Empire* programme, and a broadcast message by King George V. Radio it seemed, was bringing the world together. At almost the same time, the IBC provocatively launched its own ‘Empire Short Wave Service’, a very limited affair from the Spanish station, EAQ Madrid.

In January 1934, the Lucerne Plan, drawn up by the European Broadcasting Convention addressed the issue of increasingly crowded airwaves, and sought to

allocate wavelengths by law. The BBC retained its one long wavelength, and gained one medium wavelength, thus increasing its allocation to eleven. It was to be the flouting of the Lucerne Plan, particularly by the 'pirate' Radio Luxembourg, which was to cause much contention over the next few years. Indeed the station in the very same month took over illegally the 1304 Long Wavelength which had been allocated to Warsaw, but which had not been taken up.

Many attempts to crush commercial opposition to the BBC failed; a newspaper ban on publicising their programmes only resulted in the creation of *Radio Pictorial*, a populist journal which advertised all English language Continental programming, and which proved an extremely successful rival to the *Radio Times* until the outbreak of the Second World War.

Meanwhile the summer of 1935 was a Royal time for the BBC with an outside broadcast of a Thanksgiving Service from St Paul's Cathedral at the centre of King George V's Silver Jubilee celebrations in May, and a broadcast of the review of the Fleet at Spithead in July. By this time the King had less than six months to live. Dark days lay ahead.

Significant Dates

- 1 Jan 1927** British Broadcasting Corporation constituted by Royal Charter for a term of ten years. J.C.W. Reith became Director-General.
- 22 Jan 1927** First Association Football commentary: Arsenal v. Sheffield United from Highbury.
- 25 Mar 1927** First racing commentary (The Grand National from Aintree)
- 2 Apr 1927** First commentary on the Varsity Boat Race.
- 23 Apr 1927** First broadcast from Wembley Stadium (F.A. Cup Final, Cardiff City v. Arsenal).
- 14 May 1927** First Cricket commentary (Essex v. New Zealand at Leyton).
- 13 Aug 1927** First broadcast of a BBC Promenade Concert (from Queen's Hall, London).
- 12 May 1928** First broadcast of the BBC Dance Orchestra (with Jack Payne).
- 16 Jan 1929** First issue of *The Listener*.
- 9 Mar 1930** The Regional system of broadcasting began. The Brookman's Park transmitter broadcast alternative programmes for London and the Home Counties. At the same time Daventry 5GB started Midland Regional programmes.



Radio Pictorial – No. 3, February 2, 1934

- 22 Oct 1930** First broadcast of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Adrian Boult.
- 11 Oct 1931** First IBC broadcast from Radio Normandy (Radio Fecamp).
- 29 Nov 1931** French station, Poste Parisien commenced English language commercial broadcasting under the auspices of the IBC with a record programme sponsored by HMV, introduced by Rex Palmer, a former BBC staff member.



Supplement from *Radio Times* – December 21 1934
Foreground illustration by Victor Reinganum

- 15 Mar 1932** First broadcast from Broadcasting House, London (Henry Hall, replacing Jack Payne, and the BBC Dance Orchestra).
- 15 Mar 1932** Broadcasting House became the official London headquarters of the BBC.
- 19 Dec 1932** Inauguration of the Empire Service from Daventry.
- 21 Aug 1933** BBC News read by a woman for the first time. (Discontinued shortly afterwards).

- 15 Mar 1933** Radio Luxembourg began test transmissions.
- 29 Oct 1933** Luxembourg began regular Sunday programmes.
- 15 Jan 1934** Implementation of the Lucerne Plan, drawn up by the European Broadcasting Convention, on wavelength distribution.
- 19 Jan 1934** First edition of *Radio Pictorial*. Beginning as a general magazine about radio, it gained wider appeal from 31 August 1934, when it became the listings journal for Continental commercial stations such as Radio Normandy, Radio Luxembourg, Radio Toulouse and Radio Lyons etc.
- 6 May 1935** King George V's Silver Jubilee celebrations.
- 16 Jul 1935** Broadcast review of the Fleet from Spithead.

Prominent People

Adrian Boult — First conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra.

Gerald Cock — The BBC's first Director of Outside Broadcasts, joining the Company in 1925. By the time he moved to television in 1935 he had created many of the annual set-piece sporting Outside Broadcasts which were to become staples of radio output, including the Boat Race, The Cup Final, the Derby and The Grand National.

L. du Garde Peach — Prolific playwright, who wrote more plays for the medium than any other writer. During this period his notable radio successes were *Ingredient X* (1929), *Path of Glory* (1931) and *The Marie Céleste* (1931).

Val Gielgud — He has been called the creator of British radio drama. The elder brother of John Gielgud, he remained in charge of BBC radio drama until 1963. In the early 1930s Gielgud was a major agitator for audience research.

Freddy Grisewood — Joined the BBC as an announcer at Savoy Hill in 1929, and was to become one of the best-loved voices on radio until his retirement in 1968.

Tyrone Guthrie — A great pioneer of radio drama both as writer and director. Notable among his work were *The Squirrel's Cage* (1929) and *The Flowers Are Not for You to Pick* (1930)

Henry Hall — After the resignation of Jack Payne in 1932, Hall took over the conductorship of the BBC Dance Orchestra. *Henry Hall's Guest Night* was broadcast from 1934. His theme tune was *Here's to the Next Time*.

- E.A.F. Harding** — Archie Harding was a brilliant and controversial features producer, the creator of major programmes such as *Crisis in Spain* (1931) and *New Year Over Europe* (1932) which created a political storm and caused his removal from London to Manchester, where he became North Region Programme Director in 1933, developing a formidable Features department.
- Harry Hemsley** — Child impersonator; he directed and took the central part in *The Ovaltineys Concert Party* on Radio Luxembourg.
- Eric Maschwitz** — Joining the BBC in 1926, he was Editor of *Radio Times* from 1927–33, when he became Director of Variety in 1933, being responsible for many great popular shows, including *In Town Tonight* and *Scrapbook*. A multi-talented man, he wrote the lyric for the song, *These Foolish Things*, and co-wrote under the pseudonym of Holt Marvell the detective novel, *Death at Broadcasting House* (published in 1934) with Val Gielgud.
- C.H. Middleton** — Famous as The Radio Gardener from 1931, moving to television in 1936. He was recommended to the BBC by the Royal Horticultural Society, and broadcast as ‘Mr Middleton’.
- G. Val Myer** — The architect of Broadcasting House.
- Jack Payne** — Dance-band leader who formed the first BBC Dance Orchestra. He resigned in 1932, and his Dance Band was later to be heard frequently on the Continental stations, notably accompanying the Ovaltineys.
- Captain Leonard Plugge** — A central figure in the development of commercial radio. After the 1925 Eiffel Tower experiment with Selfridges, he formed the International Broadcasting Company, which resold air time on existing French stations such as Toulouse, (from 1929) Normandy, etc. to British advertising agencies. By 1935 British firms were said to be spending £400,000 per year in this way.
- Lance Sieveking** — Gifted and innovative drama producer, who set out to explore the creative possibilities of sound, relating it to the concept of montage in film.
- John Snagge** — A legendary announcer and famous as a commentator of the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race from 1931 to 1980. Snagge had joined the BBC as Assistant Station Director at the Stoke-on-Trent relay station


HIPPODROME
SOUTHAMPTON.

6-30 ——— NOV. 7th WEEK ——— 8-40

THE INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY LTD.
presents

**“RADIO NORMANDY
CALLING !”**

A NOVEL TYPE OF ENTERTAINMENT
Produced by LEON POLLOCK



WITH
**EDNA
SQUIRE-
BROWN**

THE CELEBRATED
**F A N
DANCER**
and her
**GLAMOUR
GIRLS**

£25 CASH PRIZE OFFERED TO AUDIENCE £25
for Correct Forecast of the Result of the
Amateur Talent Competition
SEE BACK PAGE

in 1924, and became an announcer at Savoy Hill in 1928. In 1933 he became Assistant, Outside Broadcasts Department.

Max Staniforth — First full time presenter on Radio Normandy.

Cecil Watts — Creator of the Cellulose Nitrate disc, which revolutionised recording for radio.

Stephen Williams — A man whose career spanned both the BBC and commercial radio. From early experiments he joined Radio Normandy and then Radio Luxembourg where he launched the English Service when it began full transmissions in 1933.

Key Programmes

- Foundations of Music*** — Musical education series which ran from 1927 to 1936. It was a twenty minute programme and each week concentrated on a specific composer.
- Kaleidoscope 1*** — Billed as being “a play too purely radio to be printed for reading”, and “a Rhythm representing the Life of Man from the Cradle to the Grave”, *Kaleidoscope 1* was broadcast in 1929 under the directorship of Lance Sieveking.
- Music Hall*** — Highly popular Saturday evening variety programme. It was first heard at 8.00pm on 26 March 1932, and from 1933, when *In Town Tonight* preceded it the show formed part of a highly successful piece of scheduling. In 1936, when it was mooted that the time of *Music Hall* be changed to 9.20pm there was a major outcry among listeners.
- The End of Savoy Hill*** — A retrospective feature broadcast on 14 May, 1932. When the programme finished, Reith ceremonially locked the door of the main entrance for the last time.
- Out With Romany*** — The Rev. G. Bramwell Evens, a Methodist minister of Gypsy stock, ‘Romany’ conducted studio-bound “walks in the countryside” with two children from 1933. The programmes, part of *Children’s Hour*, became so popular that they spawned a number of books on popular natural history. Evens died in 1943.
- In Town Tonight*** — First broadcast at 7.30pm, 18 November 1933, the programme quickly became a key part of the Saturday evening listening ritual.
- Scrapbook*** — An evocative programme, documenting past years which developed into a long lasting series (ending finally in 1974) presented by Freddy Grisewood and compiled by Leslie Baily. The first programme, *Scrapbook for 1913*, was broadcast on 11 December 1933.
- ‘Opping ‘Oliday*** — A feature by Lawrence Gilliam about Cockney hop-pickers in Kent, broadcast in September 1934. It has been seen as an important landmark in feature-making giving a voice to ordinary people.
- Ovaltineys’ Concert Party*** — First broadcast on Radio Luxembourg on 21 December 1934. The children came from the Italia Conti stage school.
- The Oxydol Minstrel*** — Radio Luxembourg programme featuring Jack O’Day and the Oxydol Orchestra directed by Jack Harris, broadcast for the first time on 18 March 1935.

IV

Towards Darkness

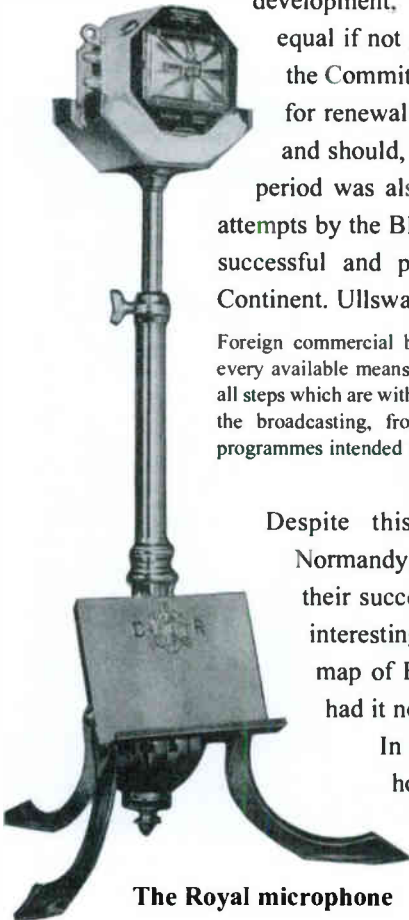
1936-1939

By 1936 the idea of television was very much in the air; March of that year saw the publication of the Ullswater Committee's Report on the future of broadcasting, which placed the development of the new service in the hands of the BBC. Alexandra Palace in North London was to be the base for this development, which began in November that year. Of equal if not greater importance to the Corporation was the Committee's recommendation that the Charter, due for renewal in 1937, should not be radically changed, and should, like its predecessor, run for ten years. The period was also characterised by the increasingly bitter attempts by the BBC and the British Post Office to crush the successful and popular commercial broadcasts from the Continent. Ullswater stated this in no uncertain terms:

Foreign commercial broadcasting should be discouraged by every available means...Responsible departments should take all steps which are within their power with a view to preventing the broadcasting, from foreign stations, of advertisement programmes intended for this country.

Despite this determination, Radios Luxembourg, Normandy, Lyons and others saw the high point of their success in the last part of the decade, and it is interesting to speculate on how the broadcasting map of Britain might have taken long-term shape, had it not been for the outbreak of War.

In the meantime the BBC continued to honour its public service remit in all sorts of ways, including the development of its broadcasting service to schools throughout the United Kingdom.



The Royal microphone

The *BBC Annual* for 1937 stated that:

In England and Wales there are now 5,645 listening schools on the BBC register, as against 3,759 twelve months ago...There are now 76 Local Education Authorities in England and Wales which have agreed to contribute towards the cost of providing receiving apparatus. Sets have been, or are shortly to be, installed in the Senior Schools of most of the larger Urban areas.⁶

Subjects included Natural History, The Practice and Science of Gardening, Travel and History as well as Music, English and Geography. Scottish Schools also received broadcast lessons under the title Speech Training. Contributors to the programmes included some of the finest minds of the time: Professor John Hilton, Commander Stephen King-Hall, S.P.B. Mais and Stephen Potter, among many others, all took part in the 1936 curriculum programmes.

Outside broadcasts brought sounds from challengingly remote parts of the country; on 7 July 1936 for instance a Gaelic Service was broadcast from the Abbey on Iona. In October of the same year came the first broadcast of The Cambridgeshire from Newmarket; opera lovers had a memorable May 1936 when the BBC National Programme broadcast a live relay of *Tristan and Isolde* from Covent Garden, starring Kirsten Flagstad, followed just ten days later by the Glyndebourne production of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. In August British radio audiences witnessed the arrival of the Olympic flame from Greece at the Lustgarten in Berlin.



Miss Elmina Humphreys, as “The Spirit of Radio” at the Radiolympia Theatre, 1937

On October 1st 1936 came the official birth of BBC Audience Research under Robert Silvey, and his work was to focus increasingly over the next three years on this threat to the BBC monopoly from commercial radio. It is hard to conceive of anyone better suited to the job. Silvey had been recruited from the London Press Exchange, one of the larger of the British advertising agencies, where he had been employed to write a survey of listening to European commercial stations. In a crucial sense, the commercial enterprises of the time led the way in audience surveys; potential clients required evidence that their sponsorship money was being used to the best possible effect, and was reaching the maximum appropriate audience. The idea of audience surveys had up to this time been one which produced some controversy within the Corporation. Reith had seen public opinion as more or less irrelevant; for him the nature of public service broadcasting was that the best possible service should be provided, and that broadcaster response to the wishes of the listener would only dilute that service. On the other hand, as early as 1930 Val Gielgud, Director of Drama wrote:

...it must be of considerable disquiet to many people beside myself to think that it is quite possible that a very great deal of our money and time and effort may be expended on broadcasting into a void.⁷

If one is to seek a change towards darker days during the 1930s, it might be said to have occurred in 1936. For Britain the year began with the death of King George V, and a famous statement by the BBC's Chief Announcer, Stuart Hibberd: "The King's life is drawing peacefully to its close." Before the year was over, the succeeding King, Edward VIII, was to make another dramatic use of radio in his abdication speech, in which he told a shocked nation and Commonwealth: "It is impossible to discharge my duties as King as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love..." The Coronation of King George VI in 1937 was a massive radio event, broadcast from 38 microphones in Westminster Abbey to a world-wide audience. As the Coronation number of *Radio Times* declared:

This will be the first time the Coronation of a British sovereign has been broadcast, and as far as organisation goes it will be the most difficult broadcast ever attempted by the BBC.⁸

The subsequent broadcast of the Coronation Review of the Fleet on 20 May inadvertently provided one of British radio's most memorable moments, when Thomas Woodroffe, a member of the BBC's outside broadcast commentators'

team broadcast live from HMS Nelson after having enjoyed several hours of naval hospitality. As darkness approached, his inebriated commentary as one by one the lights on the vessels around him came on, created a sensation:

The Fleet's lit up. And when I say 'lit up', I mean lit up by fairy lamps. It's lit up by fairy lamps. It isn't a fleet at all...the whole fleet is fairyland...it's fairyland...the whole fleet's lit up...the ships are lit up...even the destroyers are lit up...

After what seemed an age, the drunken Woodrooffe's voice was faded out, and a record of dance music was hastily inserted in its place.

In some ways the Woodrooffe incident seems to us today as typifying aspects of the late 1930s in British radio, portentousness undercut by what for many was a frivolous vulgarity. As the decade darkened and the world moved towards war, these boundaries grew more entrenched as the BBC and commercial radio became increasingly locked in a battle for the airwaves against the growing European danger.

Certainly the Coronation provided an island of celebration in an increasingly dark and threatening world, and radio brought the news of Mussolini's and Hitler's proclamations with a depressing directness, just as it did Neville Chamberlain's exhortation as Chancellor of the Exchequer that "It has become urgently necessary to enter upon the largest defence programme ever undertaken by this country in peacetime."

On 20th July 1937 Guglielmo Marconi died; the next day the event was marked by a two-minute shut-down of all BBC transmitters. The loss of the man so much associated with the birth of radio at such a time held for some an almost symbolic significance.

During the 1930s the BBC's North Region, based in Manchester, saw the production of a number of important radio features, including a series of four industrial chronicles: *Steel* (1937), *Coal* (1938), *Cotton* (1939), *Wool* (1939). These programmes, using much location work, were produced by the dynamic team of D.G. Bridson, Joan Littlewood and Olive Shapley. Other significant features to come from these producers were the 1939 programmes, *The Classic Soil* and *They Speak for Themselves*.

There was to be yet another departure which characterised the latter part of the decade in Britain; In June 1938, John Reith announced that he was resigning his director-generalship of the BBC to become chairman of Imperial Airways. He

was forty eight, and his departure was ‘encouraged’ for political reasons by Chamberlain, by now Prime Minister. On 3 June a companion in a taxi was told by Reith, “I’m seeing the Prime Minister this afternoon. It looks like the sack.” For Reith his resignation was the price to pay for holding the BBC “constitutionally clear and politically impartial”.⁹ He was always to look back on his acceptance of the move as the biggest mistake of his career. His end at the Corporation was swift; within a month he was gone. Just as his closing the doors on Savoy Hill himself in 1932 had contained his own personal brand of drama, so his departure from the BBC itself seemed to contain many elements of traditional tragedy. On 30 June he walked out of Broadcasting House with tears pouring down his face. From there he drove to the giant transmitter of Droitwich where he had dinner with some colleagues. Then, at midnight, when broadcasting ended for the day, he shut down the generators and the transmitter with his own hands. As he left, he was asked to sign the visitors’ book; the entry reads “J.C.W. Reith, ex-BBC”.

Dark and portentous as the period seems to us now – and undoubtedly was – paradoxically the late 1930s were to see a growing celebration of populism



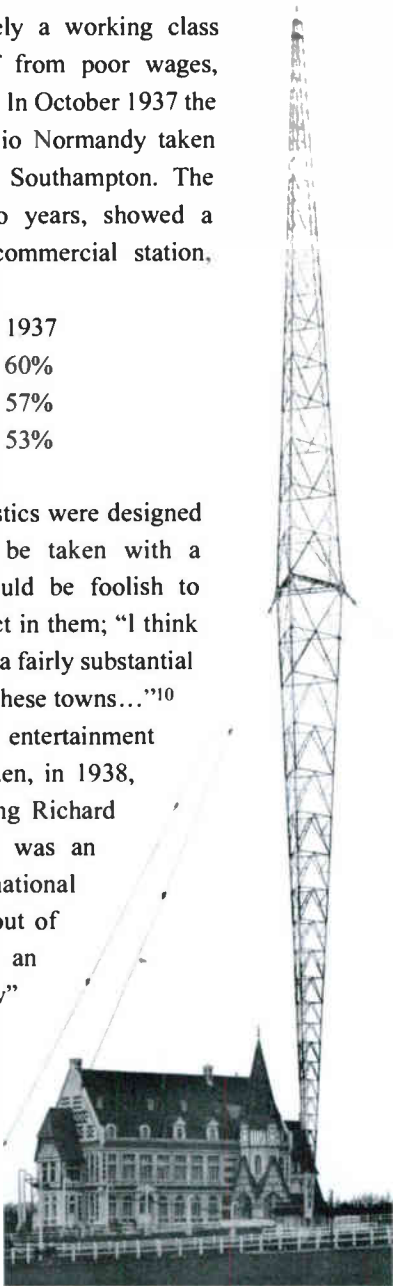
Radio Normandy Turntable Studio

through music and variety targeting largely a working class listening audience hungry for light relief from poor wages, unemployment and international uncertainty. In October 1937 the IBC produced an audience survey for Radio Normandy taken from listeners in south east London and Southampton. The figures, taken as a comparison over two years, showed a dramatic increase in audiences for the commercial station, particularly on Sundays:

	1936	1937
Morning	22%	60%
Afternoon	32%	57%
Evening	24%	53%

Silvey pointed out that while these statistics were designed to prove a point, and therefore “must be taken with a considerable pinch of salt” the BBC would be foolish to imagine that there was not some basis in fact in them; “I think it very improbable that they do not represent a fairly substantial increase in listening to Radio Normandy in these towns...”¹⁰

The BBC, too, created a major popular entertainment success to alleviate the growing gloom when, in 1938, *Band Wagon* came to the airwaves. Starring Richard “Stinker” Murdoch and Arthur Askey, it was an unprecedented success, and became a national institution. Another radio institution born out of the 1930s was *Henry Hall’s Guest Night*, an early version of the later familiar “chat show” format. Hall had taken over from Jack Payne as director of the BBC Dance Orchestra in 1932, a role he held for five years, and it was out of a 1934 special Boat Race day edition of his regular music broadcast that a new shape and style of programme developed, combining unscripted show business conversation with dance music,



Radio Normandy transmitter

and giving the nation a new catch phrase: “Hello everyone, this is Henry Hall speaking, and this is my guest night.” The programme was to run right through the War and into the late 1950s, a total of nearly a thousand broadcasts, featuring the top stars of the day including such as Danny Kaye, Noel Coward, Gracie Fields and Bob Hope. Perhaps its most



Radio Normandy Outside Broadcast Unit

lasting legacy was its theme tune, *Here's to the Next Time*, which for a whole generation became synonymous with Hall himself.

The dance bands of the day grew in popularity: Ambrose, Ray Noble, Lew Stone and Jack Hylton were among the top popular music figures, but as Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff have pointed out, there was also a considerable following for light orchestral music.¹¹ The more extreme forms of jazz improvisation were not for everyone, and in difficult times such as these “soothing melodies and gently undulating rhythms poured out in measured doses of soft lights and sweet music”¹² provided a necessary balm just as important as the stimulating beat and extemporisation of Swing.

This trend was typified by the arrival in November 1938 of another BBC programme which was to prove one of the most enduring of all; the first edition of *These You Have Loved*, presented by Doris Arnold on the National Programme included such items as *The Floral Dance*, *The Londonderry Air* and its future theme tune, Handel’s *Largo*. In one form or another, the programme ran – with breaks – until 1977.

The BBC and the Post Office attempted on numerous occasions during these years to exert pressure to close down the competition to its programmes from the Continent, all to no avail. Through 1938 and 1939 indeed, the increasing awareness that war was growing closer shifted attention away from the problem somewhat. Europe was becoming riddled with propaganda; in Germany radio sets were on sale which were designed to make it impossible for listeners to tune in to foreign programming. Against this, the British Government – in the person of Sir Robert Vansittart of the Foreign Office – actually encouraged the use of

Radio Luxembourg to broadcast the speeches of political figures such as Neville Chamberlain. It was an unlikely alliance.

The *BBC Handbook* for 1938 gave a clear statement of intent which took pains to differentiate propaganda and truth, as the Corporation launched new foreign language overseas services:

The aim of the new service is not to meet propaganda with counter-propaganda, but to secure a wider audience for a broadcast news service which has, in English, won a high reputation in all parts of the world for fairness and impartiality.¹³

The Arabic service began broadcasting on 3 January 1938, and in March came Spanish and Portuguese services beamed at South and Central America. Crucially, at the height of the Munich crisis in September, daily bulletins to Europe, broadcast in German, French and Italian, began.

That month the BBC commentator Freddy Grisewood was at Heston Aerodrome on a bleak wet day to convey to the radio audience the scene as Chamberlain, by now Prime Minister, flew back from a meeting in Munich with Hitler and waved a piece of paper, declaring, "I believe it is peace for our time." Just under a year later it was again radio that was witness to Chamberlain's ultimate disillusionment as he confessed to the nation that a final ultimatum to Germany had been ignored, and that therefore Britain was at war:

...everything that I have worked for, everything that I have hoped for, everything that I have believed in during my public life, has crashed in ruins...

On 4 September, the day after the broadcast, the BBC published a "Supplementary Edition" of *Radio Times* which carried the banner, "Revised Programmes for Sept. 4-10" over a photograph of Broadcasting House and a bottom line of "Broadcasting Carries On". The opening article made it clear that the Corporation was ready and equipped for its part in the coming conflict:

For nearly a year now the BBC has been making its plans. Recognising the part that broadcasting would play in the struggle, it could not afford to leave anything to chance. First of all, of course, radio will be one of the chief means of communication during the war...The Government can speak to the people – news can reach the remotest village – instructions can be issued by the Ministries – warnings can be given of approaching attacks. These are obvious functions of radio during war, and their vital importance is recognised by everyone. But there is another function that is nearly as important, and that is entertainment. Broadcasting can help to take our minds off the horrors of war as nothing else can.¹⁴

There were some who felt that the war had in fact saved the BBC from itself. Of necessity, the Continental commercial stations closed down within a few weeks of the announcement of war, with the exception of Radio Normandy which attempted to reinvent itself as Radio International, directing programmes at Allied troops until January 1940, when it was closed by order of both British and French governments, due to the fact that its transmissions acted as a radio beacon for enemy aircraft. Luxembourg had ended its broadcasts on 21 September with the broadcast of a march written by a Luxembourg composer, entitled *For Liberty*.

