

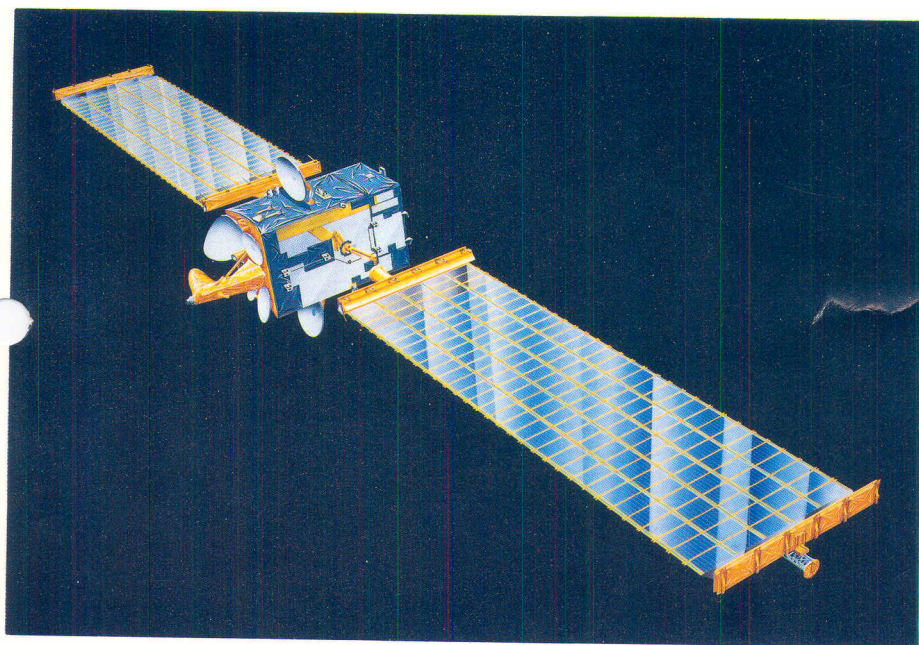
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AUTUMN 1989 No 38

ENTERPRISES SIGNS OLYMPUS SATELLITE AGREEMENT

BBC Enterprises has signed a five-year agreement with the European Space Agency (ESA) to provide them with eight hours of television and other programming per day. The programmes will be carried at prime time on the European Channel of the recently-launched Olympus 1 satellite. This is a large multi-purpose, high power, communications satellite which was built for ESA by a consortium led by British Aerospace.

The BBC Olympus service - to be known as The Enterprise Channel - will be based initially on the existing BBC TV Europe service, which is a simultaneous relay of BBC 1. Ultimately however, and certainly within the first year, Enterprises intends to develop a new schedule to reflect the innovative, experimental and European nature of the channel. The Olympus project is described in some greater detail on page 4.



The Olympus 1 satellite (photo: British Aerospace)

Charlie Sandbank honoured by the SMPTE

Deputy Director of Engineering, Charlie Sandbank, has been awarded a Fellowship of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE).

He will receive his award at the SMPTE's 131st Technical Conference, to be held in Los Angeles in late October. Also receiving a Fellowship will be former Director of Engineering, Or Bryce McCrerrick.

The Los Angeles Technical Conference will commemorate a hundred years of film and fifty years of television in America.

Among the speakers will be another former Director of Engineering - Sir James Redmond - who will deliver a presentation on the history of broadcasting in the UK.

CONTENTS

ASCENSION	
- new control system	7
BIRMINGHAM	
- Studio 5 refurbished	12
BROADCASTING HOUSE	
- new network switcher	11
- new Travel Centre	8
BUSH HOUSE	
- new information display system	7
CCD	
- cameras for the future	6
D&ED	
- stabilised power supplier	2
ELSTREE	
- Studio D refurbished	15
ENGINEERING SAFETY PAPERS	
- GP4 and GP6	13
HDTV	
- at Wembley, Wimbledon and Berlin	14
LICENCE AGREEMENTS	2
MAIDA VALE	
- Studios 4 & 5 refurbished	3
NOTTINGHAM	
- new Broadcasting Centre	15
OLYMPUS SATELLITE PROJECT	4
RADIO WM	
- the 'Heartlands' project	16
TRANSMITTER NEWS	2
WOOD NORTON	
- switchgear training	13

ENGINEER

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The closing date for stories to be
included in the winter issue
(No. 39) is 24 November.

Mike Meyer

LICENCE AGREEMENTS

Two licence agreements have been struck since the last issue of Eng Inf.

The first of these, with Eddystone Radio, broadens their range of ancillary equipment for Band 11 installations. The deal encompasses the MNI/15 Programme Failure Monitor and PS2/163A Stabilised Power Supplier (see below), along with two unequipped Equaliser Chassis, CH2/3 and CH2/4.

The second licence covers the set of enhancements for Mk III telecines, comprising the 'Festival' Burn and Shading Corrector (UN26/604) and P.E.C. Head Amplifier (AMI/616) as well as the RP3/511 Shot Change Detector. The agreement for this

equipment is with a new company called Foster Dene Ltd, which has been set up specifically to handle these items.

The staff who have formed this company know the units well. They had formerly bought them from the two other licensees - Digi-Grade Systems Ltd and Digi-Tel Systems (UK) Ltd - for installation in telecine machines based mainly in the United States. (Cintel also holds a licence for the Shot Change Detector.)

