

ENG INF

The Quarterly For BBC Engineering Staff

Major BBC Showing at IBC

The BBC will take an important place at the International Broadcasting Convention in Brighton this year.

No less than seventeen conference papers will be read by BBC engineers and there is to be a major exhibition stand to show off more than a dozen novel engineering developments from Research and Designs Department.

All the products on show can be licensed for manufacturing by private industry or have already been licensed and need to be shown off to potential overseas customers. At the moment product licences draw in some £65,000 a year but we aim to increase that as much as possible.

The equipment on the stand will include novel equipment from Research Department for electronic preparation of Television Graphics and ACE (Advanced Conversion Equipment), the first four-field digital standards converter and the first to be virtually transparent in operation.

Other developments on show will include NICAM, the digital sound distribution system, high-quality Band II

FM transmitter equipment and compact, microprocessor-controlled equipment that will generate television logos and captions.

There will also be a demonstration of processing audio signals using a COPAS (Computer Processing of Audio Signals) system in which spectrum shaping, compression, limiting and other audio processes are all controlled by a bit-slice microprocessor working on digital signals.

Outside the exhibition hall will be CMCCR 2, the BBC's new Colour Mobile Central Control Room. It has sides that expand to 4½ metres width, opening to give a spacious production unit that will handle 25 vision sources and includes a stack of 34 monitors.

405 Ends, Self-Help Begins

On May 20th, the Home Secretary announced the phased closure of the 405-line television service, authorisation for a further stage of relay station building and also signalled the start of a scheme for 'self-help transmitters'.

The closure of the 405-line transmitting stations will be spread over a period of five years between the beginning of 1982 and the end of 1986. The 39 BBC stations to be closed in 1982 are in areas where there is almost complete UHF coverage. The closure programme will be co-ordinated with the IBA so that transmitters in the same area will be closed at the same time. These are the key points from the announcement:

- Phase III, the next phase of UHF relay station building, will follow on after the present Phase II programme has been completed. With 200 Phase II stations still to be built at the rate of 70 stations a year, Phase III should begin during

1984. Service Planning Section at Research Department cannot yet anticipate the number of Phase III stations that will be required but feel it may be as many as 500. These will be built at the same rate of 70 a year.

- In the 'self-help' scheme, approval will be given to small remote communities to set up and run their own stations. Broadcasters will do the basic planning and will ensure that the transmitters are integrated into the network. Then when a station comes into operation the broadcasters will check that it is not causing interference to existing viewers in the area. When this has been done the Home Office will issue a licence for five years operation at a cost of around £100.

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'Our Standards Are Highest'

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"You may think it is strange that at a time when many things are being cut that we should initiate this engineering bulletin but for a very small cost every year it should be able to contribute considerably to keeping us all in touch with what is going on in BBC Engineering. Some of you may well be pleasantly surprised at the range of development that is going on in BBC Engineering now, today.

With technology developing as rapidly as it does today I am very proud to be able to boast that engineers in the BBC are not just following close behind the technological bandwagon but are amongst those who are in the front pulling it along.

But the cuts in our expenditure have been on all our minds over the last few months and the repercussions will continue to affect us for a long time. We have to give up 130 posts in the Engineering Division from a total staff of some 7,000. As well as the reduction in staff we are going to suffer much tighter budgetary control, but as engineers we are thoroughly used to the practice of tailoring our system to the budget that is available.



Bryce McCrirrick
Director of Engineering

Despite these cuts in effort and money our technical standards will not fall. As broadcasting engineers we will continue to lead the field in Research and Development and our operational standards will likewise continue to set and example to broadcasters the world over.

Some of the equipment that has recently gone in service shows just how BBC engineers are setting even higher standards. The new digital standards converter at Television Centre has proved so efficient that some people ask whether programmes have in fact

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