Suddenly the BBC was both a monopoly and the hallowed and valued voice of Britain again. Radio in Britain was approaching its most momentous time, and events were redefining its purpose in spite of itself.

Significant Dates

- 20 Jan 1936** Death of King George V.
- 28 Jan 1936** Broadcast of the King's funeral.
- 16 Mar 1936** Publication of the Report of the Ullswater Committee on Broadcasting.
- 1 Oct 1936** Formation of the Listener Research Unit.
- 1 Nov 1936** Radio Lyons started broadcasting, with staff announcer Tony Melrose. Programmes were produced in London by Vox Productions. This was the last of the major Continental stations to go on air broadcasting English language commercial radio.
- 10 Dec 1936** Publication of Royal Charter for continuance of the BBC and Licence and Agreement between the Postmaster-General and the BBC.
Broadcast of the announcement of the abdication of King Edward VIII.
- 11 Dec 1936** Broadcast from Windsor by King Edward VIII concerning his abdication of the Monarchy.
- 12 Dec 1936** Broadcast of the Proclamation of Accession of King George VI.
- 1 Jan 1937** New Royal Charter and Licence came into force for ten years.
- 12 May 1937** Broadcast ceremony of the Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth.
- 20 May 1937** Thomas Woodrooffe broadcast from Coronation Review of the Fleet at Spithead.

- 31 Aug 1937** Broadcast of the Farr/Louis World Heavyweight Championship fight direct from the Yankee Stadium, New York.
- 3 Jan 1938** Opening of the Arabic service, the first BBC broadcast in a foreign tongue.
- 15 Mar 1938** BBC Portuguese and Spanish service for Latin America began.
- 30 Jun 1938** Resignation of the first BBC Director-General, Sir John Reith.
- 27 Sep 1938** Broadcast by the Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, on his return from Munich.
BBC German service, Italian service and French service began.
- 1 Oct 1938** F.W. Ogilvie succeeded Reith as Director-General of the BBC.
- 1 Aug 1939** First broadcast in English to Europe.
- 1 Sep 1939** The BBC Home Service commenced broadcasting at 8.15pm, in place of the National and Regional Services. At 9.26pm a supplementary service in foreign languages, for listeners in Europe, began.
- 3 Sep 1939** Broadcast by Neville Chamberlain on the outbreak of war.
- 5 Sep 1939** Start of BBC Hungarian service.
- 7 Sep 1939** Start of BBC Polish service.
- 8 Sep 1939** BBC Czech service began.
- 15 Sep 1939** BBC Rumanian service and Serbo-Croat service to Yugoslavia began.
- 21 Sep 1939** Radio Luxembourg closed down.
- 30 Sep 1939** BBC Greek service started
- 20 Nov 1939** BBC Turkish service started.
- 31 Dec 1939** BBC Slovak service started.

Prominent People

- Arthur Askey** — One of the many comedians for whom radio meant stardom. Askey and Richard Murdoch were the first British entertainers to make radio a specific medium for comedy (as opposed to a vehicle for existing material and routines) in *Band Wagon*.
- D.G. Bridson** — Geoffrey Bridson was a major Features Producer in the BBC's North Region, based in Manchester, and challenged the reputation of programme makers in this genre based in London.

Bob Danvers-Walker — Later to become a familiar voice to film newsreel audiences. He was a presenter, producer in the IBC's programme division, and was much involved in working relations with Continental stations. By 1938, when his title was IBC Senior Announcer, London, he had been instrumental in consolidating IBC interests in Toulouse, Madrid, Normandy and Paris.



Bob Danvers-Walker

Laurence Gilliam — Head of BBC Features, a post which came into existence when the Features Department was created as a separate entity to Drama in 1936

Tommy Handley — First broadcast in 1924 in *Radio Radiance*, and also made appearances on commercial radio prior to the launching of *ITMA*. So loved was he that at his death in 1949 a memorial service was held in St Paul's Cathedral, and Sir William Haley, then the Director-General of the BBC, broadcast a tribute to him. As far as radio comedy was concerned the decade from 1939 largely belonged to Handley.

Jack Hargreaves — Later in his career to become known to television viewers as the presenter of a gentle programme of rural affairs, *Out of Town*, in 1936 Hargreaves joined the IBC as Production Manager, and in 1938 became Director of Programmes.

Ted Kavanagh — A long-time collaborator with Tommy Handley, and the creator of the *ITMA* characters. He was to go on to influence the next generation of comedy writers, notably Frank Muir and Denis Norden.

Joan Littlewood — Recruited by D.G. Bridson as the presenter of the features *Coal*, *Wool* and *Cotton*, she became a major partner in the important social feature-making team in the North Region.

Sandy Macpherson — A warm-voiced Canadian who became the BBC Theatre Organist in 1938, succeeding the previous incumbent, Reginald Foort.

Richard Murdoch — 'Stinker' in *Band Wagon*, with Arthur Askey, at the start of what was to be a long and illustrious radio comedy career.

F.W. Ogilvie — Reith's successor as Director-General of the BBC. Ogilvie was the Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast, a man of considerable talents, who was, however, ill-suited to the difficult role to which he was appointed in 1938. Reith was forthright in his feelings: "I was quite sure he was not the man for the BBC."

Roy Plomley — After working as an actor, Plomley joined Radio Normandy as Chief Announcer in 1936. Moving back to London in April 1937, he became compere/producer of outside broadcasts, notably the touring programme, *Radio Normandy Calling*. Later he moved back to work at the Paris station, Poste Parisien, and was strongly involved in Radio International in the first months of the war. His BBC career was yet to come...

Olive Shapley — She had joined the BBC's North Region in Manchester in 1934, and after some time working on *Children's Hour*, worked closely with D.G. Bridson on features. She became a crucial figure in the recording of location actuality, and a great user of mobile recording units.

Robert Silvey — Silvey, originally on the research staff of the London Press Exchange, set up the Listener (later called Audience) Research department at the BBC in 1936. His appointment, and the establishment of the department, was a key moment in the development of the BBC, and met with considerable – and lasting – opposition from many within the Corporation.

Sir Stephen Tallents — Appointed as BBC Director of Public Relations in 1935, he made major contributions to the changing attitude of the BBC in its relationship with the listener. For some he was a potential successor to Reith. In the event he and Ogilvie worked closely together, particularly in the field of audience research.

Key Programmes

The Kraft Show — A 1936 Sunday series on Radio Luxembourg featuring Billy Cotton and his Band with Alan Breeze.

Toytown — A classic of BBC children's radio, written by S. Hulme Beaman, which became the subject of a *Radio Pictorial* cartoon strip in 1936. Mr Grouser, and above all Larry the Lamb (played by Derek McCulloch) were loved characters for children after – as well as before – the war.

Monday Night at Seven — Highly popular entertainment series which began in 1938, mixing comedy, music and a detective feature (*Inspector Hornleigh Investigates*). In 1939 it was re-scheduled in the same format as *Monday Night at Eight*.

Carroll Levis Discoveries — Extremely popular amateur talent show broadcast on Radios Luxembourg, Normandy and Lyons, and predating by more than ten years such similar programmes as *Opportunity Knocks*.

Laugh and Grow Fit — A real curiosity; the first radio keep-fit programme, featuring the entertainer Joe Murgatroyd accompanied at the piano by his wife, 'Poppet'. Broadcast on weekday mornings 'live' from Radio Normandy starting on 12 July, 1937.

A Question of Taste / Cad's College — Two titles for basically the same programme, which ran on Radios Luxembourg and Normandy through several months in 1937 and 1938 respectively, starring the Western Brothers.

Band Wagon — The programme ran from January 1938 to December 1939, starring Arthur Askey and Richard Murdoch, who purported to live in a flat on top of Broadcasting House.

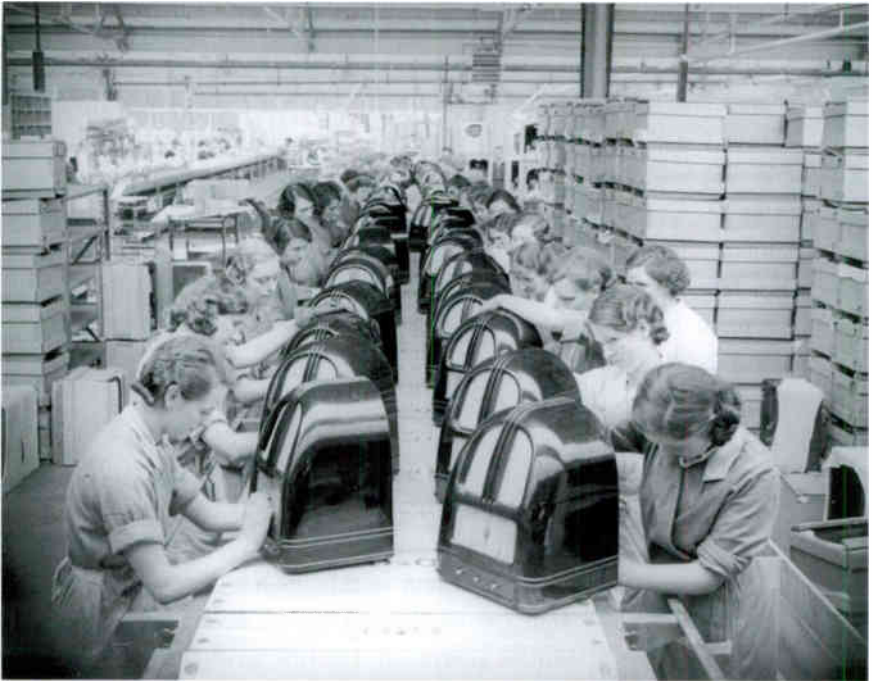
Radio Normandy Calling — Touring variety show, compered by Roy Plomley from March 1938, and sponsored by Maclean's Peroxide Toothpaste and Stomach Powder.

These You Have Loved — Doris Arnold presented the programme which started in November 1938, and gained great significance for listeners when the war started, carrying as it did messages and requests from the Armed Forces. It finally came off the air in 1977.

Let the People Sing — A novel by J.B. Priestley, which was broadcast in seventeen instalments, starting on 3 September 1939. It was written for broadcasting, the first time the BBC had commissioned an author to write a novel specifically for this purpose.

ITMA — First broadcast in a series of four weekly programmes starting on 12 July 1939, *It's That Man Again* remains a legend, having captured the imagination of the wartime generation. The first series was rather different to the format of later episodes, and was not a runaway success. Series two began on 19 September, and may be seen as the true start of the programme as it was to become familiar to millions.

Garrison Theatre — First broadcast on the Home Service 10 November 1939, the programme recreated the atmosphere of First World War troop shows. The show was instrumental in making Jack Warner a major star; it later transferred to the Forces Network.



Workers at Perivale Philco radio factory, 1936, putting the finishing touches to a batch of the new Philco 'People's Radio'
(Daily Herald Archive/NMPFT/Science & Society Picture Library)

V

“Broadcasting Carries On” 1939-1945

Despite the sounding of air raid sirens almost as soon as Chamberlain had delivered his sombre address to the nation on the morning of Sunday 3 September, the declaration was followed by the period of ‘Phoney War’. In fact as far as maintaining a broadcasting service was concerned the BBC had had its plans for the event honed and shaped for months. Immediately war was declared, the various departments were distributed to new homes outside London; Features, Drama and Schools Broadcasting were evacuated to Evesham, while the Variety Department and the Symphony Orchestra went to Bristol. At the

same time, through a piece of remarkable engineering dexterity and ingenuity, all domestic broadcasting became limited to a single wavelength which was to lend its name to a new network: The Home Service. The invention of the single wavelength was the child of necessity; it was known that transmitters could be used as beacons for enemy bombers; this enabled the service to be maintained to the listener should one transmitter be required to shut down due to the potential proximity of enemy aircraft.

In the meantime Radio Normandy had reinvented itself as Radio International, and continued to broadcast from Fecamp for thirteen hours a day,



Radio Times – 4 September 1939
Supplementary Issue 831A

DECEMBER 8, 1939

PRINTED BY G.P.O. LONDON



DEC. 10th to DEC. 16th, 1939

HAPPY LISTENING

Continuous broadcasting from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day to
THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE IN FRANCE



Under the patronage of the

BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE WIRELESS ENTERTAINMENT COMMITTEE

Chairman : Field-Marshal The LORD BIRDWOOD, G.C.B., etc.

Happy Listening – 8 December 1939

supported by a weekly programme sheet, *Happy Listening* which was distributed free to British troops. The idea of being beaten to a Forces Broadcasting Service by the old commercial enemy – as well as fears that the Normandy transmitter would act as a beacon for German aircraft – drove the BBC to create its own new service, and the Forces Programme began its first experimental transmissions on 7 January 1940. Radio International was closed on the orders of the French Government soon afterwards, but the BBC replacement was a clear demonstration that the Corporation had learnt some lessons from the attacks on its monopoly during the previous decade; Forces programmes contained liberal amounts of variety and popular music, a fact not lost on the domestic audience, particularly as the programmes and wavelengths were advertised in *Radio Times*, and were easily heard by the listener at home. Thus was created a Home Service and a lighter alternative, a concept forming a pattern for broadcasting which was to survive beyond the war.

That said, when the deceptive calm of the early weeks was broken by the fall of France and the bombardment of British cities in August 1940, the most sought-after broadcast commodity was news. One of the foremost characteristics of this war – as opposed to the 1914/18 conflict, was the fact that this was a war in which civilians played a major part and were able to follow its progress both at home and abroad. The principal factor in this was of course the existence of radio. Those who listened carefully to Bruce Belfrage reading the nine o'clock news on 15 October 1940 might have detected a low 'thump' and a brief hesitation in his delivery. These were the only symptoms of the havoc and death caused in Broadcasting House by a direct hit from a 500 pound bomb. On 8 December a landmine exploded in Portland Place, causing even greater damage. It was this event which prompted the BBC to move its European Service away from Broadcasting House, ultimately to find a new home in Bush House, in what had formerly been the J. Walter Thompson organisation's recording studios.

The war brought forth new radio heroes; J.B. Priestley broadcast regular talks on Sundays, *Postscript*, which focussed on the possible future rather than the frightening present. After Dunkirk he caught the mood and promoted hope for tomorrow with an unerring hand:

Our great grandchildren, when they learn how we began this war by snatching glory out of defeat, and then swept on to victory, may also learn how the little holiday steamers made an excursion to hell and came back glorious.



Jack Train and Tommy Handley in *ITMA*

On 23 June 1940 the first edition of *Music While You Work* was broadcast, and was to run until the post-war Light Programme closed in 1967. Other programmes grew out of the need to work, fight and live – as much as possible – normal lives informed by British humour. *Garrison Theatre* made a star out of Jack Warner and *Workers Playtime* started its long life in May 1941 from a Royal Ordnance factory “somewhere in England”. The programme, conceived by Ernest Bevin, the Minister of Labour, took popular variety acts into factories, and, like *Music While You Work*, continued its life well into the 1960s, finally ending its life in 1964. Most famously of all *ITMA* seized the imagination of the nation and changed radio comedy for ever. *It’s That Man Again* became a Thursday night tradition for all Britain from July 1939 to January 1949. Centred around Tommy Handley (who died three days after the last episode), the show produced a whole range of zany characters who were to become beloved to a whole generation. Mrs Mopp, Colonel Chinstrap, Mona Lott and Funf (the German spy) delivered a range of catch phrases created by writer Ted Kavanagh, which embedded themselves in the language. “Can I do yer now sir?”, “I don’t mind if I do”,

“TTFN” and “It’s being so cheerful that keeps me going” would be uttered like a sort of code by nostalgic listeners long after the show – and most of its cast – had died.

It is often stated that British humour was a major factor in winning the Second World War. If this is true, there can be no better personification of the fact than the character of Robb Wilton, whose gently self-mocking monologues about the Home Guard were the perfect antidote to the sneering propaganda of William Joyce (“Lord Haw Haw” as the Daily Express named the Irish-born German collaborator who broadcast nightly from Hamburg). Wilton’s musings on his war-time exploits usually took the form of conversations with a wife ever-doubtful of the quality of his war effort:

The first day I got my uniform I went home and put it on. The Missus looked at me and said “What are you supposed to be?” I said, “Supposed to be? I’m one of the Home Guards.” She said, “One of the Home Guards? What are the others like?” She said, “What are you supposed to do?” I said, “I’m supposed to stop Hitler’s Army landing.” She said, “What, you?” I said, “No, not just me, there’s Bob Edwards, Charlie Evans, Billy Brightside – there’s seven or eight of us.

Another radio tradition was born in 1941 when *The Brains Trust* came to the air, and made familiar personalities out of C.E.M. Joad, Commander A.B. Campbell and Julian Huxley. High-toned, and dealing with weighty philosophical, artistic and scientific issues, it nevertheless gained a huge weekly audience.

In January 1941 a new symbol of defiance against Germany emerged when Victor de Lavelaye of the BBC’s Belgian service introduced during a broadcast the V sign: V for Victory, V for Victoire, V for Vrijheid. Quickly the image printed itself on the consciousness of Europe – on both sides (the Germans also adopted the sign) – and the Morse version, taken from the opening three notes of Beethoven’s *Fifth Symphony*, became a signal of an imminent news transmission, full of portent.

A year later there was evidence of an internal battle which had been going on within the BBC itself when F.W. Ogilvie was forced to resign as Director-General, the main reason being that it was felt within the Corporation and the Government that “the chief executive control of the BBC under war-time conditions calls for different qualities and experience from those suited to peace-time control.” He was replaced by a man with a commercial eye, Robert Foot,

General Manager of the Gas, Light and Coke Company. In the wake of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, and the 8th Army's situation against Rommel in the Western Desert seemingly desperate, the event caused little stir.

Vera Lynn was by this time ensconced as the 'Force's Sweetheart' on her radio programme, *Sincerely Yours* which started in 1941, and *We'll Meet Again*, her theme song had achieved the status of an anthem. Notwithstanding this success, there were those within the BBC who considered that her "crooning, drivelling and slush" would undermine the resilience of the armed forces and that her ballads should be replaced with military marches.

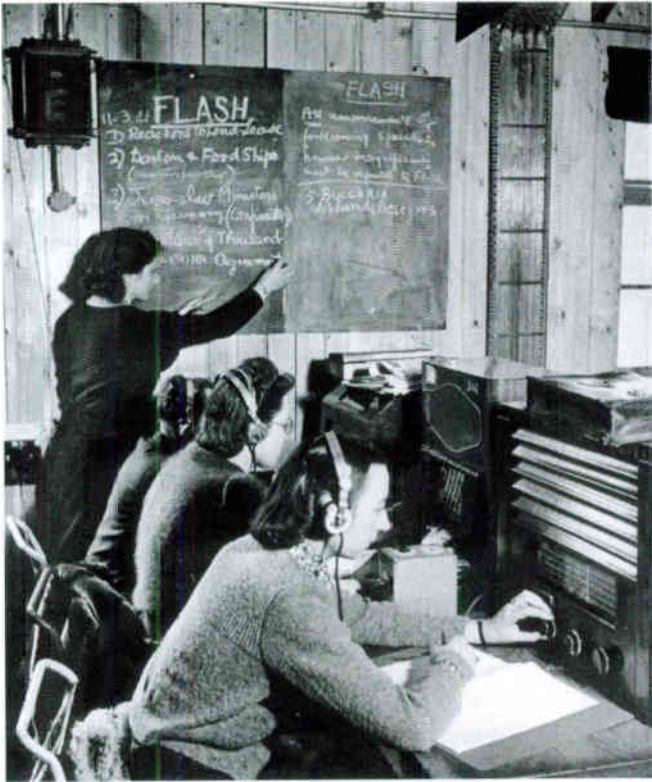
Notable among new programmes for 1942 was *Desert Island Discs*. Roy Plomley, the deviser and first presenter of the programme, had narrowly escaped from across the channel at the fall of France, having worked to the end on Radio International and other IBC interests in Fecamp and Paris. The programme was a simple idea of genius; a well known personality selects eight records they could not bear to be separated from in the event of a shipwreck casting them ashore on a desert island, together with a miraculously preserved gramophone. When the series began, later additions



Roy Plomley

such as a single luxury and a favourite book were not present. The first 'castaway' would have attracted a guaranteed huge audience at the time: it was Vic Oliver, a household name thanks to his regular appearances in *Garrison Theatre*. Other guests included in the programme's first year demonstrate something of the popular cultural *zeitgeist* of the middle-war years: C.B. Cochran, Jack Hylton, Arthur Askey, in the first of four appearances on the programme) Ivor Novello, Beatrice Lillie, Leslie Howard and Richard Tauber. Plomley was himself the 'castaway' in programme 15, interviewed by Leslie Perowne. In accordance with BBC war-time policy, the first two hundred programmes were scripted by Plomley *himself*.

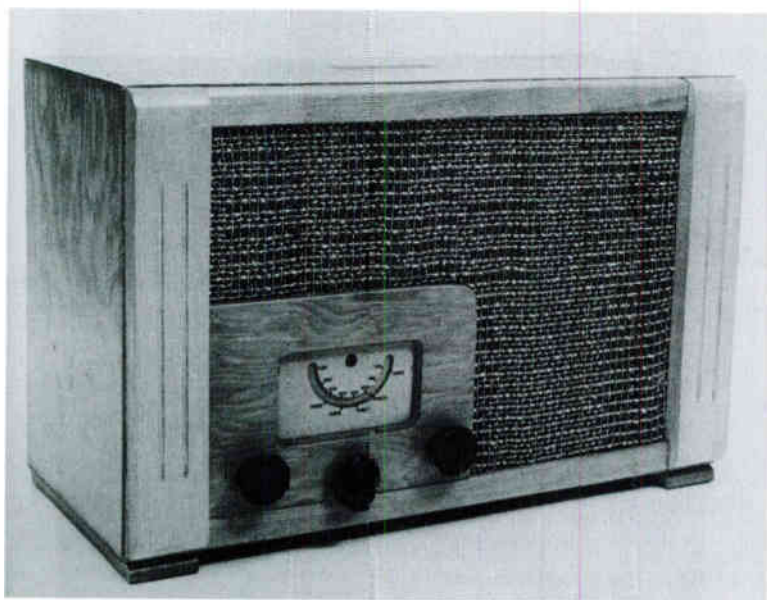
The warmth and comforting friendliness of these programmes were in marked contrast to the war work being done by such as Hugh Carleton Greene, the German language editor, who advocated the broadcasting of news to Germany in



Monitoring foreign radio broadcasts at the BBC – c. 1940
(Daily Herald Archive/NMPFT/Science & Society Picture Library)

short sentences, in order to subvert Nazi jamming techniques, and made skilful use of Hitler's statements in his own voice to prove to German listeners the inaccuracy and dishonesty of his claims and promises to his people. A different technique was necessarily adopted by the BBC's French service, its most important programme being one in which expatriates spoke to their countrymen within France, *Les Francais Parlent aux Francais*. By December 1943 the BBC was broadcasting in 45 languages from Bengali to Thai, and including Japanese. All this in addition to the English language Empire Service, with its staple news programme from 1940 onwards being the famous *Radio Newsreel*.

The war did not halt the great tradition of BBC radio drama; perhaps understandably gramophone records were used more than before the war, but there was still room for Louis MacNeice to create the magnificent *Christopher*



Wartime Civilian Receiver (battery model)

(Courtesy of Jonathan Hill, Sunrise Press)

Columbus in 1942, and *Saturday Night Theatre* was launched in 1943 with a major production of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. An increasing problem was the manufacture of radios to meet the demand both from the Armed Services and domestic consumers. A Government-inspired organisation known as the Radio Production Executive was formed, and from this came the decision to mass-manufacture of what was called the Wartime Civilian Receiver; although this had been put in motion in January 1943, the sets did not go into production until July 1944. From this time at least, there was a Radio Industry rather than a Wireless Industry although 'wireless' was to stay the term of popular parlance – and later of affection – for some years.

Technology was changing for the broadcasters, too. At the start of the war, the BBC had been ill-prepared in one particular area, that of news. Prior to the start of hostilities news had been very much the domain of the daily papers, and had been jealously guarded as such. With the coming of war, and a growing scarcity of print materials and paper, radio began the development of its greatest weapon – the only real essential service which could provide a speed of response to events in the field of information. In the early stages of the war the BBC beamed large



Desmond Hawkins at the Control Panel

amounts of propagandist programming to North America, as part of a campaign to encourage the USA to take a role in supporting Britain. Desmond Hawkins, later to be a key figure in the creation of the BBC Natural History Unit in Bristol, recalled working in the Features department alongside Louis MacNeice to produce a series of programmes called *The Stones Cry Out*, scripted semi-dramatised accounts designed to convey to the US conditions British citizens were enduring as a result of the blitz. At this time, however, the technical facilities were not equal to conveying more than dramatic reconstructions of military events:

For instance we might do a dramatised reconstruction of an air raid over Germany; in fact that is a good example of the sort of trouble we got ourselves into. On this occasion, at a very dramatic moment, with the bomber getting ready to drop its bombs, and an actor said "Bomb Doors open!". And then a few minutes later the same voice said "Bomb Doors gone!" Well that kind of thing can happen in a dramatic reconstruction – it doesn't happen in reality.¹⁵

D-Day, 6 June 1944, saw Hawkins involved in the co-ordination of a new programme, *War Report*, in which the BBC's war correspondents worked alongside allied troops, often in the very thick of combat, to send recorded eye-witness accounts for transmission to huge audiences in Britain and across the world in the fastest possible time. This dictated the necessity for light portable equipment. Stanley Maxted, Godfrey Talbot, Chester Wilmot, Wynford Vaughan-Thomas, Richard Dimpleby (the first BBC war correspondent in the Middle East) Frank Gillard and others needed a form of disc recording which was both instant and easily transportable. The answer was a machine called *The Midget*, and a chain of communication which somehow – seemingly against all odds in some cases – enabled the recording to reach the ears of the listener. Gillard, for example with Montgomery's Eighth Army in Egypt would record his despatch, send the disc overland to Cairo, where it would be checked by censors before being beamed back to London where it was broadcast both to the domestic audience on the Home Service programme, *War Report* and the troops themselves via Short Wave – all within 24 hours. The programme continued without a single break until 5 May 1945. From the first Normandy landings until the defeat of Nazi Germany it provided millions of listeners with a daily picture of the war's progress through the witness of reporters on the spot. Some of the most memorable radio of all time was made in this way, including Richard Dimpleby's famous recording of a bombing raid from the vantage point of the bomber itself, and the terrible pictures generated in the mind by his words on entering the Bergen Belsen concentration camp. In a fundamental way the necessities created by the BBC's decision to cover the war in this manner changed radio as a news gathering medium for ever.

