THE MAGIC SPARK

50 YEARS OF RADIO IN AUSTRALIA

R. R. WALKER

One of the amenities which our modern world takes so much for granted is radio. Yet it is a highly complex and sophisticated business which requires technical proficiency, outstanding personalities and polished showmanship.

Radio in Australia began fifty years ago with crystal sets and private licences. In a comparatively short time it has developed into a vast wave of sound which rolls in from widely separated cities and towns throughout the country.

To celebrate radio's Golden Jubilee, R. R. Walker, who has had much to do with the world of radio, has set down here a full and colourful description of this popular medium.

He recalls the challenges of War and television; the financial and production triumphs and failures; the characters – Jack Davey, Bob Dyer, Norman Banks – and countless other guests, invited and uninvited, to Australián living rooms.

More than a history, this book is also a personal record of times past and present – and a forecast of things to come.

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THE MAGIC SPARK

The story of the first fifty years of Radio in Australia

R. R. Walker

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THE MAGIC SPARK

By the same author

COMMUNICATORS —
People, Practices, Philosophies in
Australian Advertising, Media, Marketing

WRITING FOR RADIO

RADIO FOR THE RETAIL TRADE

PATTERSON TELEVISION REPORTS 1-17

Contents

Conspectus

- The Trail-Blazers, the Experimenters, the Ham Operators, the first stations up till the close of the 1920s
  Chapters 1-5

- The confident voice, development of programmes to the end of the thirties
  Chapters 6-8

- War and Peace, Controls and Censorship, the independent production houses
  Chapters 9-11

- Pre- and Post-TV, the Announcers, the Great Performers
  Chapters 12-14

- The Networks, Organizations, Economics
  Chapters 15-18

- How Radio works, AM and FM, Ratings, Country Radio
  Chapters 19-21

- The Basic Tripod – Music, News, Sport
  Chapters 22-24

- Trials and Errors, the persuasion of sound, the Future
  Chapters 25-27

Illustrations

ILLUSTRATION CREDITS

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Author's Note

In commissioning this book the Federation of Australian Commercial Broadcasters agreed to give the author free rein. Consequently, some of the views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Federation or its individual members. Indeed, there would be strong disagreement with some of the comments made. It is to its credit, however, that the Federation was prepared to allow the radio story to be told with due regard for its weaknesses as well as its strengths – as seen through the eyes of this writer. It should also be stated that this is the story of commercial radio, with only passing reference to the Australian Broadcasting Commission and its great contributions. Furthermore, with so much of the material subject to recall by different people there will inevitably be some dispute about names, dates, origins, claims. Early records, unhappily, are few and often conflicting. Also, because of the great number of stations and the people who have passed through them over the years it has been impossible to pay credit to all those who have played a part in commercial radio history. Unwittingly, some significant names may have been overlooked; others, less deserving, possibly given credit where it was not due. For any such omissions or wrongful attributions pardon is sought.

R. R. WALKER

CHAPTER ONE

Wherever You Go There's Radio

Radio – 'that instrument of almost incalculable importance' (as the man who equated advertising with the black plague, the BBC's late Lord Reith, described it), 'the tribal drum' of Marshall McLuhan, the 'conduit through which prefabricated din' flowed into the home of Aldous Huxley, the device which 'permits speakers to state without fear of contradiction', the 'entertainment medium that never shows old movies', the portable musical pipeline to the young-at-heart, the instant information system, the nation's sporting scoreboard, the friend of the farmer, the companion of the outback, the refuge of the lonely, the charitable conscience of the country, the voice of the advertiser – is celebrating its golden jubilee in Australia.

From a delicate child with a slender hold on life it has developed into vigorous maturity and, apparently, a state of ageless fascination.

Its vital statistics are formidable.

At recent count there were nearly 666 million radio sets that could be tuned in to the 13,400 stations round the world.

By comparison there are less than 8,000 daily newspapers, 6,400 TV stations (including repeaters) and 262 million TV sets.

More than half the radio transmitters and half the sets are located in the United States. The besotted New Yorker has access to more than one hundred stations if he likes to fiddle around enough. In Australia there are one hundred and eighteen commercial radio stations and 82 nationals. The number of radio sets in operation is conservatively estimated at more than eleven million.

In an average week Australians tune in for three and one-quarter hours a day in metropolitan areas, slightly longer in the country. Radio virtually sends its signal into 99 per cent of homes. There are more than two and three-quarter million licensed households and probably at least another three hundred thousand unlicensed.

Most of the time, for most of the people it is the commercial stations that claim their attention. On a continuing average the overall percentage is about 85 per cent commercial, 15 per cent national.

Those percentages, it should be noted, tend to obscure the appeal of individual stations. In Sydney and Melbourne for instance, where there are six commercials, the ratings of the more 'popular' of the two national stations compare favourably with competitors. Indeed surveys over the past two years show they sit about the middle of the scale.

This year — 1973 — Australian commercial radio may be said to be fifty years old. The qualification is there because radio, in a way, got off to a false start. Both national and commercial stations came from common progenitors. Although private companies were invested with the mandate to get it off the ground, they were not really commercial in today's sense. The first attempt did not succeed. But with a revised charter it was not only to make the grade but prosper in a way that left early operators stroking their cat's whiskers in wonderment — and some contentment.

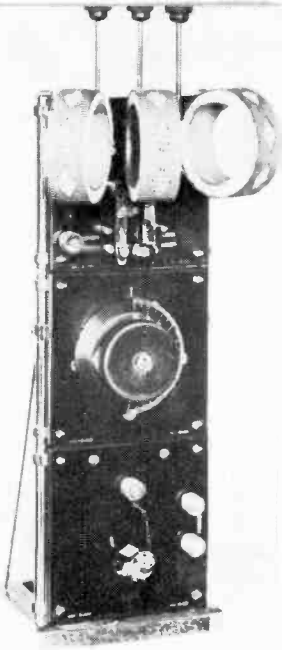
Advertisers today invest nearly $46 million a year in broadcast intelligence. Radio ranks number three in media spending, behind print and television — ahead of outdoor and cinema — absorbing — over the last decade — between 10 and 11 per cent of advertising appropriations.

Commercial radio may, justifiably, be said to have started in the United States. Even the Russians don't challenge that. As for the United Kingdom, while Australia is responding to its half-century toast, that long-deprived and under-privileged nation is only this year to sample the vicarious delights of sponsored wooing from its very own transmitters — not from pirates or Radio Luxembourg or Normandie, as in the past. After talking about it for years Britannia is broaching the waves with the restrained passion of an elderly bride worried about the effort involved. And wondering whether it will all be worthwhile.

The earliest known photo of an Australian broadcast, taken at 2FC, after AWA built the station on the roof of Farmer's store

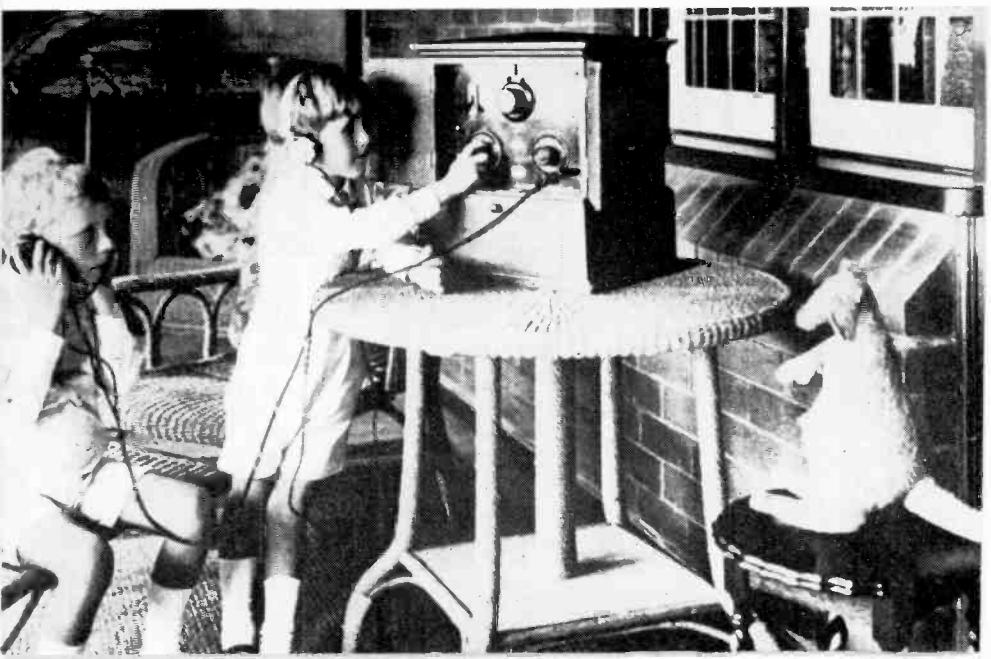
Earliest known photo of the control room 2FC, Farmer's Broadcasting Service, 1923

On sale in 1926 for £90 was the Radiola Super Six, a six-valve super heterodyne receiver, capable of receiving stations from Adelaide to Brisbane



For £3, wireless enthusiasts could buy this early AWA crystal set

'Even a child can do it' – so ran the teaser underlining the simplicity of tuning in on a 1923 Radiola two-valve receiver



In the United States, stations in Pittsburgh, Detroit and San Francisco all lay claim to being the first truly 'commercial' operation. It all depends on how you interpret the word and the type of service. The argument, however, is of small consequence. What can be said is that radio, as an advertising medium, became firmly established around 1920. Two years later radio was to experience its first great expansionary phase. The voice of President Harding, World Series baseball, election results – right there in the living room – caught the nation by the ears. It was up, up and away. The 'magic spark' was to arc the Pacific and activate a receptive Australian audience.

CHAPTER TWO

In the Beginning

But the story goes back further than the twenties – to the hams in wireless telephony. In 1905 a Wireless Telegraphy Act was to acknowledge and establish under federal control communication by wireless for navigational purposes and a few land-lubbing experimenters. The Marconi company established a two-way radio station at Queenscliff in Victoria.

In 1906 a Mr C. P. Bartholomew built an experimental station at Mosman, New South Wales. In 1910 the Wireless Institute was formed in that State. The Institute was to organize wireless contact between two trains travelling at forty miles an hour. The year was also marked by the arrival from England of an Ernest Fisk, armed with patents from Marconi and Telefunken and who three years later was to become Managing Director of Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Limited.

Fisk and AWA were to figure prominently in the history of radio from that point onwards.

Earlier still came the theoretical and componential discoveries that were to be irresistibly drawn into the box of tricks that could send out sounds over vast distances – millions of miles now we have spacecraft poking their inquisitive antennae into dark corners of the universe.

Nobody really 'invented' radio. Like Betsy, it just grew from a confluence of thoughts from great minds. The men behind it all might be said to be the American, Franklin, who in 1752 identified positive and negative electrical charges; the Italian, Volta, who developed the first electric 'pile' or battery; the Dutchman, Oer-

sted, who demonstrated in 1819 that electricity could magnetize; Ampere, the Frenchman, who established the mathematical basis of electrodynamics; Ohm, a German, who examined relationships between current, voltage, resistance; Henry, another American who discovered the phenomenon of electrical 'self-inductance'; the Englishman, Faraday, who conceived magnetic lines of force.

From their equations and experiments Maxwell, another Englishman, was to theorize in 1864 on the nature of electro-magnetic waves. In 1887, Hertz, of Germany, transmitted and received the first 'radio' waves. Then, in one big step forward in 1897 the great Italian inventor, Marconi, developed the first commercially-successful spark-coil transmitter. Also swelling the corpus of practical knowledge, or its application, were other eminent men – Morse, Bell, Edison, Lodge, Meissner, von Arco, Round, Poulsen, Langmuir, Alexanderson, Fleming, de Forest, Armstrong, Pupin.

To Marconi, however, must go the principal credit for channelling accumulated wisdoms into the practical use of wireless telegraphy. His first efforts at sending a signal across space were on a very modest scale indeed. In 1895 he managed to 'fly' it across the garden of his father's home in Pontecchio. Though slight this was a start. Two years later he had the distance up to two miles.

In 1901 he spanned the Atlantic with a signal. The 'message' was short and to the point. It consisted only of the letter 'S', but the impressive thing was, he got it there from 1,800 miles away. The following year, from 2,100 miles off, Marconi received wireless messages at sea. In 1903 the first ocean newspaper, based on intelligence received by wireless, was published on RMS *Campania.*

Australia was in the picture, too. A Mr H. W. Jenvey, an electrical engineer with the Post Office in Victoria, established contact with the Duke of York's escort ship during the royal visit of 1901. In 1906 a Professor Fessenden of Brant Rock, Massachusetts, operated an experimental station. On Christmas eve a short programme of two musical 'selections', a poetry reading and a talk on an undisclosed subject were broadcast and picked up by ships' wireless operators within a range of about three hundred miles. For the technically-minded, the equipment consisted of a water-cooled microphone which was used to modulate an Alexanderson alternator. One kilowatt of power was employed. The frequency – 50 kilocycles.

In 1907 the Atlantic was alive with radio telegrams between England and Canada. In 1908 Paris was to hear a broadcast from the Eiffel Tower. The following year Enrico Caruso's voice was to 'go out' from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York.

David Sarnoff, one of the great names in broadcasting history, put a plan to the company which employed him as an engineer – the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company – for the manufacture of a 'radio music box'. That was some time in 1916. The next few years saw many 'hams' seeding the air with both regular and irregular sound, mostly music, but punctuated by impromptu performances from friends and neighbours.

By 1920 'music in the air' was an accepted phenomenon. By late 1922 some 560 US stations had received licences to operate, many of them tied to radio and electrical firms anxious to sell sets. A lot of them fell by the way but those backed by money from publishing houses and department stores gathered financial strength from the sale of advertising. Religious institutions were also strongly identified in ownership lists – and still are. In Australia, for instance, more than six hundred hours of 'religion' are broadcast over more than ninety commercial stations each week. In England and on the continent events in parallel were occurring, with broadcasting emerging from the ardor of the amateurs. One of the first broadcast 'concerts' was staged at a Hampstead garden fete. Listeners were regaled with 'unconsidered trifles of the lightest type'. Prior to the start of the programme there was a long, piercing blast from an organ to help listeners adjust their sets properly. The year was 1922.

The British Broadcasting Company – changed in 1927 to the British Broadcasting Corporation – was under way, charged by the government to develop the system as a monopoly but with a high degree of autonomy, subsequently to be preserved by some singularly strong-minded chairmen who found commerce a word that was to know no application to their medium. It took fifty years to modify that aversion.

Lord Reith, a tall six feet six inches, tart of tongue, firm of faith, was 'the man who made the BBC'. He once described The Beatles as 'evil' and considered the most important part of his job to be protecting people listening at home, from harmful influences: among these, advertising.

Like the British, Australian studios were treated to absorb sound; heavily draped with curtains and thickly carpeted. 'Silence' notices and red lights contributed their unnerving tomb-like qualities. But inside and out, the air waves were stirring – the magic spark lighting up a new world of possibilities – pleasurable, practical, profitable.

CHAPTER THREE

The First Bold Voices

Before we start the story of Australia's first regular service — a brief look at some of the early experimental broadcasts.

'Wireless transmissions' appear to have begun about 1910. In the next four years the air was filled with snap, crackle — but no pop. World War I saw a virtual radio silence, and among the early post-war local 'hams' was Charles Maclurcan of the Sydney suburb of Strathfield, one of the first to graduate from 'spark' transmission to continuous wave. Although it would appear that officially he was not supposed to transmit regular music and/or entertainment, he apparently managed to send out two hours of gramophone music each Sunday from his backroom 'station', 2CM.

2JR, which stood for Joe Reed, an AWA engineer, was also early on the scene. AWA, which had established the Marconi School of Wireless in 1913, was to train quite a few early enthusiasts whose names were to be associated with the story of radio in this country. The late Ray Allsop, another pioneer, was in regular contact with American stations 'by code and wireless telephony'. He reported reception from KDKA as 'remarkably clear'.

In the early twenties, station 3DP in Hawthorn and 3SW Kew were on air. Other hams included Mr Maxwell Howden of 3BQ, W. E. Coxon of 6AG Perth, Jack Davis of 2DS Vaucluse, and many others.

In 1919 AWA conducted radio telephony experiments and on 13 August of that year came 'on air' with a musical programme transmitted from its Clarence Street offices in Sydney, to an audience in the hall of the Royal Society in Elizabeth Street. There AWA's

managing director, Ernest Fisk, was giving a lecture. A dramatic pause, and then – from across the city, 'see – no wires', the sound of music from a hand-wound gramophone.

In July 1920 what was also claimed – apparently mistakenly – to be 'the first actual demonstration of transmission and reception of radio telephony in Australia' took place at the Melbourne Aircraft Exhibition. On 13 October of the same year at the request of Prime Minister Hughes, a demonstration broadcast was arranged for State and Federal parliamentarians in Melbourne's Queen's Hall. The programme emanated from the Brighton home of Mr L. A. Hooke, AWA's Melbourne manager. It featured a 'Miss Walker,' winner of a Melba scholarship, singing live. The politicians were reported to have 'marvelled exceedingly'.

In 1921 AWA launched a series of 'wireless concerts' for Melbourne experimenters. They were so well received that a similar service was organised in Sydney. In May, what was termed 'an advanced demonstration of broadcasting' was arranged for the enlightenment of members of the Victorian division of the Wireless Institute of Australia. The *Argus* described it thus:

> A concert programme consisting of gramophone selections, a song, a recitation from Shakespeare and a speech were transmitted from the Institute's headquarters in Little Collins Street by Mr Lionel Hooke and reproduced at Prahran by a seven-stage amplifier – that is, the sound was rendered progressively louder by seven different valves. The reproduction was further augmented by a loud-speaking device which made the sound audible through the building.

The excitement was mounting. On 31 March 1922 the first broadcast from a theatre – 'live' – came from the stage of Her Majesty's Theatre. The following morning, under the head 'Music Through Space' the *Argus* reported that 'members of the theatrical profession experienced a new delight. Mr Jascha Spivakovsky, the Russian pianist, "who contributed two pieces to the novel entertainment", said that it was "beautiful" to realize he "was playing to an audience which was scattered over a range of 400 miles".' Madge Elliot and Cyril Ritchard sang a duet 'I never knew'. Un-

happily 'the humorous touches of Mr Frith were lost on the invisible audience'.

Billy Hughes was probably the first politician to transmit his wisps of wisdom 'through the ether'. A speech he made in Bendigo in 1922 was broadcast to an outside audience that probably could be counted on two hands. But by a trick of sound, apparently there were two or three extra goggle-eyed members of the unseen audience. For 'one unexplained effect was that when transmitting commenced a tank of filtered water at the back of the stage of the Town Hall repeated audibly every word spoken into the transmitter'.

The little digger seems to have been fascinated by radio: four years previously, in 1918, he participated in a test to send a message direct from Wales to his homeland. Ernest Fisk picked it up at his experimental station in Wahroonga, Sydney. Seventeen years later, at a ceremony to mark this first direct communication, Billy Hughes declared, 'Wireless is a miracle . . . an achievement of man most likely to influence his life and future'.

Ernest Fisk added the rider, 'Thirty years ago eminent engineers declared that it would never be possible to receive in Australia, direct messages from England'. The reason? 'The curve of the world set up a wall of 100 miles of sea which could not be penetrated by wireless'.

There's an obelisk on the site to mock the mockers.

The Melbourne *Argus* thought it was high time its staff got to grips with this new-fangled toy. AWA arranged a demonstration in their offices. With it came the first formal announcement that the company proposed to establish a regular broadcasting service in Australia.

And so it came about that in 1922 AWA entered into an agreement with the Commonwealth to 'forthwith proceed with the development, manufacture, sale and use of apparatus for wireless communication . . . the erection of wireless stations and the conduct of wireless services . . .'. The agreement also covered communications for ships and aircraft owned, registered and trading within the Commonwealth and its territories. At a meeting of interested parties called by the Postmaster General, AWA proposed the introduction of what was to become known as the 'sealed-set' system. The PMG opened the meeting, said his piece,

then departed. He left those present to sort things out among themselves and come up with a plan the government undertook to consider. Reports suggest that it was not all that interested.

AWA at this time was also not concerned with acquiring stations, but merely building them, equipping them, selling sets, and receiving royalties for the patent rights it held. It was not until 1930 that it went into the radio station business with 2AY Albury. However, in the early thirties when 2CH and 2SM Sydney opened, AWA operated them on behalf of the licensees – as it had done in the early days of 2FC.

2CH is still operated by AWA on behalf of the Council of Churches. In addition it holds the licences for 2GF Grafton, 2GN Goulburn, 3BO Bendigo, 4CA Cairns, 4TO Townsville, 7LA Launceston, and 4WK Warwick. AWA also has holdings from small to substantial in other radio and TV stations.

It is difficult to estimate the importance of the contribution it made to the broadcasting industry – it has so many 'firsts' to its credit and was so closely identified with all phases of radio's progress that a book could be written about AWA alone.

Suffice to say, in this document, that without Fisk, Hooke and the legion of talented engineers and administrators, radio would not be as technically advanced and highly diversified as it is today.

CHAPTER FOUR

Quiet, Please!

The year is 1923. The year that saw Adolf Hitler's first attempt to seize power – and fail. He is imprisoned in the fortress of Landsberg. Said the future fuhrer, 'I have never combatted the republican democratic form of state because I regard the present German Reich as neither a democracy nor a republic but a marxist-jewish-international pigsty' . . . Benito Mussolini, feeling his water – or mare nostrum – seizes the Greek island of Corfu . . . 'There is', he declaims, 'no such thing as absolute liberty'. While he said he had no prejudices against women, he refused them the vote. Another US misogynist agrees: 'Women average about five ounces less brain matter than men', he said. Twenty-two million Russians go hungry because of failure of the grain crop . . . Grand Duke Nicholas asks for a one franc contribution from two million emigres to start a propaganda fund to get rid of the Bolsheviks . . . 'La cucaracha', Mexican bandit Pancho Villa, is slain by his enemies . . . the annual conference of the British Labor party 'laughs out' a motion 'that the royal famliy be declared no longer necessary' . . . Tokyo and Yokohama in ruins after a disastrous earthquake followed by fires, tidal waves and famine. In Paris, a noted Greek tragedienne, Madame Silvain, was standing on stage under the sword of Damocles, when the cord snapped and her left ear fell to the floor . . . the divine Sarah Bernhardt dies while cheerfully talking over arrangements for her funeral. Bitalli wins the Melbourne Cup at four to one. Much to the disgust of Billy Hughes, Stanley Melbourne Bruce, 'a fine flower of transplanted English civilization', becomes Prime Minister of Australia . . . Jack Lang is elected leader

of the New South Wales Labor Party . . . Joe Lyons takes over as Premier of Tasmania . . . in Canberra, the site of the new national capital, the first sod (humus, not human) is turned over in a solemn ceremonial.

