

# ENGINEERING

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## New Director of Engineering looks ahead.

"I am pleased to have this opportunity to reflect upon what I see lying ahead for engineers and engineering in the BBC over the next five years.

The real world of broadcasting in the United Kingdom sees RDS immediately upon us in its first phase of infancy, with a significant impact anticipated on listening habits so desperately needed to coax the listener to VHF-FM; similarly we have an early opportunity to incorporate the benefit of stereo sound with television. In the more speculative areas the technology of Digitally Assisted Television (DATV) is just around the corner; whether the broadcaster uses it as quickly as technically possible remains a more sophisticated non-engineering argument.

BBC engineers are seen once again demonstrating that they are at the front of the queue in developing a further new era of technology to the benefit of broadcasting in general, and the BBC in particular. It remains important in my opinion for this situation to continue, and not to allow a situation to develop where the BBC is merely reacting "post hoc" to the impact of new technology. This is particularly important given a situation where the broadcasters are not wholly convinced of the benefits of the new technology.

Whilst providing the engineering climate within which programme making can be developed in the most cost effective way, our technical standards should not be allowed to fall. BBC engineering continues to lead in the field of broadcasting research and development, and both our engineering excellence and our operational standards in Radio and Television set an example which is envied by broadcasters the world over. It will

be a testing time over the next five years, given the overall environment within which the Corporation will have to work, but there are no grounds to suggest that there is any incompatibility between this environment and the commitment to further the excellence of engineering.

The development of the White City site, which to many people must seem a slow process, will be a dramatic event for those involved both in managing its execution and its occupation. The profile of the project is heightened since it offers for the first time the opportunity to build a centre that will incorporate the latest technical advances in the fields of radio, television and business communication media. Whatever broadcasting use is finally realised on the site the techniques used will have the capacity for expansion and to carry the BBC into the next century.

In contemplating the next five years we must not forget the sterling work of transmission engineers, whose efforts so often go unnoticed. Theirs is a remarkable success story of using technology to advance transmitter operation and automation to a very high degree of refinement. After all, without a reliable transmission network viewers and listeners alike would become disenchanted with the service however excellent the programme material.

Finally, on a personal note, I would like to say a sincere thank you to all who were kind enough to send their best wishes on my appointment. I can do no more than hope you will continue to give me the level of support you have so readily given to Bryce over the past years."

**Bill Denny**

