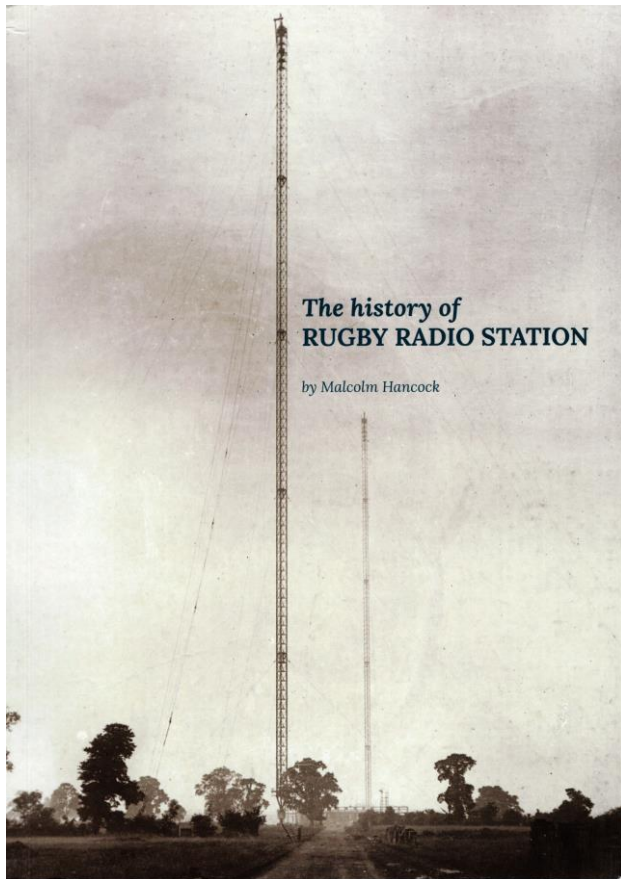


Book Review: The History of Rugby Radio Station

By: Malcolm Hancock

Dave Porter G4OYX



It is probably best to start this review with the actual words on the back page of this book:

For over 80 years, twelve iconic radio masts graced the skyline of Rugby and Hillmorton – towering symbols of Rugby Radio Station's global reach.

The pace of technological advancement never slackens though. Time moves on, demands change... and today Rugby Radio Station is no more. Fortunately this extensive history meticulously compiled by Malcolm Hancock (a former Rugby Radio Station manager) is here to ensure that all of its incredible stories and glories are preserved for future generations.

The first Public Telephone Service from Europe to the USA; top-secret operations during the dark days of World War II and The Cold War; personal anecdotes relaying the everyday lives of the people whose vision created it and whose passion brought the vision to life.

It is all here in The History of Rugby Radio Station.

Well that is the general information for punters but what technical information is there between the covers?

If you are a fan of the Tricks of the Trade pieces in *Signal* then this book is right up your street.

Malcolm G8EYY is a former engineer at the site who progressed through the ranks to become the last station manager before its closure. The story he tells is chronologically in the correct order; it is easy to get way-laid and lose the reader when the tale that is told extends over nearly a century but, by presenting good quality illustrations, the time stamps are in the document. "Time stamps" is pertinent here as within the book is the engineering tale of the MSF LF and HF services as well as the GBR time transmissions prior to it becoming a top-secret MoD facility in the mid-1960s.

The developments which occurred on the site on both sides of the A5 trunk road are documented to include the 1950's HF SSB/ISB "B" facility with what appeared to be about 1000 rhombic antennas.

What could be dry-engineering reporting is enhanced by the steady stream of "personal memories" that help immensely in bringing the saga to life. Who could not resist reading about *The Ode to a Pigeon*, *The Disconnected Admiral*, *Transmissions to the USSR from the CCCP* or even, *The Inverness Railway Station Car Park Closure* while G8EYY was away on a training course and how escape was effected by driving along a platform after having conducted, what we would say now, was a 'risk assessment'.

Humour is very much in this book and it is best to close this review with another quote from G8EYY.

*He writes "I do remember one time when we were building a rhombic aerial on the ground at the "B" site. This involved a 400-foot length of 7/22 cadmium-copper wire. This was long enough for quite a bit of RF pick-up from the GBR 16 kHz transmitter on the site opposite. Every time I touched the wire I got a small shock. I was told "You don't want to tickle it like that. Grab hold of the f***er! And it worked!"*

The 237 page paperback book is available from the following on-line source for the amazing price of £5-99 + postage. ISBN 978-1-5272-0540-6

<http://rugbyradiostation.co.uk/the-history-of-rugby-radio-station/>

All proceeds from the sale of the book go the Warwickshire and Northamptonshire Air Ambulance service.

~ ~ ~