These were the men and events shaping our destiny: and as part of the sounds of those times — the first uncertain voice of regular radio came through the air.

The Commonwealth Government gave its blessings, mid-year, to the broadcast plan based on the sealed-set. Listeners — what few of them there were — could, on payment of a subscription to a private company and a licence fee to the exchequer, tune in to broadcast entertainment to be provided in four capital cities. The sets were to be locked to the frequency of a particular station, or stations, so that you could only listen to the stations you paid for. The government licence fee was ten shillings for one station, £1 for two or more.

Two stations were authorised for Sydney: 2SB operated by Broadcasters (Sydney) Limited with a listener's subscription of 10 shillings; 2FC, operated by Farmer & Company, with a subscription of three guineas. In Melbourne, 3AR, the Associated Radio Company, was fixed at three guineas; 6WF Perth, Westralian Farmers Limited, four guineas. 2SB subsequently changed to 2BL because it sounded too much like 2FC. It will be noted that the call signs, still in use but now under government or national control, came from the letters forming the names of the operating companies.

Many later stations were similarly identified by company, personal or geographical initials. 3DB in Melbourne stood for Druleigh Business College, the first licensee; 2HD Newcastle came from Harry Douglas who started a service there in 1925; 2UE was originally 2EU which stood for Electrical Utilities — a business run by the 'father' of commercial radio 'Pa' Stevenson. Two-e-u, it was subsequently thought, sounded too much like 'who are you' or a constricted bird call, and the letters were reversed. 4GR Toowoomba came from Ted Gold, one of the early experimenters, who called his station Gold Radio; 4QG Brisbane stood for Queensland Government; 5CL Adelaide from the first and third letters of Central Broadcasters Limited; 6ML Perth from Musgrove's Limited, the music people; 7HO served three purposes — 'Hobart's Original',

and the first two letters in both Hobart and the surname of Ron Hope, another radio 'ham' who originally transmitted under the signal 7RS. Location was to determine the call signs for such stations as 2AY Albury, 4GY Gympie, 2BH Broken Hill, 2KA Katoomba, 4LG Longreach and many others. 2LF Young stood for Lambing Flats while 5KA Adelaide, by way of a change, stood for the actual street where the station was first located – Kintore Avenue, 3AK – the Akron Tyre Company. On a more intellectual plane 2GB Sydney came from the initials of Giordino Bruno, the early Italian philosopher, highly regarded by the Theosophical Society, original holders of the licence. On a solemn religious note 2SM represented the Saint Mark's presbytery in Drummoyne. The parish priest, Father Meaney, got the licence in 1931.

What was the reason then, for a 'listening' subscription of only ten shillings for one Sydney station and three guineas for the other? Apparently 2SB was largely underwritten by set retailers anxious, naturally, to sell sets sealed to their frequency and who figured, properly, that the lower the original stake the greater chance of a sale. First on the air was 2SB. The big day – 23 November.

From a studio set up in the old Smith's Weekly building in Phillip Street came the nervous but tuneful voices of Miss Deering, soprano; Mr Pick (first name, fortuitously, Sydney), a bass; Miss Druitt, contralto; Mr Saunders, baritone and Mr Thorp, cellist. In support – the St Andrew's quartet. Saunders subsequently went on to become a leading personality as one of the first of radio's myriad uncles – 'Uncle George'.

Twelve days later, 2FC came on air, although it was not 'officially' opened until 10 January, 1924. The journal *Radio* records that 'through courtesy of J. C. Williamson Ltd and Messrs J. and N. Tait the programme took the form of a complete transmission of The Southern Maid, the musical comedy then playing at Her Majesty's Theatre. As the transmission of the play by wireless was effected it constituted an Australian record and a distinct triumph for Australian wireless engineers . . . reports from all parts of NSW showed that the programme was easily heard and many expressed themselves charmed and delighted with the musical fare provided . . . just before the curtain went up . . . the announcer . . . gave a general call which was followed by a melodious peal of chimes

rung on tubular bells. This was to give "listeners-in" a chance to tune in accurately'.

Melbourne's 3AR was next on 26 January 1924. An advertisement of the event ran thus:

> The Associated Radio Company of Australia Limited, 51-53 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne, wireless broadcasters, actual manufacturers and distributors of wireless receiving sets beg to announce the opening of their Melbourne broadcasting service on the evening of Saturday next, 26 January.
>
> Experimenters are invited to listen in and cash prizes of £3, £2 and £1 are offered for the best written report of the evening's broadcasting . . . TELL YOUR WIRELESS FRIENDS.

The Chief Secretary (Dr Argyle) in a speech considered 'humorous' told the audience that as a member of parliament he was at a disadvantage because if listeners were not satisfied with what he was saying they could disconnect their wireless and go away. On the other hand they were unable to ask him any questions – a sally which produced considerable 'laughter'.

The press was to record that the speeches and concert following were heard clearly in the suburbs although the strength of the music was not as great as had been the case in some of the tests.

6WF's transmission did not start until June. Again, it was a 'musical' evening – singers, instrumentalists, and the 'Wendowie Quartette'. Apparently there were two 'opening' nights because of the size of the invited audience. 'In many respects', records the *West Australian* after the second performance, 'last night's entertainment was an improvement on the first night'. This was attributed to 'changing of the piano from an upright to a grand, and in other minor ways'. Added the writer, 'It is not advisable, to draw comparisons regarding the artists' rendition of the various items but it can be truly said that the whole entertainment was a decided success'.

The programme started at 7 pm and went on for three hours. It included gramophone records, bedtime stories, market and weather reports, news, Mr Ned Taylor 'discoursing' and then rendering 'humorous items' – and lots of singing.

Late in 1923, the old *Adelaide Register* thought wireless important enough to include a regular column about it in the Saturday issue: 'Wireless for all – by A Pirate'. Wrote one:

> Listeners-in, will testify to the excellent quality and strength of 5DN (Mr E. J. Hume, Parkside) . . . with Mrs Hume in control of arrangements for the programme, nothing is lacking on the score of entertainment.

One amateur, Mr Henry Lloyd of 5AI, Trinity St, St Peters was taken to task for being 'strangely quiet lately'. This apparently was due to the fact that 'Mr Lloyd has been holidaying in Glenelg'.

There were even some execrable radio jokes gaining currency like

Why did the hetero-dyne?
Because the cabin-et.

First Man: What kind of aerial would you advise me to erect?
Second Man: Have you a licence?
First man: Er . . . not yet.
Second man: Then you had better have a Star Aerial.
First Man: Star Aerial – what kind is that?
Second Man: Only comes out at night.

As these 'sealed set' stations were expected to cover their costs by subscriptions; direct announcements, selling wares, were not encouraged.

2FC was simply 'Station 2FC Sydney, Farmer's Broadcasting Service'. Farmer's, the department store now owned by Myer, and known far and wide as both 'The House of Distinction' and 'The store for men' would not permit any form of sordid commercial exploitation. Even when their own orchestra, which performed regularly in their famous Oak Hall, played in the afternoon sessions on 2FC, it was not credited as part of Farmer's shopping attractions for weary customers. It was merely 'The trio from Oak Hall'. The studio and control rooms were on the roof of the building on the corner of Pitt and Market Streets. Amalgamated Wireless built the transmitter at Willoughby – and received royalty payments for technical services – as from other stations, too. The station had a direct line to the defunct *Evening News*. Afternoon player-piano

sessions on 'The Beale Player Piano' were frequently interrupted by race results and news flashes. A. S. (Stan) Cochrane, ground-floor superintendent at Farmer's became their first 'name' announcer. Readings from Dickens, assorted poets, stock exchange reports, wool prices, weather and, of course, music were the substance of daily entertainment. Market reports were supplied 'by courtesy of Dalgety and Company Limited'.

There were often long gaps between the various programme segments — sometimes of two and three minutes duration. To fill in 'loose' time listeners were regaled with the solemn ticking of a metronome. That ticking must have had symbolic terminal significance for it was to herald the passing of the system after an experimental phase of just over nine months (a gestation period usually considered adequate for other forms of viable life).

It went into the eternal silence in the middle of 1924. Only 1206 people had entered the subscription lists although many more, it would seem, were sufficiently ingenious to avoid the formality of entering into the necessary contractual arrangements. Indeed, as early as November 1924, the press were reporting that 'a condition of success in broadcasting is that there shall be no clandestine listening-in on the part of the owners of unlicensed sets, several of whom in Sydney were prosecuted and fined last week. For the sake alike of common honesty and progress in a form of artistic achievement now with difficulty struggling into existence "pirates" must be prevented from getting all the enjoyment possible out of broadcasting without contributing to its cost'.

On 11 February 1925, Percy Marlow of Booran Road, Caulfield, Victoria, was to admit to the local court of petty sessions that he had a 4-valve set for which he did not hold a licence. He said he had not taken one out because he was 'undecided whether to retain the set or buy a gramophone'.

His indecision cost him a fine of £5 with £2 costs.

Tracking down the pirates so pre-occupied the Post Office that they were compelled to issue a general appeal:

> Owners of . . . sets, either through indifference or carelessness are showing a laxity which is retarding the growth of broadcasting service and militating seriously against the provision of improved programmes.

The degree to which the finer nature of our citizens has always responded to such moving pleas over the years may be gauged from the fact that one of Australia's leading advertising agencies reported in 1972 that 'it would appear that about 25 per cent of Australian homes have a radio but no licence'.

The public, although not overly-responsive to the sealed set however, was sufficiently interested in 1924 to encourage shops to advertise complete simple crystal or single valve sets – or kits – for home building.

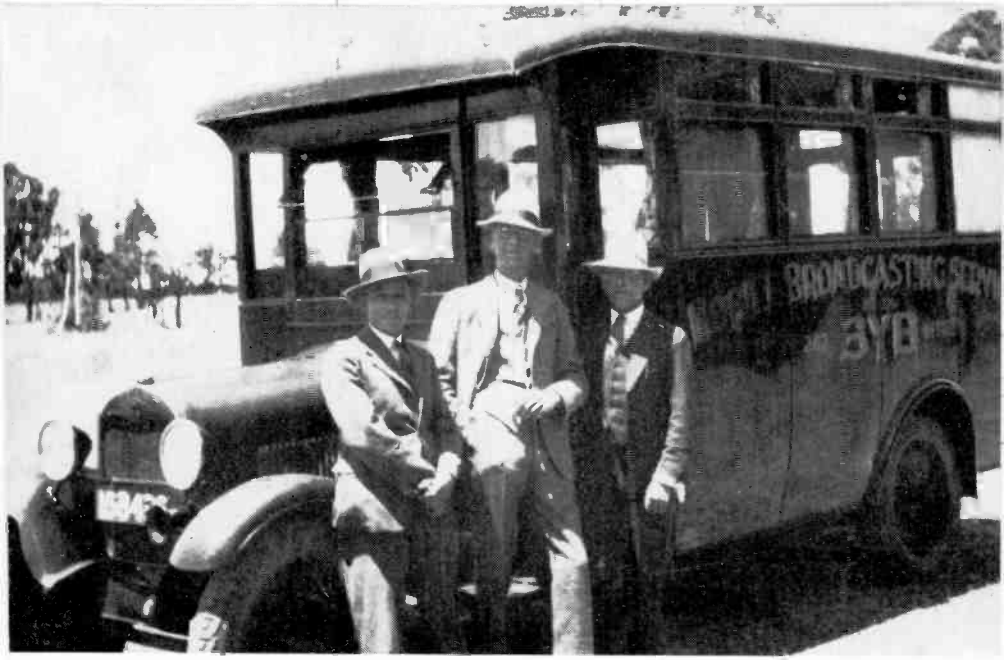
Tangles of copper wire, trailing leads, terminals, honeycomb condensors, cabinets, headphones and mysterious switches, sockets and sprockets were making their appearance in more advanced and adventurous households. The 'Cat's Whisker' and 'The Mighty Atom' were fanciful words working their way into the language of the day.

The cat's whisker, which tickled a lump of crystal until it had fossicked out a receptive contact, was also known as the cat's whisper. It could be a thin piece of copper, steel, or fuse wire – even a strand of picture wire could be used. Galena, QSA, silican, molybdenite, carborundum, hertzite, were all considered satisfactory 'crystals', though Galena and QSA were particularly favoured. Apparently the very first crystal sets used a small bunch of wires to gain contact. They protruded, according to an unidentified 'humorist', like a mog's delicate feeling apparatus – cat's whisker! With commendable clinical regard for the proper order of things crystal-set owners were advised that 'Your cat's whisper should always be scrupulously clean and your connections kept bright and tight'.

A simple crystal set could be bought for as little as 25/-. For the well-to-do, AWA were advertising their Radiola single valve set for £15/15/0. 'One of the outstanding features of the Radiola is its absolute simplicity. It is operated by merely turning a knob or dial'.

Single or twin masts anchored to the ground by staywires and joined together by aerial loops, with T-leads that ran through the window to the sets inside became the new status symbols of the middle twenties. The higher the masts the greater the awe and respect of the neighbours.

Why they called the whole mechanical maze the 'wireless' is



Australia's first motor-mobile broadcasting station, 1931. Vic Dinenny, an instigator in its development, is in the centre

In 1932 3YB switched from free wheels to fixed bogeys, until finally coming to permanent rest in Warrnambool in 1936

A group of some of the best-known voices in radio in the 30s. Back row: Reg Morgan, John Dease, Jack Davey, Charles Cousens, Jack Lumsdaine; Front row: Albert Russell, Eric Coleman, Harry Dearth

Three of the early stars of Sydney radio: Jack Lumsdaine, Uncle George Saunders and Cyril James

one of those ironies of nomenclature. There were wires everywhere, traps for the unwary or the unsteady. Many of those early crystal sets on the mantelpiece were sent crashing to the floor in the middle of a gay rondo or sombre bible reading by bumble-foots insensitive to the mystery and enchantment of it all.

But, 'I heard it on the wireless' became a password to social and business acceptance. Anybody who was anybody just HAD to have one.

CHAPTER FIVE

Stage Two — A and B

After the seal of doom came new government regulations which, in July 1924, were to establish two categories for broadcasting: A-class stations financed – in theory – entirely by licence fees from listeners and B-class stations dependent on selling advertising time.

But the government, which was still not all that interested in the medium, was to blur the lines of distinction by permitting the A-class stations to accept restricted advertising: a total of one hour in each twelve hours of broadcasting time, confined to periods of not more than five minutes at a stretch and with only three sessions at night. The four original 'sealed-set' stations had their licences renewed for five years. 2FC and 2SB (later 2BL) were both subsequently to amalgamate under new management – the New South Wales Broadcasting Company – holder of both Sydney licences until July 1929.

In Melbourne a new licence was issued to the Broadcasting Company of Australia: its call sign 3LO after London's 2LO. In 1928 3AR and 3LO also were to join forces under management of the Dominion Broadcasting Company. 3LO came on air in October 1924.

Queensland was to set up 4QG where transmission started in July 1925; Adelaide 5CL (November 1924); Hobart 7ZL (December 1924).

Authorised power in the transmitter was 5000 watts for all the A-class stations except Hobart, where it was 3000. The signal, optimistically, was supposed to carry hundreds of miles and

licence fees were fixed at 35/- a year for listeners within a two hundred and fifty mile radius, 30/- outside that to four hundred miles, and beyond that, 25/-. It was a clumsy arrangement.

A-class stations, in the main, were not all that interested in chasing advertising – indeed it was to stop altogether in 1927. The exception was 4QG which ran five-minute advertising breaks in the lunch hour, early evening, and at hourly intervals thereafter. The late John Robinson, probably Australia's first news broadcaster, subsequently director of radio services for the Queensland State Government and first manager in that State for the Australian Broadcasting Commission, wrote that advertising sessions were preceded by such words as, 'Our advertising session is about to commence. It will last for five minutes'. After it was over, the announcer said: 'That is the end of our advertising session'.

Early advertisers included McWhirters, Finney-Isles and Leslie J. Williams, optician. Demand became so great at one stage the station had an eighteen months waiting list. Throughout the land there was a lot of criticism of the ads, especially in the press, which sensed the growing power of a competitive medium. One disturbed deist even thought that the whole principle of broadcasting was a design of the devil. Trying to tap the air waves was like eavesdropping on the voices of heaven and would inevitably bring down the wrath of God on our heads. No doubt, when masts were blown over in high winds, he interpreted this as a sign of divine displeasure. (Some people, even today, might be inclined to agree that some of the noises to be heard do not exactly sound like a chorus of angels but emanate from darker regions.)

The four new A-class stations were all operating by middle 1925.

The 5CL affair was carried out in somewhat of a hurry because of the many complaints that the city of churches was lagging too far behind Sydney and Melbourne. The licensee was given virtually two days to 'get on air' by the Postmaster General.

Later the words of the engineer engaged to speed things up indicated the pace he had to work at – 'the fastest piece of work I have ever done'. The 500-watt transmitter (subsequently enlarged to five kilowats) came on stream on the night of 20 November 1924.

Using their new 'choke control' equipment (two panels – one

containing the oscillator and the modulator, and the other the amplifier) 'songs were rendered by Mr J. L. Davey ('The Blind Ploughman' and the 'Three Fishers') and Mr G. Myers ('Less than the Dust' and 'Harlequin'). Violin duets were played by Miss M. Lynch and Mr C. Tonkin with Miss A. Lynch at the piano. Mr Harvey contributed piano solos. Telephonic reports received after the concert stated that both volume and modulation were good and that there was an absence of fading'.

Four days after 5CL's opening the Adelaide *Advertiser*, in an editorial headed 'The Broadcasting Problem' was to ask 'One might provide oneself with a receiving set but what if there is nothing to listen to, or if the transmitter is put to such a poor use as to make the invention next to worthless except as a scientific curiosity?' The problem, some might say, is still with us.

The next month it was Hobart's turn; and the occasion of some colourful reporting.

'Step by step', said the *Mercury*, 'wireless telephony – now worked up to such a wonderful state of efficiency – has been entering into the private and commercial life of Tasmania. In a tiny, felt-lined room . . . above the *Mercury* office in Macquarie Street, last night there took place, quietly enough, an event which will go down in Tasmanian history as another milestone in the progress of the State'. As elsewhere the programme was largely musical:

> 'Songs by Mr Allan Limb, Mesdames Eltham and Harris and the Lansdowne Crescent State School Choir'.
>
> A few minutes after 8 o'clock the choir . . . filed softly into the room . . . the look of surprise on each young face was plain to see . . . apparently they were amazed to find that, as far as they could see, they were expected to sing to bare walls. The little ones had expected something strange (they had heard much of wireless and its wonders but this was beyond them) . . . the children, nevertheless, settled down and rendered their four items in dashing style . . . the most remarkable aspect of the whole thing was the utter lack of applause or of any of the other recognised modes of recognition.

Weather conditions were 'bad' for 4QG's opening on 27 July

and some listeners were troubled by noises from the studio's 'machine' room. However, they were promised that this fault would be rectified when new generators were received to replace 'the present temporary fittings'.

Queensland Premier, W. N. Gillies, saw broadcasting as a means to ending the isolation of the man on the land. The following day the opening of Parliament and the Governor's speech were broadcast.

'At long last,' commented the *Sunday Mail,* 'the wireless enthusiasts of Queensland are to be given regular opportunities of engaging in their scientific experiments and entertainment... accordingly as the owners or sets are disposed'.

It was not long, however, before 2BL was in financial trouble. Associated Newspapers, now absorbed into the Fairfax group, were apparently astute enough to realize the potential of the medium and propped up the station financially. From that gamble has come, indirectly, a very rewarding pay-off: the present Macquarie Broadcasting Network.

First of the B-class stations on air was the now defunct 2BE Sydney, under licence to the Burgin Electric company. It started on 7 November 1924 and ceased operations in November 1929.

Oldest extant commercial broadcaster is 2UE which commenced on 26 January 1925 – to be followed one day lated by 2HD Newcastle. Next, in order of time, came the February openings of 2UW Sydney and 5DN Adelaide. In March, Melboune's first commercial, 3UZ, took the air. August saw 4GR Toowoomba on air, and the first Labor station 2KY Sydney commenced in October. 2MK Bathurst, opened in November but closed five years later. Bathurst was then to be without a local commercial service until 2BS started up in 1937. In 1926 came 2GB Sydney, and early in the following year 3DB Melbourne and 5KA Adelaide. Outside these twelve there were to be no additional B-class licences issued until 1930.

It should be remarked that these stations were not necessarily first on the scene in their respective States, but those that have endured.

2UE, fittingly, made its first broadcast on Australia Day: from the living room of the Maroubra home of Mr C. V. Stevenson, licensee and early experimenter. The programme mostly recorded

music, went on for two hours from 8 pm. A spring-loaded gramophone was wound up, the microphone was placed near the mouth of the horn-type amplifier, and the show was on its way, background noises and all.

Advertising was for Stevenson's electrical lines only. The station cost 'Pa' Stevenson £750 to build and £9 a week to run. It all came out of his own pocket. His son, Murray, was subsequently to be identified with many major advances in broadcasting technology, as was 2GB's Len Schultz.

Although the opening did not rate a mention in the *Sydney Morning Herald* the following day, that paper did record on its leader page that station KDKA in Central Pennsylvania had sent a message 'To the people of Australia. We take this opportunity of sending greetings from America by short-wave telephony'. The story is told of some subsequent broadcasts:

Musical entertainment came from the family pianola. At the conclusion of each roll, so listeners would know the station was still on the air, Stevenson would rewind the roll with the microphone open. Then he would walk to the cabinet to get a fresh roll, whistling as he went. One day the local butcher phoned and said 'Stevo, your horrible whistling is driving me insane. Why don't you tell your listeners the price of my best cuts instead?' From this 'suggestion' came the first commercial, the cost was 1/- per announcement.

