

Corrections and recollections – Holme Moss



On receipt of *Prospero*, today, my wife read me the letters. The inaccurate information, by Mr Tordoff, about Holme Moss prompted this response. Some of the letter from Mr Tordoff is not correct. I spent the last 31 years of my career as a BBC engineer at Holme Moss, and Peter Sherdley was a colleague of mine and we were never involved with any opt-out switching.

In the early years this switching was the responsibility of Post Office engineers based at Burley Road in Leeds. I understand the switching was moved to BBC premises in Woodhouse Lane. During the Post Office involvement, it became a joking matter when the switching errors became frequent. When Holme Moss was built, at 720ft above sea level, the television aerials were over 2,000ft above sea level and the coverage covered from Hull in the East to Liverpool and North Wales.

Holme Moss became a target because the Welsh viewers thought programmes should be in the Welsh language. One night the Welsh Nationalists smashed windows to gain entry and some equipment was broken. The culprit was arrested and prosecuted.

Apart from not ever transmitting colour TV, Holme Moss has other interesting events to remember, being, as far as I am aware, the only transmitting station to have an open day for the public, in the 60s. This event attracted over 1,000 visitors.

In 1952 the station and staff featured on a live TV programme. The show was part of a series called *Other Peoples Jobs* and titled *Top O't Moss*. The presenter was Richard Dimbleby. Richard interviewed staff members, including the E.i.C Charles Buckle, A.E.i.C. Donald Hinchliffe and S.M.E. Lionel (Fred) Allen. I was interviewed on duty at the control desk. The station electrician Will Harper and rigger Frank Dobson were also featured. The Manchester Outside Broadcasting unit used three cameras and the show producer was Derek Burrell Davis. Sadly this was before video recordings were available and there are no recordings of this programme. These facts will probably be of limited interests but, at least, are true, and we transmitter engineers must fly the flags as part of the TV chain between the studios and the public.

Peter S Pearson

It weren't our fault, Guv!

Once again I find myself metaphorically putting pen to paper in defence of the honour and integrity of Holme Moss. Having brushed aside Graham Hare's accusations of interference, I now find Courtenay Tordoff blaming us for a mis-switching operation causing incorrect material to be radiated.

Not so! At no time did we at Holme Moss have any responsibility for any network switching. We could only broadcast whatever was sent to us on the circuit from Leeds.

I would suggest he looks outside the BBC for the culprit in this case. My suspicions would lie with the Post Office Network Switching Centre.

I repeat, it weren't our fault, Guv!

Peter Sherdley

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