Three months before D-Day had come the surprise resignation of the BBC's Director-General, Robert Foot, to take up the post of the independent chairman of the Mining Association. His place was taken by William Haley, who was to guide the BBC out of war and into the 1950s.

On 27 February a new General Overseas Service replaced the Forces Programme and, by making its output – more relaxed and populist than the Home Service – officially available to both domestic listeners and Allied Forces, Haley prepared the way for a time when, in his words:

The provision of general contrast, the feeling of competition and choice in the BBC's programmes, should cause what present demand there is for commercially provided competition to subside.¹⁶



Manufacturer's booklet for war-time listeners – 1940

Although Haley was the person charged with delivering to the public a new BBC programming structure for post-war Britain, plans had been laid before his appointment, in 1943. The Forces Programme would become the Light Programme, the Home Service would remain, with Regional variations, and a new service – the Third Programme – would be created to cater for what were perceived as more “highbrow” tastes and interests, including the arts. In the meantime there was competition for British ears from other stations which gave the listener at home a tantalising sense of the less formal style of American broadcasting. British audiences tuned to AFN, the American Forces Network or to the Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme, jointly run by British, Canadian and American broadcasters. There was something here that the yet-to-be-born Light Programme would not be able to satisfy, and which informed events in British radio twenty years later. Domestic audiences grew used to the more relaxed American style of broadcasting, and the voices of such as Bob Hope, Jack Benny and others began the Americanisation of British media.

On 10 September 1944 American forces arrived in Luxembourg, and by 23 September the Radio Luxembourg transmitter was starting programming in German aimed at the retreating troops as well as civilians in German towns and cities. Working under the name of Radio Twelve-Twelve (after the US Twelfth Army who were operating the programmes) the aim was to confuse and demoralise the enemy by giving them the impression that they were listening to a German underground station.

British radio was redefined by the events of the years 1939-45. Through this momentous time the BBC changed and developed into something in many ways very different from the Reithian creation it had been in the 1930s. Circumstances aided its placement at the heart of the nation, with the closure of many forms of communal entertainment centres, and the shortage of competing news media. At the same time its role as a broadcaster from the free world into areas of enemy occupation in Europe ensured an honoured place in the hearts and minds of millions, who would long afterwards trust the reputation of the Corporation as the deliverer of truth rather than propaganda. As Desmond Hawkins remarked: “For years after the war, if you were travelling in Europe, you only had to mention that you were from the BBC, to be clasped by the hand and welcomed as an honoured friend.”

Significant Dates

- 3 Jan 1940** Radio International closed down.
- 7 Jan 1940** Opening of special programme for the Forces, broadcast from 6.00pm nightly.
- 18 Feb 1940** Forces Programme extended: now broadcasts from 11.00am to 11.00pm
- 13 Oct 1940** Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret broadcast from Buckingham Palace to the children of the Empire.
- 15 Oct 1940** Bomb exploded in Broadcasting House, London killing seven people.
- 8 Dec 1940** Landmine caused further severe damage to Broadcasting House.
- 17 Mar 1941** BBC European Service moved to Bush House.
- 26 Jan 1942** Resignation of F.W. Ogilvie as BBC Director-General. Appointment of Sir Cecil Graves and R.W. Foot as Joint Directors-General.
- 26 Jul 1942** First broadcast of *Britain to America* series in the BBC North American Service, re-broadcast by NBC in the USA.
- 13 Jun 1943** Forces programme became the General Overseas Service.
- 24 Jun 1943** Resignation of Sir Cecil Graves as BBC Joint Director-General.
- 1 Sep 1943** Appointment of R.W. Foot as sole Director-General. W.J. Haley appointed as Editor-in-Chief.
- 31 Mar 1944** R.W. Foot resigned. W.J. Haley appointed as BBC Director-General.
- 6 Jun 1944** D-Day. Allied invasion of Europe. First BBC announcement, 9.32am.
- 7 Jun 1944** Commencement of the Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme.
- 23 Sep 1944** US Twelfth Army commenced German-language programming aimed at retreating enemy troops as Radio Twelve-Twelve from Radio Luxembourg.
- 1 Mar 1945** Adrian Boult conducted the Orchestre Nationale in the first concert to be broadcast from Paris since the liberation.
- 8 May 1945** V-E Day. Broadcasts by King George VI and Winston Churchill.

- 28 Jul 1945** Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme discontinued.
- 29 Jul 1945** The Light Programme commenced. Regional Broadcasting resumed.
- 15 Aug 1945** V-J Day. Broadcasts by King George VI and Clement Attlee.

Prominent People

- Richard Dimbleby** — Of all the war correspondents, Dimbleby went on to become the voice of public events in Britain. Memorably he recorded eye witness accounts of a bombing raid over Germany, crossing the channel in an RAF Mosquito a day or so after D-Day, and the entry into Belsen Concentration Camp.
- R.W. Foot** — Originally appointed as General Adviser on War-Time Organisation within the BBC for three months, he then became joint Director-General with Cecil Graves in 1942, succeeding F.W. Ogilvie.
- Frank Gillard** — Gillard, an ex-schoolteacher, pressed for greater mobility for the war correspondents, being rewarded by the creation of a portable disc recorder, a device which was to revolutionise the sound and making of radio. It was only the start of a distinguished career in the BBC.
- Cecil Graves** — Graves was the first Director of the Empire Service, and a major champion of the BBC's international reputation as a broadcaster.
- W.J. Haley** — From a career in journalism, he moved in 1943 from directorship of the Press Association and Reuters to the post of Editor-in-Chief, BBC. He was Director-General from 1944–52, when he became editor of *The Times*.
- Ted Kavanagh** — Born in New Zealand, he wrote *ITMA* for ten years. It was Kavanagh's mind from which the surreal and zany characters sprang. He and Tommy Handley were a team, and both were essential to the show's success.
- Leonard Miall** — Miall, who was to become a great chronicler of BBC history and people, worked from 1939–42 for the European Service, inaugurating news talks to Europe in 1939. In 1941 he was German Talks and Features Editor, thereafter spending the rest of the war seconded to the *Political Warfare Executive*.

Key Programmes

Postscript — A Home Service Sunday evening series of talks by J.B. Priestley which began on 5 June 1940. Under another name – *Once a Week* – and with a different presenter – Norman Birkett – the format had started on 9 February as a counter to the Nazi propaganda of William Joyce.

Ack-Ack Beer-Beer — Comedy show with Kenneth Horne and Elsie and Doris Waters and others, broadcast on the Forces Programme from 1940-44.

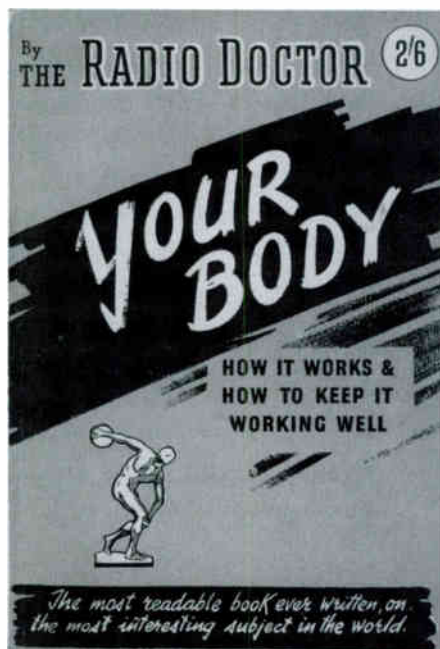
Hi Gang! — Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon starred with Vic Oliver in this light entertainment show.

Music While You Work — From June 1940 this half hour medley of non-stop popular music was broadcast twice daily for factory workers, relayed over Tannoy systems. The theme tune – *Calling all Workers* – was by Eric Coates.

The Radio Doctor — First broadcast on 6 May 1942, the programme introduced Charles Hill to the radio audience.

Radio Newsreel — Started in July 1940, the programme was broadcast first on the North American Service and subsequently beamed at the Pacific and Africa. It did not reach the domestic audience until after the war.

The Brains Trust — Home Service series which started its life under the name, *Any Questions?* on 1 January 1941 but became *The Brains Trust* in September 1942. Three regular speakers – A.B. Campbell, Julian Huxley and C.E.M. Joad – were augmented by guests. The first chairman was Donald McCullough and the first producer, Howard Thomas.



One of a number of booklets related to *The Radio Doctor* series

- Workers Playtime*** — Variety programme, each broadcast typically introduced as coming from a factory at an anonymous location. The long-running series began in May 1941, the first edition coming from “a Royal Ordnance factory somewhere in England”.
- Sincerely Yours*** — Broadcast ‘live’ from either the BBC’s Maida Vale studios, or the Aeolian Hall, Vera Lynn became ‘The Forces Sweetheart’ largely through this one programme. Aimed at the Forces and their families, it went out on Sunday evenings, starting on 9 November 1941.
- The Man Born to be King*** — The story of Christ dramatised by Dorothy L. Sayers and serialised in twelve episodes as part of *Children’s Hour* between December 1941 and October 1942. Produced by Val Gielgud, it evoked much controversy.
- Desert Island Discs*** — Roy Plomley, having narrowly escaped capture in the last days of Radio International, began his famous programme on 29 January 1942, when his first guest was Vic Oliver.
- Variety Bandbox*** — The programme ran from 27 February 1944 until the early 1950s, and featured Arthur English, Reg Dixon, Frankie Howerd, Derek Roy and Max Wall.
- War Report*** — Starting on D-Day, 6 June 1944, and running nightly until 5 May 1945, the programme featured the BBC’s war correspondents with eye witness accounts of the Allies’ progress across Europe.
- Family Favourites*** — The weekly request programme had its first broadcast on 1 August 1945, linking with the British Forces Network and remaining for many years a radio bridge between Service men and women and their families. Jean Metcalfe and Cliff Michelmore – later to become husband and wife – ‘met’ first over the airwaves of this famous programme.

VI

Change and Eternal Values

1945-1959

With the ending of war in 1945 British radio entered a period of broadcasting which has been called by many “a second golden era”. 1950 was to see a peak in the sale of sound-only licences with a total of 11,819,190, this in spite of the fact that in June 1946 the cost of a licence was doubled from ten shillings to one pound, with a combined radio and TV licence costing two pounds. The fledgling television service was resumed on 7 June 1946, but the major investment remained in radio broadcasting. Thus in the financial year 1945/46 radio facilities



investment within the BBC stood at £214,587 as opposed to a mere £14,487 for television. In 1947/48 sound was drawing spending of £6,556,293, while television saw only £716,666. At the same time the Labour Government under Clement Attlee renewed the BBC Charter in 1946 not for ten years but five.

On 29 July 1945 peacetime broadcasting in Britain resumed with the Home and Regional Radio services of the BBC. On the same day the Forces Programme gave way to the newly named Light Programme. On 29

A final handshake. Stuart Hibberd retires from the BBC in 1951, a year after publishing his autobiography, *This – Is London...*

September 1946, the Third Programme was inaugurated, created initially as an evening service of uncompromisingly ‘highbrow’ cultural speech and music. The appointment of Donald McWhinnie as deputy to Val Gielgud in the BBC Radio Drama Department in 1953 was an important moment in the developing relationship between writers and radio producers. As television grew as a popular medium, radio at its more esoteric extreme became freer to innovate and explore. The poetic voice of radio was developed with great richness on the network, notably in Dylan Thomas’s *Under Milk Wood*, first broadcast in January 1954 on



Dylan Thomas at Laugharne, the model for his fictional village, Llaireggub in *Under Milk Wood*
(Courtesy of John Idris Jones)

the Third Programme, Richard Burton playing First Voice in place of the author, who had died two months before transmission. More radical was the initially slow, but eventually burgeoning relationship with Samuel Beckett, which produced a number of great radio experiments. *All That Fall* was broadcast in early 1956, at a time when the Third Programme was responding through some visionary radio producers to the excitement currently abroad within the new British theatre, and young writers found in the network an increasingly inspirational patron. Dylan Thomas’s idea of a “play for voices”, something which could belong ideally to radio alone was a variation of a concept which Sieveking had been exploring twenty years

previously, but now that concept had developed with a sophistication of language that cemented the idea of radio as a literary medium. Tom Stoppard's radio play *Albert's Bridge* was the first major step on the path to establishing his reputation as a great voice of the British stage. Notable at this time was the work of Giles Cooper above all

others, defining as it did the idea of a "radio shape" to drama created for the medium. His *Under the Loofah Tree* is impossible to imagine succeeding in any other form. Drama thrived during the period, and the relationship between poetic drama and radio was never stronger: Louis MacNeice had produced his *The Dark Tower* in 1946, and Douglas Cleverdon – in addition to his production of *Under Milk Wood* – brought forth classics such as *In Parenthesis* (1946) by David Jones and *Night Thoughts* (1955) by David Gascoyne.

The post-war BBC presided over by William Haley may be seen now as being the start of a system of broadcasting which would evolve along cultural strands, culminating just over twenty years later with the creation of Radios 1, 2, 3 and 4, and the subsequent development of broadcasting into the 'branded' genre programming of the early 21st century. The removal of serendipity from radio listening which Reith had seen as a cornerstone of public service broadcasting was perceived by many as a retrograde cultural step, although in truth in the early years of the era there continued to be a considerable amount of overlapping of programmes.


A significant development in 1945 was the creation of the Features Department under Laurence Gilliam. Gilliam's philosophy, that "radio must initiate or die" was put into practice by his department's patronage of an impressive range of writers, among them John Betjeman, Louis MacNeice, Dylan

'Under Milk Wood'

THE FIRST BROADCAST PERFORMANCE OF
THE WORK SPECIALLY WRITTEN FOR THE BBC BY

DYLAN THOMAS

PRODUCED BY DOUGLAS CLEVERDON



First Voice.....Richard Burton Second Voice.....Richard Bebb Captain Cat.....Hugh Criffith Kevie Probert.....Rachel Thomas Polly Garter.....Diana Maddox Mr Mog Edwards.....Dafydd Howard Myfanwy Price.....Sybil Williams Mrs. Ognore-Pritchard...Dilys Davies Mr. Ognore.....David Close-Thomas Mr. Pritchard.....Ben Williams Butcher Beynon.....Meredith Edwards Gossamer Beynon.....Diana Maddox The Rev. Eli Jenkins...Philip Burton Lily Small.....Gwyneth Pritty	Mr. Pugh.....John Huw Jones Mrs. Pugh.....Mary Jones Mary Ann Sellors.....Rachel Thomas Sinbad Sellors.....Aubrey Richards Dai Bread.....David Close-Thomas Mrs. Dai Bread One...Gwenith Owen Mrs. Dai Bread Two...Rachel Roberts Willy Nilly Postman...Meredith Edwards Mrs. Willy Nilly.....Olwen Brookes Cherry Owen.....John Ormond Thomas Mrs. Cherry Owen.....Lorna Davies Nogood Boyo.....Dilwyn Owen Organ Morgan.....John Glyn-Jones Mae Rose Cottage.....Rachel Roberts
---	--

The songs set by Daniel Jones
Children's songs and singing game recorded by children of Laugharne School

— at 7.25 —

**Radio Times cast list for the first broadcast of
*Under Milk Wood***

Thomas, Elizabeth Bowen, Viola Meynell, Geoffrey Grigson and Laurie Lee. The department made programmes for all three networks, and created some genuinely innovative radio.

There was also what was called in a 1953 BBC paper “a large and eager appetite for the topical” which led to the development of a radio Current Affairs department, and a statement in programme terms of its policy, when *At Home and Abroad* was first broadcast in January 1954. Major international names from Pandit Nehru to Christian Dior were brought before the microphone, or rather – more significantly in many cases – the microphone was taken to them. The development of portable tape technology, with important machines coming from EMI, Nagra and Uher over the following twenty years, was to be a major weapon in the journalists’ armoury, and would also inform the work of the next generation of features makers.

With the creation of the Light Programme there was scope for entertainment programming of a more populist nature, and the major force behind the early policy of the network was Norman Collins, later to be a key figure in commercial television. Collins it was who launched the continually successful *Woman’s Hour* on 7 October 1946, the very day the British listener was introduced to another radio legend (albeit not so durable) in the form of *Dick Barton – Special*



Wilfred Pickles in *Have a Go!*

Agent. Indeed the year was one of numerous ‘firsts’ including the first edition of *Housewives’ Choice* and Wilfred Pickles’ *Have a Go!* both coming to the airwaves on 4 March, (although Pickles was broadcast first only in the Northern Region, finally achieving national status from 10 September.) This travelling quiz show, hosted by the genial Pickles with his wife Mabel “at the table”, which was to run for more than twenty one years, began its life under the producership of Stephen Williams, who had pioneered commercial radio on Radio Luxembourg during the early 1930s.

Indeed Luxembourg, alone of all the pre-war Continental commercial stations, returned to the BBC’s evenings with its mix of light sponsored programmes. The changing map of French broadcasting meant an end to Leonard Plugge’s media aspirations there. As Raymond Kuhn has pointed out:

The main concern for French politicians...was not so much to encourage consumer demand for radio, but to ensure that the medium would serve the objectives of the post-war state. The main provision of the immediate post-war legislation [in France] was the confirmation of broadcasting as a state monopoly with public service goals, placed under the responsibility of a Minister of Information. The Liberation government thus legitimised the framework within which broadcasting in France was to develop and attain maturity: a state monopoly with a formal public service role, but in practice closely subordinated to the political interests of the government of the day.¹⁷

Clearly there could be no place within this scenario for such stations as Radio Normandy, and if such an organisation could not exist domestically, there could be no foothold for international ventures such as the IBC. Such legislation did not apply in Luxembourg, with the result that the station, out of the hands of warring opponents at last, could resume an output in many ways similar to that of its 1930s heyday. Firstly on long wave and subsequently on its famous 208 medium wavelength, Radio Luxembourg was fed as before by agency production houses in London recording programmes such as *Take Your Pick* and *Opportunity Knocks*, both of which would make a smooth and successful transfer to television with the coming of ITV in 1955. *The League of Ovaltineys* returned in 1946, sounding very much as it had done in the 1930s, but with a new generation of Stage School children at the helm, among them the future popular entertainer, Leslie Crowther. Perhaps the greatest innovation of Luxembourg in the 1940s was the creation by its General Manager Geoffrey Everett (under instructions from the station’s London executives) of the *Top Twenty* programme, first

presented in 1948 by Teddy Johnson. In its first incarnation the programme was not permitted to be a count-down of top selling records, but of the most popular sheet music, *illustrated* by gramophone records. Johnson's response was doubtful in the extreme:

I said, "That's crazy. People are never going to listen to a programme like that, because all they'll be hearing will be the songs and the records that they've been hearing on every other programme during the week on every other radio station. People will just not listen to that sort of programme."

Despite Johnson's initial misgivings, the programme proved to be a colossal hit with the young audience, and Luxembourg was soon receiving an extra 1,500 letters a week as a result of *Top Twenty*, forging a path for music radio which continues to this day. Teddy Johnson left Luxembourg in 1950 and forged a new career as one half of the popular singing duo, Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson.

For the BBC the Spring of 1947 brought difficult times with a fuel crisis following on the heels of an infamously hard winter. Power cuts hit the whole country; the Third Programme was suspended for over two weeks in February, while the Home Service and the Light Programme merged from 15 February until 16 March. Full daytime broadcasting did not resume until 28 April.

On 14 November the Corporation celebrated its Silver Jubilee. Mindful of post-war financial stringency, the event was marked by the publication of a modest pamphlet, *Twenty Five Years of British Broadcasting*, in which, in a transcript from a radio talk, William Haley placed broadcasting at the heart of society, clearly sending a message of encouragement to theatre managers and concert promoters who were anxious about declining attendance:

[Broadcasting's] greatest contribution to culture would be to cause theatres and opera houses to multiply throughout the land. If it cannot give to literature more readers than it withholds, it will have failed in what should be its true purpose. Its aim must be to make people active, not passive, both in the fields of recreation and public affairs. It will gain, rather than suffer, if it can do any of these things. For it will flourish best when the community flourishes best.¹⁸

Just six days after the anniversary, the BBC was able to demonstrate its presence at the heart of the nation when it broadcast the wedding ceremony of HRH Princess Elizabeth and HRH the Duke of Edinburgh.

Comedy continued to thrive: *Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh*, starring Kenneth

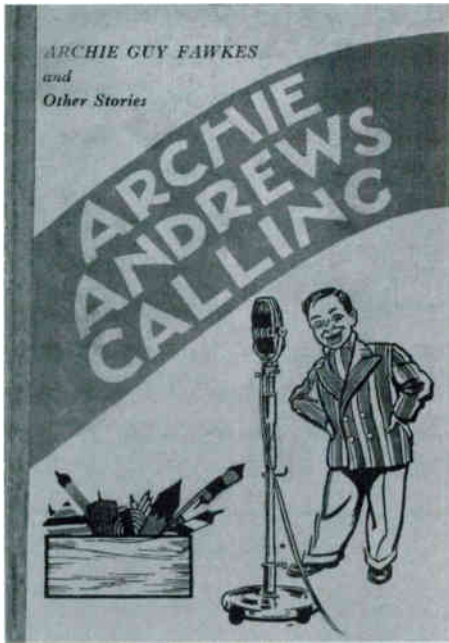
Horne and Richard Murdoch, began its first series in 1947; the long-running comedy writing partnership of Frank Muir and Denis Norden started with *Take it From Here* in March 1948 with Jimmy Edwards, Dick Bentley and Joy Nichols; and in 1949 came *Ray's a Laugh*, featuring Ted Ray. In addition, in January 1948, *Mrs Dale's Diary*, the first post-war daily serial started on the Light Programme, going out at 4.15pm to an increasingly familiar swirling harp signature tune. The programme became a



Richard Murdoch, Sam Costa, Kenneth Horne, Maurice Denham in *Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh*

a national institution, finally ending in April 1969. It has been reported that Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother once said of *Mrs Dale's Diary*: "It is the only way of knowing what goes on in a middle-class family."

Another key moment in the history of radio 'soap operas' came at 11.45am on 1 January 1951, when the first episode of *The Archers* was broadcast. *Dick Barton – Special Agent* was still running on the Light Programme at 6.15pm, but had its final episode on 30 March, to be replaced by *The Archers* the following Monday when the "everyday story of country folk" was moved to a new evening slot of 6.45pm. By this time Captain Richard Barton, late of the Commandos, had been played by a number of actors; the original incumbent of the role, Noel Johnson, had resigned in 1949 because, it was claimed, he felt underpaid by the BBC. He was soon to be offered the lead role in another radio 'strip cartoon' as the eponymous hero of the Radio Luxembourg series, *The Adventures of Dan Dare*.



**Children's book
based on the radio character**

see my lips move?" to which she replied, "Only when Archie's talking."

In May 1951 a new anarchic radio comedy programme was broadcast on the Home Service. Entitled, *Crazy People*, it was written by Spike Milligan, and featured Milligan with Peter Sellers, Harry Secombe and Michael Bentine. In June 1952 the programme name was changed to *The Goon Show* and shortly afterwards, Bentine left the team. It was to span the rest of the decade, redefining broadcast comedy with its surreal humour and moving quickly into myth and legend. One of its seminal qualities was that it *could* only have worked on radio – no other medium could have contained it.

Meanwhile changes were taking place at the top within the Corporation. In 1952 Sir William Haley resigned as Director-General of the BBC, to be replaced by Sir Ian Jacob on 1 December, who was to lead the Corporation through a period of profound change and challenge. The post-war years of British radio contained a curious tension between the values of the years before World War II and the new era; an amusing example of this may be found in a 1948 handbook for writers and producers, issued by the BBC under the title, *Variety Programmes*

Policy Guide and containing among many other strict instructions, the following guidelines on “Vulgarity”:

Programmes must at all cost be kept free of crudities, coarseness and innuendo. Humour must be clean and untainted directly or by association with vulgarity and suggestiveness....There is an absolute ban upon the following:—

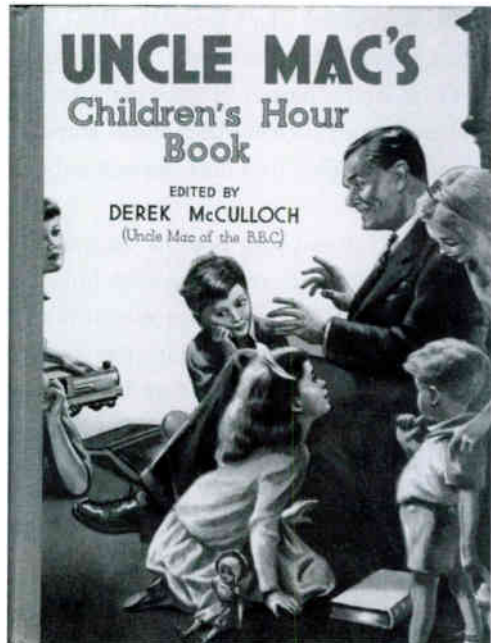
Jokes about –

- Lavatories
- Effeminacy in men
- Immorality of any kind

Suggestive references to –

- Honeymoon couples
- Chambermaids
- Fig leaves
- Prostitution
- Ladies’ underwear, e.g. winter draws on
- Animal habits, e.g. rabbits
- Lodgers
- Commercial travellers ¹⁹

Nowhere was the issue of this juxtaposition of values more in evidence than in the field of broadcasting for young people; in this there were parallels with BBC policy of the 1930s, from which children and young adults found escape in the Continental programmes of the BBC’s commercial competitors. BBC programmes for children contained some old favourites; *Children’s Hour* broadcast such serials as *Toytown*, featuring Derek McCulloch (‘Uncle Mac’) as Larry the Lamb, Ralph de Rohan as Mr Grouser and Norman Shelley as Captain Brass. The stories, originally from the pen of



One of several *Children’s Hour* books published in the 1950s

S. Hulme Beaman, had first been heard by children in the 1930s and continued to be repeated through the post war years. From October 1948 a generation of children listened to Anthony Buckeridge's *Jennings at School* for more than a decade, the adventures of boys in a fictional prep school, arguably untypical of post-war youth generally, although required listening nevertheless.