2HD Newcastle was operated by the inventive Harry Douglas, from his tyre works in Hamilton (he was first to instal a retreading plant in the district) in an improvised upstairs studio. From here Newcastle folk were regaled with music, song and chatter. Two Edison turntables and a dozen or so Edison diamond records — quarter inch thick — comprised the station's total musical resources.

The following month 2UW Sydney, whose original licence was granted to Otto Sandell, was on air from studios in the T & G building. J. M. Prentice, subsequently to become one of the early personalities of the business with his commentaries, was their first announcer. The station went through three changes of location and ownership — from Sandell to Palings, Farmers and J. C.

Williamsons. The latter two withdrew and Palings, then sole owners, sold out in 1933 to the Australian Broadcasting Company, former programme contractors to the A-class stations.

5DN, one of the earlier experimenters, had the two sons of E. J. Hume – the founder also of the pipe firm bearing his name – as chief engineer and announcer. 3UZ in Melbourne, also born of wireless enthusiast, O. J. Nilsen (who is still alive today) numbered among its early personalities, Alf Andrew, Ern Trotman, Frank Jenkins, and E. Mason Wood, later to become nationally known as a play producer.

In 1926 there came the August inauguration of 2GB Sydney – transmission emanating from a house in Clifton Gardens. Financially, they were setting a hot pace for other stations in the Commonwealth – revenue averaged £70 a week in its first year. 3DB Melbourne came on air in February 1927 from Capitol House, Swanston Street. Its first programme was 'Willy Wattle's Children's Corner'. The *Herald* group bought out the licence in 1929, and moved the studio next to the newspaper offices.

5KA Adelaide was broadcasting in March. Its licence was revoked in war-time, to continue under different management.

There were no more commercial stations then in operation until 1930 when quite a string opened up: 3BA Ballarat, 5AD Adelaide, 7HO Hobart, 4BC and 4BK Brisbane, 3TR Sale (originally located at Trafalgar – hence the call sign), 3GL Geelong, 3KZ Melbourne, 7LA Launceston, 2MU Moss Vale and 2AY Albury. Now twenty-five commercial and nine national stations were sparking the waves.

By the end of 1924, thirty eight thousand licences had been taken out by listeners throughout the Commonwealth; twenty six thousand in New South Wales; eight thousand in Victoria, one thousand seven hundred in Western Australia, one thousand three hundred in South Australia, six hundred in Queensland and two hundred and fifty in Tasmania. By the end of the following year the number had more than doubled. 1926 saw a further big surge forward – nearly one hundred and ninety thousand were in force by December.

By 1929, three hundred and ten thousand homes had receivers. Radio had really arrived.

CHAPTER SIX

Tea and Wireless

1925 was a watershed in the short history of regular broadcasting. In January of that year AWA were advertising in the first issue of Melbourne's *Listener In* that their Radiolas combined perfect tone quality with 'a wonderful selectivity that never ceases to interest and delight'. Two different four-valve sets, in handsome cabinets, were offered at £56/10/0 and £68 respectively. Their crystal set 'with a range of 12 miles', was priced at £6.

On the facing page the Meyer Brothers, either deliberately or fortuitously appeared to be mocking AWA. Their full page advertisement read: 'Ha! Ha! Listen in. We supply a five-valve set complete, installed for £48/10/0!' For the less well-placed, inside the paper were detailed instructions on 'How to make a receiving set (crystal) for 7/6'.

Cafes round town were installing sets to entertain their customers. 'Tea and wireless is quite the thing these days' reported the *Listener In*. 'Each week more shops are parading the notice "Wireless Music Supplied Gratis".'

Maurice Moscovitch, international stage star, in town for a season at the Theatre Royal was to note that 'wireless is no longer a luxury. It is a necessity . . . broadcasting will not injure the theatre'. He was among the first to nominate one of its great subjective strengths. 'No one', he said, 'could listen to a powerful play without wondering with what gesture the actor accompanied his sentence, what fine scorn was shown on his face'.

Stanley Brookes, the Australian Dickensian actor, referring to a broadcast of Oliver Twist noted that 'the rustling of dresses, the

movement of feet, the blows, the heavy passionate breathing and the knocking against the furniture indicated clearly the struggle between the murderer (Sikes) and his victim (Nancy) and told its own tale without the aid of costumes'. In the late twenties amateur and repertory companies were providing completely rehearsed plays – at microphone – for a fee of one guinea per actor.

Just how much the magic spark was lighting up inventive minds may be gathered from the 'number of investigators engaged in perfecting a very feasible system of transmitting light, heat and power by radio. A scheme for broadcasting refrigeration by radio is the ambition of another group; and there are at least three instruments in the course of construction for transmitting and receiving motion pictures'.

'Wireless is wonderful' wrote an enthusiastic country listener . . . 'a continuous and most varied entertainment . . . carol singing, cathedral bells, church services, choir singing, concerts, cricket scores and racing results are ours for the taking . . . at a dance recently the entire musical programme was provided by 3LO; the dancing being done to the playing of Carlyon's orchestra . . . the only disgruntled person was the old concertina player who has officiated at this gathering for years. He had to give way to wireless'.

Ernest Fisk described developments in 1925 as 'epoch making'. Wireless sets without aerials or earth wires were starting to be advertised; wireless leagues to 'protect the interests of listeners' were being formed; the first wedding service was broadcast live; so too, the first wrestling match between Walter Miller and Al Karasick. 'Wireless vision' or 'seeing by wireless' (or television) was in the news; wireless exhibitions were attracting crowds of thousands, a 'radio voice' competition (for professionals and amateurs) – precursor of the talent shows of a decade later – aroused wide interest, Jack O'Hagen was 'the announcer'. Cricket scores were announced at race meetings 'by means of a monster loud-shouter', a 'drunk's set' was invented by an ingenious engineer (wire was coiled around a beer bottle, the receivers were fitted into drinking glasses, and 'a convivial touch given the set by staining the glasses a light brown to give them the appearance of being partly full of liquor'.) A Japanese firm was marketing a receiver shaped like a swan. 'Tuning is done by altering the position of the neck of the

bird . . . the detector is arranged in a small receptacle under a hinged wing . . . really good reception has been obtained'.

Step two in broadcasting history saw A-class stations setting the pace. The B-stations then operating were not finding the going easy and the *Listener In,* mid-year, was to observe that 'the conducting of a radio broadcasting station by the ordinary means of advertising has, except for a few isolated cases, failed'. Unless they had access to, say, a tax on 'each valve and crystal bought by the consumer for his set . . . they have no future'.

The writer obviously misread the signs and augurs for advertising started to build slowly. But 'slowly' was the operative word. Whether it was due to fresh initiatives or just coincidence is difficult to decide: the fact is, that the early 'commercial' operators had little idea of how to sell their product. Business, fortunately, started to come to them.

A sampling of A-class programmes in the various states showed that in the morning, usually at 9 am there were time signals, movements of interstate trains and ships, mail and weather, general information 'of use to shoppers', news, and pointers to later programming. Then stations were likely to close down till midday when there was more news, music or market reports.

Early evening saw the children's corner and bedtime stories. At 8 pm a 'concert from the studio' was regular fare. In between came talks and play readings: the first play was broadcast by 3LO on 21 March 1925. It was produced by Mr Stanley Brookes and 'specially written' by Mr J. H. Booth. It was *The Barbarous Barber* a sort of Sweeney Todd who, after shaving his customers, touched a secret spring in the chair which tipped them into a padded cell under the floor! When the Archbishop of Melbourne was asked his opinion of broadcasting he replied, 'I have not listened to or read a programme for some time and am therefore not in a position to offer a suggestion'.

Mid-1925, apart from the fourteen A and B-class stations on air, there were thirteen amateur or dealer stations operating in Tasmania, seventeen in Western Australia, twenty-four in Queensland, eighty-eight in New South Wales and ninety-two in Victoria. In fact, many 'wild sounds unadorned' crackled their way along the carrier waves.

After re-launching the broadcasting ship on its fresh course in 1925, it could clearly be argued that the Federal government expected the broadcasting system to be self-generating and to solve its own problems. It was presumed, however, to develop along socially desirable lines and in the broad public interest; and, of course, to obey edicts from the Postmaster General's department.

Although differences between the A and B stations were to become more marked, the implied hope that country people would be quite happy to receive an inferior signal from far-distant metropolitan stations could not long be sustained. Indeed it might be said that pressure from outside the cities helped accelerate the setting up in 1927 of the first Royal Commission. In due course, the Commission brought down some rambling findings. Curiously, it saw no apparent need for a national body to chart the way ahead. Apart from technical considerations, it set major store by the pooling of all licence fees to finance extension of broadcasting to the poorly-served areas.

The A-class operators did not think much of that and dug their heels in. They had a licence to provide a specific service and that, in their view, was exactly what they were doing. It was not their responsibility to underwrite the costly and probably highly unprofitable expansion to the great beyond.

The government, thus, was forced not only to concern itself more actively with this troublesome child of circumstance but to pick up the tab for its future upbringing. In so doing it served notice that the days of the private A-licences were numbered. All — it should be remembered — had five-year licences expiring 1929-30.

In mid-1928, it was decided to establish a national broadcasting service, with A-stations owned and operated by the government but with programmes provided by independent contractors (not unlike the present commercial TV system in Britain). Thus, between July 1929 and December 1930 the government took over by purchase or lease, six stations, and entered into a short term arrangement with the other two to continue — for the time being.

Existing B-class stations would continue as before and any new licences would be by decision of the PMG. In addition, a number of C-class licences were to be issued with programmes available for sponsorship to 'large advertisers'. A listening licence fee of 24/- was fixed, with 12/- earmarked for programmes, 3/- for AWA for

its contractual services. What remained would go towards establishment of new A-class stations and, hopefully, cover the costs of administration. In the event, no 'C' class stations ever came into existence.

After acquisition of 'A' stations, a programme tender was accepted from the Australian Broadcasting Company (made up of Greater Union Theatres, Fuller's Theatres and J. Albert and Sons, the Sydney music people). The Manager of the group was Mr C. J. (Frank) Marden who was to play an important part in commercial radio in the booming thirties. The contract was to cover all States and extend to June 1931.

Stage Three in the complicated early history of broadcasting was under way.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Big Leap Forward

In the thirties radio was homogenizing Australian society — in the sense that its voice was breaking down the great loneliness, distributing its benefits with almost equal favor in city, town, hamlet.

Although in the early part of the decade the nation was in the grip of a crippling depression the radio industry expanded rapidly — particularly in the B-class sector — lack of money notwithstanding. Export prices were halved, the Premiers' Plan was devised to meet the financial crisis, Sir Isaac Isaacs became the first Australian governor-general.

B-stations up to this time were not all that profitable. In 1933 3DB's net profit for the year was £129/18/-. Nevertheless, in 1930 thirteen new commercial stations came on air — five metropolitan, eight regional, and one new national. The following year saw the start of another seventeen stations — fifteen commercial, two national. In the following three years there were another eighteen (seventeen commercial and one national). 1935 was a boom year with fifteen new call signs. By the end of the thirties one hundred and thirty-one stations — twenty-six national — had been licensed. Twelve commercial stations ceased operation; seven of them, however, either re-located or started up again under different management.

The programme contractors to the A-stations were not finding their deal a bonanza, although they were being paid 12/- out of each 24/- licence fee. The first year of operation apparently resulted in a loss. The arrangement with the government was that the company was limited to a 10 per cent profit on gross income re-

ceived, but 'so far', said the PMG (Mr Lyons) in August 1930, 'the company has not made any profits at all'.

The company was in fact, providing more than thirty thousand hours of programming each year and employing a staff of more than two hundred people spread over all states. But criticism of its programmes, its alleged 'huge profits' and its understandable inability to spread its resources too widely caused the government to re-think policy.

The contract was due to expire in June 1932: well before this the government gave notice of its intention to end the arrangement and set up the Australian Broadcasting Commission as we know it today. An act gave effect to this decision and in July 1932 the broadcasting system was again under new controls; with the post office continuing in charge of the technical side and the postmaster-general invested with authority to prohibit the broadcasting of any material he considered undesirable.

Subsequent amendments to the act watered down this over-rider and the Commission and its executive branch were gradually to extend authority within their own house.

That it has, however, still not shaken off the hand of the bureaucracy may be gathered from events of the seventies when it was reasonable to assume that pressures (both overt and covert) were responsible for some changes of direction, and personnel, in the public affairs sector.

The PMG's department announced that 'it is no longer correct to refer to the privately-owned broadcasting stations as B-class'. The split was national and commercial. There were even suggestions that the opposing services were getting a bit testy with each other. 'If', said one report, 'the post office, which has a red-tape interest in the national broadcasting service, does anything calculated to interfere with or embarrass the managements of the B-class stations, the listening public will protest vigorously'.

Apparently there was some dispute about cancellation of landlines for a national B-class hook-up because the A-class stations were 'suddenly awake, some days later, to the necessity to relay a programme (of their own) to two or more states'. Subsequent to this, the hook-up was arranged by 2GB to 3DB, 4BC and 5AD. The occasion was a concert programme and 'transmission over the landlines was almost perfect'.

The government was under attack for allowing the PMG to amalgamate broadcasting with the business of 'selling stamps and transmitting telegrams'. It was further attacked: 'The wireless services must be conducted entirely as a separate undertaking and every penny of revenue received must be devoted to the purpose for which it is raised'. (The same sort of complaint may well be registered today.)

Nevertheless, there was a good deal of co-operation between the two services. Both shared, for the first time in November 1930, joint facilities for the broadcast of Joe Lyons' speech appealing for investment in the new Commonwealth Loan. Also, that same year, one commercial station graciously consented to go off air for twenty minutes while the national station broadcast an 'important speech' from the Prime Minister, Mr Scullin.

Astor then were advertising that in answer to an appeal from the Prime Minister for lower radio-set prices, 'the Astor factory is working day and night to fulfil orders for the new Baby Astor Electric at £11.15.0'.

This, too, was the year when everybody was talking cricket. 2UW and 3DB were simulating actual events at Lords. The radio industry estimated that as a result of these broadcasts sets worth nearly £2 million were sold.

And of those times, 1930 saw the arrival of Kingsford Smith in Brisbane. 4BC, only three months old, set up three separate broadcasting points to describe his progress to the city. And then, from the studio, the great aviator himself spoke not only to the people of Brisbane but by landline to 2UW, 3DB and 5AD. Even Perth got into the act by arrangement with AWA's short-wave station 2ME on relay to 6ML. It was quite a feather in the cap for the new Brisbane station.

Its competitor, 4BK was also to chalk up quite a handful of 'firsts': among them a broadcast from a plane on a night flight over the city, establishment of its own studio orchestra, a complete broadcast of the opera *Manon* and the whole sound track of a feature film.

'One Hundred Per Cent Talkies' are all the rage. On Empire Day, 1933 in a 'gesture to the world' expressing the unity of the British Peoples in 'The Southern Seas' Australia broadcasts to Britain, New Zealand and North America. Loyal toasts, massed

choirs, statements of great pith and moment from Prime Minister Lyons and others demonstrated 'the efficiency of the link throughout the Pacific in the chain of the Empire's communications'. This was not the first broadcast to such distant lands, but the biggest. Three years previously AWA could claim a world-first for itself by its overseas broadcast – described by the London *Morning Post* as 'one of the most remarkable experiments in the history of broadcasting'. Another comment on a subsequent broadcast read:

> All the London newspapers refer to the success of the broadcasting and select the striking of Sydney's Big Ben, the calls of coo-ee, the laugh of the kookaburra as the most interesting items. They specially applaud the attractiveness of the programme, the finale, 'Hello England, America and Canada' and the playing of the National Anthem.

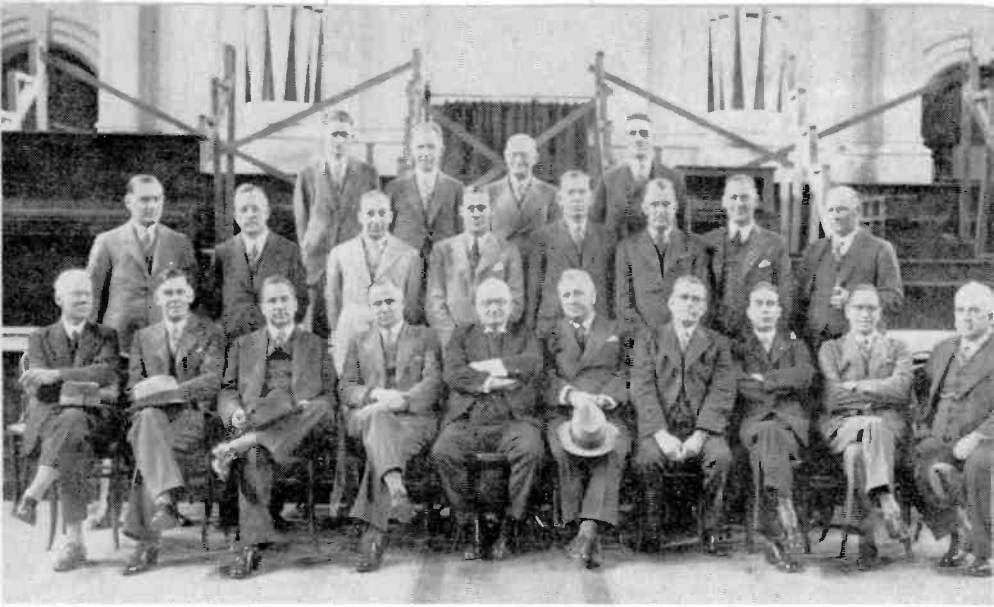
Mr Ernest Fisk was apparently so fascinated by the infinite possibilities of radio communication that he suggested in a talk to the Millions Club that it might be the means of establishing contact with the dead. Presuming, and always presuming, however, that personality survived the last, long journey.

'If', said Fisk in a subsequent interview, 'human beings do survive I do not think it is improbable that radio will be the means by which they are brought in touch with us'.

There were other remarkable prognostications also. A newspaper report was headed 'SCIENTIFIC FIND Radio may be Cancer Cure'. The typeset went on:

> Experiments [in the United States] quietly conducted over a period of five years, in which thousands of white mice were sacrificed to science, have disclosed that radio is an effective agent in healing the tumors of rats and is possibly a cure for human cancer.

Under the suspected possibilities of all these hopes commercial programmes looked like this: 2UW Sydney, Thursday 23 August 1930: 5.30 pm Children's Hour, conducted by Uncle Jack; 6.30 Fox Movietone Radio Club; 6.40 Meccano Club; 7.00 GPO Clock and Chimes. Music and request items; 7.45 Garden Talk; 8.00 Presen-



Delegates to the 1936 Federation Convention to Adelaide.

Back row: L. MacNicoll, Bryn Samuel, J. B. Chandler, George Anderson; Centre row: Syd Kemp, Syd Morgan, Allan Fairhall, — — — — —, Jack Ryan, John Taylor, Gordon Marsh, L. G. Findlay; Front row: Alex Holtz, Alec Robertson, Dave Worrall, A. N. Kemsley, M. B. Duffy, Vic Brooker, Frank Marden, — — — Lincoln, M. Stevenson, — — — — —

Pre-war; those seated were all contributing to the success of independent production. From left: Athol Rielly, Hector Crawford, Lin Corr, Frank Rowan and Beatrice Touzeau

One of radio's many 'Uncles', Uncle Col, who also doubled as station manager, broadcasts with 'Kitty' during a children's session in the 'thirties

Norman Banks, during a 3KZ quizz 1942, is flanked by Bob Baeck, now manager of 3XY, and Keith Dare, subsequently broadcaster and writer

ting a Special Hour of Music; 9.00 Talk on Foreign Affairs by Mr J. M. Prentice; 9.10 Pot-pourri of musical items; 10.15 Cricket Scores and Music.

2GB had much the same format except at 8.28 they had Amos and Andy and at 9.10 Messrs Jack Twin and Heath Burdock with 'humour'. (Burdock was later to become famous Australia-wide as a serious news commentator.) 2KY, on Friday night broadcast the fights with Bert Beaver – subsequently the station manager. On Saturdays, the nationals covered racing. Mr Eric Welch was well-known in Melbourne, while the other stations in Adelaide, Brisbane and Sydney did not name their callers in the programmes.

Commercial rates in Sydney and Melbourne in 1931 were about £1 per one hundred word announcement.

By 1935 quarter-hour sponsored sessions in Sydney ranged from £6 to £13 a quarter-hour; Melbourne from £5.10.0 to £7; Brisbane £3.5.0 to £5.10.0; Adelaide between £4 and £5; Perth an average of £3; Hobart £2.12.6. Country rates in Victoria and New South Wales ranged from £1.2.6 in Gunnedah to $2.15.0 in Bendigo and to £3.16.0 in Orange. W. A. McNair in his book *Radio in Australia* estimated that at this time stations were deriving about 35 per cent of their revenue from national advertisers and the rest from local sources. Gross revenue he calculated at round the £1½ million mark. In a survey he organized in 1934 it was suggested that average listening time per listener was two and one-quarter hours weekdays, two hours on Saturday, and one and three-quarter hours on Sunday.

In 1936, in a trial voting total of 857, the table of programme popularity, in Sydney, ran: 2FC Dinner Music, George Edwards Plays, Air Adventures of Jimmy Allen, 2UW Saturday Sporting, Chandu the Magician, Inspector Scott, 2BL Community Singing, Charlie Chan, 2SM Amateur Night, Darby and Joan, 2UW Racing.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Roaring Thirties

1935 was a flag year on the radio circuit. Programmes were diversifying, plays were becoming more popular, quizzes were multiplying. Hopefuls anxious to make their name on air resulted in a proliferation of talent quests. Transcribed serials – most of them American – were showing up strongly on the commercial programme charts. Among these were The Air Adventures of Jimmy Allen, Cecil and Sally, Eb and Zeb, Flash Gordon, K7 – Secret Service Drama.

