

In a Box Innovations

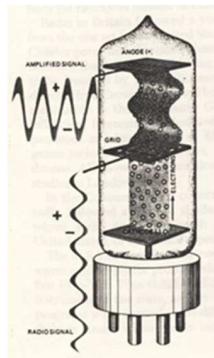
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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

News

A bit of Radio History

On the 12th Dec 1901, Guglielmo Marconi transmitted three dots of the morse code across the Atlantic, opening up the world of communications that it is today. With this epoch making event wireless communications using morse code became quite common until 1908 when H J Round of Wireless Telegraph Company (founded by Guglielmo Marconi) was able to transmit speech over a distance of 50 miles. Quality of voice transmission was improved when in 1913 the triode was used which was developed by Dr Lee de Forest in the US.



(The Triode, 1906 The Birth of Broadcasting)

Broadcasting, as an entertainment medium, commenced in 1919 in UK and USA, under similar circumstances. The monotonous speech transmissions were interspersed with music which enthralled the listeners, crying for more.

In Britain the first advertised program by Dame Nellie Melba was broadcast on the 15th Jan 1920. In 1922 Wireless Telegraph Co. (later to be called Marconi Company) was allowed by the PMG to operate a broadcast transmitter, limited to 250 watts. 14th Feb 1922 was this historic day when TWO EMMA TOCK, as the station was called, went on air from a wooden hut near Chelmsford. A single broadcasting authority known as the British Broadcasting Company represented by six famous names in the radio manufacturing industry controlled broadcasting in Britain until 1926, when the British Broadcasting Corporation was inaugurated.

Among the three countries that commenced regular radio broadcasting three years after Britain which began in 1922, are Japan and Ceylon (now known as Sri Lanka). A 250 watt transmitter was built by a few engineers in the then Central Telegraph Office of Ceylon, making use of some components from ship to shore radio apparatus. The engineers who were responsible were Messrs E Harper, A Nadarasa, W E de Silva and B Wijetilleke. Music from a gramophone was transmitted by placing a microphone in front of it and this took place in the Central Telegraph Office building.

On Feb 22nd 1924 the first relay from an outside venue took place. The event was a musical show held at the YMCA premises in Fort in Colombo, on the occasion of the opening of its new building and auditorium. Operating on 800 meters, the transmission was demonstrated as an experiment. On the 27th June the Speeches of H E the Governor and the President of the Engineering Association of Ceylon were broadcast at the annual general meeting. Gramophone music, news etc were then transmitted from time to time, about two or three times a week, and on the 16th of Dec 1925 a regular broadcast service, on a new transmitter was inaugurated by the Governor in a special broadcast. This was confirmed in the report of the Special Committee on Broadcasting in Ceylon 1941 issued as a sessional paper in 1941 in which it was stated "..... Ceylon is the first of the Crown colonies to provide a broadcasting service.....".

In a PMG's report during that time stated "The service appears to be much appreciated by the listeners generally and a striking feature is the excellence at which the transmission is received over greater part of India.....Colombo programs have been the means of keeping alive interest in broadcasting throughout India.....".

Even though the diode and later the triode based receivers were available from the beginning of broadcasting, it was the crystal set that was more popular because it was cheap. Most crystal sets had a wire 'cat's whisker' which had to be twiddled until it touches a suitable place on the crystal to start receiving the broadcast signal.



(Crystal set type RB2)

During the World War II, the construction of a SW station started in 1941 in Ceylon and was commissioned in 1943/4 with a 100kW Marconi transmitter. This transmitting station, which was known as Radio SEAC, was used by the forces to broadcast to SE Asia through a studio set up at 191 Turret Road in Colombo.



(Radio Times of Radio SEAC)

*(Courtesy "Milestones in Broadcasting – Marconi Communication Systems Publication")
(Extract from an article written late 1980's by Rukmin Wijemanne)*

Autonomous Bougainville Government (ABG) launches a mobile radio station

The Bureau Media and Communications Department of the Autonomous Bougainville Government launched recently a mobile radio broadcasting service in Buka, its capital. This service will travel around the Island of Buka informing the people of Buka about the planned referendum, voting and other important topics.

The Autonomous Region of Bougainville, previously known as the North Solomons Province, is an autonomous region in Papua New Guinea. The largest island is Bougainville Island (also the largest of the Solomon Islands archipelago), and the province also includes Buka Island and assorted outlying islands including the Carteret Islands. The capital is temporarily Buka, though it is expected that Arawa will once again

become the provincial capital. The population of the province is 249,358 (*curtesy Wikipedia*).

Leading from the peace agreement which embedded the right to hold a referendum on independence not earlier than 2015 and no later than 2020, the ABG is planning to inform and educate the people of Bougainville the importance and the voting process of the referendum. One of the methods adopted is to travel to rural areas with the mobile radio station and broadcast locally.

For this purpose the Media Unit of ABG purchased a Radio-in-a-Box (model Proteus), a portable radio station, from the Australian company, In a Box Innovations. A vehicle mounted telescopic mast was also purchased to facilitate portable use of the radio station. The equipment was delivered in September 2014. A training programme for the operational staff was held early October to ensure that the staff are conversant with the setting up and operational processes.



Training of staff – Courtesy Tanya Rita Lahies





Briefing and training

As the portable telescopic mast had not arrived at the time of the training, the installation procedure was explained to the staff. A temporary mast was erected using a galvanised pipe to test all the equipment and to make several test broadcasts.



Installation of the portable mast- Courtesy Jeremy Miller

The portable telescopic mast has now been successfully installed on a Toyota Land Cruiser and the mobile radio station is now operational.

2000 windup radios were also purchased for distribution to people who do not have access to radios.

This project was jointly funded by Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia and New Zealand Aid Programme.



Broadcasting on location – Courtesy Jeremy Miller



Setting up of the telescopic mast– Courtesy Jeremy Miller