For younger children *Listen with Mother* began in 1950, with its familiar introductory music taken from Faure's *Dolly Suite* and the opening words, "Are you sitting comfortably? Then I'll begin." Outside of the traditional times prescribed for them, children would listen enthralled to *Journey into Space* which began in September 1953 with an intended life span of just eight episodes but subsequently ran for two more series, in 1954 and 1955, for a total of 58 episodes. It made household names of Andrew Faulds (Jet Morgan), David Kossoff (Lemmy), Alfie Bass and David Jacobs, among others. It also found another place in history, being the last radio drama series to beat television in the audience ratings.

Hugely successful as these programmes were, there remained an area as the 1950s progressed which found the BBC wanting in the eyes of the young, just as it had in the 1930s: the field of popular music. Particularly after 1956, when the Rock 'n' Roll explosion erupted in the United States and a host of British copyists such as Tommy Steele, Marty Wilde and others began their recording careers, the Corporation failed to reflect the musical revolution and to meet the demands of its devotees.

Radio Luxembourg became increasingly a popular music station (in both senses of the word) and, even with broadcasting limited to a 7.00pm start each evening, began to establish a record-based DJ culture in which its presenters became household names among the young. When Teddy Johnson left the station in 1950, he was replaced by Pete Murray, who in turn gave way to Keith Fordyce in 1955. Later disc jockeys included Don Moss, Barry Aldis and, newly arrived from Australia, Alan Freeman. They were subsequently joined by Jack Jackson, Ray Orchard and others. The BBC's response could hardly be called competitive with the relaxed presentation of Luxembourg. From October 1955 the Light Programme broadcast *Pick of the Pops*, initially presented by Franklin Engelmann with "a choice of current popular gramophone records". Engelmann was succeeded as the decade drew to its close by Alan Dell and then David Jacobs in a late night programme slot on Saturday evenings. In 1957 another concession



Radio Luxembourg headquarters – Villa Louvigny

to youth culture came in the shape of *Saturday Club*, a two hour programme of “the best of today’s ‘pop’ entertainment” presented from 10.00am to 12 noon each week by Brian Matthew. These two programmes apart, there was little to satisfy lovers of contemporary pop on the BBC.

The middle years of the decade brought with them other problems for the Corporation, most significantly the Suez crisis of 1956 in which serious conflict developed between the Eden Government and the BBC over the Corporation’s policy of revealing internal differences of opinion within Britain over the conduct of the affair, rather than, as Eden would have had it, putting forward to the world the image of a British united front. In the event the fact that Sir Ian Jacob’s BBC did not compromise itself was seen by many commentators as a crucial moment in the history of British broadcasting, and in particular the key for the international perception of the World Service in an era of cold war propaganda and global mistrust.

Through the 1950s the growth of television had been inexorable. The purchase of sound-only licences had begun to fall as early as 1952. Even more significant was the growth between 1950 and 1952 of dual Sound and TV licences from 343,882 to 1,449,260. Without doubt the public desire to witness some of the great events of the decade, notably the Coronation of Queen

Elizabeth II in June 1953, increased the demand for the new medium. But such things apart, British television – particularly in the second half of the decade – gained an impetus and a sophistication that made it irresistible. It was during this period that a trend emerged for development of programme ideas on radio and their subsequent ‘take-up’ by TV. Ray Galton and Alan Simpson’s *Hancock’s Half Hour*, began on the Light Programme in November 1954, and continued until December 1959. It starred Tony Hancock, Sid James, Hattie Jacques, Kenneth Williams and Bill Kerr, and in 1956 transferred to television, thereafter running on both media. There were occasions when radio could push back the tide, as on 22 September 1955, when the launch night of ITV was upstaged by an episode of *The Archers* in which the beautiful young Grace Archer was ‘killed’ in a stable fire. The next morning the *Manchester Guardian* carried these lines by Mary Crozier:

She dwelt unseen amid the Light,
Among the Archer clan,
And breathed her last the very night
That ITV began...
She was well loved, and millions know
That Grace has ceased to be.
Now she is in her grave, but oh,
She’s scooped the ITV.²⁰

That said, there was little doubt in anyone’s mind as to the long-term future of the new mass broadcasting medium. As Tony Currie has written:

By the end of 1959, television had been transformed. No longer was it an amusing diversion put together by a few well-heeled Home Counties sorts: it was the means by which the great mass of the UK received their entertainment, news, sport and information.²¹

Not for the last time, there were those who confidently predicted the imminent death of ‘steam radio’. Notwithstanding that, developments in recording technology (particularly the use of tape and the increasing portability of equipment) led in 1958 to a new and radically different style of feature making when Charles Parker, working out of the Midland Region in Birmingham with folk singers Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, devised a narratorless montage of location recording and song about the life and death of a train driver. Broadcast on 2 July 1958, *The Ballad of John Axon* was to be the first in a series of eight features broadcast over the next six years which were to become legendary.

Of *The Ballad of John Axon*, the *New Statesman* was to comment, “A generation from now, listeners will surely still be moved by this recording.” So it has proved; thus was born the *Radio Ballads*.²²

Significant Dates

- 1 Jan 1946** W.J. Haley knighted in the New Year Honours List.
- 1 Jul 1946** Radio Luxembourg resumed commercial English language transmissions, led by Stephen Williams who would be succeeded by Geoffrey Everitt, his assistant and, with Teddy Johnson, an early post-war announcer on the station.
- 29 Sep 1946** Start of Third Programme.
- 1 Jan 1947** Third Royal Charter and Licence (for five years) came into force.
- 25 Sep 1949** Italia Prize inaugurated.
- 12 Feb 1950** European Broadcasting Union formed.
- 6 Feb 1952** Broadcast announcement of the death of King George VI
- 1 Jul 1952** Fourth Royal Charter and Licence (for ten years).
- 30 Sep 1952** Sir William Haley resigned as Director-General of the BBC.
- 1 Dec 1952** Sir Ian Jacob became Director-General.
- 2 Jun 1953** Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II.
- 1 Jun 1954** Combined TV and Radio licence cost increased to £3.00. Radio only licence, £1.00.
- 2 May 1955** First VHF transmitter opened at Wrotham supplying BBC radio services to London and the South East.
- 3 Nov 1956** Suez crisis. Prime Minister Anthony Eden broadcast to home and overseas audiences.



**Marconi Ribbon
microphone, type AXBT,
used by the BBC from
1934-1959**

(Science Museum/Science &
Society Picture Library)

- 1 Aug 1957** Combined licence £4. Radio licence remained £1.
- 30 Sep 1957** Network 3 began.
- 14 Apr 1958** Radiophonic Workshop began.

Prominent People

Horace Batchelor — Regular advertiser on Radio Luxembourg, where his lugubrious tones would interrupt programmes to recommend his ‘Infra-Draw’ football pools method. A generation learned how to spell his home town’s name through the intoning of the address for further details: “Keynsham, spelt K-E-Y-N-S-H-A-M.”

Anthony Buckeridge — The creator of the schoolboy, Jennings. He was himself a teacher at a prep school.

Douglas Cleverdon — The producer of *Under Milk Wood*, he was also responsible for bringing *In Parenthesis* and *The Anathemata* by David Jones to radio, as well as *Night Thoughts* by David Gascoyne.

Jimmy Clitheroe — Diminutive Lancashire comedian who played the part of a naughty schoolboy in *The Clitheroe Kid*, starting on the Light Programme in 1952.

Norman Collins — The first Controller of the Light Programme and the instigator of numerous programmes in the extraordinary period of innovation between 1945 and 1946, before moving to television in 1947.

Geoffrey Everitt — After Stephen Williams, General Manager of Radio Luxembourg in the post-war period, and the employer of many familiar DJs, including Keith Fordyce, Barry Aldis and Pete Murray.



Radio Times – 27 September 1959
Cover design by Cecil Bacon

- Raymond Glendenning** — After pre-war BBC employment on *Children's Hour*, he became a freelance sports commentator for the BBC from 1945, and was for many the voice of radio sport throughout the 1950s. Famous as an incredibly fast speaker when the occasion required.
- Gilbert Harding** — The irascible and rude broadcaster who was the first chairman of *Twenty Questions* and was a familiar voice on numerous 1950s programmes. He was eventually fired from *Twenty Questions* after an infamous broadcast during which he was clearly drunk.
- Jack Jackson** — Originally a band leader, then on the Light Programme the presenter of *Record Roundabout*. He moved to Radio Luxembourg in the 1950s presenting programmes sponsored by Decca Records, and finally was to return to the BBC when Radio 1 opened. He was well known for his inter-cutting of script and comedy recordings between the music, a style predating the music radio of Kenny Everett and others.
- Louis MacNeice** — The poet and radio producer who had made a number of important war-time features. He is best known for his Home Service poetic fantasy, *The Dark Tower*, broadcast in January 1946.
- Al Read** — Lancashire comedian who left the family business of meat pie making in Salford to entertain radio audiences from 1950 with his wonderful array of character studies.
- Jimmy Young** — Although noted as a popular ballad singer in the mid 1950s, Young's contribution to radio has been infinitely greater. First introduced records on air in *Flat Spin* in 1953, was part of the original Radio 1 team in 1967, broadcasting for some years on both Radios 1 and 2 before joining Radio 2 exclusively in 1973. He remained until 2002, when he retired from daily broadcasting with a knighthood at the age of 77.

Key Programmes

- Housewives' Choice*** — Launched on 4 March 1946, a hugely popular record request programme, conceived by Light Programme Head, Norman Collins after hearing a similar programme on a visit to Sweden. The programme ended a month before Radio 1 was launched in 1967.
- Letter from America*** — Growing out of a Second World War talk, *American Commentary*, the first of Alistair Cooke's famous "Letters" was broadcast on 24 March 1946.

Have a Go! — Became one of the most popular of all radio programmes, attracting at its peak twenty million listeners. It was a touring quiz show hosted by Wilfred Pickles, and first went on air in the North Region on 4 March 1946.

From Our Own Correspondent — Originally launched as a fifteen-minute programme on the Third on 4 October 1946, and running weekly until June 1949, it subsequently moved to a half-hour slot on the Home Service on 25 September 1955. It still continues today.

Woman's Hour — Began on 7 October 1946. Jean Metcalfe was an early presenter, followed in 1958 by Marjorie Anderson. How to catch mice and how to bleach black-out material were early topics. And on the very same day...

Dick Barton – Special Agent — With side-kicks Snowey White and Jock Anderson, the first daily serial on BBC radio is still remembered, if only for its theme tune, Charles Williams' *Devil's Gallop*.

Down Your Way — The programme existed in its original format – that of visiting a specific place, interviewing the locals and inviting them to choose a piece of music – until 1987. Presenters during that time were Stewart MacPherson (1946-50), Richard Dimpleby (1950-55), Franklin Engelmann (1955-72) and Brian Johnston (1972-87)

Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh — Said to be the favourite programme of King George VI, the programme brought the talents of Richard Murdoch and Kenneth Horne together with Sam Costa and Maurice Denham. Set in an imaginary ex-RAF station, transformed into a country club, it was first broadcast on 2 January 1947.

Twenty Questions — Starting on the Light Programme on 28 February 1947, the show ran until 1976, and also appeared on Radio Luxembourg.

How To... — Stephen Potter and Joyce Grenfell conceived the series in 1946 for the Third Programme. It was made up of satirical sketches built around a specific theme, i.e. *How to Give a Party*, *How to Broadcast*, etc. *How to Listen* was the first ever programme aired on the Third Programme, at 6.00pm on 29 September 1946.

How Does Your Garden Grow? — The programme was to become *Gardeners' Question Time*, and was first broadcast on 9 April 1947. Conceived by North Region Producer Robert Stead who chaired the first programme with garden experts Fred Loads and Bill Sowerbutts who were to stay with it for thirty years.

Take it From Here — Started on 23 March 1948, with Jimmy Edwards, Dick Bentley and Joy Nichols, who was succeeded by June Whitfield in 1953. Frank Muir and Denis Norden wrote the programme, the most popular feature of which was a mini soap opera entitled *The Glums*. It ran until 1959, but *The Glums* were revived on TV in 1979.

Top of the Form — A Light Programme quiz show featuring a knock-out general knowledge competition between secondary schools. First broadcast on 3 July 1948, it ran until 1986.

Top Twenty — When Teddy Johnson introduced the first programme in 1948 on Radio Luxembourg – of the top twenty sheet music sales – the programme was sponsored by Outdoor Girl lipstick. By 1952 it had become the top twenty record sales, and was hosted by Pete Murray, who was eventually succeeded by Barry Aldis.

Billy Cotton Band Show — Came to the Light Programme on 6 March 1949, with the Cotton Band, Alan Breeze and Kathy Kay. Sunday lunch times were unthinkable for many without Cotton's call, "Wakey-Wakey", and the familiar strains of the theme tune, *Somebody Stole my Gal*.

Ray's a Laugh — 4 April 1949 brought Ted Ray's popular comedy programme, with Kitty Bluett playing Ted's wife, and other appearances by Patricia Hayes and a young Peter Sellers.

Opportunity Knocks — The famous talent show began life on the Light Programme in 1949, before moving to Radio Luxembourg in 1950. Later to become an ITV staple, it was from the start compered by Hughie Green.

Take Your Pick — Another early 1950s Radio Luxembourg quiz which moved to television with the coming of ITV, hosted by Michael Miles.



Michael Miles

Listen with Mother — First broadcast on 16 January 1950, a fifteen-minute programme for the under fives consisting of stories, nursery rhymes and songs. It's traditional time for broadcast was originally a quarter to two in the afternoon.

Life with the Lyons — From 5 November 1950, the US imported Lyon family, Bebe and Ben, with their children, Richard and Barbara, starred in this sit-com through the 1950s.

- The Adventures of Dan Dare*** — Radio Luxembourg series based on the science fiction hero of the *Eagle* comic, which ran from 1951 to 1956.
- The Archers*** — Conceived as a palatable way to convey information to farmers in post-war Britain, radio's longest running soap opera started on 1 January 1951, and famously upstaged the launch of ITV on 22 September 1955 when Grace Archer "died" in a burning barn.
- The Goon Show*** — *Crazy People* was first broadcast on 28 May 1951, to become better known as *The Goon Show* from June 1952.
- Under Milk Wood*** — First broadcast on the Third Programme in 1954. After four and a half days of rehearsal, it was recorded on Sunday 24 January, and transmitted the next day.
- At Home and Abroad*** — An important development in Current Affairs broadcasting, it first went out on 12 January 1954 and continued until 1960. Launching the programme, *Radio Times* declared that "the essence of Current Affairs broadcasting is to bring to the microphone the *right* contribution on the *right* subject at the *right* time" – a definition it is hard to argue with today.
- All That Fall*** — Great radio play by Samuel Beckett, produced by Donald McWhinnie and broadcast on the Third Programme on 13 January 1956.
- Hancock's Half Hour*** — November 1954 to December 1959 saw Tony Hancock at the height of his powers in the classic comedy series by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson, featuring also Sid James, Bill Kerr and Kenneth Williams.
- Pick of the Pops*** — First broadcast on 4 October 1955 with Franklin Engelmann selecting from "current popular gramophone records".
- Today*** — The Home Service introduced it as a light magazine format programme on 28 October 1957, and from 1958 to 1970 it was hosted solo by Jack de Manio, famous for the approximation of his time-checks.
- The Hundred Best Tunes in the World*** — On 22 November 1959, Alan Keith first presented what was to become *Your Hundred Best Tunes* (it changed its name on 1 January 1961) It began on the Light Programme, moved to the Home Service and eventually continued on Radio 2.
- The Navy Lark*** — HMS Troutbridge sailed for 18 years on the Light Programme and Radio 2, making it the longest running comedy series on radio until *Week Ending* claimed that honour.

VII

Radio Revolution

1960-1972

On 16 August 1960, Charles Parker produced what was to become the most famous of all the *Radio Ballads* – *Singing the Fishing*. Like its predecessor, *The Ballad of John Axon*, the programme was a creative collaboration between Parker, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, and explored through location actuality and song, the work of Britain's herring fishing communities. Just as Parker's method of programme making had been liberated by the introduction of the portable tape recorder, so the 1960s began with a number of further technical developments which were to have major significance for the way radio would develop over the next twenty years – and how it would be listened to. By the end of 1960 there were 20 VHF transmitting stations in operation, covering between them 97% of the population of Britain, and it was said that one household in every five owned a set with the ability to pick up the higher quality signal. The importance of VHF (FM) was at least two-fold; firstly the low-power capability of this means of transmission enabled the same or near frequencies to be used by various broadcasters around the country. This single fact was key in the development of local radio in the years to come. VHF also enabled stereophonic sound to be explored by radio, thus keeping the medium potentially at the forefront of quality for those who required it. The first experimental live stereo broadcast, lasting just ten minutes, took place in 1960 on the Light Programme as part of *Saturday Club*.

The most important event of 1960 was however neither of these, but the seed of a technical revolution which was planted in a shed rented by a four-man electronics distribution company in West London called Tellux Ltd. The company's main work involved the assembly and distribution of sun ray lamps, but in 1960 they became, surprisingly, the British distribution agents for Telefunken and Sony. It so happened that this was the year that Sony released a new kind of radio; with the uninspiring title of the TR620, it sold for eighteen guineas, came in coral red and white, black and white or blue and white, with an aerial, carrying case, earphone, battery and polishing cloth. The crucial fact

relating to the TR620 was none of these accessories, but its size; measuring just three and a half inches by two and seven eighth inches, and powered not by valves but by transistors, the tiny radio was to open the field of mass consumer electronics to the wonders of miniaturisation.

The Sony set was not the first transistor radio by any means; the first transistors had been created as early as 1947 by American electronics engineers, and the first all-British set, manufactured by Pam, a subsidiary of Pye Ltd, had become available in 1956, but take up initially had been slow, partly due to cost and partly because the manufacturers had not taken the route of miniaturisation. In 1957 Ever Ready



**Sony TR620
pocket portable – 1960**

introduced their range of 'PP' batteries, designed for transistorised circuits, and by 1959 the mass production of transistors was enabling costs to come down. In that year nearly two million transistor radios were sold in Britain, with only 3% coming from overseas manufacturers. The arrival of the Sony TR620 was to see the start of a dramatic attack on the British radio manufacturing industry; by 1963 36% of the 4,500,000 sets sold were imported, mostly from Japan and the Far East. The TR620 dramatised in its design – a cross between a tiny piece of space hardware and a Mary Quant fashion accessory – the concept of portability in a style which was also prophetic of much of the popular culture of the decade. It was a clear break with the past, and the perfect answer to the monolith of the television now dominating so many living rooms by giving the emerging emancipated youth of the country a symbol of freedom of musical expression. Radio was free from the tyranny of the valve, once its greatest liberator; now it was more durable, literally pocket-sized, and with the capacity to go anywhere, a factor which was to prove one of its greatest glories for the next forty years. It is impossible to over-estimate the importance of the transistor and its impact on the subsequent history of radio. Its arrival on the radio scene even created a new word: the age of the 'tranny' had come.

While manufacturers had hit on a concept which was important in the growing teenage market for radio, actual content with youth appeal still lagged behind in Britain. Significantly 1963 also saw bandspread coverage of Radio Luxembourg on many transistor portables, for the young a relative oasis in a BBC-dominated market which persisted in making few concessions to the popular music revolution currently under way elsewhere. It was ironic that Charles Parker and his *Radio Ballads* team produced a major documentary feature, *On the Edge*, broadcast in February 1963 on the Home Service, about the lives, dreams and cultural plight of British teenagers.

*

A number of highly successful independent companies based mostly in London were recording radio programmes for transmission on Radio Luxembourg, just as the major agencies of the 1930s had done thirty years earlier. Among these was Ross Radio Productions, co-run by Monty Bailey-Watson and John Whitney. Companies such as this were busy and profitable. Ross at its peak was making 30 programmes per week, using the still extant IBC studios at 35 Portland Place. In 1964, Whitney, with John (later Sir John) Gorst, founded the Local Radio Association and began agitating for legalised commercial radio in the United Kingdom. The two men had first met during the 1950s, when Gorst had been working as the Advertising and Public Relations Manager for Pye Ltd, the company that had sponsored some of Ross Radio's Luxembourg programmes. Gorst, who went on to become the Conservative member for Hendon North, was to be an important figure in the lobbying of Tory support for independent radio prior to the 1970 General Election, a crucial moment in the commercial radio history of Britain. The LRA, together with a company called Commercial Broadcasting Consultants, set up in 1966 by Tony Cadman and Hughie Green was a major player in the movement for the breaking of the BBC radio monopoly. As John Gorst later recalled:

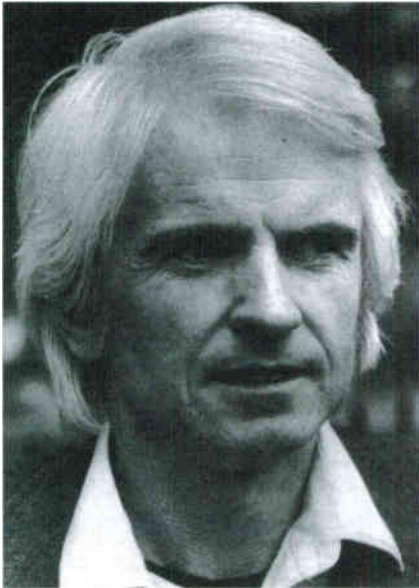
One of our aims within the LRA was to meet the argument of the BBC that there were not enough medium wave frequencies to permit the creation of a commercial radio network. So we commissioned the Marconi Company to research a feasibility study, and this of course proved that there were sufficient frequencies available.²³

The LRA put forward a proposal for a local radio network which might one day number some 150 local stations, with an operating cost of £60,000 per year. The Association even gave some indication of a proposed hour-by-hour house style:

Music:	39 minutes
News:	5 minutes
Other speech:	10 minutes
Advertising:	6-12 minutes

Gorst's partner, John Whitney had been hopeful of success; unfortunately the LRA was developing its plans at the time of a particularly intransigent Labour Government led by Harold Wilson, with a determined anti-independent radio policy:

I went off to see Edward Short who was the Postmaster-General for the Labour Party. And I went in front of him and he fumbled around in his drawer and produced a letter I'd written to him. And he said, "If you're the man who wrote this letter, we're not interested. I'm sorry if I've wasted your time, but I felt I should say it to you, face to face."²²



Ronan O'Rahilly

There were others however, who were active in the pursuit of commercial radio in a rather more dramatic and confrontational fashion. It was on Sunday 29 March 1964 that Radio Caroline, the brainchild of a young Irish entrepreneur, Ronan O'Rahilly, made its first broadcast from international waters five miles off Harwich. There followed an explosion of such stations which radically changed the course of youth music-radio culture in Britain; this was American-style, DJ fronted popular music radio of a style largely unheard of in the United Kingdom, and directly at odds with the BBC's post-war policy.

That said, Radio Caroline and its emulators drew their inspiration from a trend in off-shore radio stations which had existed off European and Scandinavian coastlines for some years. In July 1958 Radio Mercur had broadcast to Denmark from a site off Copenhagen. Other stations came and went, notable survivors being Radio Syd, moored off the Baltic coast of Sweden, and Radio Veronica, off Scheveningen in the Hague, Holland. In addition a notable exception to the rule prohibiting a breach of the BBC monopoly was the creation of Manx Radio on the Isle of Man, run by Richard Meyer, formerly of the IBC in the 1930s, broadcasting from 1964 as Britain's first legal land-based commercial radio station through a special dispensation of the Government. Permission was only granted in this instance on the understanding that its broadcast signal could not be received beyond the island itself.

In 1966 National Opinion Polls Ltd carried out a series of surveys to estimate audience size for the commercial stations, coming to the dramatic conclusion that 45% of the population listened either to an offshore broadcaster or Radio Luxembourg each week. In terms of the top six operators, audience figures broke down as follows:

	listeners
Radio Luxembourg:	8,818,000
Radio Caroline:	8,818,000
Radio London:	8,140,000
Radio 390:	2,633,000
Radio England:	2,195,000
Britain Radio:	718,000

Notwithstanding this, the political will of the Wilson Government would not be gainsaid; Edward Short's successor, Anthony Wedgwood Benn engaged directly with the pirates in what amounted to a battle for the air-waves, culminating on 13 June 1967, when a Parliamentary act designed to silence the stations by making it illegal to service the ships from which they broadcast received its third and final reading in the House of Lords. The Marine, etc. Broadcasting (Offences) Bill took effect at midnight on the night of 14/15 August, and all but the defiant voice of Radio Caroline fell silent.