George Edwards was the standard-bearer on the home commercial scene supported by such names, or companies, as the Paget Players, the Ellis Price Players, The Lee Murray Players, the 2CH and 2UE Dramatic Players, the Hobart Repertory Theatre and similar groups in Brisbane and Perth. In Melbourne, a new station, 3XY, and in Sydney 2SM, were capturing large and faithful audiences with a home-spun serial – One Man's Family.

Among the actors who were becoming household names were Thelma Scott, Lou Vernon, Charles Wheeler, Nancye Stewart, James Raglan, Lloyd Lamble, Mayne Linton, George Blunt, Catherine O'Neill, John D'Arcy, Betty Suttor, Reg Hawthorne, Catherine Duncan, Babs Mayhew, Lorna Forbes, Ronald Morse, Norman Wister, Marshall Crosby, Guy Hastings, Eric Conway, George Randell, Hal Percy and Clifford Cowley. Edward Howell and Therese Desmond introduced Mr and Mrs Everybody on the ABC and subsequently went on to put down more than a thousand quarter-hour episodes of the same Fred and Maggie for commercial release.

Station producers included Laurence Cecil, John Cairns, Frank Clewlow, Hal Percy, Fred Daniell, Mark Makeham (also a writer), Lee Murray, Frank Perrin, Laurence Halbert and Claude Fleming. Top writers included Edmund Barclay, Max Afford, George Matthews, William Fitzmaurice Hill, Frank Allen, Roy Russell, Maurice Chapman, and the incredible Maurice Francis.

Variety was taking to the radio stage, too. Dick Bentley, Jack Lumsdaine, June Mills, Norman Bland, Kathleen Goodall, Jack and Sylvia Kellaway, the Sundowners Quartet, the Jim Davidson and Bert Howell Bands, were many in the spotlight.

The Shell Show, formerly Shell Chalet, compered by the company's own advertising manager, Frank Cave, took top billing on a network of commercial stations. The C & G Minstrels, who survived for a quarter of a century, were well into their long lusty life. 5AD Adelaide had Jack Burgess with his popular Kangaroos on Parade.

Station-produced programmes with the dropped aspirate were popping up: Mrs 'Arris and Mrs 'Iggs, Mrs 'Olmes and Mrs Hentwhistle, 'Ans and 'Orace — and later on, Mrs 'Obbs. Dorothy Foster was conducting a 'millinery session' on 3UZ.

A New Zealander, Jack 'Crazy' Davey, was upsetting orthodox announcing styles in Sydney with his trip-trigger delivery and American twang. And everyone, just everyone, was crazy about Community Singing.

Some stations were running an American programme called Joe Twerp, the last-nighter. He was strictly a comedian's comedian and the dialogue appeared to befuddle the listeners —

> The scene is a cannibal village. To save himself from the pot, the white man pipes up:
> Pardon me chief, could I have your daughter's hand in marriage?
> Chief (burping): Sorry son, just had it in a meat stew.
>
> After escape, the white man runs into another paleface in the jungle. What are you doing here? he asks.
> — I'm here on safari.
> How's it going?
> Oh, safari, so goody.
> The programme did not last very long.

Of more serious things, Charles Moses, erstwhile announcer and sporting commentator became General Manager of the ABC at a salary of £2000 year. Stanley Clark, now Managing Director of the Macquarie network, joined 3DB's programme staff, from Christie's, the music house. Debates on 'highly contentious subjects' like, Should moneyed girls take jobs?, Is the Soviet succeeding? Have the films ousted the stage? opened up new programming directions. The March of Time, produced by 2SM's John Pickard, strode through the vaultless void.

Question-and-answer programmes (studio quizz, outdoor audience participation) made their appearance, one of the earliest being 3KZ's Voice of the People, from the foyer of the Regent Theatre. The following year the air was filled with the anguish of tongue-tied participants striving to blurt out the truth on an amazing range of propositions put into them by new-breed quizz-masters.

There was a lot of talk – particularly on the ABC. In a typical week more than fifty speakers covered everything from infant welfare to the mysteries of the universe. Big names on the oracular front were the Reverend Irving Benson, Captain Peters, Professor L. F. Giblin, Captain Donald Maclean, Doctor J. Dale and William Tainsh, The Watchman. F. E. Baume was pumping out his passionate views on 2UE.

Mr Fisk remarked that 'television is coming but it will be years before it reaches the stage where a public service can be rendered'. Many disagreed with him – but he was proved right. It arrived exactly twenty one years later.

Radio remained the unchallenged master of the air waves. So appreciative was one listener of its charms that he penned these lines:

Your voice comes vibrant, low and sweet
O'er miles of pulsing air
And floods my quiet, lamplit room
With music rich and rare
Through each soft note emotion thrills
My heart leaps to its power
And fancy lifts its radiant wings
That soar o'er golden hour.

A distinguished medical authority, Sir Leonard Hill, was reported as saying that experiments with radio waves of 3.4 metres in length 'have specific effects in killing cancer cells'. Of more practical day-to-day interest, however, was an American claim that radio waves could relieve hangovers by warming the walls of the stomach, 'causing them to relax and bringing comfort to the patient by eliminating the craving for strong liquor'.

And 'on the supposition that the planet Mars is inhabited by intelligent beings, Senatore Guglielmo Marconi declared recently that it was possible to communicate with them by means of radio. . . . It is interesting to note that Marconi was given world-wide publicity a few years ago when he claimed to have picked up signals from Mars on his yacht in the Mediterranean. Although [they] did not resemble anything in our International Morse Code he stated at the time that they indicated a wave length of anywhere between fourteen thousand and one hundred and fifty thousand metres'.

CHAPTER NINE

A Nation on Guard

The rattle of the rifle, a nation in khaki, jungle green, Bombay bloomers – Australia at war and radio subjected to firm and sometimes over-zealous censorship.

On that fateful September night in 1939 programmes were interrupted for 'a special announcement' from the Prime Minister, R. G. Menzies. He said:

> It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that in consequence of the persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her, and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.

It did not take long for the machine of 'do nots' to lumber into place. Italian tenors, Wagnerian Brunhildes and basso-profundos of suspect nordic extraction were to be banished from the air. No mention was permitted of troop movements, ships, aircraft.

Even before Japan came into the war some members of the Cabinet were in favour of closing down commercial stations altogether for the duration, but they were outnumbered. After Pearl Harbour and the raid on Darwin the Federation and the Army agreed that if a landing were made by the enemy in the Sydney area all transmitters and studios would be destroyed.

Across the other side of the nation, Ed Churchward of Perth (recently retired after more than forty years in commercial radio), recalls that an emergency combined studio was set up in a secret underground suburban location – which is still secret! – and that

commercial and national announcers were provisionally rostered to maintain a combined on-air service if the need arose. A spare hidden transmitter was built in a private home in the nearby hills.

And – as a sidelight on the travel priorities established for American servicemen in the Perth zone – domestic appliances such as carpet sweepers, had the call for space over commercial station executives who might have to travel on DC2's or DC3's, on business connected with war loans or other patriotic appeals.

With all stations, advertisements had to be signed by the writers, all music chosen and logged fourteen days in advance, all people in radio quizz programmes – of which there were about fifty in Melbourne and Sydney alone in 1940 – were doubly suspect because of the possibility of slipping loaded information into an ostensibly innocent answer. All shows, thus, had to be pre-recorded and questions vetted to such an extent that 'What was the year of the Battle of Trafalgar? – 1805', was deemed to have a dark meaning that could provide aid to the foe. It was deleted from a national quizz.

As a result of the recording costs and the irksome, and often palpably foolish restrictions, the number of quizz shows was more than halved by 1941. Before war's end, however, quizz shows were back 'live'.

On 7 February 1941 the postmaster-general under powers conferred on him by National Security regulations revoked the licences of four stations; 2HD Newcastle, 5KA Adelaide, 5AU Port Augusta and 4AT Atherton. In each case the licences were held by companies associated with the Jehovah's Witnesses church.

The *Commonwealth Gazette* of 17 January 1941 had declared the Witnesses and certain other organizations associated with them as 'unlawful organizations'; apparently on the grounds that it was felt there was some danger of them giving comfort or succour to the enemy. Jehovah's Witnesses appealed the revocation, taking it to the High Court: but were unsuccessful.

The licences were finally re-assigned – three of them to commercial interests, 4AT to national interests. It could clearly be argued that the stations lost their licences more from dislike of Judge Rutherford's pronouncements in the United States than from any real danger to Australia's security.

Evidence given before the Parliamentary Standing Committee in 1943 indicated that two of the major reasons why they were put off the air arose from innocent remarks. In the case of 2HD, a seaman on the *Iron Monarch* had sent in a question to a quizz panel who failed to answer it correctly. The station announcer said something to the effect of, 'Next time you come in, Bill, drop up here and the 2/6 is here for you'. This was considered a sinister device to inform the Japanese that the *Iron Monarch* was somewhere out of Newcastle although not necessarily at sea.

In the 5KA case, a woman announcer – not a Witness herself – running a gossip session said: 'As I was coming here today I saw Gordon Marsh. You remember him, he used to manage 5DN, and, by jove, was he looking magnificent in his naval uniform! He was going to Port Adelaide to go aboard his minesweeper and he asked me to give you all his kind regards'. This, of course, indicated there was a minesweeper in dock, and that, in conjunction with other 'unexplained' reasons, meant curtains for the licensee.

Subsequently the Navy's Sir Ragnar Colvin indicated 'in terms of great anger' to the Witnesses' lawyer that he did not believe information was being given to the enemy. But the fact that the Witnesses had been declared an unlawful association was the sealer. The four stations were dispossessed, and that was that.

With Japan's entry into the war in December 1941 stricter controls were to be exercised. No mention could be made on air about the state of the weather – if it were, in fact, fine, cloudy, raining, windy, humid, sunny. This put quite a crimp in the sails of breakfast announcers who were always expected to be cheerful and naturally voluble – like one who was very given to saying 'Lovely day today, good to be out and about. Come on, Dad. Are you up, Mum?'

In Melbourne, Myer, the big department store cancelled its sponsorship of Quiz-Krieg – a 'battle' of wits staged between two stations – because of what was thought to be undesirable associations with Germany's blitzkrieg and possible adverse associations in the minds of the customers. It was to re-appear as the Two-Way Quizz sponsored by 'that Maples store right near your door'.

Myer's, curiously perhaps, thought that any form of participation in sponsored radio – into which they had only entered on a reasonably large scale in 1941 – was not in keeping with the times and

dropped its sponsored programmes in the home city. Others looked upon the situation differently and sustained many programmes in the belief that it was good for morale and enabled sponsors to devise shows slanted to the services.

The restrictions were not to be taken lightly. Three stations (one national and two commercial) were put off the air for twenty-four hours and reprimanded for inadvertently mentioning the sinking of HMAS *Sydney* in 1941, although the event was widely publicised in the press.

The method of acquainting stations – at least in Melbourne – with the older form of 'D' notices, was curiously Dickensian. After most of the stations had closed down, a letter under Commonwealth seal was slipped under the studio doors by anonymous government couriers. The notice to 3KZ, however, slid under the carpet and that station's bouncing breakfast announcer, Norman Swain, did not see it when he arrived next morning. In those days, apart from BBC bulletins, many commercials, by arrangement with the local press, merely used items in the morning paper and announcers read them out as the station news service. (It is altogether possible that the practice still persists in some far-flung pockets.) There was the news of *Sydney*, and so it went to air. The station, next day, was suspended for twenty-four hours and severely reprimanded.

3AR, the national station, was similarly treated. Its case was even more comical. They were broadcasting from a school where God Save the King was being played. 'In view of the tragic happening to the *Sydney* [or something of the like], said the headmaster, 'we should all sing with renewed fervour'.

A station in Sydney also felt the impact of the harsh security hand. Stations were likewise circularised on 'no mention' of the Darwin air attack, enemy aircraft over Townsville, Japanese submarines in Sydney Harbour, mines in Bass Strait, the return of the 9th Division, American troops arriving.

Entertainment for the troops, bundles for Britain, support for war loans, savings, rationing, and 'is your journey really necessary' became part of the sounds of those times.

The BBC news service, and in particular the voices of Derek Prentice and Quentin Reynolds became familiar to millions of Australians.

On the home front:

> Security checked all people on station staffs, insisted on barbed wire fences around transmitters and armed guards where transmitters were in isolated areas. How such guards could repel unauthorised intruders was left to their discretion. 3BA Ballarat – with its mast miles out along the road to Adelaide – had to hand in its revolver because of the shortage of such weapons. They were informed that a fire-axe on the wall should be sufficient to deter any unwanted visitors (who, presumably, would come unarmed).
>
> . . .
>
> Italians and Germans were banned from holding wireless licences. Curiously, however, their sets were not confiscated. 'Enemy aliens who persist in using sets after cancellation will be prosecuted' said a National Security Act fiat. How the embargo was policed nobody knows.
>
> . . .
>
> So great were the demands made upon commercial stations for free time by the War Effort Publicity Board through the Department of Information, promoting war loans, rationing, programmes for the troops and other patriotic fervours, that revenue losses in 1940 were estimated at £300,000. In 1941-42, forty-four of the ninety-seven commercial stations operating showed a loss. Fifty-three, operating profitably, shared only £82,000 between them. By war's end loss stations declined to fourteen, while over-all profits of the other eighty-six amounted to £429,000.
>
> . . .
>
> Two pop musical items – She Had to Go and Lose It at The Astor and The Man Who Comes Around were banned on commercial stations. Other stations voluntarily removed Only a Glass of Champagne. The lyrics, mildly suggestive, would

have passed unnoticed today. 3UZ and 5AD defied the ban. Nevertheless, one paper, commending the action, editorialized that 'there is no room for anything savouring of the lewd or suggestive. Clean shows are the best box office', it went on. 'Wisecracks which aroused the covert snigger would react against the announcer, his station, and his sponsor'.

. . .

Not only firearms but typewriters and binoculars were 'called up'. Even race broadcasters had to hand in their glasses. Ken Howard anticipating events, trained himself to use a telescope.

. . .

Most stations decided that because of the war there would be no cocktail parties at Christmas. Regretfully, the 3DB Board was also to record that due to the flimsy nature of the building, little could be done to safeguard the staff in the event of an air raid. But some extra protection would be afforded the control room and front office.

. . .

In 1941 a joint parliamentary committee after an investigation of 'all phases of both the national and commercial services' proposed that all previous laws and regulations relating to broadcasting should be incorporated in a single measure – the Australian Broadcasting Act. It came into force in July 1942. In passing, the committee was to note that 'it cannot be expected that the programmes of any single station will please all the people all the time'. Maximum enjoyment, however, could be achieved by planned listening, it advised.

. . .

The Act, virtually, gave all stations the right to use their discretion about what their speakers could say, on politics or

other controversial matter, without ministerial interference, direct or otherwise.

. . .

Many sponsors used none of their commercial entitlement. They asked listeners to support wartime charities instead.

. . .

Plagiarism, declared producer Leslie Ross, was rife in Australian radio.

. . .

The ABC was complaining that 'people who are in broadcasting for the money they can make out of it' were involved in a sinister campaign to hamstring the commission. Commercial interests described the allegation as 'preposterous'.

. . .

31 May 1942. Four Japanese midget submarines are destroyed in Sydney Harbour but not before twenty-one men in an old ferry boat were killed. A torpedo — aimed at the American cruiser *Chicago* — passed harmlessly underneath it, but hit the ferry.

. . .

The Watchman, in a New Year Eve broadcast in 1944, was reassuring the nation that 'if we try (as far as fallible and ignorant men can) to range ourselves on the cause of right against wrong we may be assured that however dark and lowering the clouds at any time, we may rest calm and confident that, in the end, the powers of evil will be cast down'. The Great Thunderer was subject to normal frailties of prognostication himself, like his forecast that post-war migration to Australia, as a population-booster, was 'scarcely promising'.

. . .

Anzac Day 1944, saw commercial stations throughout Australia combine in a ten-hour telephone appeal for the Victory Loan – raising from twenty-three thousand subscribers more than £1½ million.

. . .

The PMG (Senator Cameron) calls for scripts in his campaign to remove moral impurities from the air. Federation President (Alf Paddison) retorts 'Australian radio is the cleanest in the world'. In July, four artists (Al Thomas, Wayne Froman, Dorothy Foster, Rita Pauncefort) and producer Russell Scott are suspended by the PMG for allegedly broadcasting 'objectionable matter' in Calling the Stars. The ban was lifted after an exchange of 'undertakings' not to offend again. Gracie Fields altered the last lines in her song 'He Wooed Her' 'less they offend the sensitive ears of Senator Cameron'.

. . .

Mr Sheehan (Labor NSW) asks the PMG to eliminate 'sensational murder stories being broadcast almost nightly by B-class stations'. Mr Chifley, mildly, conceded that he enjoyed reading the type of material on which the radio dramas were based.

. . .

The popular recorded series, Frank and Archie, is suspended because 'Frank' Watanabe was a Japanese houseboy.

. . .

3GL has to stop an on-the-spot description of a bushfire because enemy planes might pick up the smoke and use it as map reference to attack Geelong.

The end of the war years saw Actors Equity stepping up its campaign for more Australian content in broadcasting – live and re-

corded, including music. Judged by today's standards, radio then presented a very familiar local face indeed. In fact the war gave such a stimulus to the development of Australian artists that the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting, which was disbanded in 1948 after the formation of the Broadcasting Control Board, reported in 1947 that commercial programming was split up this way: live performance by local artists, 31.81 per cent; recorded performances by local artists, 64.13 per cent; recorded programmes imported from UK and USA, 4.06 per cent.

War Bonds, National Savings, Red Cross, Comforts Fund, hospitals all benefited from commercial station efforts during those years. Records of amounts raised, however, are virtually non-existent now but informed estimates put the total at more than £20 million. And among the inventions that the early post-war period produced was the transistor, subsequently to be seen by many as the saviour of radio in its battle for survival against television. And two of Australia's largest advertising agencies — J. Walter Thompson and George Patterson — were to exercise a profound influence on the destinies of radio — an influence that was to last for fifteen years — virtually till TV opened in 1956. This occurred to such an extent that the press-dominated TV channels determined that they would hold strict production control over their programming to prevent a repetition of what they regarded as the undesirable power these two agencies had wielded over radio stations — and audiences.

In effect, George Patterson in particular, proved that they could virtually make or break a station's hold on majority night audiences by moving programmes in blocks.

They did this with the Colgate shows — three different 'networks' all carried these top-rating shows at one time or another. The moves were dictated largely by disagreements over rates, supporting promotion and who should pay for what.

J. Walter Thompson's 'flagship' shows were the Lux Radio Theatre and The Amateur Hour for Lever, Mrs 'Obbs for Bonnington's Irish Moss — whose steady 'sip, sip, sip' dripped its way into the consciousness of millions.

Thompson's, largely due to the influence of their American chief executive, Sam Dobbs, were far greater users of radio than Patterson in the middle thirties. But with the formation of the Colgate

Unit – which produced shows on an unheard-of scale during the war years – Patterson's became the biggest buyers of radio time ever.

This was not all due to the basic selling strength of radio, but rather born of the knowledge that newsprint rationing would inevitably restrict space availabilities for product promotion. On the other side of the ledger, however, this compulsion, if it could be so called, was to demonstrate that radio had a selling potential that had been vastly underrated by national advertisers. Indeed, the example set by Lever and Colgate was to spur other big national advertisers to switch large proportions of their appropriations to the air media and stay with it after war's end.

The Youth Show, Rise and Shine, Star Parade, Ladies First, Ask the Army were the first big-name programmes mounted by the Colgate Unit, to be followed by Quizz Kids, Calling the Stars, Can You Top This, Share the Wealth, Pick-A-Box and many others. Performers included Robin Ordell, Roy Rene, Al Thomas, Jack Davey, Joy Nicholls, Hal Lashwood, Dick Bentley, Strella Wilson, Gloria Ashcroft, Rex Dawe, 'Spencer – the garbage man', Peggy Brooks, Abe Romain and Denis Collinson's bands, Jack Burgess, Kathy Lloyd, Harry Griffiths, Willie Fennell, John Dease, Allan Coad, Kitty Bluett, Olive Lester, John Fullard, George Foster. Mark Makeham, Russell Scott and Jack Davey handled production. Oswald Anderson, one of the pioneers of radio, was first manager of the Unit; Freddie Parsons and Alex Macdonald the chief scriptwriters.

On four, sometimes five, nights a week, mostly at the peak-listening time of 8 pm, Colgate shows dominated the air.

The irrepressible Davey, already well known throughout Australia, became the biggest single drawcard in radio's history – before or since.

While most shows were produced in Sydney the Unit travelled to Melbourne and Adelaide for three months' seasons and wherever they went it was a triumphal progress. Ron Beck became manager but resigned after a test of strength with the Patterson agency. Gordon Marsh moved in. Davey pulled out in 1950, to be replaced by Bob Dyer, bringing with him his Pick-A-Box and Cop The Lot shows. John Dunne joined the Unit in 1952 to compere Strike It Rich.

Colgate sponsored more than twenty shows over fifteen years of sponsorship – most of them top or high rating.

Now, they are still well represented on radio – but with spot schedules. Colgate and Unilever would rank among the big users of the medium but the fanfare, the splendour, the soaring sounds have all gone – forever it would seem.

Another giant on the production scene was the Leyshon Agency in Melbourne, with the dynamic Jack Clemenger, formerly of Davis Cup fame, producing such well-known live shows as Starnight, Fifty and Over, Radio Auditions, Are You an Artist, Sports Parade.

After Les Leyshon's death, Clemenger set up under his own name and continued production of these shows – plus another popular newcomer – Top Town.

Other members of the team that lent colour, variety and certainly pace to the war and post-war waves, were Tony Charlton, Doug Elliott, Skip Brennan, Frank Rowan, Derrick Warren, Max Reddy, Tommy Davidson and his band.

And coincidental with the activities of the big advertising agencies was the growth of the transcription companies – independent units filling the programme pipe-line with songs to be fashioned and tales to be told.