For further details of these or other agreements, or for information or advice on any aspects of licensing~ please contact the D&ED Liaise Engineer, Peter Jefferson, on AH 375.

TRANSMITTER NEWS

The following services opened between 1 July and 16 September:

Television

Arisaig	Highland
Aviemore	Highland
Castle Caereinion	Powys
Castleton	N. Yorkshire
Taynuilt	Highland

FM Radio

Haslingden Lancashire

* * *

In late July, the new digital programme feed to the Channel Isles entered service (see the previous Eng Inf). About the same time, Rowridge (Isle of Wight) started broadcasting from a new directional aerial system, which offers mixed polarisation.

On 30 August, the frequencies of Radios 2, 3 and 4 from the Bath relay were each increased by 200 kHz. This is to allow further FM services to be added over the next few years. And on 31 August, the Radio 4 FM transmitter at Limavady, Co.Antrim, began broadcasting in stereo.

On 13 September, Pontop Pike started transmitting from a new aerial system, also offering mixed polarisation.

PS/163 Stabilised Power Supplier

This unit was originally designed in 1974, specifically to power the AM7/11, 12, & 13 series of audio amplifiers. Since then, it has undergone a number of modifications, albeit of a fairly minor nature. Thus, the 1989 model is substantially the same as the fifteen-year-old original design.

Despite its advancing years, the design's popularity has continued. Over two hundred and fifty were ordered last year alone, and there have been no obvious signs that this level of demand will significantly decrease in the immediate future. As a result of this, and because the original design has become less economic to produce, D&ED has recently completed a major reappraisal of the Power Supplier.

The outcome is a revised unit which, although at least as good in terms of performance, features a much-improved mechanical construction. This allows the design to be produced more simply, as well as providing for easier maintenance in the field by virtue of its simplified construction.

This 'new' unit, which is coded PS2/163A, is now available through Design and Equipment Department. It supersedes the original design and will automatically be supplied against existing or future orders for the PS2/163. However, drawings for the latter unit will remain available through the usual channels, in order to allow for continued maintenance of the three thousand plus original units in the field. Note that circuit references have been maintained, so the same handbook (DDHB 3.144) may be used for both generations of the design.

For further information, please contact the D&ED Liaison Engineer, Peter Jefferson, on AH 375.

RADIO PB

The Autumn 1989 edition of the pocket booklet 'BBC Radio Transmitting Stations' is now available from EID. Please telephone LBH 5040 to order your free copy(ies).

MAIDA VALE - Studios 4 and 5 refurbished

The newly-rebuilt Studios 4 and 5 at Maida Vale will take Radio's recording facilities into the 1990s. For the first time, a BBC Radio project has been completely designed by external consultants to a brief produced by Radio Projects.

The first planning meeting was held in July 1987, when it was decided that a leading firm of studio design consultants would be commissioned to design the entire facility. Jon Gibbs (Manager Operations, Music Studios) and his assistant, Bob Conduet, then found out which commercial studios were preferred by studio operational staff. After visits to several London studios, a short list of three studio designers was compiled.

The three designers were then asked to submit an outline design, based on a brief produced by Martin Bravery of Radio Projects. Following interviews, Neil Grant of Harris Grant Associates was awarded the contract to provide the complete design package. This involved all architectural, acoustic, structural, technical, mechanical and electrical works.

The Studios

Previously, Studios 4 & 5 were identical 40-channel SSL-equipped facilities. However, in 1985, Studio 4's cubicle was redesigned by Tom Hidley, an acoustics consultant, to provide a commercial-type environment. Unfortunately, the size of this cubicle was such that there was little room left for any extra equipment or musicians! So when Maida Vale 5 required modernising, the need for a larger cubicle was obvious. Because of the existing studio structure, it was necessary to swap the cubicle and studio roles, thus creating a very large cubicle (or control room) and a small studio.

Studio 4 was also included in the refurbishment which resulted in an integrated complex, allowing either cubicle to use any or all studio areas. The final design also includes a vocal booth, a mezzanine floor in Studio 4 and a machine room-cum-apparatus room.

The Technical Features

The sound desk chosen was an SSL 4000 'G' Series with forty-eight mono and eight stereo channels, and computer automation. This is the latest version of what has become the

BBC's standard music recording desk — the 'E' series SSL of which there are seventeen in BBC service.

Other features of the new control room are: comprehensive effects and processing equipment; Boxer 4 main monitoring loudspeakers; alternative monitoring via Yamaha NS10 and Auratone speakers; MIDI routing matrix; video switcher allowing colour CCTV monitoring of studios; two Studer A800 24-track tape machines, chase-synchronised to provide 48-track capability; DAT and 1/4-inch mastering recorders.

Dimmer-controlled low voltage halogen lighting has been installed in

all areas to provide comprehensive mood lighting.

The complex entered service in July 1989. The variety of Radio 1 and 2 sessions using the facilities so far include: solo Classical guitar; 3-piece Heavy Metal band; 20-piece African band; mixing of Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and MIDI-controlled electronic pop. Everyone has learned a great deal and the end result has been fairly well received. Currently, the facilities are booked at least twelve hours a day, seven days a week, into the foreseeable future.

Martin Bravery, Project Leader
Radio Projects.

Top: Studio 4 at Maida Vale

Bottom: The Control Room of Maida Vale 5