If most of the stations disappeared, the voices of their presenters did not; at 7.00am on Saturday 30 September Tony Blackburn played *Flowers in the Rain* by The Move, launching Radio 1 on 247 metres, Medium Wave, the BBC answer

to demand for a popular music service, peopled mostly by DJs who had become familiar to pirate station listeners: Kenny Everett, John Peel, Emperor Rosko (Michael Pasternak) and many more. In point of fact the new station was something of a compromise, in that, due to needletime restrictions the listening was shared between Radio 1 and Radio 2, the new name for the Light Programme. Thus was born generic radio broadcasting at the BBC, and at the centre of this revolution was one of the great figures of wartime broadcasting, Frank Gillard.

Gillard had been working in the developing BBC regional centre of Whiteladies Road, Bristol since the end of the war, firstly as Head of Programmes, West Region (he created *Any Questions* at this time – not to be confused with the 1940's programme of the same name, which was to become *The Brains Trust*) and, after a brief return to London, as Controller, West Region. In 1963 he became Director of Sound Broadcasting at Broadcasting House, and began a series of controversial changes to the output. He abolished the Features Department, and terminated *Children's Hour*, to the consternation



Frank Gillard

of sixty MPs who signed a critical motion in the House of Commons, failing to notice what Gillard's decision was based on: the mass defection of children to television at tea time. Gillard also led the move away from scripted talks towards unscripted discussions, as demonstrated by the creation of such programmes as *The World at One* on Radio 4, the new Home Service. Radio 3 completed his renamed sound broadcasting service, although it still could be said to lack a full identity at first. The Third Programme had also held the name Network 3, comprising The Music Programme and Study Session, and even a sports service on Saturdays. Of all the BBC radio networks, here was one in desperate search of an identity, and the true shape of generic radio would not emerge until early 1970, as a result of the publication of the controversial paper, *Broadcasting in the Seventies*, published in 1969. This created the four networks for the first time as separate and distinct from one another. BBC radio at the start of the 1970s now eschewed the element of cultural surprise which John Reith had so valued in the

early days; it was perhaps a fitting moment for Reith to pass away, which he did in June 1971. Frank Gillard was to recall a meeting with Reith shortly after his own appointment to the key job in radio in 1963:

He invited me to lunch at the Lords, flattered me with clumsy praise that someone 'of my calibre' (his phrase) had been selected to run BBC Radio, and then launched his torpedo. 'Of course, Gillard, I shall expect you to restore my Sunday policy'. I had to tell him frankly that his hope was unlikely to be realised, and my calibre-rating very quickly collapsed.²⁵

Another of Frank Gillard's innovations was the establishment of Local Radio. Beginning as an experiment on 8 November with Radio Leicester, the first seven stations thereafter were Radios Sheffield, Merseyside, Nottingham, Brighton, Stoke-on-Trent, Leeds and Durham. Gillard's dream was ultimately to see a station in every city in the land, not as "amplified juke boxes" as he said, but as local centres of journalistic excellence. By 1970 the experiment was deemed to have succeeded, and further stations opened, beginning with Bristol, Manchester, London, Oxford, Birmingham, Medway and Solent with more to follow in subsequent years.

In April, 1969 Mrs Dale finally closed her diary, open to the nation since January 1948. She had survived the move from the Light Programme to Radio 2. She had even survived a change of programme name from *Mrs Dale's Diary* to *The Dales*, and a move from a London suburb to a fictional new town ('Exton' somewhere in the Home Counties). What the programme could not survive were the changes going on within and around the BBC. It was replaced by a new suburban soap opera called *Waggoners' Walk*, which launched the career of one of the BBC's legendary radio producers, Piers Plowright, and was to stay on the air until May 1980.

The BBC by the end of 1969, the year of Gillard's retirement, could be seen as largely having regained its radio monopoly, although Radio Luxembourg, now much diminished in its cultural significance by the age of off-shore radio and the coming of Radio 1, persisted. In fact, more momentous changes were on the way. The Conservative Party during its years of opposition to the Wilson Government had pledged itself to initiate legal, land-based commercial radio, and this was included in its manifesto in the General Election of 1970. With an unexpected victory for Edward Heath's party, it became clear that the period of change which had reverberated in sound broadcasting during the 1960s was by no means over.

Indeed a new pirate station, Radio Northsea, was to claim its own part in the defeat of the Labour government. Suddenly appearing off Frinton at Easter 1970, the station began broadcasting a constant diet of pop and anti-Labour propaganda. The government even jammed the station, but Radio Northsea changed its frequency – and its name, becoming “Radio Caroline International”, by so doing invoking a name which for free radio advocates had by this time gained almost mythic status. The station disappeared from the airwaves shortly after the election, but it may be that its presence, and the concept of free radio which it expressed, were issues of cultural and political significance in this, the first General Election in which the age group 18-21 were granted the power of the vote.

In Edward Heath’s new government, Christopher Chataway was given the position of Minister of Posts and Communications. The Queen’s Speech of 2 July 1970 confirmed the government’s intention to introduce legislation for a series of stations “under the general supervision of an independent broadcasting authority”.

In the new Government’s White Paper of March 1971, *An Alternative Service of Broadcasting*, plans were unveiled for the limitation of BBC local radio stations to a total of twenty, and to create a series of sixty commercial radio stations around Britain. What was also clear from the White Paper was that Chataway, who had visited the United States as part of his research into the reality of commercial radio, was certainly not going to grant licences for the kind of rebellious, anarchic broadcasting which had characterised the output of so many of the ‘pirates’, and which had so captured the imaginations of 1960s youth:

The Government’s intention is that the stations should combine popular programming with a good service of local news and information. Another major objective of the new service will be to provide an alternative source of national and international news on radio.²⁶

For the Opposition, Ivor Richard, the Labour spokesman on broadcasting called the proposals “a piece of Conservative theology which is designed to fulfil an ill-considered, half-baked pre-election pledge”.

On 1 February 1971 it had been announced that the BBC licence would cover television only; the radio-only licence was abolished; radio was from now on either to pay its way commercially, or to be subsidised by other means. The plans for the legal establishment of commercial radio on British soil were finally

ratified in the Broadcasting Act of 1972, the year of the BBC's fiftieth anniversary, by which time almost four hundred companies had been established with the intention of bidding for one of the new licences, when they were finally advertised.

The Corporation celebrated its Golden Jubilee with a number of commemorative publications and recordings. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh opened an anniversary exhibition at The Langham, opposite Broadcasting House; Edward Heath gave the main speech at the 50th Anniversary Banquet at London's Guildhall on 3 November; on 14 November Sir Adrian Boult shared the baton with Pierre Boulez in an anniversary concert given by the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall. Meanwhile BBC technical staff pushed forward with the further development of stereophony.

Transistor technology, portability, the challenge of television, the growth of popular music as a universal language for youth: all these things gave radio a new focus and the promise of land-based commercial radio seemed to promise even better things to come, at least for some. There remained many who saw a lowering of standards and a reduction of ideals in the new identity of radio. In 1970, Ian Trethowan, then Managing Director of Radio, brought the issues together, reconciling the past with the present:

Few today use radio as the staple diet of family entertainment in the evening. Most of them use it as individuals, mostly during the day, often casually, while they're doing something else. We may not like it: we may wish that everyone was listening intently, but these are listening habits we cannot ignore.

Significant Dates

- 1 Jan 1960** Hugh Carleton-Greene became Director-General
- 31 Dec 1960** BBC VHF transmissions now covered 97% of the population.
- 1 Jul 1962** Fourth Royal Charter extended to July 1964
- 28 Aug 1962** BBC commenced experimental stereo radio transmissions.
- 1 Jan 1964** Hugh Carleton-Greene knighted.
- 28 Mar 1964** Radio Caroline commenced broadcasting.
- 30 Aug 1964** Introduction of the Music Programme within the Third Network.
- 1 May 1965** General Overseas Service renamed the BBC World Service.
- 1 Aug 1965** Combined licence, £5. Radio licence, £1.5s.

- 30 Sep 1967** Radio 1 opened. Other networks renamed Radios 2, 3 and 4.
- 8 Nov 1967** Local Radio experiment began with the opening of BBC Radio Leicester.
- 10 Jul 1969** Publication of *Broadcasting in the Seventies*.
- 4 April 1970** Fuller development of BBC generic radio pattern.
- 19 Jun 1970** Conservative Party won General Election.
- 1 Feb 1971** Radio-only licence abolished.
- 16 Jun 1971** Death of Lord Reith.
- 10 Nov 1971** Opening of BBC Pebble Mill, Birmingham.
- 12 Jul 1972** Sound Broadcasting Act came into force.

Prominent People

- Tony Benn** — Having been a BBC staff producer briefly on the North American Service in 1949-50, he became known as the scourge of pirate radio when in 1967 as Postmaster-General under Harold Wilson he introduced the Parliamentary Bill which forced them off the air.
- Christopher Chataway** — Before his political career he had been well known as an athlete, and had paced Roger Bannister in the first ever 4-minute mile. Became Minister of Posts and Telecommunications in the first Heath Government, and was instrumental in the introduction of British commercial radio.
- Simon Dee** — The first voice on Radio Caroline on Easter Sunday, 1964. Absorbed by the BBC even before the creation of Radio 1, he also worked for Radio Luxembourg and, in a chequered subsequent career, became for a time a not inconsiderable TV personality.
- Maurice Ennals** — The first Manager of a BBC Local Radio station at the start of the experiment in 1967, he subsequently became Manager of BBC Radio Solent when it started in 1970.
- Kenny Everett** — Music presenter of anarchic genius who moved from the pirate Radio London to Radio 1 when the network opened, beginning a fraught relationship with the BBC. He later moved to Capital Radio.
- Ronan O'Rahilly** — The Irish entrepreneur who founded Radio Caroline as well as a number of spin-offs, including Major Minor Records.
- Robin Scott** — The first Controller of Radio 1.
- Ian Trethowan** — Successor to Frank Gillard as Managing Director, Radio,

who was to become Director-General of the BBC in 1977.

Johnnie Walker — The start of a long radio career was on Radio England, but he became famous – with co-DJ Robbie Dale – on Radio Caroline in August 1967 for his speech of defiance of the Marine Offences Bill, signalling the start of the station's legendary continuation of broadcasting.

Key Programmes

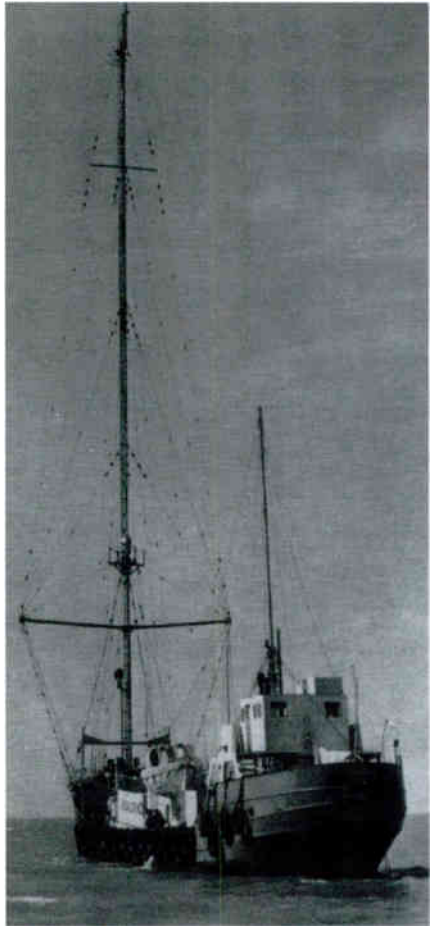
Round the Horne — Starring Kenneth Horne, Betty Marsden, Hugh Paddick, Kenneth Williams and Bill Pertwee, and mostly written by Barry Took and Marty Feldman, the series ran from 1965 to 1968.

The World at One — Created by Andrew Boyle, and launched in October 1965 with William Hardcastle as presenter.

I'm Sorry I'll Read that Again — Ran from 1964 to 1973, with John Cleese, Graeme Garden, Bill Oddie, Tim Brooke-Taylor and a future Managing Director, BBC Radio, David Hatch. A pilot programme, entitled *Cambridge Circus*, was broadcast on 30 December 1963.

Night Ride — A late-night programme, initially on Radio 1 from the station's launch on 30 September 1967, and subsequently on Radio 2, where it developed a number of the station's announcers as personalities.

Just a Minute — Radio 4 panel game, chaired from its beginnings in 1967 by Nicholas Parsons.



Radio Caroline

Waggoners' Walk — Radio 2 soap opera which ran for 2,824 episodes, Monday to Friday, from 1969 to 1980.

You and Yours — Daily consumer programme on Radio 4, first broadcast in 1970.

Analysis — Long-running Radio 4 current affairs flagship created by Ian McIntyre and George Fischer, the Hungarian-born former Head of Talks and Documentaries. The programme became notable among other things for its agenda-setting and its distinguished presenters, among them Mary Goldring.

Week Ending — Long running satirical topical comedy programme broadcast on Friday nights on Radio 4 starting in 1970.

I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue — “The antidote to panel games” started in April 1972. Little need be said about this programme except that in the Sony Awards, 2002, it was awarded the prize for radio's best comedy programme – on its thirtieth anniversary.

The Last Goon Show of All — On 5 October 1972, Milligan, Secombe and Sellers were reunited for one last show as part of the BBC's 50th Anniversary celebrations.

VIII

Independent Radio

1973-1989

The Sound Broadcasting Act of 1972 transformed the Independent Television Authority into the Independent Broadcasting Authority, with responsibility for both TV and radio outside the BBC in Britain, with John Thompson as its first Director of Radio. The first station to commence broadcasting under the new legislation was the London Broadcasting Company (LBC). The station, originally based in Gough Square, off Fleet Street began broadcasting a diet of news and information to the capital on 8

October 1973. The first man on air was David Jessel, and with a pleasing sense of continuity, one of the station's share holders was the IBC, for so many pre-war years at the heart of the battle to break the BBC monopoly. The station also housed Independent Radio News, which was to supply a service to the Independent Local Radio network of stations as it grew. On 16 October, LBC was joined on air by Capital Radio, with another great agitator for commercial radio, John Whitney as its Managing Director.



**John Whitney (right)
with Richard Attenborough**

Something which was not lost on those who tuned in to the first broadcasts of both stations was how conservative (in the non-political sense) the output sounded. LBC's started at 6.00am on its first day with a muted news jingle, a



**LBC Breakfast Show – c. 1985
Douglas Cameron, Bob Holness and guest**

short bulletin, and a recorded message of congratulation and encouragement from Edward Heath; this was followed by a rather more grudging few words by Harold Wilson in his new role as Leader of the Opposition. Some ten days later Sean Day-Lewis in the *Daily Telegraph* commented on Capital's "bland and relaxed opening, offering a staple diet of middle of the road pop music decorated with hearts and flowers chat..."

In fact it was to be one of the ironies of the arrival of land-based commercial radio in Britain that over-regulation diluted the character of this new 'voice'; far from the free-style mavericks who had fought so hard in the 1930s and 1960s for this moment, the first era of Independent Local Radio was a curiously Reithian affair. The first weeks of both LBC and Capital were difficult; audiences were low and LBC in particular underwent a number of difficulties with staff and content. Some seven weeks after opening, the Labour Party was calling on the Government to "put LBC out of its misery".

It was an extremely precarious time financially for those involved with many of the infant stations, just as it was a crisis-torn time for the country both at home and abroad. London was being bombed by the IRA, fighting in the Middle East threatened to spill into global conflict, it was the year of Watergate, and, as winter

came, Britain moved to a three day week and the Heath Government was brought to its knees. Tony Stoller, later to become the Head of Radio Programming at the IBA, and subsequently the Chief Executive of the Radio Authority recalled that

independent radio was not expected to survive. You had a very sickly child, commercially, to start with. The Heath Government came to power unexpectedly; it never expected to come to power. It had commercial radio as part of its platform, but because it did not expect to get into power, it hadn't thought it through, and it had no idea what to do. The route they found was to take the ITV model. (Remember commercial television came late to Britain – and it was conceived as a public service.) Then, within a couple of months, we walked slap into the miners' strike.²⁷

While the issue of regulation by the IBA meant that local independent stations had to conform to the Authority's interpretation of "balanced" output, containing a blend of "meaningful speech", relevant religious output and community interest placed amid a bed of usually middle of the road popular music, the stations also had to fight a battle against prejudice among some of its more influential potential listeners, particularly MPs. In other words the programming had to demonstrate that commercial radio could be more than it had shown itself to be in its pirate manifestations. An interesting by-product of this was reflected in the 1981 edition of the IBA's annual publication, *Television and Radio*:

Many of the best documentaries receive a wide hearing on Independent Local Radio stations throughout the ILR network. LBC in London has a regular weekly Network programme as a showcase for other ILR productions, and a number of ILR stations now have similar regular or occasional 'slots' for shared or networked material.²⁸

The concept of shared material developed into a formal process of exchange, firstly administered by the IBA, and subsequently by the Association of Independent Radio Contractors (today known as the Commercial Radio Companies Association). The Programme Sharing Scheme operated from 1976 to 1990, during which time a considerable amount of very high quality material was broadcast and exchanged between stations. It was a useful and economical way of demonstrating that here, in spite of whatever preconceptions existed, was a medium of worth.

The key word associated with this new development in radio was *independent* rather than *commercial*, and it was this distinction, together with the responsibility of stations to answer to audiences rather than shareholders that



Ken Haynes, keeping the early tradition of ‘Radio Uncles’ alive at Radio Forth in the 1980s

almost drove the whole system out of business. Tony Stoller, joining the IBA in 1977, was charged with defending this ethic:

One of my jobs was occasionally to write rude letters for example to someone at the BBC who had described it as *commercial* radio, and demonstrate that it was not, it was *independent* radio.²⁷

The funding of the Programme Sharing Scheme – that is to say the advertising, copying and distribution of tapes to participating stations – came from a controversial tax raised by the IBA on ILR success. The IBA owned the transmitters, and was therefore technically the broadcaster, issuing franchises to companies; if a company moved into profit (very few did) then the Authority extracted a percentage of that profit under the title, ‘Secondary Rental’. The fund built up through Secondary Rental was then made available to stations, whether they were in profit or not, to finance schemes the IBA felt would be of interest to the public through the independent radio system. One of the beneficiaries of this for a time was The National Broadcasting School; another was the Programme Sharing Scheme.

It is worth exploring in specific terms some of the programming created by independent radio at this time, much of which was shared throughout the country.

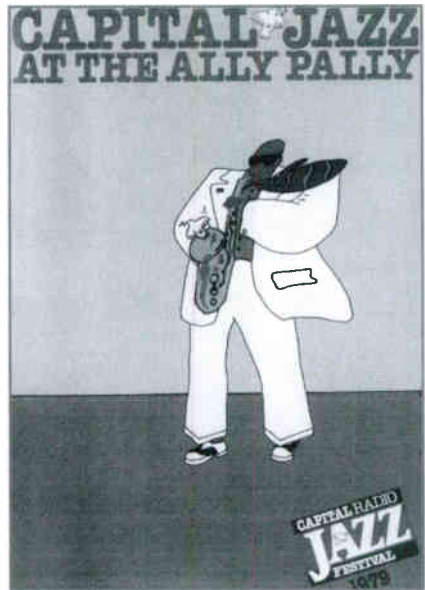


**The Queen attends the official opening
of Radio Clyde's new studios – August 1986**

In February 1985 Radio Clyde was offering a series of four chamber concerts performed by the Scottish Early Music Consort, featuring music by (among others) Rameau, Thomas Morely, Oswald von Wolkenstein and Orlando Gibbons. In the Programme Sharing Scheme advertising sheet for August/September 1988 we find that LBC was offering an interview with the internationally acclaimed French mime artiste, Marcel Marceau, while as late as December 1990 Hereward Radio in East Anglia had recorded for sharing a Christmas concert in Peterborough Cathedral by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Capital Radio and Radio Clyde boasted drama producers (Anthony Cornish and Hamish Wilson respectively). Without doubt the range of work being created by independent radio at this time was remarkable; Radio City (Liverpool) produced drama by Alan Bleasdale, Piccadilly Radio (Manchester) made a ground-breaking documentary on child abuse (*Conspiracy of Silence*) and Radio Hallam (Sheffield) won an award for a documentary on alcoholism (*Dying for a Drink*) produced by Ralph Barnard, later to become a key figure in the development of the GWR Group.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the financial pressures on independent radio remained considerable. In addition to the struggle for recognition, profits and

audience, there was a compulsory spend of 3% drawn from net advertising revenue imposed under an agreement with the Musicians' Union in the 1972 Act, for the 'live' employment of its members. Capital Radio ran its own orchestra – The Wren Orchestra – thus partly fulfilling this requirement. In addition the station lavished funds on an ambitious series of symphony concerts entitled *Great Orchestras of the World*. The recording of one of these, featuring Herbert von Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, London, demonstrated the lack of confidence in independent radio.



During the interval of the concert, von Karajan demanded that Capital's Managing Director, John Whitney, should pay him – in cash – half his fee, before agreeing to perform the second half of the concert. As Whitney later recalled in an interview with the author:

I had to go backstage with a small suitcase and hand over the money personally. He had severe doubts, you see, that independent radio in Britain was capable of delivering at this sort of level.²⁴

At the other end of the scale, the much smaller South Coast station, 2CR employed its own 2CR Big Band as well as sponsoring concerts by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, including, in 1984, a performance of Mahler's huge *Second Symphony, The Resurrection*. Many other stations frequently staged similar major concerts as a discharge of their MU obligation. Profit margins became increasingly narrow if they existed at all in a period of extreme financial instability; by February 1983, of the ILR stations then on air, two thirds were losing money.

Throughout the early 1980s there was increasing frustration among the companies at what they perceived to be excessive regulation which continued to jeopardise the very existence of the network. This frustration was shared – for different reasons – by the listening audience. Pirate radio began to increase again;

the brash sound of Laser 558, broadcasting from the American-owned *MV Communicator* drew huge audiences to its powerful transmitter off the Essex coast, and the station's promise that "music is never more than a minute away" and the reduction in superfluous presentation by its DJs had a strong negative effect on the listenership of both ILR and Radio 1.

The BBC pop service was shortly to undergo a new set of traumas; in the meantime the Corporation's radio services generally enjoyed – for the time being at least – a national monopoly. In 1979 Radio 2 became a 24-hour station. The previous year had seen the introduction of radio broadcasting from Parliament, available to both BBC and ILR broadcasters. Certainly BBC Radio continued to create programmes which would prove durable and challenging. In 1981 Professor Anthony Clare launched his combination of consultancy and interview, *In the Psychiatrist's Chair*. In the same year Brian Sibley's superb adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* was broadcast in serial form for the first time, quickly attaining near cult status. 1982 saw the arrival of the British radio industry's equivalent of film's 'Oscars' – the Sony Radio Awards, and there was, as may be seen amidst all the change, much to celebrate in terms of quality from both commercial and BBC sectors. Douglas Adams' ground breaking comedy science fiction fantasy, *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* had been created in 1978, and by the mid-1980s was an established cult, much to the surprised delight of Radio 4's Controller of the time, Michael Green. Ned Sherrin's *Loose Ends* came to the air in 1985, and was to continue to delight audiences with its elegant wit and discussion for the rest of the century and beyond. Some programme ideas however were less successful; *Citizens*, an attempt at a gritty soap opera, was launched on Radio 4 in 1987 as the network's first venture in the medium since *The Archers*, failing however to capture Middle England and thus fated to die in the early 1990s. In fact it was based, not on the East End, but on a contentious household in the fictional Limerick Road, Ditcham Heath, London SW21. Flawed from the start, it fell into the trap of what the *Sunday Times* columnist Paul Donovan called "soap box" rather than "soap opera". Radio 1 on the other hand contributed a speech programme which was to gain wide-spread acclaim: *The Mary Whitehouse Experience*, a blend of stand-up comedy and satire named ironically after the woman who had sought to fight for higher moral standards in broadcasting was a landmark in the careers of a number of comic talents, among them David Baddiel and Steve Punt. It subsequently transferred to

television. Also in the BBC Nationals' favour was the progressive move to FM. In 1988 Radio 1 opened its first FM frequency, and by the end of the decade could be heard in stereo by three quarters of the population.

There were technical innovations during the period which consolidated the revolution in radio consumption; in 1979 the first Sony Walkman went on sale. In 1988 Volvo was the first manufacturer to fit its cars with Radio Data System sets (RDS). For the first time drivers were freed from the burden of retuning car radios on long journeys; it was also possible to see a visual identification of the station.

Meanwhile in the independent sector, a new threat emerged to exacerbate the problems of the struggling companies. From 1974 to 1977 a government-appointed committee chaired by Lord Annan had been sitting to draw up a report which would provide recommendations which engaged the whole concept of public service broadcasting in the Reithian sense. Although Annan had its most significant input on the future of television, the creation of new TV companies had an indirect, although major impact on independent radio; in particular, the stuttering start of breakfast television, in early 1983, struck at the industry at almost its weakest moment. The most important part of the radio day was during the early morning; in 1983/84, this audience for radio was reduced by 10%. At the same time, partly due to the growth of television, and the perception of the medium as a rather impersonal concept, there was a growing grass-roots interest in radio as a community communication; a number of active social groups were becoming aware of the intimacy and relative simplicity of the form. As the issue of access radio began to be a factor a number of the pirate transmissions increasingly available to potential urban audiences were from ethnic groups who felt disenfranchised by current media developments, and in 1984 the Thatcher Government brought out the Telecommunications Act, and set about hunting down and silencing the voices of illegal broadcasters. Small-scale community and college radio projects found representation from 1983 in the foundation of the Community Radio Association, growing out of the third national Community Radio Conference, held in Sheffield in April of that year. The event flyer declared it to be:

A conference for people:

- active in community radio initiatives
- working towards radio stations controlled by their listeners
- interested in access radio which is open to everyone to express their ideas.