One of the great war-years adventure serials, 'First Light Frazer'. Here writer Maurice Francis with cast: George Hewlett, Carlotta Kalmar, Richard Ashley, Lyndall Barbour, Mayne Lynton and Ron Randall

John Bhore, key character in BEA's 'Jimmy Colt' falls ill – episodes are recorded at his bedside. From left: Marcia Hart, Bhore, Keith Eden, Jimmy James (producer), Robert Burnard, Reg Goldsworthy, Monty Maizels (recording engineer)

The opening of 2GB's studios in Bligh Street, Sydney, March 1932. A. E. Bennett in tails, was one of the most significant figures in early radio

George Edwards and Nell Sterling responding to congratulations to celebrate the eighth anniversary of Dad & Dave: 2276 recorded episodes

CHAPTER TEN

Stand By Studio—Stand By Recorder

'The star shell has burst – bringing to the microphone George Edwards and his radio players . . .'

That set-piece was to be stamped loud and clear on the memory-circuits of thousands of listeners in the early thirties: the start of the great days of recorded drama.

By 1939 there were twelve companies at work supplying the seemingly insatiable appetites of the commercial stations for serials. Early on, adaptations of famous classics were the vogue. Then came the cycle of mysteries and drip-dramas (or soap operas). The shuffling shamus slid into the lounge rooms of the nation. Portia faced life with trembling lip but stout heart. Dad and Dave came but never went. The Shadow loomed large and ominous. Mrs 'Obbs gabbled on and on.

George Edwards was the first big name in the business. His Sunday night dramas began to infiltrate minds in 1932. He had a penchant for playing several roles in each story and picking his parts became a sort of incidental listening game. His wife, Nell Sterling, was also featured in most of his astonishing output.

'Cutting' twelve to fifteen episodes was considered a normal day's recording. His sausage-machine technique (read through and record) worked well enough then. And behind him sat the nimble-brained, fleet-fingered Maurice Francis – production-line script-writer of extraordinary capacity. He is reputed to have put on paper more than ten thousand episodes in his time. From which most actors received ten shillings an episode.

Greatest production was given over to the quarter-hour serials

which were timed to run no more than twelve and one-half minutes – to allow for commercial credits – and played three to four times a week. The half-hour episode usually was self-contained, although part of a continuing series. Period pieces mostly went for thirty minutes.

Drama highlight of the week, however, came with the introduction of the Lux Radio Theatre in 1939, produced by Harry Dearth and launched by none other than Cecil B. de Mille on relay from America. Dearth was later to be associated with the General Motors Hour and the Harry Dearth Playhouse.

The Macquarie Radio Theatre, with Laurence Cecil and E. Mason-Wood as name producers and Richard Lane as a regular writer and adapter, was next on the scene. The annual Macquarie Awards for the best actors became one of the radio events of the year.

The General Motors Hour and Caltex Theatre later came into the 'showcase' field. Harry Harper followed Harry Dearth as producer of the General Motors Hour when Dearth left Macquarie to join 2UW. Paul Jacklin took over Lux.

The name that has endured longest however, in the transcription business, and almost as a lone standard-bearer today, is Grace Gibson. As a young girl she was working for the Radio Transcription Company of America. In the middle thirties, A. E. Bennett, one of the big names in Australian radio and at that time managing-director of 2GB, was visiting the United States on a programme-buying mission. Grace did some selling – with such telling effect that Bennett subsequently cabled her boss and asked for a loan of her services to establish a production unit in this country. Thirty-nine years later she is still among us and still producing, on a modest scale, also handling residuals for most of those companies which have since put up their shutters in the post-TV fade-to-silence.

Gracie, friendly as all Texas, sold some of the popular titles of those days: Pinto Pete and His Ranch Boys, Frank Watanabe and the Honorable Archie, Chandu the Magician, The Air Adventures of Jimmy Allen.

Bennett formed a company called American Radio Transcription Agencies, subsequently to become known as Artransa and still now operating successfully in TV and film production. Grace Gib-

son became its first manager. But after the war she picked up her needle and put it down on her own label.

The Drama of Medicine and Mr and Mrs North were among her first efforts; to be followed by such aqueous adventures as Doctor Paul and Portia Faces Life — two names that brought a throb to the heart and a tear to the eye in thousands of households throughout Australia. The good doctor, with a bedside manner that apparently made women become peculiar all over, diagnosed his way through the body and mind of four thousand six hundred and thirty-four episodes. Portia, brave figure ever, despite the slings and arrows, was not far behind: three thousand five hundred and forty-four episodes. Both serials are still to be heard in far flung outposts of this country and in the Bahamas, West Indies and Singapore. An impressive thirty thousand plus episodes flowed from the house that Gracie built.

One of her chief script-writers, Kathleen Carroll, tells of the tests Grace applied in script evaluation. She read most of them in bed.

> If she fell asleep before page three, my scripts had no chance of being accepted. If she got a little further, then, maybe, I could get by with a re-write . . . If she read the first episode to the end and reached for the second, then I was definitely in. So I figured that the best way to keep the lady awake was to open each new show with a lusty verbal battle between a couple of characters . . . forget the introductions, forget the explanation — just let your characters go at it hammer and tongs for the first few pages. Maybe that's why Grace Gibson shows were so successful — they all had to open with a bang.

Such, indeed, were the cunning ploys of other companies trying to engage the ear of stations and sponsors. Sydney and Melbourne were the principal centres of activity.

Melbourne shows, most of them now forgotten, which carried the Featuradio label included Grand Hotel, David Copperfield, The Elusive Pimpernel, Emile Zola, World Cavalcade. From Legionnaire, The Broken Idol, 'Olmes and Hentwhistle, The Dark Invader, Little Man, Homestead on the Range. The Victorian Broadcasting Network produced This England, The Lone Hand.

In Sydney, the Columbia Graphophone company, part of the world-wide EMI complex was producing shows from two companies, George Edwards and James Raglan. From the former, came the long running Scott of Scotland Yard series, Mittens, Drama in Cameo, Rich Uncle from Fiji, the seemingly interminable Dad and Dave and many more.

Raglan's company was responsible for The Black Moth, Singapore Spy, Soldier of Fortune and others.

British Australian Programmes (BAP) numbered among their titles Marie Antoinette, East Lynne, Dramas of the Deep, Wings over the Diamantina, Mutiny on the Bounty. From Amalgamated Wireless: Coronets of England, Fred and Maggie Everybody, Those We Love. Du Maurier productions were responsible for Tale of Two Cities, Robin Hood, The Double Event.

Macquarie Broadcasting Services, which sold product from both the Macquarie Players and Artransa, were producing the long-running I Want A Divorce, Famous Australians, Australia Felix, Sacrifice.

American shows included Charlie Chan, One Girl in A Million, Black Flame of the Amazon, Secret Diary, Lady of Millions. From Trans-Radio, Fatal Tenth and Antique Shop of the Grand Canal.

Fidelity Radio in Sydney were distributors for both local and overseas programming. Oswald Sellers, another significant name on the broadcasting scene, was handling the output of George Edwards.

Apart from the transcription companies, the radio stations themselves were recording shows. The Advertiser Network in Adelaide, for instance, was releasing such shows as Bringing Up Sally, Lord and Lumme, and Fourth Form at St Percy's — the last named to change its title to Yes, What — and extending to all States, recently undergoing a revival.

In later times 2UE's Paul Jacklin was producing Hagen's Circus, Officer Crosby, The Golden Colt, I Hate Crime; 3UZ The Happy Show, We Three, Laundry Mark 29; 3DB Daddy and Paddy; 4BK The Hunter Family.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Twinkling Stars

Early post-war many of these names had disappeared. Featuradio and Legionnaire, also a company called Televox, had been absorbed into Broadcast Exchange, the manager of which was Hector Crawford until the end of 1945. The Hugh Anderson media representation company took over BEA in 1950 and from that studio came such epics as Delia of Four Winds and The Markhams – some one thousand seven hundred and sixty episodes. His Heritage, Simon Masterton and Lavender Grove racked up an impressive one thousand two hundred and fifty episodes.

Crawford struck out on his own late 1945 and was to fashion a new type of programming – the dramatized musical. From his studios emerged The Melba Story, The Amazing Oscar Hammerstein, The Blue Danube – the latter the most expensive show put on disc to that time, £350 an episode. Crawford took a gamble on its success but it paid off. It was sold nationally and overseas and he recouped about £2,000 an episode from it. He also produced Opera for the People and the prestigious Mobil Quest; the latter extending over five years under the same sponsorship.

Crawford was well represented in drama, too: A Man Called Sheppard, David's Children, Here Comes O'Malley, John Turner's Family, and (what he calls 'human interest', others 'drip-drama') Sincerely Rita Marsden, Women in Love, My Other Love, Prodigal Father. Dorothy Crawford, his sister, was in charge of production.

He picked up his stylus and abandoned radio shortly after the advent of television, where he and his sister have since repeated their success story.

Of commercial radio today Hector Crawford has one word: 'Appalling'.

The most successful – in terms of ratings and life-span – of the EMI shows were Dad and Dave (two thousand two hundred and seventy-six episodes), Martin's Corner (two thousand two hundred and forty-four), The Right to Happiness (one thousand five hundred and seventy-two), The Search for the Golden Boomerang and Courtship and Marriage (both one thousand four hundred and forty-four episodes). Martin's Corner was probably the most successful in terms of overseas sales.

Morris West, best-selling world author, former novitiate, one of Billy Hughes' many harassed secretaries, publicity officer, international boulevardier, passionate espouser of great causes, came into the production business after the second World War. In a hot, hessian-lined studio over the Collingwood chemist shop of his partner and brother-in-law, he turned his hand to this comparatively new 'art-form'. Not long after he was joined by a former farmer and restless ex-9th Division warrant officer, Phillip (Bill) Jones, now also an author of distinction, (The Fifth Defector, Johnny Lost, The Month of the Pearl). Jones describes West as 'a gregarious, generous sophisticate who chain-smoked and was as taut with ideas and enthusiasms as an electric turbine is with power'. Of the transcription business, Bill Jones writes:

> Morris engaged me as a scriptwriter and handed over the first episodes of a 26-episode serial called Dr Miracle, starring Richard Davies, indicating that I should finish the show. It would have been the worst serial ever heard on air – especially the episodes written by me.
>
> I wrote the first episodes of the Burtons of Banner Street and this was purchased by Bex – and then Children's Library of the Air which was taken by 3DB for the Major Network. Morris had found a gentleman who had been an espionage agent and we developed him as Colonel X – Morris was adapting four Don Byrne books and we made a deal with 3DB for an adaption of The Scarlet Pimpernel and Beau Geste.
>
> In those days there were no tapes and all recording was

done direct on to a matrix. This partly explains the Australian radio actor's phenomenal ability to read at sight, stay on cue, and read scripts for anything up to two hours at a stretch without a single 'fluff'. A bad 'fluff' meant a new matrix at 25/- a time, plus the necessity to do the whole quarter-hour again.

In the heyday of transcription houses the practice of 'flying' a script into the matrix was common. Not enough actors, not enough time, deadlines to be met – these were the reasons. The cast would arrive in the studio, pick up their scripts, mark their roles, arrange who would perform any necessary sound effects and without a read-through record the episode. As many as four episodes could be recorded in an hour, but 'flying' was only practised where a serial was well-established, the actors knew their characters, and the actors themselves experienced 'older hands'.

When I was out selling one country station manager, he expressed a desire to buy several programmes for the local Co-operative. But there was a catch. His wife chose the programmes, and she was indeed a difficult woman to please. Would I spend the evening auditioning my wares? Of course. Indeed I would have slept with her for the sake of a sale. So I became closeted with this fortyish lady and it was soon evident that her interest lay not in the quality of the programmes, but in the private lives of the actors and actresses whose voices were heard therein. Homosexuals? Lesbians? Indeed Mrs X thought rampant sex reared its ugly head everywhere – casting couches – you name it, and radio had it. A delighted manager informed me next day that Mrs X had purchased all the programmes – 'very good shows'. I had in fact only auditioned one of them. The rest were sold on gossip.

Recording The Prince of Peace was a nervewracking business. Because of the huge cast in the New Testament, we had to use would-be actors in the bit roles. One afternoon a tyro, with only two lines to say, stood up and approached the mike five minutes before cue. The old hands shouldered him gently aside. Eventually his moment of truth came. He was sweating and pale and holding on to his script like it was a sky hook. He opened his mouth to establish his claim to

immortality – and promptly fainted. Robert Peach, playing the disciple John, caught him on the way down, read the lines in a cool voice, and then lowered him to the floor. He lay there for the remainder of the episode.

On another occasion – it was The Burtons of Banner Street – John Morgan began a scene with Robert Peach. In the first line of dialogue he accidently changed the tense of the sentence. These two experienced players completed the scene – changing tenses all the way. And they were 'flying' the episode.

In the Burtons of Banner Street all scripts were sent in advance for sponsor approval, and we were not allowed to mention sex, politics, religion, dubious situations – even by inference – and certainly not liquor. The needs of the Burton family for the latter were covered by a bottle of 'cooking sherry' which Mum Burton kept in the kitchen. Every hundred episodes or so Dad was allowed to celebrate by taking a thimbleful of this stuff. One bottle lasted for seven years. I can still see Walter Pym's face as he pondered the lines . . . 'Now, Mother – where's that Cooking Sherry? . . .'

When it was decided to launch the Boney series, we invited Arthur Upfield to introduce the episodes – but the first recording was a catastrophe. Arthur was a lovely bloke, but he spoke through his teeth with his mouth closed, and it wasn't until our third conference that I began to lock on to his frequency. He was very proud of his creation and it took some twisting and turning to persuade him that Boney might be better served by having a professional actor do the job of narration. Eventually we wiped the narration idea altogether and began each episode with a teaser scene.

Donovan Joyce was to introduce an overseas concept into recorded programming when he set up in business in 1945: write to the star of the show. The particular actor to play the lead was selected after the story-line was established. In subsequent episodes dialogue was to be slanted to bring out the best of his talents.

But that was to come after the first essay – an impressive half-

hour documentary series called The Passing Parade. It ran for four years. Morris West and Phillip Jones were among early writers.

Joyce established such a reputation for strong plots, meticulous casting, and professional direction that at one stage the Major network gave him a contract for £75,000 – before a word was written or recorded. So authentic was the background written into a programme called T-Men, which dealt with taxation evasion, that he became the object of scrutiny by the Commonwealth Police who wanted to know the source of his information. You have to be good to fool the taxation boys.

Among his more distinguished contributions to the medium could be listed The Devil's Duchess, Madame Bovary, Strange House of Jeffrey Marlowe, A Mask for Alexis, Two Roads to Samarra, The Knave of Hearts, The Legend of Kathy Warren – 'come-on' titles in themselves. Joyce wrote a lot of the material himself, with Lindsay Hardy, later to achieve success in England, as a feature-writer.

Joyce, too, was to sell his product in South Africa, Rhodesia and the United States. His studios kept going until 1960.

At this time, moving on and off stage, was a restless jumping-jack of a man named Rupert (John) Hickling. Hickling, in the middle thirties, was radio manager of Goldberg Advertising and producing shows every night of the week for Dunlop, Black & White cigarettes and others. When he left Goldberg he had an arrangement to produce shows, at cost to the microphone, with the Major network and others. They looked after processing, distribution, selling.

He is remembered best, however, for his production of the March of Time. Hickling was smart enough to register the title for broadcast purposes, much to the chagrin – and cost – of the Time people. His half-hour dramatizations of events of the week held top ratings for many years. He died in Spain, in poverty and obscurity.

Although all production houses were anxious to sell their shows nationally – that is, six capital cities, plus as many country outlets as possible – most would negotiate a Sydney-Melbourne deal in the expectation that half to two-thirds of the cost could be amortised. Early post-war prices would range from £30 to £40 a quarter-hour episode.

One production unit costed its quarter-hour prices:

Script	£4. 0.0
Cast of 6 to 8	£9. 0.0
Recording and processing	£8.10.0
Pressings	£2.10.0
Overhead and production	£6. 0.0

— a total of £30 per episode for national rights.

Typical ARP prices were Sydney £12, Melbourne £8 to £10, Adelaide £4, Brisbane £3.10.0, Perth (which usually meant all Western Australia) £4. Hobart £1.10.0 to £2. Country stations paid from 10/- to £2 an episode, depending on their size, power and location.

The biggest overseas markets were New Zealand and South Africa. New Zealand paid, on average, £8 an episode commercially, £10 on their national network. South African sales returns were widely varied — from £10 to £20. Actors, generally, received £1 per quarter-hour.

For nearly a quarter century the night air was rent with calls to arms and clamorous cries. By day, other calls to arms — clinging, loving — but nonetheless traumatic, as hearts were torn and tears welled up in the distaff ducts of the nation. Human endurance was stretched almost to breaking point. Happily, nothing much snapped.

But sniffs and snufflings are no more. And unless the wheel of fortune turns full circle 'these our actors . . . were all spirits and are melted into air, into thin air'.

Most production houses folded after the start of TV in 1956. Artransa, however, decided to retain its production team. Although the domestic market began to contract rapidly, overseas prospects looked sufficiently encouraging to exploit. The two big non-TV markets were New Zealand and South Africa. Indeed, Artransa produced according to their expressed needs. Both countries were high in their praise of Australian stories, acting and direction. Early post-TV, Singapore continued to pay £4 to £5 an episode for a quarter-hour, Malaya was also buying; so too was Hong Kong, Rhodesia, Kenya and Nigeria. Even in the early sixties Artransa was still selling in fifteen countries and recovering about 75 per cent of costs from foreign sales.

Before that, local prices were being shaded by 20 per cent or more, so that Sydney rights, for instance, could be negotiated for £12 an episode; or even £10.

But the day of the long-running serial was virtually over. Artransa concentrated on 'series' shows — in which the story was completed in five or eight episodes so that stations, or sponsors, could buy in shorter over-all segments and complete each story in a week or a fortnight. The five-minute 'story' also found some favour — even one-minute potted information fillers like Fantastic Facts, Where in the World, Is It True? More than two thousand of these were recorded. In addition a successful series for export release was called Strange Tales From Around The World. Fifty-two episodes about Australia were in this package.

But after nearly ten years of battling to sustain production, Artransa had to call it a day in 1965. However, it is still making some bulk sales, in thousand or more lots, to stations at home and abroad.

From inception, Artransa produced more than a hundred shows among them such popular titles as Doctor Mac (Lou Vernon's 'Aye, it's me, Doctor Mac' were household words throughout the land), Superman, Tarzan (a young fellow called Rod Taylor in the star role), Hop Harrigan, Gunsmoke, Space Patrol and many others.

Macquarie, separately, were handling such favourites as Mal Verco and Ginger, Willie ('ow are you, mate) Fennell, Ada and Elsie (Dorothy Foster and Rita Pauncfort), Bobby Limb, Dawn Lake. In the late thirties, Verco and his ventriloquial act shot to stardom overnight. From Adelaide they moved to Melbourne and with Terry Dear as straight man, became a top-rating programme.

However, the insistence by the public that each man be relevant to his day, demonstrated that the attempt to revive 'Ginger' some years after his lips were sealed, was to prove an embarrassing failure. But they were to take their place in the hall of radio's fame.

Of the Melbourne production houses BEA is the only one to survive; its main revenue coming from recording of commercials. However, it still maintains a programme identification with the show Now Anne — starring Anne and Johnny Hawker and sponsored as a public relations exercise by the Department of the

Army. It has wide distribution throughout the Commonwealth.

Marjorie Williams, BEA manager, speaks forthrightly about what she considers to be the lack of initiative and follow-the-leader thinking among commercial stations and fear of experimenting. 'Radio', she says, 'just has to be re-born and at fifty years, that's the time to do it'.

There is no doubt that the independent transcription companies contributed significantly to the growing stature of commercial radio from the mid-thirties to the mid-fifties. In those twenty years the air was filled with passion, intrigue, adventure, crime, tragedy, sorrow, brave causes, bold minds. Any night the listener could be transported into the wonderful world of the writer's imagining – its power and purpose reinforced by the rare talents of actors and actresses who mastered radio techniques in a manner, of the times, that seems to have eluded many of their successors on television.

Dastards and darlings, lovers and lechers, heroes and harridans, saints and sufferers, all came through the marvellously evocative talents of Neva Carr-Glynn, Robert Burnard, Mary Disney, John Morgan, Ruth Cracknell, Douglas Kelly, Walter Sullivan, Muriel Steinbeck, Richard Davies, Patricia Kennedy, Sheila Sewell, Ron Haddrick, Carl Bleazby, Yvonne Banvard, Nigel Lovell, Beryl Walker, Leonard Teale, Frank Harvey, June Salter, John Cazabon, Kenrick and Keith Hudson, Moira Carleton, Keith Eden, Nan Summers, Robert Peach, Elizabeth Wing, Leonard Bullen, John Tate, Ruby May, Noel Ferrier, Margaret Mouchemore, Margot Lee, Hal Lashwood, Ken Fraser, Alistair Duncan, Stewart Ginn, Marcia Hart, Syd Conabere, Dinah Sheering, Ann Haddy, James Condon, Walter Pym and many others.

There was a leavening of illustrious names from Broadway and the West End, too, especially in the hour plays.

The General Motors Hour, for instance, featured Melvyn Douglas, Ralph Richardson, Lewis Casson, Sybil Thorndike, Margaret Rutherford, Roger Livesey, Ursula Jeans, Shirl Conway and Margaret Rawlings. Fees paid to them ranged from £100 to £400. Local 'stars' usually received £25; for the smaller roles £20. But they did not resent the occasional intrusions of imported troupers. So long as it was 'occasional'.

General Motors-Holden's literally used their radio show as a

public relations vehicle, travelling it round Australia as far north as Townsville, as far west as Perth. The invited black-tie section of the audience – with supper afterwards – included everyone from the Governor, the Premier and the Chief Justice down.

On one occasion, during the live broadcast of Ten Minute Alibi (where the time struck on the clock is of terrible significance to the plot) the timepiece at Norwood Town Hall (where the play was being staged) boomed out nine of night – and ruined the whole effect.

Many Australian radio actors, after departing these shores, went on to success in England and America – among them Peter Finch, Ray Barrett, Madge Ryan, Ron Randell, Bill Kerr, Frank Gatliff, David Butler, Ken Warren, Bruce Beeby, Betty McDowell, John Bluthal, Reg Lye, Guy Doleman, Frank Thring, Michael Pate, John Meillon, Charles Tingwell – the last four now happily restored to native soil.

