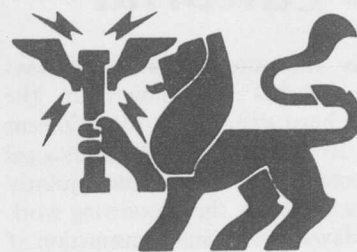


ENG INF

The Quarterly For BBC Engineering Staff



Direct Broadcasting by Satellite DE signs "Heads of Agreement"



Bryce McCrerrick signing the Heads of Agreement with Alan Jefferis, (left) Managing Director of United Satellites Limited.

On March 7th, Bryce McCrerrick, (DE), and Alan Jefferis, Managing Director of United Satellites Limited (Unisat), signed Heads of Agreement for provision by Unisat of two direct broadcasting by satellite television channels for the BBC DBS services due to start in 1986.

Unisat, jointly owned by British Telecom, British Aerospace and the General Electric Company, will be responsible for building and launching two satellites in 1986, the first to be operational and the second as a flying spare. A third spacecraft will be available on the ground as an additional safeguard. Launch will be by the European Ariane rocket or by the American Space Shuttle, the final choice to be made nearer the time. The satellites will be in geostationary orbit 36,000 km above the equator and will provide signals of sufficient power

for high-quality reception by individual households, with suitable receivers and small dish antennas less than 1 metre in diameter, within a 'footprint' covering the United Kingdom and parts of Western Europe. The agreement covers a period of operation of the satellite service of at least seven years.

The satellite will carry transponders for two BBC DBS services; DBS 1 will be a Subscription Channel carrying feature films and other attractions; and DBS 2 will have an international flavour. There will also be a number of digital sound channels affording stereo sound with television and some high-quality radio channels.

The signing of the Heads of Agreement represents a notable landmark in the development of British broadcasting. It will be followed later by completion of a full Agreement covering the finer details.

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