In 1984 Restricted Service Licences (RSLs) were introduced: short term, low transmission stations ideally suited to student and community projects. At first it appeared as though Community Radio Stations would become a reality within the short term; in the event, the government decided that while such stations should exist, they should do so as a part of a broader spectrum of radio broadcasting which needed fuller development, and which was to find expression in the Broadcasting Act of 1990. Part of the equation was put into place in June 1984 when a meeting of executives from stations currently on air was organised by the Association of Independent Radio Contractors under its recently appointed Chief Executive, Brian West near Heathrow Airport. Out of this 'council of war' came four key resolutions:

1. To make public the Industry's frustration at the IBA's over-regulation.
2. To demand an early substantial cut in rentals.
3. To press the Government for new legislation on commercial radio.
4. To commission an independent report on the potential for creating many more stations under light regulation.

For Brian West and the ILR company executives around the country the achievement of these aims was crucial to the very survival of the fledgling industry of commercial radio in Britain. Fortunately the pressure for change was irresistible:

Within three months many of the IBA's petty rules were dispensed with; within six months rentals had been reduced by more than a third and within a year an independent report (*Radio Broadcasting in the UK* by The Economist Intelligence Unit) had shown that there was scope for real, rapid expansion and that 'light-touch' regulation was both feasible and safe.²⁹

The year after this meeting, the Government appointed a committee to examine the future of public service broadcasting funded by a licence fee. Chaired by Professor Sir Alan Peacock, the committee published its report in 1986; notable among its suggestions was that BBC television should not be funded by advertising. On the other hand Peacock proposed the privatisation of Radios 1 and 2, a concept which, had it occurred at the time, would almost certainly have wreaked havoc in an already crippled commercial sector of radio. As it happened this suggestion was not implemented, although it continued to be debated from time to time over the next ten years. The committee also recommended that the BBC develop the concept of commissioning programmes

from independent production companies, as Channel 4 Television had pioneered since November 1982. The idea was to move quickly through both BBC Television and Radio. Peacock paved the way, in many aspects, with other movements for change current at the time, for the 1990 Broadcasting Act. In 1987 the Government published a green paper in which it indicated its intention to create National Independent Radio in addition to the local network. Once again, however, events pre-empted bureaucracy when a new long-wave pop music station, Atlantic 252, launched from the Irish Republic in the early autumn of 1989. Its transmission power was huge, and it was effectively the first all-day national commercial radio station in Britain. It was in 1988/89 that ILR was given the opportunity of splitting frequencies, FM and AM to provide separate services. Surrey's County Sound was the first station to avail itself of this facility, which in most cases was used to broadcast golden oldies on AM and contemporary pop on FM. By this time the AIRC's resolutions and their implementation had created a dramatic turn-around in ILR fortunes; between 1983 and 1988 revenue doubled, from £69 million to £139 million.

In 1989 the IBA licensed twenty-one 'incremental' radio stations, broadcasting within areas already served by an independent station. This could have been said to have been a move towards community broadcasting, or at least to satisfy specialist audiences; in the event many of them proved to be non-viable at a time when radio advertising was undergoing one of its many dips in support, added to the unpalatable reality, as Andrew Crisell has perceptively said, that "what the public wants to broadcast is not necessarily what it wants to hear."³⁰ Other stations were simply to be absorbed by larger groups as regulation changed.

The process which had begun for mainstream independent radio companies at the Heathrow Conference was to culminate six years later in the 1990 Broadcasting Act, which enabled independent radio to be truly commercial for the first time, permitting among other things the creation of large groups of stations and national commercial radio. Furthermore, consolidation of ownership was to be permitted, and most significantly the new generation of regulation would demand no positive programme requirements of the companies; commercial radio would cease to be regarded as public service broadcasting for the first time in its land-based history.

Significant Dates

- 12 Jul 1973** Independent Broadcasting Authority came into existence.
- 8 Oct 1973** First ILR Station, LBC, began broadcasting.
- 16 Oct 1973** Capital Radio began broadcasting.
- 28 Feb 1974** Labour Party won general election; halted ILR development and awarded more local licences to BBC stations.
- 10 Apr 1974** Government announced the creation of a Committee to examine the future of broadcasting (Annan).
- 4 May 1979** Conservative Party won General Election. Committed to expand commercial radio.
- 10 Apr 1983** The Community Radio Association (later to become the Community Media Association) founded in Sheffield.
- Apr 1988** First RDS car radio installed.
- 1989** Government relaxed restrictions on commercial radio.

Prominent People

- Peter Baldwin** — Successor to John Thompson as Director of Radio at the Independent Broadcasting Authority, from 1987–1990, when he became the first Chief Executive of the Radio Authority.
- Jacki Brambles** — In 1989 became the first woman to host a daytime show on Radio 1. One of the early British pioneers of the American style of DJ-ing by broadcasting standing up.
- Sandra Chalmers** — Sister of the presenter, Judith Chalmers, in 1976 she became the first woman to run a BBC local radio station, at Radio Stoke. In 1983 she became editor of *Woman's Hour*, and in 1987 was appointed Head of BBC Radio Publicity and Promotions.
- Tim Crook** — The founder – with Richard Shannon in 1987 – of Independent Radio Drama Productions, the work of which organisation was heard mainly on LBC in its early years. Tim Crook's work demonstrated that there was a place for quality radio drama production outside the BBC.
- David Hatch** — In bureaucratic terms, the 1980s were David Hatch's golden years. From a Light Entertainment producer and participant in such programmes as *I'm Sorry I'll Read that Again*, he became Controller, Radio 2 in 1980, Controller, Radio 4 in 1983 and then Managing Director, Radio in 1987.

Brian Hayes — Hayes' arrival on the morning LBC phone-in programme in 1976 signalled a sea-change in speech radio; here was a man who was not afraid to be rude to his listeners if they irritated him. He remained on the station until 1990, and has gone on to national BBC networks, including Radio 2 and 5 Live.

Garrison Keillor — Became a household name in Britain and something of a cult figure when his book, *Lake Wobegon Days* was read by him on Radio 4's *Book at Bedtime* in February 1986.

Gerald Priestland — Much-respected radio journalist from a Quaker background, and the BBC's Religious Affairs correspondent from 1977-1982.

Gillian Reynolds — The first female Controller of an ILR station – Radio City, on Merseyside in 1974 – and Radio Critic of the *Daily Telegraph* since 1975. She was one of the founders of the Charles Parker Archive in Birmingham in 1982.



John Thompson — First Director of Radio at the IBA, from its inception in 1973 to 1987.

Gillian Reynolds

Sheila Tracy — First woman to read the news on Radio 4, in August, 1974.

Ian Trethowan — Managing Director BBC Radio up to 1976. (In 1977, he became BBC Director-General, succeeding Sir Charles Curran.)

Key Programmes

Kaleidoscope — Daily Radio 4 Arts Magazine which began in April 1973, and ended when Controller James Boyle revamped the Network schedule in 1997.

Decision Makers — Produced by the Independent Radio News Parliamentary Unit, the programme focused on political issues in the news. As well as being transmitted on LBC, the London news station, it was broadcast weekly on the majority of the Independent Local Radio network.

Great Orchestras of the World — Ambitious series mounted by Capital Radio in the late 1970's, living up to its title by broadcasting concerts by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, the London Symphony Orchestra and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra among others.

Newsbeat — Radio 1's news programme, started in 1974.

Poetry Please! — Listeners' poetry request programme on Radio 4 which established itself as a much-loved part of the Sunday afternoon schedule.

The Lord of the Rings — Brian Sibley adapted Tolkien's trilogy, originally into 26 half-hour episodes, in 1981. It has been repeated twice – compressed into 13 episodes of 55 minutes each, in 1982 and 2002. Ian Holm played Frodo; Michael Hordern, Gandalf; Robert Stephens, Aragorn, with John Le Mesurier as Bilbo.

In the Psychiatrist's Chair — Anthony Clare's programme – half interview, half consultation – began on Radio 4 in 1981.

A Nation in His Hand — A remarkable drama documentary produced by David Lucas for Swansea Sound in 1981. Starring Philip Madoc and Sion Probert, this was a telling of the story of Evan Roberts and the 1904-05 religious revival in Wales.

After Henry — Simon Brett's poignantly funny sit-com started in 1985, with Prunella Scales, Joan Sanderson, Gerry Cowper and Benjamin Whitrow. Highly successful on Radio 4, when it was offered to television it was taken up – not by the BBC but by ITV.

Age to Age — History programme on Radio 4, produced by John Knight in Bristol. The programme's clever premise was to find parallels between current events and the past. Derek Wilson was the first presenter, succeeded by Barry Cunliffe and finally Christopher Cooke.

The Food Programme — Derek Cooper developed it from a fairly light-weight recipe magazine to a relevant, often topical and newsy programme. It was first broadcast on Radio 4 in 1979.

Folk on Two — Jim Lloyd presented the programme from its inception in 1980 on Radio 2. One of the programme's most useful creations was Lloyd's idea, the Young Tradition Award, open to folk artists under 25.

Face the Facts — Radio 4 investigative series started in 1986, fronted by Margo MacDonald. She was succeeded by the excellent John Waite in January 1986, the very month his cousin, Terry Waite, envoy to the Archbishop of Canterbury, was captured in Beirut.

Feedback — Radio 4's weekly listener response programme started in 1979. Among its presenters has been the moral campaigner Mary Whitehouse.

File on Four — Created by one future Radio 4 Controller, Michael Green in 1977 – and featuring another, Helen Boaden, as part of its production team, it remains one of the network's most important current affairs programmes.

IX

Digital Dreams

1990-2002

As far as the development of British commercial radio was concerned, The Broadcasting Act of 1990 saw the verification and continuation of change which had already been set in motion at the Heathrow Conference of 1984. The Independent Broadcasting Authority was abolished, and created in its place were two distinct bodies as regulators for independent television (The Independent Television Commission) and radio (The Radio Authority). Commercial radio's very sound changed; gone was the 'meaningful' speech of the early days of the 70s and 80s, and in the decade which was to follow the Act – and beyond – small-scale commercial stations, increasingly automated, were to proliferate, while major radio groups such as GWR, Capital and Emap continued to buy up more and more local stations. The consequence of this latter expansion was to create a unity of sound and branding which in a sense created a national network. It also confined listener choice within the sector, and commercial radio's critics pointed to a 'sameness' of output which turned radio into a branded product rather than a service. Indeed the word *branding* was to become the cornerstone as radio moved – at times falteringly - onwards towards the digital age.

One of the most significant features of the 1990 Act was the invitation for bids for three truly national commercial radio stations. The first of these, Classic FM, went on air in September 1992, followed by Virgin 1215 in April 1993 and TalkRadio UK in February 1995. Meanwhile the decade had begun at the BBC with two major events; in that year Radio 2 became the first national radio service to be broadcast on FM only, while on AM a new station opened in the form of Radio 5, which, in its original form, struggled from the start to gain an audience. This was largely because it lacked a clear brand image; a mix of sport, news and programming for young people, it was to be relaunched as Radio 5 Live in March 1994, and subsequently developed a strong current affairs/sport profile which made it increasingly popular.

The new freedom in commercial radio allowed the sector to compete with BBC popular radio in a more aggressive way, and this was demonstrated by 1993

by a spectacular falling-off of the Radio 1 audience. Matthew Bannister, then Controller of the station, set about redefining its brand image, a process which had been long overdue, since it was still employing a generation of presenters who belonged to its first years and, even more disturbingly, to an era before that. Bannister's time at Radio 1 was controversial; many of the old order resigned, (famously Dave Lee Travis, 'live' on air). The station continued to lose its audience, and, although it has improved its share of the youth audience it was created to serve, by the early years of the new millennium, its place in an increasingly competitive music radio world was one which could not be taken for granted. With the arrival of Chris Evans as breakfast show presenter in February 1995, the network entered a more stable period.

The mid 1990s were boom years for commercial radio; by 1995, independent radio's audience share overtook that of the BBC for the first time ever; between 1992 and 1995, revenue from advertising almost doubled, from £141 million to £270 million.

Significant in the new-found success of commercial radio may well have been the creation of Classic FM as its first national station. It has been said that, with the arrival of a broadcaster which played classical music – albeit in a pop music radio format – commercial radio could be seen to have 'grown up'. Advertising executives could for the first time approach company directors and demonstrate that here was a station which was both successful in terms of selling advertising, but which was also appealing to an audience beyond the youth market and reaching into the homes of professional families. In the Autumn of 1995, further commercial radio expansion was enabled by the development of the 105-108 Mhz FM frequencies, and the Radio Authority began advertising for new licences from a working list of 33 areas.

In September 1995, the BBC launched digital radio, carrying all its existing national services. Liz Forgan, Managing Director, BBC Network Radio, called it an "historic moment", marking...

...the dawn of a third age of radio – the technological progression from AM which is now 100 years old, and FM, now 50 years old, into the digital multi-media world of the 21st century. Consumers will get superb quality sound, a fade-free signal and a whole range of new services on simple, easy-to-use sets.³¹

The 1996 Broadcasting Act published in July of that year set out officially a digital future for radio, for television and for other services. It was, to quote its opening sentence:

An Act to make provision about the broadcasting in digital form of television and sound programme services and the broadcasting in that form on television or radio frequencies of other services.³²

The promise was of a crystal-clear service without interference, with secondary material including text and even graphics in addition to the sound signal. To receive this, the listener was required to invest in a new-style receiver. The national Commercial Multiplex was advertised by the Radio Authority in 1997; there was only one applicant. The GWR Group's Digital One launched in the Spring of 1999, offering a raft of stations including Classic FM as an alternative to its FM transmission. Virgin – still broadcasting to most of Britain on AM only, was one of two stations for whom technical quality was a major benefit of being a part of Digital One's service, the other being TalkSPORT, also an AM station (by now under the ownership of Kelvin McKenzie and with a changed brief from its earlier incarnation as a broadcaster of 'shock jock' style speech radio, an American formula which had proved unsuccessful in the UK). Other stations were digital-only: Planet Rock; the speech station, Oneword; Primetime (Saga); Life, (a middle of the road music station run by the Capital group); Core (dance). Virgin had been taken over by Chris Evans' Ginger Group in December 1997, while the controversial presenter's much publicised and acrimonious split with Radio 1 had led to the breakfast show being taken over by first Mark Radcliffe and Marc 'Lard' Riley (unsuccessfully) and then by Zoë Ball and Kevin Greening. During 1998, amidst rumours that Evans was trying to lure Ball to Virgin Radio, she was given sole custody of the Radio One breakfast show.

The years 1996–1998 were eventful ones for Matthew Bannister, who replaced Liz Forgan as Head of Radio, in 1996 while remaining in charge of Radio 1. Two years later he became Chief Executive, BBC Production, handing over Radio 1 to his deputy, Andy Parfitt. 1998 was a year of change for BBC Network Radio controllers; in July, Radio 3's Controller,



Andy Parfitt



**Sara Cox, Jamie Theakston Humphrey Lyttelton and Tim Brooke-Taylor
Sony Radio Academy Awards**

Nicholas Kenyon resigned with two years of his contract still to run, and was succeeded by Roger Wright. James Boyle, who had taken over from Michael Green in 1997, made radical and controversial changes to the network's schedule in April 1998, while James Moir's refurbishment of Radio 2 was bearing fruit, with disenfranchised listeners from Radio 1's new younger profile finding sanctuary in its "gold" style daytime format. In July one of the station's long-term presenters, John Dunn, resigned after 23 years, to be replaced in the autumn by Johnnie Walker on the drivetime show.

For the rest of the decade and into the new century, digital radio was stifled by a circular problem; manufacturers would not invest in the mass production of receivers until a full service was available from national transmitters – and was demonstrated to have created a consumer demand. This failure to mass produce kept the price of the receivers extremely high, and by the Summer of 2002 it was said that under 60,000 households possessed one. Sky Satellite TV subscribers could receive the programmes via their television receivers, a factor which further inhibited receiver development. There was talk of switching off analogue transmitters, providing listeners with a *fait accompli*; however statistics showed that by the year 2002 the average number of radio sets per household was six, and the replacement of receivers on such a scale was a hard concept to instigate. Nevertheless it became clear that the high quality of sound offered by digital receivers was not sufficient to justify the high cost of the sets required; in fact a number of listeners complained that the sound was less pleasing than the

‘warmer’ analogue signal, and as a result GWR engineers modified the Classic FM digital signal to compensate for this. Alternative digital-only services – such as the Radio 5 Live Sports Extra service – were potentially attractive ‘add-ons’ but still the take-up remained low.

Perhaps part of the problem was to be found in the proliferation of technologies offering radio in a number of new forms. Internet radio began to attract the attention of a growing number of potential broadcasters. Initially perceived as another means of broadcasting – or in this case, ‘narrowcasting’ – as the century turned a number of major companies saw it rather as a means of extending brand rather than as a discrete broadcasting platform. Nevertheless by 2002 there were literally hundreds of radio webcasters, products of a boom in 1998 which saw the web as a universal answer to business expansion in many areas in addition to radio. As time went on many stations came and went: in the Spring of 2002, a major player in the area, Stormlive ceased its operation, the loss of which raised some serious questions as to the potential viability of the medium. Advocates of internet radio claimed – as with digital radio – that a major part of the problem of take-up with the medium was that of consumer technology. One of the great strengths of radio from the 1950s onwards was its ability to be portable. The Nokia mobile telephone company was to seek to trade on this when in 2001 the company produced a mobile which was also capable of receiving FM radio. At the same time a number of major manufacturers were developing technology to make 3G and 4G internet access available in cars and on cellular telephones. This prompted a new and interesting issue, as raised by Andy Milburn, at one time Operations and Marketing Manager of NetFM:

There is simply too much money to be made from getting this product right for large companies to stay out of the game forever. It might be Vodaphone or Microsoft that makes internet radio happen rather than GWR or Emap – but happen it will.³³

The idea that internet radio is a completely different concept and one which ultimately would be controlled by others than traditional radio companies appeared to be gaining ground in the first years of the 21st century. The medium was discovering in itself unique properties which no other platform was capable of offering; internet radio, so its supporters claimed, would provide the ultimate in niche programming and advertising, tailoring content specifically to individual listeners’ needs and enthusiasms. One of the great strengths of the internet

however showed itself to be the facility for broadcasting audio on demand: a web-based archive of programmes which the listener, wherever they were in the world, could access as and when they wished to.

The development of global technology may well be the lasting legacy of the closing years of the twentieth century. Through the final decade of the last millennium a bewildering range of transmission platforms emerged. The World Radio Network, a company based in London, explored ways of rebroadcasting digests of world radio in digital quality via satellite. This was enhanced by the birth of the Worldspace Corporation, in which the concept of direct-to-home satellite radio, aimed particularly at disenfranchised parts of the world, gained increasing credence. By 2001 Worldspace receivers were available in Britain, offering a number of music and speech channels in digital quality beamed from Worldspace's Afristar satellite. What is more these sets were cheaper than domestic digital radios.

The extraordinary developments in terms of carrier and receiver technology pointed to the requirement for a new kind of regulator. In June 2000 the Radio Authority published a paper for submission to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department of Trade and Industry entitled *Radio Regulation for the 21st Century*, outlining its belief in the requirement for further deregulation:

The Radio Authority believes that radical change is needed in the structure of regulation of broadcasting and telecommunications and proposes the establishment of an over-arching converged regulator for media and telecommunications, including a new sectoral Radio Regulator to replace the Radio Authority and to allow for the flexible evolution of a new regulatory approach for radio.³⁴

During 2001, it became a much-vaunted claim that the radio renaissance was such that the medium had actually overtaken television as far as the audience was concerned. Debatable as this fact was, there was no doubt that radio was enjoying a new wave of enthusiasm in Britain; this fact however did not disguise that 2001/2002 saw an economic downturn which in turn saw commercial radio advertising revenue fall dramatically.

History may look back on May 2002 as being a significant moment in radio history. It was a month when RAJAR audience measurement demonstrated success across most BBC networks. Public service radio share was now ahead of commercial radio in terms of overall audience share, and Radio 4's decision to



Terry Wogan



Tony Blackburn

Sony Radio Academy Awards 2002 |

repeat its serialisation of *The Lord of the Rings* (first broadcast during the early 1980s) in the wake of the release, in the previous Autumn of 2001, of the feature film version of the story, increased the listenership to the station by nearly one million. The 13-week run brought the station an unprecedented audience for this kind of radio. Radio 2, voted 'Station of the Year' at the Radio Academy Sony Awards for the second year running, also saw audience gains, holding its own as the most listened-to station in Britain. Only Radio 1 gave cause for concern to its controller, Andy Parfitt, losing nearly 1% of its listeners in comparison with its showing a year previously. On the commercial front, Classic FM increased its audience for the fourth consecutive time, and in London was second only to Capital Radio in terms of popularity among commercial stations.

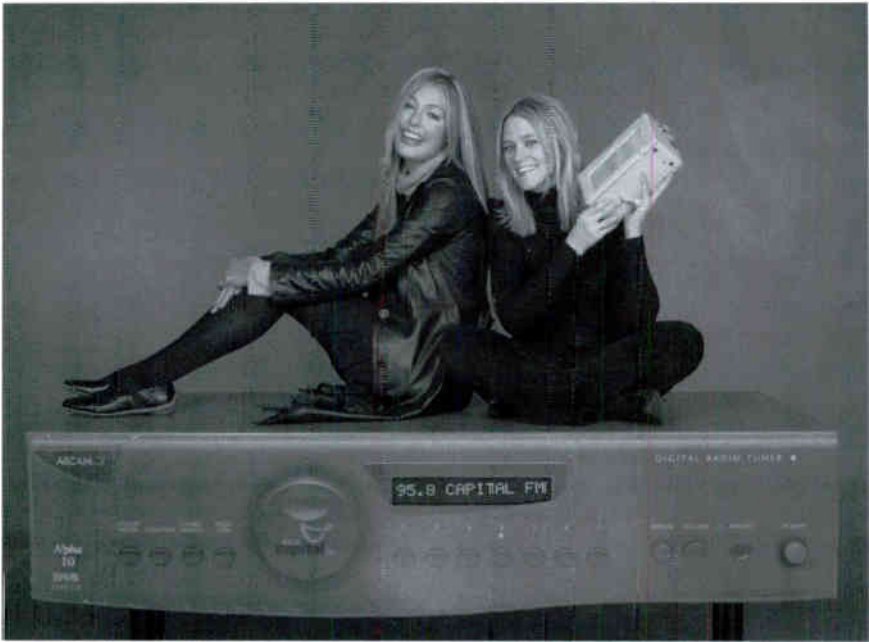
The most significant event of May 2002 however was none of these things, but the announcement by Tessa Jowell, the Blair Government's Culture Secretary, of a long-awaited draft Communications Bill, which set out plans for major changes in cross-media ownership in Britain. Up to this point British media had been – in the view of many – over regulated and over protected. Existing regulators, according to the plan, would be scrapped in favour of one 'super-regulator', the Office of Communications (Ofcom) which would begin its first

duties as early as the autumn of 2002. The plans were to have a major effect on commercial television ownership, but radio too was to feel winds of change as a result of the Bill. The proposal was to abolish rules which prevented ownership of more than one national commercial radio licence, and which prohibited large newspaper groups from acquiring radio licences. Even more significantly rules were abandoned which forbade non-European ownership; The *Sunday Times* for 12 May carried the headline, “The Yanks are Coming”, and the placing of commercial radio interests into the hands of a small number of major operators was confidently predicted. At this time the key radio owners were the Capital Group, Chrysalis, Emap, GWR and Scottish Radio Holdings, with other smaller groups also operating. The new scenario of radio ownership would see this pattern change, with analysts suggesting that within a year or so all commercial radio in Britain could be in the hands of three large companies, with American interests expected to play a part. The *Guardian* reported one investment banker as saying: “This is going to be a great couple of years to be a deal maker.” Notwithstanding this, for some the draft did not go far enough; speaking in the House of Commons, the Shadow Culture Secretary, Tim Yeo said:

I remain disappointed that Tessa Jowell has not followed her own logic and fully deregulated media ownership. The acid tests for these proposals will clearly be whether they represent a light touch or a heavy hand.³⁵

Meantime, in two other contrasting areas of radio endeavour there was activity; in 2001 the Radio Authority set up an experiment in Community Radio – now called Access Radio – with a number of stations operating around the country under observation, with a view to further development to come. In 2002, the BBC World Service sought £76m from the Government over three years, to supplement its current cost of £200m. Uniquely the World Service is funded by a grant from the Foreign Office, and with increasing demands on government purse-strings from domestic causes such as the Health Service, the transport system, education and public security, any increase in World Service expenditure was closely examined. Nevertheless the reputation of this institution globally – particularly in the immediate aftermath of the events of September 11 2001 – could not be denied. As a leader in *The Guardian* expressed it:

That one of the most successful global media brands can be government-funded and not government-influenced should be celebrated.³⁶



Cat Deeley and Edith Bowman of Capital Radio selling the Digital revolution

On the British domestic front, how the intense media activity of the early summer of 2002 would affect plans for digital radio remained an open issue. In July 2002, Pure introduced the first DAB radio receiver under £100, the Evoke-1. Through the year, the BBC moved forward with its own digital-only stations beginning with 6 Music which opened in March, following it in the Summer with a black music station, IXtra, and in the Autumn, BBC7, a speech-based service with a focus on archive comedy and drama, together with children's programming. Also available was the Asian Network and the progressive digital roll-out of British national services, BBC Radios Scotland, Ulster, and Wales, as well as BBC Radio Cymru and BBC Radio nan Gaidheal. Nevertheless some areas remained without a complete digital reception service, and public knowledge of and enthusiasm for the concept remained low and lukewarm. For some the events of 2002 created as many questions as answers as the British Government and its radio industry struggled to make their digital dreams come true.