Mostly, regular scripters got £2 to £4 a quarter-hour episode. Some 'name' writers did a little better. Like the late George Johnston whose Death Takes Small Bites was one of the greatest cliff-hangers of all time. The writing was superb but the action came in very small nibbles indeed. As with Blue Hills, you could miss many episodes, without losing your grip on what was happening. (In passing it could be recorded that Gwen Meredith started on her long radio-writing career after winning £10 in an ABC competition with a play felicitously called The Opportunist.)

Apart from writer-producers, shows were scripted by Max Afford, Rex Rienits, Kay Keavney, Kathleen Carroll, Sumner Lock-Elliott, Richard Lane, Ru Pullan, Lindsay Hardy, Maurice Chapman, Phil Freedman, Shan Benson, the Dares (husband and wife), Niall Brennan, Audrey Cohen, Bob McKinnon, 'Red' Phillips, Maxwell Dunn, Edmond Barclay and 'Snug' Balnaves. Surely the best of the old drama libraries should be preserved in a Radio Museum. The substantial pageant should not be allowed to fade or 'leave not a rack behind'.

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Television Terror

It is 1955 – the year before television, Radio, restless and concerned. Advertising agencies saying that when the animated box displayed all its parlour tricks radio would be consigned to the garage.

It was consigned alright, but not to the garage – unless to the glove box of the car. Radio in fact spread to all the other rooms and became a personal accessory.

And of those times, the programmes that were beguiling listeners at night included The Cadbury Show (Ada and Elsie), Life With Dexter, the Atlantic Show, the Dulux Show, Leave it to the Girls, the Ford Show, the General Motors Hour, Caltex Theatre, The Pied Piper, The Ampol Show, the BMC Show, Mobilsong.

It will be observed that the inclination of the big oil and motor sponsors to include their names in the programme title had become somewhat obsessive. Interesting to compare the tendency today, when there are no sponsors as such, to see how shows are identified by the name of the disc jockey.

Quizzes were still riding high but by now the actual sponsor was almost lost in the credits given to participating 'freeloaders'.

Instead of spending money on their own shows hundreds of advertisers were 'donating' their wares as prizes – providing they got a plug. One electrical appliance manufacturer declared that he was getting more mileage out of giving away his products on other people's shows – up to £25,000 a year in retail values – than investing the same amount on his own account.

The Dyer and Davey quizzes were the pacemakers. But even Bob Dyer was to strike out against swamping the air with 'gifts'.

'I literally begged for some sort of control by either agreement between sponsors or perhaps by the Federation and the agencies', he said in an article in the trade magazine — *Broadcasting & Television.*

'I am well aware', he added, 'of the menace of a growing list of products being given away other than those marketed by the sponsor. I have held steadfastly to what I regard as a reasonable limit'.

Dyer referred to 'this monstrosity of a rat race for audience supremacy'.

Said his great 'rival' Jack Davey: 'I wouldn't say quizz shows are the most entertaining programmes on the air but I would say they have entertained and will go on entertaining'.

The prizes got bigger. The quizzes gradually died.

The Amateur Hour in its fifteenth year was still pulling in the listeners, Terry Dear had taken over from Dick Fair, who succeeded Harry Dearth. Paul Jacklin was producing the Lux Radio Theatre — Harry Harper the General Motors Hour. Old familiars were still going strong, Community Singing, World Famous Tenors, the P & A Parade, Radio Auditions, The Minstrels, Reflections in a Wineglass — all bottle and battle — matured from fifteen to twenty-five years.

On the ABC, Blue Hills had taken over where The Lawsons (after five good years) had left off. The Village Glee Club, whose laughter faded only in 1971, was into its eleventh year.

One astute writer on radio — Roy Ledwidge — was saying that radio was in a rut, that 'we were getting quizz shows and panel shows until we looked like them', that radio was programming to a pattern 'that was wearing thin. Nobody is experimenting much and there is a dreadful sameness about sessions'.

Many station managers blamed this on the sponsors who wanted only tried and tested formula shows that would get them ratings.

Ledwidge referred to the 'Great Air Lift' — shows like 'Top Town, Strike It Rich, Twenty Questions, Dragnet, Information Please, Portia Faces Life, When a Girl Marries, Stop the Music, Two for the Money, What's my Line, Any Questions, Hopalong Cassidy . . . we not only lifted the ideas we took the names as well'.

As a counter-balance — shows with a new twist developed loc-

ally – Ledwidge named Keith Smith's Word from the Children and Happy to Know You, Bob Dyer's Pick-a-Box, Macquarie's Say What you Think.

Then, of course, there was Dad and Dave.

Jack O'Hagen, with more melodies than meals under his belt, expressed the view that a competition for a national song that could be used at the Melbourne Olympics was ill-starred. 'A national song is something that grows from the soil of the country and the heart and soul of the composer', he said. 'It is not produced by competitions'.

And of great ones: Katherine Hepburn, here to co-star with Robert Helpmann, says to 3AW's Michael Williamson: 'I like radio people, but broadcasting is such a bore. . . . I have said no interviews. . . . I don't have to be rude, do I?'

- Conversation at an on-air meeting between Miss Marilyn Monroe (sex symbol) and Mr Rocky Graziano (sock symbol).
  Rocky: How do you do
  Marilyn: How do you do
  Rocky: Hey, you talk just like me

- Rodney Taylor wins an award for the best actor of the year and signs a seven-year contract with MGM in Hollywood.

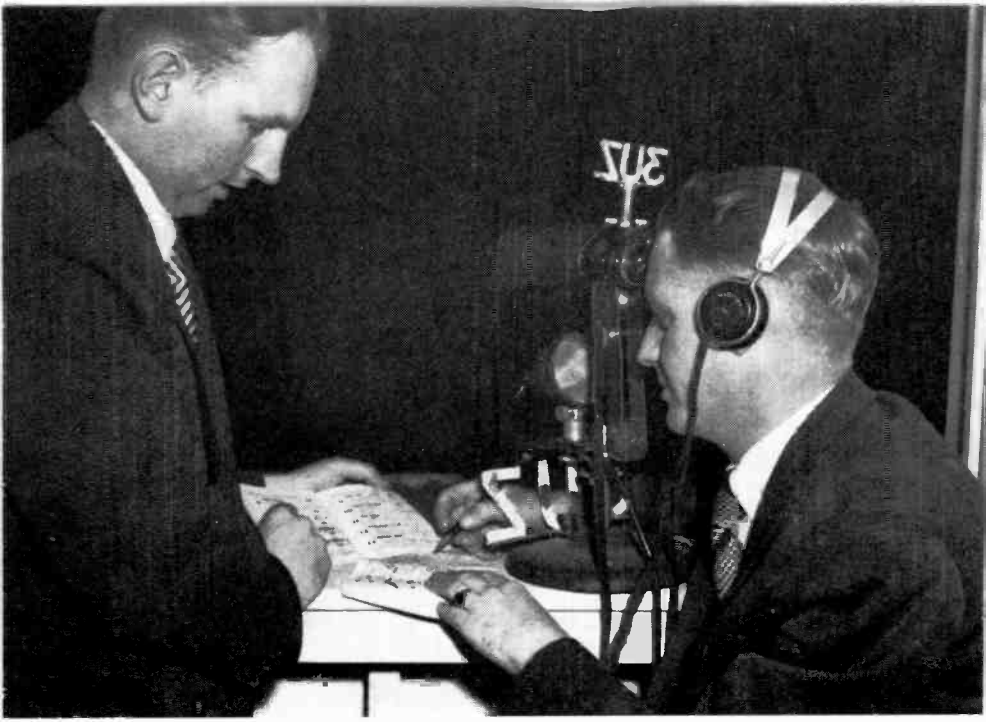
Sociologically, there were some stirrings:

- A group of housewives, forerunners no doubt of women's lib, say they are being drowned by the washboard weepers (see also soap operas, drip dramas, tear jerkers, womb tremblers). Protesting in the press, they declared that 'most of the serials served up to us as we do our household chores are moronic, insulting to our intelligence, ought to be banned, ramble on too much, are not in good taste and are far too morbid'.
  Replies Miss Dorothy Crawford: 'There are probably more complaints about them because more people are listening to them now'.

- A representative list running at this time included: When a Girl Marries, Love of a Woman, Husband's Love, Right to Happiness, Fallen Angel, Courtship and Marriage, Mary Livingstone,

'We Three' – a greatly successful musical show of the 50s. Margot Sheridan, Eula Parker and Johnny McMahon

August 1952. Morris West, Arthur Upfield and Phil Jones discussing plans for the serialization of Upfield's 'Boney' series



Race callers Bert Bryant and John Russell; still together twenty years after this was taken at the Melbourne trots in 1953

'Deadly Nightshade' was one of the great dramatic serials of 1955. Author Lindsay Hardy surrounded by from left: director Laurence Cecil, William Eldridge, producer Grace Gibson, Bruce Stewart and Margo Lee

Doctor Paul, The Markhams, Imprisoned Heart, True Confessions, The Burtons, Prodigal Father, Portia Faces Life.

- Three hundred stage, radio and screen stars subscribe to a creed which warns that TV plans, as announced, presented 'a grave threat to the future of musical, acting and allied talents in Australia'.

- A pamphlet called *We Believe* – the signatories of which included John McCallum, Googie Withers, Hector Crawford, Harry Dearth, Chips Rafferty, Dick Bentley, Sybil Thorndike, Lewis Casson, Garnett Carroll, Jack Davey and 290 others – asked for a guaranteed minimum percentage of Australian-made programmes.

- 'We believe that if Australian talent is to survive, let alone flourish, protection must be given by the Government'. (The battle continues.)

- Into the troubled air, one re-assuring voice – Noel Coward's: 'Television is alright to appear on. But you would never want to watch it'.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Surrogate Lovers, Sedulous Apes

Vox humana, the voice that breathes o'er Eden, commands, cajoles, caresses. The men behind the microphone, in a very real sense, modulate all other sounds. To some they are folk heroes; to some women – phantom lovers. (Harvey Tonkin, former advertising manager of the Melbourne *Herald,* once wrote a song that summed up this vicarious liaison. The opening lyrics went: 'You are my radio romance, you came to me from out of the air'. It enjoyed limited success.

'Enunciators' they first called them overseas, men whose voices – rounded, majestic, orotund – were carried over the air waves to the small but select audiences. And, in more gracious times, always referred to as Mister – never by first name. Mostly, they were of mature years, often over forty. Plummy one might say, such being the care they took to ensure that every word was so carefully articulated – or enunciated – that the listener was never in any doubt of meaning.

In the twenties they became universally known as 'announcers'. Ten years later announcing was deemed a very desirable vocation for young gentlemen of quality. They were not quite so studied in delivery but still – by today's standards – very fulsome and fruity. Men of the theatre or those whose adoring parents had subjected them to the disciplines of a course in elocution or voice production (then very big as an extra-curricula activity) were the favoured ones. An English accent rated pretty highly too, especially with the national stations.

But there was not much scope for any individual play of person-

ality. There were rules to be observed; and so much was allowed to be said – and no more. No ad libbing, stick to the book: 'Announcers are not permitted to add to or subtract from the written material' read the manual of many a station management.

Studios in Australia were not unlike those of the early BBC: heavily draped, practically airless, sparsely equipped. (Some of the announcers began to resemble the studios they occupied.) 2LO London has been described thus:

> . . . the original microphones were known as the meat-safe, four-legged machines with a great blue silk topping, about two foot by one, and a whacking great microphone in the middle which the engineers used to come and prod every now and then because the coil had got stuck. If you took a watch near it the watch would be paralysed because the mike had such a heavy magnet.

While stations had different house rules, in general, these matters came under the black-fellows' act:

> Obscene and off-colour jokes or songs, oaths, sacrilegious expressions or anything of doubtful propriety.
>
> Use of the Deity's name excepting when used reverently or as part of a standard classic work.
>
> Statements or suggestions that may be considered offensive to religious views, racial traits and the like.
>
> Any statement that comments upon, ridicules, or incorporates the name of a member of royalty or any Australian or overseas personality in a derogatory manner, or in relation to advertising. [No Graham Kennedy licence here, but faith in the proper order of things is restored by equating advertising with the monarchy.]
>
> Matter that constitutes a breach or contravenes any Federal or State legislation.

Most radio stations in other parts of the world were bound by similar guidelines – and still are. When Frank Muir and Denis Norden first joined the BBC they were required to read the famous 'little green book' which, among other things, specifically banned reference to the deity, the people of the Palace, physical infirmities, colour or race, and homosexuality. After digesting it, Muir said to Norden 'You know I think when we LEAVE the BBC . . . we must write a script which begins "My God!" cried the Queen, "that one-legged nigger is a poof".'

But long before that, to be an announcer in Australia was really something, a man of distinction – if not a real big spender. Four to five pounds a week was considered adequate compensation in view of the social cachet attached to the job (position, please!).

It was important that people thought well of the announcers. Not long after they had taken over 3DB, the *Herald* Board minutes recorded a decision to engage 'a good announcer'. Whether that referred to his ability or his morals was not disclosed.

To add to the charisma quite a few stations insisted that those on night duty should wear dinner suits. Not that anyone – out there – could see them, but it was considered helpful in augmenting the simulated importance of the task, aided morale and made for a more dignified performance. The ABC carried on the practice long after the commercials allowed less formal attire.

Protocol – at least with some major metropolitan stations – also prescribed two evening announcers; the presentation announcer (number one boy) and the commercial announcer (down the scale a little).

Up till the middle thirties, recorded commercials were virtually unknown. The Continuity Department of the station provided most of the copy read on air. Not more than 10 per cent of advertising material came from the advertising agencies or advertisers. And apart from sponsorship of programmes (mostly fifteen minutes, some half-hours and a few hours) 'scatters' could be bought, now known as 'spots' of twenty-five or fifty words. What manner of men then, were these silver-tongued manipulators of passion, prejudice, purchasing power?

A radio booklet published by the Radio Federation in the forties makes them into very handsomely-endowed characters – almost unrecognisable by today's – or any other day's – standards. The

aspiring 'microphone artist, performer or announcer', needed wide and liberal knowledge for he could be called upon to 'relay information on any subject under the sun . . . he knows his microphone, its possibilities and its limits; he knows his controls, the principles on which they work, the extent to which he can rely upon them to assist him. He is at once a linguist and a litterateur, a scientist and a psychologist, an historian and an histrionician [*sic*], he must have wide imagination and unfailing resourcefulness coolly to meet the manifold crises that occur behind the microphone. Above all, his nerves must be of steel, his temperament controlled, his sense of humour keen, and his liver in sound condition'.

For all that, he might expect to get about £10 a week – a small sum, considering the threat to his liver!

It might of course, be pointed out that radio was not quite so departmentalised as it is now. Feature announcers, while rarely totally invested with the astonishing qualifications outlined above, were expected to do many things: straight announcing, producing, reading news, writing copy for programmes, compering live shows, handling commercials and anything else that came along.

These days, the disc jockeys and talk-back commentators – some of whom pocket between $300 and $500 a week – keep to their individual last. In any case if those bygone tests were now applied, radio would be a museum of skeletons, silence and secrets.

One BBC announcer, apparently more than somewhat sceptical of his prestige status, described himself as 'a waiter who brings the food he hasn't prepared and must not partake of'. A jaundiced colleague added 'not so much a waiter as a butler'. Many years later Sydney's Bob Rogers was to observe, in similar vein, that his was not so much a programme as a way of telling the time. One adoring female radio addict wrote, however,

> You are admirable substitutes for husbands, in fact models; never late, never worrying if dinner is late, always at home in the evening, never bad-tempered, generally fairly cheerful and delightfully Victorian.

A mild *cri-de-coeur*, indeed, compared to the frank protestations of love and affection received today by some Australian and American surrogate lovers.

One or two of the stations' key men were permitted to say things

outside the book. In the early thirties men like Norman Banks in Melbourne and John Harper in Sydney blazed new trails of informality. In the eyes of their less exalted colleagues they were allowed to 'get away with murder'.

With regard to the tendency of some of his contemporaries to now talk with Yankee twang Norman Banks says: 'All seem to be striving to outshine each other in this pseudo-American way — using the same expressions they dig out of *Variety* and other American magazines. They nauseate me'.

Randolph Bedford, outspoken Labor politician and author, took a tilt at ABC announcers in 1940. He mentioned 'such verbal horrors' as 'superia' for 'superior', 'marely' for 'merely', 'par' for 'power', 'fah' for 'fire'; and weather reports which forecast it would be 'clardy with shahs'. He referred to ABC announcers who copied 'the silly affectations' of BBC announcers as 'sedulous apes'.

If he were still alive today he would have a far wider spectrum to cover — from bastard Yankee to Oxford bleat.

Today is the day of the disc jockey or deejay. The freedoms they enjoy would have passed all understanding of the first stars of the microphone. Personality projection is now one of the big tests. The other requirement, some argue, is a phoney American accent and an ability to carry on in the frenetic argot of the recording stars. (Harry Secombe's definition of a 'star' is anyone who can hold a trailing microphone.)

Copying the Americans has almost become a national pastime. Even stations deep in the hinterland seem to permit their disc jockeys to communicate with the audience in dialects that attempt to disguise the patrial connection. If it is just a phase, it has been unduly prolonged.

Others see it as an inevitable result of over-concentration on the teenage audience, most of whom, apparently, are impressed by Hollywood values and have an inbuilt unscrambling device that enables them to make sense of the incomprehensible. Older folk would favour the suggestion that some announcers should be put through a 'debabelization' course.

'Radio', says Marshal McLuhan, 'is the medium for frenzy and it has been the major means of hotting up the tribal blood of Africa, India and China alike'.

And all points east — and south.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Jack Davey and Friends

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who was the greatest of them all? Few would dispute a single nomination: Jack Davey.

He landed in Sydney in 1931 from New Zealand, plump, brash, just about broke. His father, captain of the old *Awatea,* gave him a lot of sound advice and a £1 note.

Within a year he had convinced 2GB's A. E. Bennett of his ability as a singer and was engaged at – to him – a staggering £9 a week. He soon graduated to breakfast announcer and established his own life-long call sign 'Hi-Ho Everybody'.

In 1934 he was running his first quizz, That's What You Think. The following year he was writing, acting in and producing a detective serial, The Adventures of Bobby Britton.

Next came Two Jacks and a Piano, with another of the early greats and musical improviser of rare, rude talent, Jack Lumsdaine. So Davey was now in full flight: writing, producing, acting, announcing, compering and newsreel commentating. He even wrote a paperback of indifferent quality – mostly jokes.

His was the star name in the Colgate Unit. He joined the American Red Cross as a field entertainer with the rank of Captain, but for reasons that are not altogether clear.

Towards war's end he had returned to the Colgate Unit where he both appeared in and produced quizz and variety programmes. In 1950 he rejoined Macquarie as director of production. He was then earning, perhaps, £30,000 a year. Certainly the highest paid entertainer in the business.

He lived for the day, working hard, playing hard, getting rid of

money in the quickest way – gambling and reckless spending on cars and gear, hand-outs to anyone he thought in need. At one stage, according to his friend, biographer and assistant, Lew Wright, his weekly schedule was five major half-hour shows, five breakfast sessions, two charity performances, one newsreel assignment, plus the odd short film – a startling six hundred and eighty-two shows annually in all. It is no wonder then that international celebrities were confounded by his capacity for work – mostly without script, off the top of his head and the tip of his tongue. Says Wright:

> To say he was popular at Macquarie would be a lie. His complete dominance over lesser contemporaries brought envy, a lack of co-operation and, in some cases, barely veiled hostility. JD regretted it yet made no reply, instigated no reprisals and would not condescend to discuss it.

Off mike, Davey loved telling stories, and he told them well. But he was a bad audience. He would listen, politely enough, smile faintly perhaps while others were slapping their thighs. You could almost see him rephrasing the words, adjusting the timing, slightly altering the punchline so that he could subsequently pick it up and retell it all, his way. It is doubtful if he ever acknowledged there was anyone in the business within spitting distance of him.

Wright suggests this also, by his reluctance to share the spotlight with anyone, and his refusal, before sign-off, to permit any on-air credits to producer, sound mixer or anyone else in the cast of the radio shows in which he was the star.

Perhaps his generosity in other directions was an instinctive counter balance to this single, or some might say, bloody-mindedness on air.

Wright's brave but doomed attempts to keep a rein on Davey's capricious spending is well told in *The Jack Davey Story*. Small wonder, when Davey had sixty suits, one hundred and twenty pairs of shoes, seven wrist watches and bought whatever high-powered and fancy-priced car or boat that took his eye. He burned himself out, but before he died in 1959 at the age of forty-nine he shed a bright enduring light over the Australian radio scene.

He once said that the secret of his success was to 'Bite off more than you can chew – and then chew like buggery'.

His estate was declared at £3,850. He would have been very annoyed at so much money lying idle.

Other great names have bestrode the scene, names like Bob Dyer who also came to Australia in the thirties as a ukulele-strumming hill-billy in the Marcus Show and managed to do what his 'rival' Davey could not do – make a success of television. Dyer and Davey carried on a mythical running battle for years on air, but they liked and respected each other. Dyer's tribute to Davey after his death was touchingly impressive.

Then there was Roy Rene, scarcely an announcer, but a sparring partner to Davey. They did not like each other much and it was not unusual for Mo to go to 'Mithter Patterthon' (George Patterson, whose agency really ran the Colgate Unit) and protest in fine sibilant spray that 'Mithter Davey wath getting a little above himself'.

Mo got as close to the bone on radio as human device could contrive but apparently, at home, he adopted a high moral tone about anything that smacked of the 'lathivious'. His wife, Sadie Gale, remarked that 'Roy is a simple, serious-minded man, modest in taste and ideas, and at times almost narrow-minded. He once stopped me reading *There's a Porpoise Close Behind Us* because he said it wasn't a nice book'.

Many other nationally-known stars of radio started off as announcers, Dick Fair, Harry Dearth, Hal Lashwood, Terry Dear, Jack Burgess, Rex Dawe and Pat Hodgins, the man who stepped into Davey's shoes as Colgate quizz-master and sounded so much like him that listeners could not believe their ears.

Most 'announcers', as such, built up strong loyalties within the boundaries of their own States and to list them all here would require a catalogue of hundreds of names. Those known to a wider audience, perhaps nationally, would include Allan Lappan, Geoff Manion, Les Daley, Allan Toohey, Norman Banks, David Lowe, John Harper, Frank Hatherley, John McMahon, Bob Rogers, Howard Craven, John Dease, Eric Pearce, Si Meredith, Alwyn Kurts, Ronald Morse, Rod Gainford, Arch McKirdy, John Dunne, Jack Burgess, Charles Cousens, Moray Powell, Ellis Price, Keith Eadie, George Hardeman, Eric Parrant, Noel Judd, John Chance, many of whom are no longer with us, or out of the business.

On the distaff side, there was Sydney's Gwen Plumb, Meg McSpeerin, Hilda Morse and Mrs Stelzer; Melbourne's Joan, Pen-

elope, Louise, Mrs Rex, Nancy Lee, Stephanie Deste; Adelaide's Phyllis and Kay (subsequently a Federal Parliamentarian); Hobart's Susan Barrie; Brisbane's Mavis Riding, Ruth Rutherford, Dulcie Scott, Hilda Hastie; Perth's Peggy, Laurel, Phoebe; Newcastle's Twink Story. Women's and children's sessions started to fade out in the fifties.

In their time, the 'lady announcers' exercised a formidable hold on audiences. Today, except in the country, they are mostly a memory of more gracious, if garrulous times.

Alan Brown, 1973 President of the Federation, was originally an announcer in Hobart, and is now manager of 7HO. Other past or present announcers-to-managers include Lewis Bennett, Eddie Balmer, Percy Campbell, Eric Pearce, Bob Hynes (now Sir Lincoln), Keith Macdonald, Gordon Lewis, George Foster, Bert Button, Reg Gray, Val Woodland, George Lovejoy, Stan Clark, Ted Furlong, Allen Brandt, and Neville Bradley.

Virtual total absence of network programming on commercial stations has meant that most of the big deejay and talk-back names in the business are well known within their home city or state, but are virtually unknown elsewhere in Australia; with the possible exception of Ormsby Wilkins, Gerald Lyons, John Pearce, John Laws and Bob Rogers. It would seem that the time of national figures is over, unless there is a reversion to 'the good old days'.

Present evidence suggests it is unlikely.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Relaying to Stations

Although radio networks in Australia – that is, a number of metropolitan and regional stations in all States joining together for programming and selling purposes – have never reached dimensions comparable to the United States, they have played a significant role in the development of the medium, especially during the war and post-war years.

The first stations to try and establish some form of national enterprise were 2UW in Sydney, 3DB Melbourne, 3BA Ballarat, 4BK Brisbane, 5AD Adelaide and 6ML Perth. In 1930 they formed a loose association known as the Federal Network.

'Owing to lack of line facilities', ran a press release of the time, 'it is possible only to link New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia in a musical programme relay, but all the stations named have agreed to co-operate in other ways'.

The Federal Network had a short and chequered career and as the opportunities for national selling were limited, the group made little real progress. In any case, there was no centralized authority – merely an occasional pooling of ideas and resources when sponsor interest warranted. Each station was also free to pursue any other arrangements with other stations – when it suited their book.

In 1933, for instance, 4BC, 2UW, 3DB and 5AD found it expedient to come together under the name of The Associated Broadcasters of Australia. The following year saw 3DB and 2GB discussing the possibilities of forming a joint transcription company. 3DB was also making separate overtures to 4BK, 2UE and 6ML.

3DB seems to have been the dominant voice in all this wheeling

and dealing, and manager Dave Worrall was the prime mover. Out of it all came the Major Network in 1938, but again there were three changes in the Sydney outlet. 2CH and 2UW were at one stage members of the network. So was 6IX, WB, MD in Western Australia. Today it consists of fifteen stations: 2UE, 2KO, 3DB, 3LK, 4BK, 4AK, 5AD, 5PI, 5MU, 5SE, 6PR, 6CI, 6TZ, 7EX and 7HT.

The network is not a company, merely an association of stations pursuing common objectives, especially selling. But in its heyday there was a National Programme Director in Sydney (Paul Jacklin) and a production set-up in Melbourne.

In 1938, 2UW was also the key station in what was once known as the Commonwealth Broadcasting Network. It had arrangements with 4BC plus some country stations; in fact with anyone that liked to do business with it. It was disbanded in 1941.

In the middle fifties an independent group (2UW, 3UZ, 4BC, 4SB, 6PM, 6AM) came together as a 'network' but it fell to bits not long after the start of television.

The Macquarie Network, the biggest and most influential, was also formed in 1938. It is a proprietary company with Macquarie Broadcasting Holdings, through a subsidiary, the dominant voice and fourteen member stations participating shareholders.

In New South Wales full network stations are now 2GB, 2PK, 2WL; Victoria 3AW; Queensland 4BH, 4BU, 4GY; South Australia 5DN; Western Australia 6IX, 6BY, 6MD, 6WB; Tasmania 7HO; ACT 2CA. There are a number of co-operating stations for which Macquarie acts as selling agents and, occasionally, for programmes, sporting relays and special events.

In its salad days the network had twenty-six member stations and thirty-five co-operating stations.

But the great days are over — in the sense that the impressive production complex Macquarie built up has been largely dismantled. In a way the network came into existence because of the influence of the two big advertising agencies — Thompson and Patterson who played the power game, naturally enough, to the greatest advantage of their clients. Their combined strength in being able to move popular programmes from station to station, to build up one group at the expense of another, by time-channel manipulation to avoid placing their programmes against each other

at peak times, carried the warning to some astute station managers that they were gradually surrendering authority to outsiders. H. G. Horner was the driving force in the negotiations that were to follow.

The first network conference in July 1938 agreed to the need to develop programmes and clear common channels for network advertisers. Two years later a central programme fund was established, each station contributing proportionately to its status. By 1941 the network was producing programmes that involved the employment of ninety artists and fifty-two musicians. At the end of that year six hundred and fifty quarter-hours, three hundred and fifty half-hours and fifty ten-minute programmes had been broadcast exclusively over member stations.

Network discounts offered advertisers favourable rates. Macquarie also made great play of its policy to treat all sponsors alike; no-one could buy better than anyone else but they could buy well, including tailor-made programmes to suit the individual advertiser's needs, organization of standard time channels throughout Australia, routing of programmes on disc, designing supporting publicity for print media, handling all scheduling and presentation of one consolidated bill at the end of it all.

All this — and Jack Davey too, plus other magic names that sparked the interest of listeners and advertisers alike.

Macquarie's determination to control both its programmes and its personalities, while attracting cries of monopoly practice, paid off handsomely. Post-war it was not only conceiving, producing and distributing more programmes than anyone else, it was also the largest single producer in the entire British Commonwealth.

Ben Coombs, one of the smartest marketing men in the business, made selling — a difficult task — that much easier. The network was fortunate in having him as its sales director.

Co-operating stations had to pay Macquarie 10 per cent of the value of station time for use of their programmes, and were happy to do so.

Beside Major and Macquarie, there are today regional groupings described as networks:

Associated Broadcasting Services (3CS Colac, 3SR Shepparton, 3UL Warragul, 3YB Warrnambool).

Victorian Broadcasting Network (3CV Maryborough, 3HA Hamilton, 3SH Swan Hill, 3TR Sale, 3NE Wangaratta).

New England Network (2AD Armidale, 2MO Gunnedah, 2RE Taree, 2TM Tamworth).

Central Queensland Network (4IP Ipswich, 4LG Longreach, 4LM Mount Isa).

Queensland Broadcasting Network (4BC Brisbane, 4GR Toowoomba, 4MB Maryborough, 4RO Rockhampton, 4SB Kingaroy).

South Australian Broadcasting Network (5KA Adelaide, 5RM Renmark, 5AU Port Augusta).

Consolidated Broadcasting System (6PM Perth, 6AM Northam, 6GE Geraldton, 6KG Kalgoorlie).

Tasmanian Broadcasting Network (7AD Devonport, 7BU Burnie, 7SD Scottsdale).

Networks now are shadows of their former past greatness, at least in programming terms. There is little attempt here, as there still is in America, to use personalities on a continuing nationwide basis. Consequently all the 'big' names in music, sport (except racing), talk-back and news, are well known within the signal area of their individual stations, but relatively unknown elsewhere. Why, is somewhat of a mystery.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Voice of Authority

Most individual activity, ultimately, is traceable and accountable to, and takes its flavour from, the organizations or disciplines within which people earn their substance.

Commercial radio has been subject to regulation by the Postmaster-General, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting, the Broadcasting Control Board.

The Board came into being in March 1949 and it was to be the new overseer. It was welcomed, guardedly, by one of the overseen, the Federation of Australian Commercial Broadcasters for two reasons: it appeared to remove radio from the quixotic hands of politicians; it provided a technical and philosophical reference for charting the future course of the medium.

Apart from ensuring that stations provide proper facilities, the principal functions of the Board, as defined by the Broadcasting and Television Act 1942-72, are to see that there are 'adequate and comprehensive' programmes, to determine programme and advertising standards, to make recommendations to the Minister about the granting, renewal, revoking or suspension of any licences.

Under what conditions this last authority would be exercised – apart from what happened in wartime – has long been cause for contemplation.

The Board, which from the outset, was expected 'to discharge its duties fearlessly' suffered, also from the outset, from one crippling deficiency, a precise definition of the extent of its powers and application of some sections of the Act under which the industry operates.

This was to be thrown up when a Melbourne television station last year breached Board requirements relating to Sunday morning programmes and went ahead with a videotaped football replay.

As a result, a 'full-scale, detailed examination of all the Board's powers' was authorised by the government. (It is still proceeding, at time of writing.) It would seem clear, however, that it is the intention of the present government – through the new Minister for the Media – to strengthen the hand of the Board, especially in relation to observance of programme standards and increasing Australian content. At present when stations step out of line, and continue to stay out, there is doubt about the Board's capacity to do much about it, legally, apart from registering its disapproval and drawing the Minister's attention to the continued intransigence of the offender.

Even the Vincent Committee on Television in 1963, while expressing the view that the Board 'Could have discharged its obligations more adequately and effectively; should have abandoned its policy of "sweet reasonableness"; taken firmer action with the commercial stations' acknowledged the difficulties the Board faced in carrying out its responsibilities under the Act.

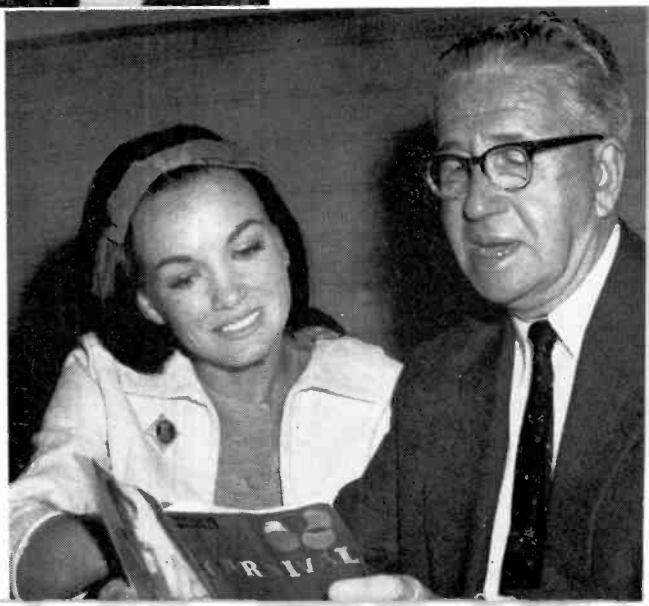
Under a Labour Government it can be assumed that the Board's powers will be clarified, possibly extended. In what manner will be known before this golden year of radio is over. At this stage, however, speculation leads to the tentative conclusion that the Ministry for Media could arrogate functions that might otherwise have been presumed to be within the Board's province. Duplications of purpose will become very real if the multiplying staff factor at present under way continues. With three bodies supervising the future it is quite on the cards that the whole business will become top-heavy. At a guess, it would seem that some sort of programme points system, similar to TV, will be introduced for radio. The radio stations are not happy at the prospect of being beholden to two masters who, in turn, may well go cross-eyed watching each other.

Meantime, it might reasonably be said that radio, generally, accepts the Board's edicts and requests with less rancor than some of the more intractable tycoons of television. It could also be argued that the Board has been more pre-occupied with television in the last few years than with the older electronic media. There

The great Tub-thumper, Eric Baume, who was heard regularly for more than a quarter of a century over Australian stations

The ravages of illness are beginning to show in the face of Jack Davey in 1958. On Davey's right Terry Dear and left Bob Dyer and Keith Walsh

1956 saw the beginning of television and also 3UZ's Nicky and off-sider, Graham Kennedy – top of the broadcast polls



John Dunne, one of the early 'greats' of the business, talks with Patricia Moore, star of Carnival

is, for instance, scant evidence of much research into the social impact of radio – an area which falls within its charter.

However, when the Senate Standing Committee on Education, Science and the Arts, which is inquiring into 'all aspects of broadcasting and television', completes its investigations, fresh directives may be issued by the Minister for the Media to explore this field in greater depth.

There are three fulltime members of the Board and two part-time. The Chairman, Myles Fortunatus Evelyn Wright, is a former journalist, actor and station manager. Its headquarters are Melbourne and there are offices in all capital cities. The head office organization is split into four divisions – the Secretary's Division, the Policy and Licensing Division, the Technical Services Division and the Programme Services Division. In all 206 people are employed by the Board. It now costs about $2¾ million a year to run.

On the practical side, Board reports, chart in fine detail the economic and general factors that impinge on the radio industry. Among them financial results of broadcasting services (mentioned elsewhere), statistics on licences, government revenue from stations, employment, changes in ownership, hours of broadcast, programme and technical developments, relations with stations, tracking down interference sources, analyses of programming, broadcasting of objectionable matter and other matters are included in the annual accounting; formerly to the PMG, now to the Minister for the Media.

Radio stations, it might be noted, now have to pay an annual basic fee of $200 and are obliged to pay the Treasury, fees ranging from 1½ per cent of gross revenue up to $1 million a year to 4½ per cent on gross earnings exceeding $4 million. In the year to June 1972 these fees amounted to nearly $500,000.

The Board also polices the structuring of station management. The Act lays down that 'a person shall not have a prescribed interest (a shareholding or voting interest in excess of 15 per cent, held directly or indirectly) in more than one metropolitan commercial broadcasting station in any state; more than four metropolitan commercial broadcasting stations in Australia; more than four commercial broadcasting stations in any one state; or more than eight commercial broadcasting stations in Australia'.

The ceiling is thus eight stations. Companies which have reach-

ed their limit include AWA (8), VBN (8), *Herald & Weekly Times* (10). This latter anomaly is due to the fact that the *Herald* held 'a prescribed interest' in these stations before the revised statute of limitations became law in 1968. Nevertheless, it has had the effect of preventing too many aggregations of power in too few hands.

While stations might sometimes challenge the Board's authority in other directions there is rarely any quibble with directives about advertising. For instance a liquor commercial implying that the product could be used for weight reducing, a stuttering voice for a foodstuff which was considered unnecessarily irritating to listeners with speech impediments, a clothing advertisement with a scriptural text, copy for an entertainment centre presented in the form of a news item, were withdrawn or re-written at Board behest.

In the main, radio gets along well with the Board but it could legitimately be said that any extension of its writ to dictate, in particular, programming content would be viewed with apprehension. The public, says radio, by free and unfettered distribution of its preferences, is a far better judge of programming than any arbitrary authority.

But the public, says the Board – by implication, anyway – is not always able to judge properly if its range of choice is limited by the unvarying nature of that programming.

A lead to Board thinking can be taken from the remarks of Myles Wright not long after he took over the chair. In referring to 'our unfortunate name', he added that, 'I wish we were the Australian Broadcasting Development Board because that . . . is what we should be . . . that . . . I hope is what we may be. Not that I want us to become involved directly with programming but I should like to see us able to more actively encourage experimentation and development in programme fields'.

And that might just be the way radio alters course in its next half century.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

United they Stand

In 1929 B-class stations in both Sydney and Melbourne were canvassing the desirability of forming an association to 'deal unitedly with the Australian Performing Rights Association (APRA) and Radio Telegraphists' Union matters'. As a matter of record, stations in Sydney and Melbourne decided that year to offer APRA £7 a week each for royalty payments, 'there being no extra payment for extra hours of broadcast'.

Music, as already noted, has produced more disharmony than any other form of programming.

Stations in 1930 got into holts with the D'Oyley Carte Company which was claiming that J. C. Williamson held exclusive rights for all Gilbert & Sullivan operas and that while APRA had no authority to grant permission for any of these works to be played it had power to 'prevent them being performed'. (Which is as fine a circular argument as you could find.)

APRA accepted the copyright fee but restricted use of music to sixty-six hours a week; to be increased proportionately if hours, in turn, were increased.

The music 'crisis' really hastened the setting up of the Australian Federation of Commercial Broadcasting Stations (AFCBS) in 1930 — changed in 1962 to the Federation of Australian Commercial Broadcasters (FACB). Before this a working committee had been established under the chairmanship of Emil Voigt of 2KY, with A. E. Bennett of 2GB an executive member and W. J. Christie of 3DB honorary secretary. They set in motion the wheels that were to lead to the formation of the Federation proper. First elected

president was M. B. Duffy of 3KZ, Thorold Fink of 3DB was vice-president and Mr G. L. Chilvers, a Sydney accountant, secretary.

'It was soon realized', said Alf Paddison (president 1944-46), 'that it had to be a Federation making concessions to the political and religious backgrounds of some of its members. Stations included representatives of the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, Jehovah's Witnesses, two Trades and Labour councils, one licence issued to the Nationalist Party, while others were affiliated with the newly-established Country Party'. The first convention was held in 1931 when there were twenty-seven commercial stations operating. Membership hit the century mark in 1940. It is now up to one hundred and eighteen.

There are three distinct phases in Federation history: the formative period of the thirties, during and after the war up till the television era, and the post-TV period to now.

Some names stand out above others in their contribution to the drive, direction and achievement of the industry. Melbourne's Dave Worrall, Maurice Duffy and Oliver J. Nilsen; Sydney's A. E. Bennett, C. V. Stevenson, Oswald Anderson, Frank Marden; and Adelaide's Alec Holtz all combined to be the figures in the early thirties, laying the foundations for what was to become a totally-embracing industry organization.

Marden had been managing the company which provided the national stations with programmes in the late twenties, went to 2UW, and played a key role in formulating standards of broadcast practice and helping keep politicians at bay.

Early decisions included the introduction of a set of Standards of Practice and Code of Ethics designed to rid the air of advertising excesses, and to regulate content on a national basis to prevent any fraudulent or offensive material getting to air. This also embraced keeping watch on those advertisers who were given to making derogatory remarks about their competitors.

About 1935 the Federation grew restless with PMG control, indeed at one stage a move was made to have commercial broadcasting placed under the authority of the Prime Minister's Department. There was strong feeling that as the PMG's Department controlled their competitors – the Australian Broadcasting Commission – and 'one does not usually have one's business under the same control as one's largest competitor', it was time for

administration of commercial radio to be removed from joint authority.

There was an internal crisis in 1936 when it seemed the Federation might split in two. New South Wales stations threatened to go it alone because of a dispute about agency commission. Sydney, at that stage, was paying 15 per cent commission, the others 10 per cent. So what happened? A compromise agreement, after a good deal of wrangling, at 12½ per cent. Press, television, out door are still at 10 per cent, some magazines 15 and a few journals at 20.

In 1937, the Federation resolved to press for the appointment of a three-man Board to regulate the commercial system — a technical member from the PMG, a nominee of commercial radio, and a chairman 'of legal training'. Such a Board would issue new licences, revise existing licences, fix wavelengths and power, make necessary regulations and rule on disputes. (Twelve years later the Control Board was set up, although not quite of the form, constitution and power as the Federation might have wished in the thirties.)

In 1938 President Worrall was telling the Federation convention that while 'we are content to let the government act as a traffic cop . . . it would be a retrograde step if ever the government should decide that it must tell us just what kind of entertainment we must provide'.

AWA's Viv Brooker, 2KO's Allan Fairhall (subsequently a Federal Minister), 2UE's Paddy Campbell-Jones, 4BH's Charlie Carson, 3UZ's A. N. Kemsley, 5DN's Joe Larkin, 6IX's Bryn Samuel now loomed large on the scene; together with Ray Dooley, the Federation Secretary, who also bore much of the brunt of cross-questioning at Standing Committee enquiries.

Wartime, because of the many demands for free time from the Government, many stations went into the red. But the Federation was eventually able to gain agreement to payment at half card rates. Perhaps that was partly due to the way the commercial stations rallied to the treasurer's cause when he was worried about the success of a War Loan. The Federation on Anzac Day 1942 organized an all-day, all-stations appeal and at close-down that night more than £2 million, mostly in small amounts, had been subscribed.

'Mr Chifley never forgot what we did on that occasion' . . .

In 1943 President Fairhall told of how the Federation battled it out with the government when it attempted to virtually eliminate all advertising for patent medicines. 'The regulations were disallowed by Parliament'.

Since the war it has been estimated that, collectively, the Federation stations have raised an average of $2 million a year in social, charitable and community causes.

The Federation as it is now constituted is an unregistered trade association dedicated to protecting, defending and serving the rights and interests of commercial broadcasters. Membership is voluntary and finance for its operational and administrative machinery is geared to the advertising rates charged by participating stations. It is not without significance that every station in Australia has elected to join. There is a president, senior vice-president, and country vice-president.

The top steering body is the Federal Council elected by annual convention and at present consisting of twelve members drawn from all States. Responsible to Council are fourteen committees and sub-committees which work on a wide range of industry activities. These include such matters as copyright, industrial relations, accreditation of agencies, engineering and government relations. Each state has its own committee under a separate Chairman.

Executive authority rests with a permanent Federal Director, at present D. L. Foster and secretary F. T. Cross.

Besides the standards and procedures laid down by the Broadcasting Control Board relating to both programmes and advertising which contain about sixty different clauses, and the special provisions relating to medical advertising which are issued by the Director-General of Health, the Federation itself has its own Standards of Broadcasting Practice covering some seventeen different articles relating to procedural, ethical and mechanical aspects of broadcasting.