Significant Dates

- Jan 1990** First BBC Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) trials from Crystal Palace.
- 27 Aug 1990** BBC Radio 5 began. BBC Radio 2 started broadcasting on FM only, the first network to do so.
- 1 Nov 1990** Broadcasting Act published.
- 1 Jan 1991** Radio Authority established. (Shadow Radio Authority formed, 1990)
- 7 Sep 1992** Classic FM commenced broadcasting on an eight year licence, the first national commercial radio station in Britain.
- 30 Dec 1992** Radio Luxembourg closed down.
- 26 Mar 1994** Radio 5 Live launched.
- Jul 1996** Broadcasting Act set out plans for the launch of digital broadcasting, including radio.
- Mar 1998** Radio Authority advertised the first national digital commercial multiplex licence.
- Jun 1998** Applications closed for national digital commercial licence. Only one applicant: Digital One.
- Autumn 1998** Digital One awarded national digital licence.
- Spring 2000** Digital One multiplex commenced broadcasting.
- 11 Mar 2002** BBC digital station 6 Music launched at 7.00am with Phill Jupitus as first presenter on air. Widely billed as “the first BBC music station for 32 years”.
- 7 May 2002** Government announced plans for radical changes in media and telecommunications regulation and ownership.
- 16 Aug 2002** 1Xtra, BBC Radio’s digital black music station launched.

Prominent People

- Jenny Abramsky** — Director of Radio and Music, BBC, succeeding Matthew Bannister.
- Matthew Bannister** — Controller, Radio 1; subsequently Director, BBC Radio and Chief Executive, BBC Production, prior to departing from the Corporation in 2000.
- Ralph Barnard** — Chairman of the GWR group, owners of Classic FM and a major figure in developments of commercial radio at the turn of the century, including digital.

- John Birt** — Became Director-General of the BBC in 1992. Accountability became an issue under his regime, and Producer Choice an important – and lasting – part of his legacy.
- Helen Boaden** — From radio journalism on such programmes as *Analysis* and *File on Four*, she succeeded James Boyle as Controller, Radio 4, in March 2000.
- James Boyle** — Became controller of Radio 4 in September 1996, and was the instigator of some controversial programme changes, as well as a more focused approach to programme commissioning.
- Greg Dyke** — Was appointed as Director-General of the BBC in June 1999, and took over from John Birt in April 2000. Famous for – among other things – his exhortation to staff to “cut the crap”.
- Liz Forgan** — Head of BBC Radio prior to Matthew Bannister.
- Tessa Jowell** — In May 2002 as Culture Secretary in the Blair Government, she was responsible for announcing the largest overhaul of media and telecommunications regulations since the 1990 Broadcasting Act.
- Frances Line** — Became Controller of Radio 2 in January 1990, aiming the Network strongly at a core audience age group of 45 plus.
- Sue MacGregor** — Retired from her role as one of the presenters of the *Today* programme in 2002 after fifteen years. Prior to that, she had presented *Woman's Hour* from 1972-87.
- Kelvin MacKenzie** — Colourful and outspoken owner of TalkSPORT, relaunched by him in January 2000 from the ailing TalkRadio UK. In 2001 and 2002 he was an increasingly strong campaigner for reform in radio audience measurement.
- David Mansfield** — Chief Executive, Capital Group.
- James Moir** — Succeeded Frances Line as Controller, Radio 2 in January 1996. By 2002 he had cleverly built the network into the most listened-to station in Britain, combining music interest for an audience disenfranchised by the reduction of target audience on Radio 1, whilst retaining the loyalty of older listeners. In May 2002 Radio 2 won the Sony Gold Award for Station of the Year for the second year running.



Greg Dyke and Jenny Abramsky

Anne Nightingale — In 1970, she was the first woman Disc Jockey on Radio 1. Annie – like John Peel – continued to command respect in the music industry, and her early Sunday morning Radio 1 programme reflecting the work of top club DJs remained a significant part of the Radio 1 schedule into the 21st Century.

John Peel — From his early pirate radio days on Radio London, through to his Sony Gold Award in 2002, Peel’s laid back humour together with an unrivalled knowledge of the more radical extremes of the popular music world have made him a radio legend. Still broadcasting on Radio 1, long after many others were forgotten, he latterly charmed Middle England on Radio 4’s *Home Truths* programme.



John Peel

John Perkins — Managing Director, Independent Radio News.

Piers Plowright — One of the industry’s most important feature-programme makers internationally; as the century ended he began moving into allied areas, including teaching in a number of British universities. Among many distinguished programmes from the period was his radio exploration of Jan Van Eyck’s painting of the Arnolfini Wedding, *What Are They Looking At?*

Tony Stoller — Having been a member of the IBA before the 1990 Broadcasting Act, he returned to take up the post of Chief Executive of the Radio Authority, diligently moving commercial radio towards further deregulation as the reality of a new cross-media “super-regulator” (Ofcom) grew gradually closer in the first years of the 21st century.

Chris Tarrant — A presenter widely known both in television and radio, but perhaps significant in that as host of Capital Radio’s highly popular breakfast show in London, he was at the turn of the century a presenter of national stature who remained on a city station.

Jo Whiley — An important part of the Radiol team at the turn of the century, a presenter of authority and knowledge.



Jo Whiley

Key Programmes

The Moral Maze — Produced by the BBC's Religious Programmes

Department in Manchester, the series, examining through the questioning of witnesses by a resident panel, moral issues behind topical news stories, first went out in 1990, with Michael Buerk in the chair.

Radio Two Arts Programme — Introduced by Radio 2 Controller Frances Line in 1990, with London editions of the programme originally produced by a team led by Stella Hanson, daughter of singer John Hanson. The main presenter was Sheridan Morley. When it started it had editions on Friday (Regional) Saturday (London) and Sunday (themed subjects). By Summer 2002 Sheridan Morley was presenting a single programme of current arts news on Friday evenings.

On the Hour — Spoof news programme, presented by Chris Morris, *The Independent* called it "The most brilliant radio comedy to emerge in the last ten years or more". First broadcast in 1991, it subsequently transferred to television.

The Adventures of Superman — Dirk Maggs adapted and directed this Radio 1 series based on the original DC Comics material in 1994. It was billed as "A movie without pictures – you won't believe your ears!"

Old Harry's Game — Andy Hamilton's considerable comedy talents brought this sit-com set in Hell to Radio 4 in 1995.

People Like Us — John Morton's superb spoof fly-on-the-wall documentary series, featuring Chris Langham as the hapless reporter, Roy Mallard had its first series on Radio 4 in 1995, and subsequently transferred to television.

Bomber — Remarkable Radio 4 drama experiment, which adapted Len Deighton's novel as a series of real-time episodes spread through a day and evening in February 1995. Featuring an impressive cast including Tom Baker and Samuel West, it was directed by Adrian Bean and produced by Jonathan Ruffle.

Blue Jam — The brainchild of the brilliant but controversial Chris Morris; this bizarre, often disturbing late night Radio 1 programme was a hybrid of comedy and radio experimentation. It was first broadcast in 1997.

Dead Ringers — Popular Radio 4 show built around impressions, and featuring among others Alistair McGowan, Kate Robbins, John Culshaw, Jan Ravens and Simon Lipson. First broadcast 2000.

References

- 1 *Daily Mail*, 16 June 1920
- 2 A.F Harlow: *Old Wires and New Waves* (Appleton-Century, 1936)
- 3 J.C.W. Reith: *Broadcast over Britain* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1924)
- 4 *BBC Handbook 1928* (BBC, 1927)
- 5 K.M. Wolfe: *The Churches and the British Broadcasting Corporation 1922-1956* (SCM Press, 1984)
- 6 *BBC Annual 1937* (BBC, 1937)
- 7 Robert Silvey: *Who's Listening?* (George Allen and Unwin, 1974)
- 8 *Radio Times*, 7 May 1937
- 9 Andrew Boyle: *Only the Wind Will Listen*, Reith of the BBC (Hutchinson, 1972)
- 10 R.J.E. Silvey: BBC Internal Memo – *Extent of Audience for Radio Advertising*, 27 October, 1937 (BBC Written Archives, Caversham, CAV R34/960)
- 11 Paddy Scannell & David Cardiff: *A Social History of British Broadcasting, 1922-1939* (Blackwell, 1991)
- 12 Sam Heppner: *Radio Times*, 14 February 1936
- 13 *BBC Handbook 1938* (BBC, 1938)
- 14 *Radio Times* Supplementary Issue 831A, 4 September 1939
- 15 Desmond Hawkins in an interview with the author, 1997
- 16 Asa Briggs: *The BBC – The First Fifty Years* (OUP, 1985)
- 17 Raymond Kuhn: *The Media in France* (Routledge, 1995)
- 18 *Twenty-Five Years of British Broadcasting* (BBC, 1947)
- 19 *Variety Programmes Policy Guide* (BBC, 1948)
- 20 *Manchester Guardian*, 23 September 1955
- 21 Tony Currie: *A Concise History of British Television 1930-2000* (Kelly Publications, 2000)
- 22 There is a Charles Parker Archive, comprising tapes, scripts, books and correspondence, situated in Birmingham Central Library
- 23 Sir John Gorst in an interview with the author, November 2000
- 24 John Whitney in an interview with the author, August 1999

- 25 Frank Gillard in conversation with the author, 1998
- 26 *An Alternative Service of Broadcasting* (HMSO, 1971)
- 27 Tony Stoller in an interview with the author, June 2000
- 28 *Television and Radio 1981* (Independent Television Publications, 1980)
- 29 Brian West in an interview with the author
- 30 Andrew Crisell: *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* (Routledge, 2002)
- 31 BBC Digital Radio Website
- 32 *1996 Broadcasting Act* (HMSO, 1996)
- 33 *Radio Magazine*, 13 April 2002
- 34 *Radio Regulation for the 21st Century* (The Radio Authority, June 2000)
- 35 *The Guardian*, 13 May 2002
- 36 Ibid

Further Reading

- Mike Baron: *Independent Radio* (Terence Dalton, 1975)
- Stephen Barnard: *On the Radio – Music Radio in Britain* (Open University Press, 1989)
- Alan Beck: *The Invisible Play – BBC Radio Drama 1922-1928* (A Sound Journal CD ROM Publication, 2000)
- Peter Black: *The Biggest Aspidistra in the World* (British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972)
- Asa Briggs: *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* Vols. 1-5 (Oxford University Press, 1995)
- Asa Briggs: *The BBC – The First Fifty Years* (Oxford University Press, 1985)
- Humphrey Carpenter: *The Envy of the World – Fifty Years of the BBC Third Programme and Radio 3* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1996)
- Andrew Crisell: *An Introductory History of British Broadcasting* (Routledge, 2002)
- Tim Crook: *Radio Drama* (Routledge, 1999)
- Simon Garfield: *The Nation's Favourite – The True Adventures of Radio 1* (Faber and Faber, 1998)
- David Hendy: *Radio in the Global Age* (Polity, 2000)

Stuart Henry and Mike von Joel: *Pirate Radio Then and Now* (Blandford Press, 1984)

Ian McIntyre: *The Expense of Glory – A Life of John Reith* (HarperCollins, 1993)

Mark Pegg: *Broadcasting and Society 1918-1939* (Croom Helm, 1983)

Ian Rodger: *Radio Drama* (The Macmillan Press, 1982)

Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff: *A Social History of British Broadcasting 1922-1939* (Blackwell, 1991)

Martin Shingler and Cindy Wieringa: *On Air – Methods & Meaning of Radio* (Arnold, 1998)

Keith Skues: *Pop Went the Pirates* (Lambs Meadow Publications, 1994)

Andrew Walker: *A Skyful of Freedom – 60 Years of the BBC World Service* (BBC World Service, 1992)

Tim Wander: *2MT Writtle – The Birth of British Broadcasting* (Capella, 1988)

In addition, there are a number of books by pioneers of radio, many of which, although scarce, give a clear picture of the early years. Among these are:

A.R. Burrows: *The Story of Broadcasting* (Cassell & Company, 1924)

D.G. Bridson: *Prospero and Ariel* (Gollancz, 1971)

Myles Eckersley: *Prospero's Wireless – A Biography of PP Eckersley* (Myles Books, 1997)

Peter Eckersley: *The Power Behind the Microphone* (Jonathan Cape, 1940 and The Scientific Book Club, 1941)

Roger Eckersley: *The BBC and All That* (Sampson Low, Marston, 1946)

Stuart Hibberd: *This – Is London...* (Macdonald & Evans, 1950)

C.A. Lewis: *Broadcasting From Within* (George Newnes, 1924)

Roy Plomley: *Days Seemed Longer* (Eyre Methuen, 1980)

J.C.W. Reith: *Broadcast Over Britain* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1924)

J.C.W. Reith: *Into the Wind* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1949)

Lance Sieveking: *The Stuff of Radio* (Cassell & Company, 1934)

Robert Silvey: *Who's Listening? The Story of BBC Audience Research* (George Allen & Unwin, 1974)

Christopher Stone: *Christopher Stone Speaking* (Elkin Matthews & Marrot, 1933)

- 1Xtra: 138, 139
 2CR: 122
 2CR Big Band: 122
 2DB: 28, 36
 2LO: 28, 36
 2LO Dance Band: 37
 2LO studio: **25**
 2LO transmitter: **23**, **25**
 2MT transmitter: **22**
 2ZY: 28, 36
 5IT: 28, 36
 5NO: 28, 36
 5SC: 28, 36
 5WA: 28, 36
 6 Music: 139
 6BM: 28, 36
 Abramsky (Jenny): 139, **140**
 Access Radio: 137
Ack-Ack Beer-Beer: 85
 Adams (Douglas): 123
 Ader (Clement): 12, 13, 25
Adventures of Dan Dare (The): 93, 104
Adventures of Superman (The): 142
After Henry: 129
Age to Age: 129
 Agnew (Louie): 33
 AIRC's. See Association of Independent Radio Contractors
 Alan (A.J.): 32, 37
Albert's Bridge: 89
 Aldis (Barry): 96, 100, 103
 Alexandra Palace: 57
All That Fall: 88, 104
 Allied Expeditionary Forces: 84
 Allied Expeditionary Forces Programme: 82, 83
 Allison (George): 40
 Alternative Service of Broadcasting (An): 112
 Ambrose: 63
American Commentary: 101
 American Forces Network (AFN): 82
Analysis: 116, 140
Anathemata (The): 100
 Anderson (Marjorie): 102
 Andrews (Julie): 94
 Annan Committee: 124, 127
Any Questions: 110
Any Questions? (Brains Trust): 85
 Arabic service: 64, 66
Archers (The): 93, 98, 104, 123
 Archie Andrews: **94**
 Arnold (Doris): **44**, 69
 Ashbridge (Noel): **20**, **21**
 Asian Network: 138
 Askey (Arthur): 62, 66, 67, 69, 76
 Association of Independent Radio Contractors (AIRC's): 119, 125, 126
At Home and Abroad: 90, 104
 Atlantic 252: 126
 Attenborough (Richard): **117**
 Attlee (Clement): 84, 87
 Bacon (Cecil): 100
 Baddiel (David): 123
 Bailey-Watson (Monty): 107
 Baker (Tom): 142
 Baldwin (Peter): 127
 Ball (Zoë): 132
Ballad of John Axon (The): 98, 105
Band Wagon: 62, 66, 67, 69
 Bannister (Matthew): 131, 132, 139, 140
 Bannister (Roger): 114
 Barnard (Ralph): 121, 139
 Bass (Alfie): 96
 Batchelor (Horace): 100
 Bateman (H.M.): 43
 BBC 25th anniversary: 92
 BBC 50th Anniversary: 113, 116
 BBC Audience Research: 59
 BBC Chamber Orchestra: 45
 BBC Charter: 87
 BBC Dance Orchestra: 50, 52, 53, 54, 62
 BBC European Service: 73
 BBC London Station: 36
 BBC National Programme: 35, 42, 58, 63
 BBC Natural History Unit: 79
 BBC Network Radio: 131, 132
 BBC North American Service: 83
 BBC Pebble Mill: 114
 BBC Radio Publicity and Promotions: 127
 BBC Studio Orchestra: 45
 BBC Symphony Orchestra: 45, 51, 53, 71, 113
 BBC Theatre Orchestra: 45
 Beaman (S. Hulme): 68, 96
 Bean (Adrian): 142
 Beckett (Samuel): 88, 104
 Beeson (E.M.): **20**
 Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*: 75
 Belfrage (Bruce): 73
 Belgian service: 75
 Bell (Alexander Graham): 12, 26
 Benn (Anthony Wedgwood): 109, 114
 Benny (Jack): 82
 Bentine (Michael): 94
 Bentley (Dick): 93, 102
 Bergen Belsen concentration camp: 80

- Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra: 122, 128
- Bejerman (John): 89
- Bevin (Ernest) : 74
- 'Big Six': 27
- Billy Cotton Band Show*: 103
- Birkett (Norman): 85
- Birt (John): 140
- Blackburn (Tony): 109, **136**
- Blattnerphone steel tape machine: 49
- Bleasdale (Alan): 121
- Blue Jam*: 142
- Bluett (Kitty): 103
- Boaden (Helen): 129, 140
- Bomber*: 142
- Book at Bedtime*: 128
- Boulez (Pierre): 113
- Boult (Adrian): 45, 51, 53, 83, 113
- Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra: 122
- Bowen (Elizabeth): 90
- Bowman (Edith): **138**
- Boyle (Andrew): 115
- Boyle (James): 128, 133, 140
- Brains Trust (The)*: 75, 85, 110
- Brambles (Jacki): 127
- Branly (Edouard): 13
- Breakfast television: 124
- Breeze (Alan): 68, 103
- Brett (Simon): 129
- Bridson (D.G.): 48, 60, 66, 67, 68
- Britain Radio: 109
- Britain to America*: 83
- British Forces Network: 86
- British Thomson-Houston Company: 27
- Broadcasting Act 1972: 113
- Broadcasting Act 1990: 125
- 126, 130, 140, 141
- Broadcasting Act 1996: 132, 139
- Broadcasting From the Barricades*: 38
- Broadcasting House: 13, 33, 46, 52, 54, 61, 64, 69, 73, 83
- Broadcasting in the Seventies: 110
- Brooke-Taylor (Tim): 115, **133**
- Brough (Peter): 94
- Bubb (F.): **20**
- Buckeridge (Anthony): 96, 100
- Buerk (Michael): 142
- Burrows (Arthur): 11, 17, **22**, 26, 29, 32, **33**, 35, 37
- Burton (Richard): 88
- Bush House: 73
- Bygraves (Max): 94
- Cad's College*: 69
- Cadman (Tony): 107
- Calling all Workers*: 85
- Cameron (Douglas): **118**
- Campbell (A.B.): 75, 85
- Capital Group: 132, 137, 140
- Capital Jazz*: **122**
- Capital Radio: 114, 117, 118, 121, **122**, 127, 128, 130, 136, **138**, 141
- Captain Brass: 95
- Cardiff (David): 63
- Carleton-Greene (Hugh): 113
- Carlton Hotel: 30
- Carr (Pearl): 92
- Carroll Levis Discoveries*: 69
- Carruthers (H.): **33**
- Cellulose Nitrate disc: 49, 55
- Chalmers (Judith): 127
- Chalmers (Sandra): 127
- Chamberlain (Neville): 60, 61, 64, 66, 71
- Channel 4 Television: 126
- Chataway (Christopher): 112, 114
- Chelmsford skyline: **19**
- Children's Corner*: 38
- Children's Hour*: 32, 33, 37, 38, 56, 68, 86, 95, 101, 110
- Christopher Columbus*: 77
- Chrysalis: 137
- Churchill (Winston): 34, 83
- Citizens*: 123
- Clapham and Dwyer: 45
- Clare (Anthony): 129
- Clare (Professor Anthony): 123
- Clarendon (Lord): 39
- Classic FM: 130, 131, 132, 134, 136, 139
- Classic Soil (The)*: 60
- Cleese (John): 115
- Clerk-Maxwell (James): 12, 13, 24, 26
- Cleverdon (Douglas): 89, 100
- Clitheroe (Jimmy): 100
- Coates (Eric): 85
- Cochran (C.B.): 76
- Cock (Gerald): 40, 53
- Collins (Norman): 90, 100, 101
- Colonel Chinstrap: 74
- Comedy of Danger (A)*: 31, 38, 39
- Commercial Broadcasting Consultants: 107
- Commercial Multiplex: 132
- Commercial Radio Companies Association: 119
- Communications Bill: 136, 137

- Community Media Association: 127
- Community Radio: 125, 137
- Community Radio Association: 124, 127
- Conspiracy of Silence*: 121
- Cooke (Alistair): 101
- Cooke (Christopher): 129
- Cooper (Derek): 129
- Cooper (Giles): 89
- Core: 132
- Cornish (Anthony): 121
- Costa (Sam): 93, 102
- County Sound: 126
- Coward (Noel): 63
- Cowper (Gerry): 129
- Cox (M.): 22
- Cox (Sara): 133
- Crawford Committee: 34, 35, 36
- Crazy People*: 94, 104
- Crisell (Andrew): 126
- Crisis in Spain*: 54
- Crook (Tim): 127
- Crowther (Leslie): 91
- Crozier (Mary): 98
- Crystal Palace: 139
- Culshaw (John): 142
- Cunliffe (Barry): 129
- Curran (Charles): 128
- Currie (Tony): 98
- Czech service: 66
- DAB. See Digital Audio Broadcasting
- Daily Radio 4 Arts Magazine: 128
- Dale (Robbie): 115
- Dales (The): 111
- Daniels (Bebe): 85
- Danvers-Walker (Bob): 41, 67
- Dark Tower (The)*: 89, 101
- Daventry: 50, 52
- Day-Lewis (Sean): 118
- DC Comics: 142
- De Forest: 16, 26
- de Lavelaye (Victor): 75
- de Manio (Jack): 104
- de Rohan (Ralph): 95
- Dead Ringers*: 142
- Death at Broadcasting House*: 54
- Decision Makers*: 128
- Dee (Simon): 114
- Deeley (Cat): 138
- Deighton (Len): 142
- Dell (Alan): 96
- Denham (Maurice): 93, 102
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport: 135
- Department of Trade and Industry: 135
- Desert Island Discs*: 76, 86
- Devil's Gallop*: 102
- Dick Barton - Special Agent*: 90, 93, 102
- Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB): 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 138, 139
- Digital One: 132, 139
- Dimbleby (Richard): 80, 84, 102
- Ditcham (W.T.): 17
- Dixon (Reg): 86
- Dolly Suite*: 96
- Donovan (Paul): 123
- Down Your Way*: 102
- Droitwich: 61
- Duke of Edinburgh: 92, 113
- Dunn (John): 133
- Dying for a Drink*: 121
- Dyke (Greg): 140
- Dynamic Theory of the Electromagnetic Field (The)*: 12, 24
- EAQ Madrid: 49
- Eckersley (Peter): 20, 21, 22, 26, 35, 37, 43
- Economist Intelligence Unit (The): 125
- Eden (Anthony): 97, 99
- Edgar (Percy): 33
- Educating Archie*: 94
- Edwards (Jimmy): 93, 102
- Electric and Musical Industries (EMI): 90
- Electrophone: 12, 13, 25
- Emap: 130, 134, 137
- Emery (Dick): 94
- EMI. See Electric and Musical Industries
- Emperor Rosko: 110
- Empire Service: 49, 52, 77
- Engelmann (Franklin): 96, 102, 104
- English (Arthur): 86
- Ennals (Maurice): 114
- European Broadcasting Convention: 49, 53
- European Broadcasting Union (EBU): 99
- Evans (Chris): 131, 132
- Evens (The Rev. G. Bramwell): 56
- Ever Ready: 106
- Everett (Kenny): 101, 110, 114
- Everitt (Geoffrey): 91, 99, 100
- Evolve-1: 138
- Face the Facts*: 129
- Family Favourites*: 86
- Faulds (Andrew): 96
- Feedback*: 129
- Feldman (Marty): 115
- Fessenden (Reginald): 16, 25, 26
- Fields (Gracie): 63
- File on Four*: 129, 140
- Firman (Sydney): 37
- Fischer (George): 116
- Flagstad (Kirsten): 58

Flat Spin: 101
 Fleming (J.A.): 16, 26
Flowers Are Not for You to Pick (The): 53
Flowers in the Rain: 109
 FM: 105, 124, 126, 130, 131, 132, 134, 139
Folk on Two: 129
Food Programme (The): 129
 Foort (Reginald): 67
 Foot (R.W.): 83
 Foot (Robert): 75, 80, 83, 84
For Liberty: 65
 Forces Network: 70
 Forces Programme: 73, 80, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87
 Fordyce (Keith): 96, 100
 Forgan (Liz): 131, 132, 140
Foundations of Music: 56
Francais Parlent aux Francais (Les): 77
 Freeman (Alan): 96
 French service: 66, 77
From Our Own Correspondent: 102
 Fryer (Bertram): 33
 Funf: 74
 Gaelic Service: 58
 Gainford (Lord): 28
 Galton (Ray): 98, 104
 Garden (Graeme): 115
Gardeners' Question Time: 102
Garrison Theatre: 70, 74, 76
 Gascoyne (David): 89, 100
 General Electric Company: 27
 General Overseas Service: 80, 83, 113
 General Strike: 34, 35, 36
 German service: 66
 Gibbons (Carroll): 37, 44
 Gielgud (Val): 39, 53, 54, 59, 86, 88
 Gill (Eric): 47
 Gill (Frank): 27
 Gillard (Frank): 80, 84, 110, 111, 114
 Gillespie (R.H.): 43
 Gilliam (Laurence): 67, 89
 Ginger Group: 132
 Glendenning (Raymond): 101
Glums (The): 103
 Godfrey (D.): 33
 Goldring (Mary): 116
Goon Show (The): 94, 104
 Gorst (Sir John): 107, 108
 Graves (George): 44
 Graves (Sir Cecil): 83, 84
Great Orchestras of the World: 122, 128
 Greek service: 66
 Green (Hughie): 103, 107
 Green (Michael): 123, 129, 133
 Greene (Hugh Carleton): 76
 Greening (Kevin): 132
 Grenfell (Joyce): 102
 Grigson (Geoffrey): 90
 Grisewood (Freddy): 40, 53, 56, 64
 Gulliver (Charles): 43
 Guthrie (Tyrone): 53
 GWR Group: 121, 130, 132, 134, 137, 139
 Haley (Sir William): 67, 80, 82, 83, 84, 89, 92, 94, 99
 Hall (Henry): 52, 53, 62, 63
 Hamilton (Andy): 142
 Hancock (Tony): 94, 98, 104
Hancock's Half Hour: 98, 104
 Handley (Tommy): 67, 74, 84
 Hanson (John): 142
 Hanson (Stella): 142
Happy Listening: 72, 73
 Hardcastle (William): 115
 Harding (Archie): 47, 48, 54
 Harding (Gilbert): 101
 Harding (Warren G.): 22
 Hargreaves (Jack): 67
 Harlow (A.F.): 16
 Harris (Jack): 56
 Harrison (Beatrice): 32, 38
 Hatch (David): 115, 127
Have a Go!: 90, 91, 102
 Hawkins (Desmond): 79, 80, 82
 Hayes (Brian): 128
 Hayes (Patricia): 103
 Haynes (Ken): 120
 Heath (Edward): 111, 112, 113, 118
 Heathrow Conference: 126, 130
 Hemsley (Harry): 54
Henry Hall's Guest Night: 53, 62
Here's to the Next Time: 53, 63
 Hereward Radio: 121
Heroes of the Free Church: 42
 Hertz (Heinrich): 13, 26
Hi Gang!: 85
 Hibberd (Stuart): 37, 59, 87
 Hill (Charles): 85
 Hilton (John): 58
Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy (The): 123
 Hitler (Adolf): 60, 64, 77
 HMV: 32, 51
 Holm (Ian): 129
 Holness (Bob): 118
 Home Service: 66, 70, 71, 73, 80, 82, 85, 87, 92, 94, 101, 102, 104, 107,

- 110
- Home Truths*: 141
- Hoover (Herbert): 24, 27
- Hope (Bob): 63, 82
- Hordern (Michael): 129
- Horne (Kenneth): 85, 93, 102, 115
- Housewives' Choice*: 91, 101
- How Does Your Garden Grow?*: 102
- How to Read an Epistle*: 42
- How To...*: 102
- Howard (Leslie): 76
- Howerd (Frankie): 86
- Hughes (David Edward): 13
- Hughes (Richard): 31, 38
- Humphreys (Elmina) [Spirit of Radio]: 58
- Hundred Best Tunes in the World (The)*: 104
- Hungarian service: 66
- Huxley (Julian): 75, 85
- Hylton (Jack): 63, 76
- I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue*: 116
- I'm Sorry I'll Read that Again*: 115, 127
- IBA. See Independent Broadcasting Authority
- IBC. See International Broadcasting Company
- IBU. See International Broadcasting Union
- IEE. See Institution of Electrical Engineers
- Illingsworth (Albert): 19
- ILR. See Independent Local Radio
- In Parenthesis*: 89, 100
- In the Psychiatrist's Chair*: 123, 129
- In Town Tonight*: 54, 56
- Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA): 117, 119, 120, 125, 126, 127, 130, 141
- Independent Local Radio (ILR): 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 123, 125, 126, 127, 128
- Independent Radio Drama Productions: 127
- Independent Radio News: 117, 128
- Independent Television Authority: 117
- Independent Television Commission: 130
- Ingredient X*: 53
- Inspector Hornleigh Investigates*: 69
- Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE): 27, 29
- International Broadcasting Company (IBC): 40, 41, 49, 51, 54, 62, 67, 76, 91, 109, 117
- International Broadcasting Union (IBU): 33, 36, 37, 43
- Internet Radio: 134
- Italia Prize: 99
- Italian service: 66
- ITMA (It's That Man Again)*: 67, 69, 74, 84
- ITV: 91, 98, 103, 104, 119, 129
- Jackson (Henry): 14
- Jackson (Jack): 44, 96, 101
- Jacob (Sir Ian): 94, 97, 99
- Jacobs (David): 96
- Jacques (Hattie): 98
- James (Sid): 98, 104
- Jefferies (L.S.): 33
- Jennings at School*: 96
- Jessel (David): 117
- Jet Morgan: 96
- Joad (C.E.M.): 75, 85
- Joan and Betty's Bible Story*: 42
- Jock Anderson: 102
- Johnson (Noel): 93
- Johnson (Teddy): 92, 96, 99, 103
- Johnston (Brian): 102
- Jones (David): 89, 100
- Journey into Space*: 96
- Jowell (Tessa): 136, 137, 140
- Joyce (William): 75, 85
- Jupitus (Phill): 139
- Just a Minute*: 115
- Kaleidoscope*: 128
- Kaleidoscope 1*: 39, 56
- Karajan (Herbert von): 122
- Kavanagh (Ted): 67, 74, 84
- Kay (Kathy): 103
- Kaye (Danny): 63
- KDKA: 22, 25
- Keep it Going!*: 81
- Keillor (Garrison): 128
- Keith (Alan): 104
- Kellaway (F.G.): 19, 27
- Kenyon (Nicholas): 133
- Kerr (Bill): 98, 104
- King Edward VIII: 59, 65
- King George V: 32, 49, 50, 53, 59, 65
- King George VI: 59, 65, 83, 84, 99, 102
- King-Hall (Stephen): 58
- Kirke (H.L.): 20
- Knight (John): 129
- Knox (Father Ronald): 38
- Kolster Brandes: 40
- Kossoff (David): 96
- Kraft Show (The)*: 68
- Kuhn (Raymond): 91
- Lake Wobegon Days*: 128
- Lambert (Constant): 45
- Lambert (Leslie Harrison) [A.J.Alan]: 37

- Langham (Chris): 142
 Larry the Lamb: 68, 95
 Laser 558: 123
Last Goon Show of All (The): 116
Laugh and Grow Fit: 69
 LBC. See London Broadcasting Company
LBC Breakfast Show: **118**
 Le Mesurier (John): 129
League of Ovaltineys (The): 91
 Lee (Laurie): 90
 Legrand (Fernand): 40
 Lemmy: 96
Let the People Sing: 69
Letter from America: 101
 Lewis (Cecil): 32, **33**, 37
 Life: 132
Life with the Lyons: 103
 Light Programme: 74, 82, 84, 87, 90, 92, 93, 96, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 110, 111
 Lillie (Beatrice): 76
 Line (Frances): 140, 142
 Lipson (Simon): 142
Listen with Mother: 96, 103
Listener (The): **41**, 50
 Listener Research: 65, 68
 Littlewood (Joan): 48, 60, 67
 Lloyd (Jim): 129
 Loads (Radio): 102
 Local Radio: 111, 114
 Local Radio Association (LRA): 107, 108
 Lodge (Lady): **23**
 Lodge (Sir Oliver): 13, 14, **23**, 26
 London Broadcasting Company (LBC): 117, **118**, 121, 127, 128
 London Symphony Orchestra: 128
Loose Ends: 123
Lord of the Rings (The): 123, 129, 135
 LRA. See Local Radio Association
 Lucas (David): 129
 Lucerne Plan: 49, 50, 53
 Lynn (Vera): 76, 86
 Lyon (Bebe & Ben, Richard & Barbara): 103
 Lyon (Ben): 85
 Lyttelton (Humphrey): **133**
 Mabel "at the table": 91
 MacBeaney (R.): 15
 MacColl (Ewan): 98, 105
 McCulloch (Derek): **44**, 68, 95
 McCullough (Donald): 85
 MacDonald (Margo): 129
 McGowan (Alistair): 142
 MacGregor (Sue): 140
 McIntyre (Ian): 116
 McKenzie (Kelvin): 132
 MacKenzie (Kelvin): 140
 MacLarty (B.N.): **20**
 MacNeice (Louis): 77, 79, 89, 101
 Macpherson (Sandy): 67
 MacPherson (Stewart): 102
 McWhinnie (Donald): 88, 104
 Madoc (Philip): 129
 Maggs (Dirk): 142
 Magnet House: 28, 36
 Mais (S.P.B.): 58
 Major Minor Records: 114
 Mallard (Roy): 142
Man Born to be King (The): 86
 Mansfield (David): 140
 Manx Radio: 109
 Marceau (Marcel): 121
 Marconi (Guglielmo): **10**, 14, 15, 24, 26, 60
 Marconi Company: 11, 17, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, 35, 36, 37, 49, 107
 Marconi House: **23**
 Marconi Ribbon microphone: **99**
 Marconi Stille recorder: 49
 Marguerite Sound Studios: 49
Marie Céleste (The): 53
 Marine Offences Bill: 109, 115
 Marsden (Betty): 115
 Marshall (Howard): 40
 Marvell (Holt): 54
Mary Whitehouse Experience (The): 123
 Maschwitz (Eric): 54
 Matthew (Brian): 97
 Maxted (Stanley): 80
 Melba (Dame Nellie): **11**, 18, 25
 Melchior (Lauritz): **18**
 Melrose (Tony): 65
 Metcalfe (Jean): 86, 102
 Metropolitan-Vickers: 27
 Meyer (Richard): 109
 Meynell (Viola): 90
 Miall (Leonard): 84
 Michelmore (Cliff): 86
 Microsoft: 134
 Middleton (C.H.) ['Mr Middleton']: 54
Midget (The): 80
 Milburn (Andy): 134
 Miles (Michael): **103**
 Milligan (Spike): 94, 116
 Moir (James): 133, 140
 Mona Lott: 74
Monday Night at Eight: 69
Monday Night at Seven: 69
Moral Maze (The): 142
 Morley (Sheridan): 142

Morris (Chris): 142
 Morse (Samuel): 12, 26
 Morse code: 14, 16, 24, 26
 Morton (John): 142
 Moss (Don): 96
 Moss Empires: 43
 Mr Grouser: 68, 95
Mrs Dale's Diary: 93, 111
 Mrs Mopp: 74
 MU. See Musicians' Union
Much-Binding-in-the-Marsh:
 92, 93, 102
 Muir (Frank): 67, 93, 103
 Murdoch (Richard): 62, 66,
 67, 69, 93, 102
 Murgatroyd (Joe): 69
 Murray (Pete): 96, 100, 103
Music Hall: 56
Music Programme: 110, 113
Music While You Work: 74,
 85
 Musicians' Union: 122
 Mussolini (Benito): 60
 MV Communicator: 123
 Myer (G. Val): 46, 54
 Nagra: 90
Nation in His Hand (A): 129
 National Association of
 Radio Manufacturers:
 30
 National Broadcasting
 Company (NBC): 83
 National Broadcasting
 School: 120
 National Independent
 Radio: 126
 National Opinion Polls Ltd:
 109
Navy Lark (The): 104
 NetFM: 134
 Network 3: 100, 110
New Year Over Europe: 54
Newsbeat: 128
 Nichols (Joy): 93, 102
Night Ride: 115
Night Thoughts: 89, 100
 Nightingale (Anne): 141
 Nightingales broadcast: 32,
 38
 Noble (Ray): 63
 Nokia mobile telephone
 company: 134
 Norden (Denis): 67, 93, 103
 North American Service:
 114
 Northcliffe (Lord): 11
 Novello (Ivor): 76
 O'Day (Jack): 56
 O'Rahilly (Ronan): **108**, 114
 Oddie (Bill): 115
 Office of Communications
 (Ofcom): 136, 141
 Ogilvie (F.W.): 66, 68, 75,
 83, 84
Old Harry's Game: 142
 Oliver (Vic): 76, 85, 86
On the Edge: 107
On the Hour: 142
Once a Week: 85
 Oneword: 132
'Opping 'Ooliday: 56
Opportunity Knocks: 69, 91,
 103
 Orchard (Ray): 96
 Orchestre Nationale: 83
Out of Town: 67
Out With Romany: 56
Ovaltineys: **48**, 54, 56
Oxydol Minstrel (The): 56
 Oxydol Orchestra: 56
 Paddick (Hugh): 115
 Palmer (Rex): **33**, 51
 Parfitt (Andy): **132**, 136
 Parker (Charles): 98, 105,
 107, 128
 Parsons (Nicholas): 115
 Pasternak (Michael)
 [Emperor Rosko]: 110
Path of Glory: 53
 Payne (Jack): **44**, 50, 52,
 53, 54, 62
 Peach (L. du Garde): 39, 53
 Peacock Committee: 125,
 126
 Peel (John): 110, 141
People Like Us: 142
 Perkins (John): 141
 Perowne (Leslie): 76
 Pertwee (Bill): 115
 Philco radio factory: **70**
 Philips Miller sound-on-film
 device: 49
 Piccadilly Radio
 (Manchester): 121
Pick of the Pops: 96, 104
 Pickles (Wilfred): **90**, 91,
 102
 Pirate radio: 110, 112, 114,
 119, 122, 124, 141
 Pitt (Percy): **33**
 Planet Rock: 132
 Plomley (Roy): 41, 68, 69,
 76, 86
 Plowright (Piers): 111, 141
 Plugge (Leonard): **34**, 36,
 40, 54, 91
Poetry Please!: 128
 Poldhu station: 14
 Polish service: 66
 Political Warfare Executive:
 84
 Popov (Alexander): 13, 14,
 26
 'Poppet': 69
 Portuguese service: 64, 66
 Post Office and Radio
 Manufacturers: 36
 Poste Parisien: 51, 68
Postscript: 73
 Potter (Stephen): 58, 102
 Poulsen (Valdemar): 15
 Priestland (Gerald): 128

- Priestley (J.B.): 69, 73
 Primetime (Saga): 132
 Princess Elizabeth: 83, 92
 Princess Margaret: 83
 Probert (Sion): 129
 Programme Sharing Scheme: 119, 120, 121
 Punt (Steve): 123
 Pye Ltd: 106, 107
 Queen Elizabeth I: 65
 Queen Elizabeth II: 97, 99, 112, 113, 121
 Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother: 93
Question of Taste (A): 69
 Radcliffe (Mark): 132
 Radio 1: 89, 101, 109, 110, 111, 114, 123, 124, 125, 127, 128, 131, 132, 133, 136, 139, 140, 141, 142
 Radio 2: 89, 101, 104, 110, 111, 114, 115, 123, 125, 127, 128, 129, 130, 133, 136, 139, 140, 142
 Radio 3: 89, 110, 114, 132
 Radio 390: 109
 Radio 4: 89, 110, 114, 115, 116, 123, 127, 128, 129, 135, 140, 141, 142
 Radio 5: 130, 139
 Radio 5 Live: 128, 130, 134, 139
 Radio Authority: 119, 127, 130, 131, 132, 135, 137, 139, 141
Radio Ballads: 99, 105, 107
 Radio Birmingham: 111
 Radio Brighton: 111
 Radio Bristol: 111
 Radio Broadcasting in the UK: 125
 Radio Caroline: 108, 109, 113, 114, 115
 Radio Caroline International: 112
 Radio Circle card: 45
 Radio City (Liverpool): 121, 128
 Radio Clyde: 121
 Radio Communication Company: 27
 Radio Corporation of America: 17
 Radio Cymru: 138
 Radio Data System (RDS): 124, 127
Radio Doctor (The): 85
 Radio Durham: 111
 Radio England: 109, 115
 Radio Fecamp: 41, 49, 51, 71, 76
 Radio Forth: 120
 Radio Hallam (Sheffield): 121
 Radio International: 65, 68, 71, 73, 76, 83, 86
 Radio Leeds: 111
 Radio Leicester: 111, 114
 Radio London: 109, 111, 114, 141
 Radio Luxembourg: 41, 48, 50, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 64, 65, 66, 68, 69, 82, 83, 91, 92, 93, 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 107, 109, 111, 114, 139
 Radio Lyons: 53, 65
 Radio Manchester: 111
 Radio Medway: 111
 Radio Mercur: 109
 Radio Merseyside: 111
 'Radio Music Box': 17
 Radio nan Gaidheal: 138
Radio Newsreel: 77, 85
 Radio Normandy: 41, 43, 48, 51, 53, 55, 57, 61, 62, 63, 65, 68, 69, 71, 91
Radio Normandy Calling: 68, 69
 Radio Normandy transmitter: 62
 Radio Northsea: 112
 Radio Nottingham: 111
 Radio One breakfast show: 132
 Radio Oxford: 111
Radio Pictorial: 50, 51, 53, 68
 Radio Production Executive: 78
 Radio Publicity Ltd: 40
Radio Radiance: 67
 Radio Regulation for the 21st Century: 135
 Radio Regulator: 135
 Radio Scotland: 138
 Radio Sheffield: 111
 Radio Solent: 111, 114
 Radio Stoke: 111, 127
 Radio Syd: 109
Radio Times: 31, 36, 39, 42, 50, 52, 54, 59, 64, 71, 73, 100, 104
 Radio Toulouse: 40, 53, 54
 Radio Twelve-Twelve: 82, 83
Radio Two Arts Programme: 142
 Radio Ulster: 138
 Radio Veronica: 109
 Radio Wales: 138
 Radiophonic Workshop: 100
 RAJAR: 135
 Ravens (Jan): 142
 Ray (Ted): 93, 103
Ray's a Laugh: 93, 103
 RDS. See Radio Data System
 Read (Al): 101
Record Roundabout: 101
 Re-diffusion: 43
 Reid (Beryl): 94

- Reith (John Charles Walsham): 28, **29**, 30, 32, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 47, 50, 56, 59, 60, 61, 66, 68, 89, 110, 111, 114
- Relay Companies: 43
- Restricted Service Licences (RSLs): 125
- Reynolds (Gillian): **128**
- Richard (Ivor): 112
- Riley (Marc 'Lard'): 132
- Robbins (Kate): 142
- Romany: 56
- Ross Radio: 107
- Round (H.J.): 17
- Round the Empire*: 49
- Round the Horne*: 115
- Roy (Derek): 86
- Royal Charter 1936: 65
- Royal Charter 1952: 99
- Royal Charter 1962: 113
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra: 121
- Ruffle (Jonathan): 142
- Rumanian service: 66
- Russell (H.J.): **20**
- Sanderson (Joan): 129
- Sarnoff (David): 17, 26
- Saturday Club*: 96, 105
- Saturday Night Theatre*: 78
- Savoy Hill: 29, **30**, 33, 36, 39, 46, 53, 55, 61
- Savoy Hill (The End of)*: 46, 49, 56
- Savoy Hill control panel: **31**
- Savoy Hill staff: **33**
- Savoy Orpheans: 37
- Sayers (Dorothy L.): 86
- Scales (Prunella): 129
- Scannell (Paddy): 63
- Scott (Nora): **20**
- Scott (Robin): 114
- Scottish Early Music Consort: 121
- Scottish Radio Holdings: 137
- Scrapbook*: 54, 56
- Scrapbook for 1926*: 35
- Secombe (Harry): 94, 116
- Seeger (Peggy): 98, 105
- Sellers (Peter): 94, 103, 116
- September 11 2001: 137
- Shadow Radio Authority: 139
- Shannon (Richard): 127
- Shapley (Olive): 48, 60, 68
- Shelley (Norman): 95
- Sherrin (Ned): 123
- Short (Edward): 108, 109
- Sibley (Brian): 123, 129
- Sieveking (Lance): 39, 54, 56, 88
- Silvey (Robert): 59, 62, 68
- Simpson (Alan): 98, 104
- Sincerely Yours*: 76, 86
- Singing the Fishing*: 105
- Sky Satellite TV: 133
- Slovak service: 66
- Smith (A. Corbett): **33**
- Snagge (John): 40, 54
- Snowey White: 102
- Somebody Stole my Gal*: 103
- Sony: 105, 106
- Sony Awards: 116, 123, **133**, **136**, 141
- Sony TR620: 105, **106**
- Sony Walkman: 124
- Sound Broadcasting Act: 114, 117
- Sowerbutts (Bill): 102
- Spanish service: 64
- Spanish service for Latin America: 66
- Speech Training*: 58
- Spithead: 50, 53, 65
- Squire-Brown (Edna): **55**
- Squirrel's Cage (The)*: 53
- Stanforth (Max): 55
- Stead (Robert): 102
- Steele (Tommy): 96
- Steinheil (C.A.): 12
- Stephens (Robert): 129
- Stereo: 105, 113, 124
- Stoll (Sir Oswald): 43
- Stoller (Tony): 119, 120, 141
- Stone (Christopher): **44**
- Stone (Lew): 63
- Stones Cry Out (The)*: 79
- Stoppard (Tom): 89
- Stormlive: 134
- Study Session*: 110
- Suez crisis: 99
- Surrey Nightingale (The)*: 38
- Swansea Sound: 129
- Sykes Committee: 30, 36
- Take it From Here*: 93, 102
- Take Your Pick*: 91, **103**
- Talbot (Godfrey): 80
- TalkRadio UK: 130, 140
- TalkSPORT: 132, 140
- Tallents (Sir Stephen): 68
- Tarrant (Chris): 141
- Tauber (Richard): 76
- Telecommunications Act: 124
- Telefunken: 105
- Tellux Ltd: 105
- Theakson (Jamie): **133**
- Théatrophone: 12, 25
- These Foolish Things*: 54
- These You Have Loved*: 63, 69
- They Speak for Themselves*: 60
- Third Network: 113
- Third Programme: 82, 88, 92, 99, 102, 104, 110
- Thomas (Dylan): **88**, 90
- Thomas (Howard): 85

Thompson (J. Walter): 41, 48, 49, 73
 Thompson (John): 117, 127, 128
Today: 104, 140
 Tolkien (J.R.R.): 123, 129
 Took (Barry): 115
Top of the Form: 103
Top Twenty: 91, 92, 103
Toytown: 68, 95
 Tracy (Sheila): 128
 Train (Jack): **74**
 Transistor radio: 106, 107, 113
 Travis (Dave Lee): 131
 Trethowan (Ian): 113, 114, 128
 Trump (E.H.): **20**
 Tudsbery (Marmaduke): 46
 Turkish service: 66
Twelfth Night: 30
Twenty Questions: 101, 102
 Uher: 90
 Ullswater Committee: 57, 65
 'Uncle Arthur': 32, 37
 'Uncle Caractacus': 32, 37
 'Uncle Mac': 95
Under Milk Wood: 88, 89, 100, 104
Under Milk Wood cast list: **89**
Under the Loofah Tree: 89
 Vansittart (Sir Robert): 63
Variety Bandbox: 86
Variety Programmes Policy Guide: 95
 Vaughan-Thomas (Wynford): 80
 VHF: 105, 113
 Videologic: 138
 Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra: 128
 Villa Louvigny: **97**
 Virgin 1215: 130
 Virgin Radio: 132
 Vodaphone: 134
 Volvo: 124
 von Karajan (Herbert): 122
 Vox Productions: 65
Waggoners' Walk: 111, 115
 Waite (John): 129
 Waite (Terry): 129
 Walker (Johnnie): 115, 133
 Wall (Max): 86
War and Peace: 78
War of the Worlds: 38
War Report: 80, 86
 Warner (Jack): 70, 74
 Wartime Civilian Receiver: **78**
 Waters (Elsie and Doris): 85
 Watson (Thomas A.): 12
 Watts (Cecil): 49, 55
We'll Meet Again: 76
 WEAf: 24
Week Ending: 104, 116
Week's Good Cause (The): 38
 Welles (Orson): 38
 West (Brian): 125
 West (Samuel): 142
 Western Brothers: 69
 Western Electric Company: 27
 Westinghouse Corporation: 22, 25
What Are They Looking At?: 141
 Whiley (Jo): **141**
White Chateau (The): 39
 White Paper: 112
 Whitehouse (Mary): 129
 Whitfield (June): 102
 Whitney (John): 107, 108, 117, 122
 Whitrow (Benjamin): 129
 Wilde (Marty): 96
 Williams (Charles): 102
 Williams (Kenneth): 98, 104, 115
 Williams (Stephen): 41, 55, 91, 99, 100
 Wilmot (Chester): 80
 Wilson (Derek): 129
 Wilson (Hamish): 121
 Wilson (Harold): 108, 114, 118
 Wilton (Robb): 75
 Wireless Telegraph and Signal Company: 14
 Wireless 'Uncles and Aunts': 32
 Wogan (Terry): **136**
Woman's Hour: 90, 102, 127, 140
 Woodgate (Leslie): 45
 Woodrooffe (Thomas): 59, 60, 65
Workers Playtime: 74, 86
World at One (The): 110, 115
 World Radio Network: 135
 World Service: 97, 113, 137
 Worldspace: 135
 Wren Orchestra: 122
 Wright (Roger): 133
 Writtle staff: **20**
 Writtle, Chelmsford: 21, **22**, 25, 26, 35
 Wynn (R.T.B.): **20**
 Yeo (Tim): 137
You and Yours: 116
 Young (Jimmy): 101
 Young Tradition Award: 129
Your Hundred Best Tunes: 104

Seán Street's first job in radio was as an actor for ORTF, Paris in 1967. He joined BBC Radio in 1970, and subsequently worked in both the Public Service and Commercial sectors of the medium. In the 1980s and 90s he was a regular contributor to Radio 4's history strand, *Age to Age*, and The Radio 2 Arts Programme. He continues to make feature programmes for Radios 3 and 4, and has been a judge for both the Sony Radio Academy Awards and the Qantas Radio Awards. In 1998, Radio 4 commissioned his *Radio – Ten Poems about Sound* for its celebration of National Poetry Day, and this formed the basis of his sixth poetry collection, *Radio and Other Poems* (Rockingham Press).



He is currently Professor of Radio in the Bournemouth Media School at Bournemouth University. His research has included a grant-aided project to digitize and catalogue work from the Independent Local Radio Programme Sharing Scheme in association with the National Sound Archive, thus preserving valuable and scarce material from the early years of post-war British Independent radio.

He is also involved in exploration into pre-war English language commercial radio broadcasting from the Continent and the editing of an anthology of poems celebrating radio.

Published by KELLY PUBLICATIONS
6 Redlands, Tiverton, Devon EX16 4DH
(01884) 256170

£10.95

ISBN 1 903053 14 5

ISBN 1 903053 14-5



9 781903 053140