Stations are accountable to the Board in practically all spheres of their activity, including money, morals and manners. With advertising material for instance, some of the proscriptions are:

> Statements mentioning royalty or any local or overseas personality in a derogatory manner, other than advertising placed

on behalf of a publisher concerning any article in a publication.

Matter of such nature which would tend to destroy public confidence or create any feeling of insecurity in the community.

Disturbing or annoying material such as blatant sound effects, persistent repetition, and words and phrases implying emergency.

Dramatized 'testimonials' inferring that the testimonial is being broadcast by the person who wrote it.

The simulated voice of a real person unless such a person has given written permission for the simulation.

Testimonials which do not reflect the genuine experience or opinion of a competent witness.

In 1960 the Federation decided to set up the Australian Radio Advertising Bureau (ARAB) as a research and promotional division.

ARAB's main functions are set down as 'undertaking research designed to inform on the value of using radio as a principal advertising medium; to provide all stations with statistics and sales aids; to inform member stations of details of successful campaign and promotional ideas; design sales plans for specialised groups; provide speakers to talk to representative buying groups; to promote radio creativity by involving advertising agency personnel in seminars and other activities'. Bob Logie and John Finlayson head up the division as co-directors.

It was not long before it began producing statistical analyses, collating facts and figures, making presentations to industry groups and individual advertisers, publishing documents and organizing creative clinics.

In 1961, for instance, it was to say that between 1952 and 1960 radio had added, on a five capital-city average, nearly a million new listeners to the breakfast session, nearly six hundred thousand to the morning session, three hundred and fifty thousand midday, ninety thousand afternoon, two hundred and thirty thousand at night.

Yearly publication of *Radio Fact & Figures* gives such information as total radio listening, production figures, dimensions of the car and portable radio markets, reach and frequency studies (ie the number of people reached by radio commercials and for how many times over a given period), comparative studies demonstrating the effectiveness of radio commercials vis-a-vis print and TV.

In this context ARAB has claimed that within a standard programming format – with 'paired' commercials – radio can generate a more positive 'interest' response than TV and with greater 'compatability'; can achieve a 'strength of impression similar to that of a TV commercial of comparable quality' and can influence a change in brand preference as effectively as television.

While other media are often a bit put out about ARAB few would dispute that it has set the pace in promotional activity. Certainly it is well ahead of television and has a more total industry-conscious span than print where there is a good deal of churlish infighting – especially in Sydney.

In more recent times the Federation has been fortunate to have been actively served by such men as Jack Ridley, Bert Button, Bob Hynes, Lewis Bennett, Norman Balmer, Allan Faulkner and executive officers like Barry Dargaville, Lloyd Sommerlad and Des Foster.

The way the expected knock-out blow of television was cushioned is testimony to the ability of such men to think fast on their feet, return the attack and come out, at least, even on points.

The post-TV story may be summarized by the economic profile in the chapter to follow.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Profit and Loss

Figures do not lie, at least in so far as they chart the financial progress of an organization or industry subject to government accounting.

Television began in late 1956.

Returns of commercial broadcasting stations as issued by the Broadcasting Control Board run as under:

Year	Number of Stations in Operation	Total Revenue in Pounds	Net Result Profit in Pounds
1953-54	106	5,647,494	1,060,260
1954-55	106	6,686,924	1,434,093
1955-56	107	7,382,476	1,511,682
1956-57	108	7,457,155	1,498,525
1957-58	108	8,547,724	1,975,644
1958-59	108	9,475,265	2,372,348
1959-60	108	10,251,345	2,594,348

It will be seen that while the growth rate in revenue and profit was retarded in television's first year, there were no adverse effects in the ensuing year. Even the drop in profits in 1956-57 could be attributed to the extra money stations spent on promotion.

Since then, radio has continued on its buoyant way. In 1970-71 revenue passed the $40 million mark and net profit was just under $11 million.

Latest figures for 1971-72 show revenue from one hundred and eighteen stations at $45¾ million and profit $11,717,522. Nineteen stations showed a loss.

For the calendar year 1960 an analysis of media expenditure in the five principal media (Print, TV, Radio, Outdoor, Cinema) showed radio with 8.1 per cent of the total.

By 1971 radio's percentage had risen to 10 per cent. Last year the figure was still 10 per cent (5.9 metropolitan, 4.1 country).

They are the facts of the matter. What of the philosophy that guided the medium through what had been assumed by many to be dangerous, even deadly, currents? Actually, a very simple idea – the medium would make more use of its two greatest single strengths: immediacy and intimacy.

Instead of trying to fight television in areas where a camera held palpable advantage over a voice – let that voice concentrate on areas where an inquisitive lens could not penetrate – the world of the mind, the world of ideas that could be sparked by sound.

Music, news, sport – these were to become the pillars of renewed radio strength, the weapons with which radio was not only to fight back against the threatening electronic intruder but virtually remain unchallenged in domains of its own choosing.

The radio announcer, who once read only what was put in front of him – which, of course, represented the writings of others – now became the disc jockey, or talk-horse riding free, bringing into play his own personality traits, speaking to an audience not as an assembled mass, but as individuals.

In following these new directions it was a happy coincidence that the transistor was around to provide a practical base for this 'you-me' rapport. It gave radio not only portability but a personal sense of proprietorship and importance. And instead of being confined to the living room it spread everywhere – into bedroom, kitchen, study, car, beach, bush.

'Wherever you go, there's radio' said a joint industry campaign in 1958, to publicise the first Australian-wide Radio Week. Later, a commercial specially written and recorded for another radio promotion ran like this:

Voice 1: The way I understand it, this person came into your house and stole all of your radios?

Voice 2: Every radio I had to my name.
Voice 1: Mmm. Including transistors?
Voice 2: Yes, well he left me one earplug, I'll say that for him.
Voice 1: Did he take anything else?
Voice 2: Just the radios. And a couple of pieces of fruit. I don't deny him the fruit.
Voice 1: Are you and your husband going to replace the radios?
Voice 2: Well, we'll have to. Arthur is late for work because he has no radio to keep reminding him of the time and traffic conditions. I have nothing to keep me company while I work around the house.
Voice 1: I can imagine.
Voice 2: We have a ten-room house. We had a radio in every room.
Voice 1: Then he stole all ten radios.
Voice 2: Eleven.
Voice 1: Eleven?
Voice 2: He also stole the car.
Jingle: Who listens to radio,
Only ten million six hundred thousand people, that's all.

Four years after the start of TV – in 1960 – radio was maintaining a surprising number of familiar programmes. Life with Dexter, Winner Take All, Cop-the-Lot, Leave it to the Girls, Quizz Kids, Hopalong Cassidy, General Motors Hour, Smoky Dawson were still part of the evening line-up. Daytime serials like Aunt Jenny, Portia, Big Brother, Life can be Beautiful, Martin's Corner, This Man is Mine were still running their breathless course.

Barry Jones was pursuing his profitable way as quizz king, the richer by an estimated £30,000. Mrs Leah Andrews, having racked up some £8,000 in prizes, was the queen of that esoteric realm.

But by 1965, most of the old names had gone. Information Please, born 1938, was virtually the sole representative in the national quizz field; D24 in drama. World Famous Tenors, now hoary with age, was still spinning on. Andrea was chatting away, John Laws was big on the scene; Doctor Paul was ministering to the needy in the morning – almost a lone survivor in the heart-balm field.

A shock-haired young man named Graham Kennedy, who had

worked as offsider to 3UZ's Nicky at £3 a week, followed the siren call of television at a time when he was earning £45 a week on radio and an extra £6 a night for compering In Melbourne Tonight. Of Nicky he said 'he made you feel you were taking part in intimate but nice eavesdropping'.

The deejays were going at it hammer and gongs.

Formation of ARAB (The Australian Radio Advertising Bureau) in 1960 added more power to the growing persuasiveness — and sales success — of the medium. Intelligible statistics were brought into play. In 1961 it was shown that of an estimated 10.4 million people, there were 6.5 million radio receivers in 2.9 million homes — compared with 1.4 million television sets and total sales of all daily newspapers of 3.6 million.

Mantel, table and console radio receivers were top sellers in 1956 — some 40 per cent of the total. In 1960, 41 per cent were portable, 26 per cent car radios, only 19 per cent mantels, tables and consoles. 'The emphasis', said ARAB, 'is now towards outdoor listening and indoor one-person audiences'.

By 1965, there were more than eight million working radio sets in Australia. In 1963-64 more radios were sold than in any other period in broadcasting history — a mammoth 711,210.

In the five years to October 1964 1,374,581 portables were purchased, and 56 per cent of cars were radio equipped.

In 1973 there were more than eleven million working sets in operation. Previous year's production was in excess of seven hundred and fifty thousand — of this, more than six hundred thousand portable — plus more than three hundred thousand imported. This latter figure did not include transistors brought in by travellers. In other words, a million-a-year market, a remarkable achievement for an industry that was assumed would receive the kiss of death after TV went into top gear.

Car radio production was sufficient to equip 75 per cent of all new vehicles sold. Of all the people listening between 4 pm and 7 pm more than one in four is listening to a car radio.

The figures clearly indicate that radio is 'on the move', a constant switched-on companion, a medium, in a real sense, that goes everywhere. This very mobility and ease of access at home, at work, at play, outdoor — a sort of restless urgency and energy — rubbed off on presentation techniques. 'Keep it moving' has been the basic

philosophy of programme formating. And it seems to have paid off.

Over-all, between early morning and midnight, almost nine people in ten listen to commercial radio some time during the week. That figure breaks down into fluctuating patterns at different times, with different audience characteristics for each station by age and socio-economic grouping.

In 1940 the top-spending radio advertisers would probably have been Colgate, Unilever, Nicholas, Cadbury, Rosella, Ponds, the oil companies, Black & White cigarettes, Kellogg, Carter's Little Liver Pills, Nestle, Bushell's and Woolworths. Apart from Thompson and Patterson the agencies using radio extensively included Goldberg, Hansen Rubensohn, Haysom, Nixon, Williams-McFerran (Bill McFerran, in sight of ninety, is possibly the oldest advertising man still around), Richardson-Cox, Mooney-Webb, Weston and Paton. Ten years later many of the same product names were still in evidence; plus Heinz, MacRobertson, Wrigley, Hoover and Dunlop.

Clemenger, Lintas, Rickard, Mooney, USP, Hawkins, O'Brien, Warwick and Aldwych joined the big-league radio agency band.

Today it is possible that Hansen Rubensohn-McCann Erickson outranks Thompson and Patterson as the biggest spenders in radio; with new names like Berry Currie, Burnett, Compton, Hertz-Walpole, SPASM, well identified in the medium.

The big advertisers — by product — are Coca Cola, Aspro/Vincent, Bank of New South Wales, Commonwealth Bank, Woolworth, Petersville, the top cigarette brands, Carlton and United, Eta, Avis, Levi Strauss, Ansett, Eveready, Kellogg, Samuel Taylor still sticking to a good thing for Mortein, and other lines.

In 1961, word count for commercials was changed to time count, thirty seconds equalling, approximately, sixty-five words. Today, the average for the same time is about seventy-five words.

More than 90 per cent of time sold would be in spots, ranging from ten seconds to sixty seconds. Breakfast till 9 am is the premium time zone throughout the land. Outside that, stations split their costings differently, but generally with morning and drive-time regarded as the next most saleable, afternoon and night at the lower end of the revenue spectrum. Most stations too, promote package sales to give their 'discounted' areas some spread of commercial identification.

Allied to station promotions which have become a key part of radio's selling strategy in the last decade these 'saturations', as they are commonly called, have enabled the industry to give reasonable balance to station cost structures. Today, on an all-Australia basis, national advertising would represent about 52 per cent of total income and local 48 per cent; not all that different from ten years ago.

By product category, foodstuffs (including soft drinks) are by far the biggest investor, followed by motor vehicles and accessories (including tyre, petrol, etc), pharmaceuticals, household equipment, smoking, liquor, finance and insurance, travel and tours, wearing apparel and women's toiletries.

Nine out of ten commercials are supplied by agencies, and nine out of ten are recorded, mostly on tape, some on disc. Many stations, however, transfer them to cartridges so they can be integrated into consolidated programme segments. In doing that, stations can adjust varying levels that are inherent in production from different recording houses. This means that the 'sound' from any one station can be held reasonably uniform.

Unhappily, many agencies – and advertisers – still follow the fancy that sound tracks from TV commercials will be adequate for radio's purpose. Very often this is just not so. Furthermore, there is a continuing addiction to the belief that if you are on radio you must sing your commercial. Half the wild sounds today are incomprehensible. No matter how good the melody might be, if the lyric does not communicate the essential selling message the major point of the exercise is lost. Why people with functional products that require down-to-earth, reason-why copy (like tools, milking machines, car accessories, home appliances etc) persist in warbling on their waffling way is one of the conundrums of the business. Attempts at humour, too, largely misfire because of the acute shortage of comic writers and comedians.

In general, it might be said that radio commercials fall far short of required professional standards, possibly because of agency reluctance – or inability – to recognise the singularity of unadorned sound.

For an industry, that in 1980 expects to be billing about $75 million, it seems high time that the radio commercial was given the undivided creative attention it deserves.

In general the average listener in metropolitan markets spends more than three hours a day listening to radio, national and commercial. Compared to 1965, listening has increased by half an hour per average person per day. Overwhelmingly, in city, town, and country this is to commercial radio.

The characteristics of the audience have, in turn, dictated selective programming, with different stations aiming at different age groups. While commercial stations move within a narrower frame than the ABC it is not difficult to concede that there is something for everyone in radio today: providing you like to take the trouble to find out what's on and when.

Nevertheless, it is clearly demonstrable that the ABC caters for more sophisticated tastes than do the commercials. The Control Board evidently regards this as an adequate counter-balance to the criticism that commercial stations do not offer a sufficient range of entertainment.

In 're-stating . . . that commercial broadcasting stations have to provide programming in a form which will attract an audience of sufficient size to ensure that income from the sale of time for advertising is adequate' the Board goes on to observe that 'in general, information available . . . suggests that the dual system of national and commercial stations is successful in meeting most listeners' requirements'.

What would happen without that duality, of course, is a different tin of tintinnabulation!

CHAPTER NINETEEN

The Magic of Sound

It's not all this simple, but in answer to the question, 'How does radio work?', might come this condensed reply:

> You have a microphone in a studio, a fixed outside location or a moving vehicle – an aeroplane or boat if you like. Sound waves are generated by voice, music, effects.

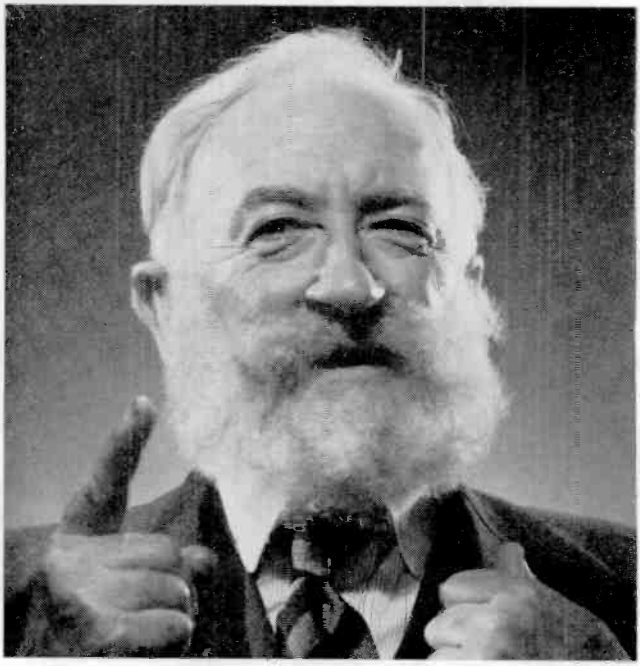
Since the principle of radio transmission is electrical ('electromagnetic energy distributed without conducting wires') it is necessary to change the sound produced by the various types of input into an electrical equivalent. This is done by the microphone which picks up sound and changes it into electrical currents. These are amplified and controlled by automatic 'gain controllers' in the Studio Control Room. They are then fed over a PMG landline to the station transmitter for radiation.

What is called a 'carrier' wave is generated by the station transmitter carrying the programme spatially to the listener's receiver. Changing the form of the signal back to that of the original transmission is called detection or de-modulation. The carrier is discarded, its audio content amplified and fed to the loud speaker. The loud speaker reverses the process of the microphone and transforms the electrical currents into coherent sound, identical with that at the other end.

Simpler still: station engineers 'take the minute sound waves of voices and music, convert them into electrical energy, multiply them, adapt them, correct them and finally superimpose them on

John Dease and one of the early panels of the 'Quiz Kids'

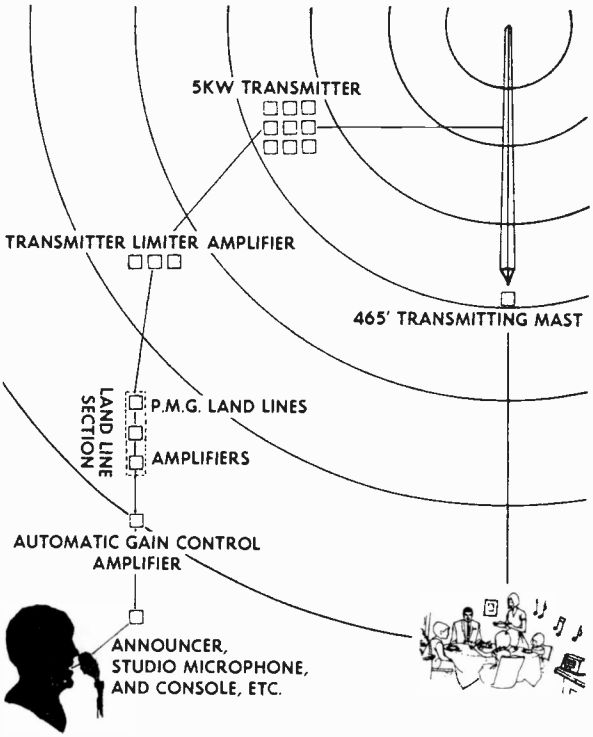
Dick Fair, appearing as guest on Australia's Amateur Hour with Terry Dear and John Tuttle. He hosted the show before Terry



George Edwards as Dad of Dad & Dave, gave his views on 'What I think of the news' on several stations throughout Australia

Mal Verco with his famous doll 'Ginger'

the carrier wave'. Switch on, and the receiver 'responds in sympathy' to everything happening at the point of intake.



The carrier wave, of course, goes on its merry way so that other people can tap its contents, too. It keeps going until its strength begins to fade. Its potential distance varies according to the station's frequency or wave-length, type of soil over which it travels, and other mysterious forces of nature.

How is it that at night, for instance, you can pick up more stations than during daylight hours? The transmitter actually sends out two waves – one which follows the earth's curvature – (the ground wave) and the other which travels upwards (the sky wave) until it hits the ionosphere or Heaviside layer of the atmosphere.

During daylight the effect of the sun's rays is to increase the ionization of this layer to the point where radio waves at broadcasting frequencies are totally absorbed. After dark the ionization level falls – but does not disappear – and the waves are bent back

to earth, arriving at varying 'skip' distances from the station. The strength of the signal can vary from night to night according to the time of the year and other conditions. Station coverage, at least in primary terms, is thus better established in terms of the quality of reception of the ground wave.

With so many stations on air, how is a great jumble of over-lapping sound eliminated? The radio spectrum in the sky is divided into different bands. Stations are assigned certain frequencies within those bands. Each broadcasts on a wave of different length (there are long waves, medium waves, short waves). Domestic stations here use medium waves, Radio Australia uses short waves.

International agreements dictate the strict disciplines under which stations must operate. Such control is necessary because — except at the very highest or microwave frequencies — signals have no regard for national boundaries. Now, with satellite services being introduced even the microwaves have to be regulated. The nations of the world formulated the International Telecommunication Convention which regulates the use of frequencies, or wavelengths, interference avoidance measures, traffic acceptance and flow, charges for the various types of messages and administrative and technical matters. The radio regulations stem from this convention and, among other things, fix the maximum allowable 'drift' from the assigned channels. But to return to 'modulation' which now has added significance.

Modulation is the process by which the carrier wave is adjusted to the nature of the intelligence, or information, to be transmitted. At present radio is tied to a system called amplitude modulation or AM. TV 'sound' is frequency modulated, FM.

In lay terms AM means that the carrier waves vary in their strength according to the frequency and loudness of the material carried. With FM radio, also to be introduced in the next few years, the carrier stays at a constant level, modulation being accomplished by varying the frequency of the wave itself in accordance with the frequency and loudness of the programme material.

Because of the frequency variation FM requires a far greater band-width in which to operate. In other words, it uses up a lot more precious air space, in fact at least twenty times more than AM and therefore must use higher carrier frequencies — VHF or

UHF. These higher frequencies are not returned to earth from the ionosphere and only ground-wave type coverage is used for FM.

In effect, FM means the virtual elimination of any background noise or distortion at minimum or maximum volume, greater fidelity of sound, and constant range – day and night – unaffected by that troublesome or advantageous ionosphere.

FM, in terms of its use for radio, has been under discussion here for a quarter of a century. In the United States there are about two thousand five hundred FM stations in operation. Canada, most of Europe, including the UK, South Africa, Japan and several south-east Asian countries already have FM services. Some time after 1976 Australia will have its first FM stations.

Who will operate them, and on what basis, is still to be resolved.

After all the to-and-fro of ageing argument, an official inquiry into the desirability, or otherwise, of introducing FM radio was held in 1972. Seventy witnesses, over a hundred written submissions and wordy exhibits later, the Broadcasting Control Board gave the go-ahead for FM on the basis of national and commercial stations – and a new type of non-profit public broadcasting station – being developed in the ultra high frequency band.

A public service category was included because the Board believed that minority musical, educational and professional groups in the community would not be adequately catered for by proposed national or commercial broadcasting services.

With the commercial services it was not accepted that FM licences should necessarily go to existing AM operators, rather that diversity of ownership should be encouraged.

It is doubtful, however, that too many people will be all that anxious to come forward with the required folding money given (a) the allocation of all FM stations to the ultra high frequency band – the only place in the world where it is so placed – (b) the present absence of sets to receive such broadcasts, (c) the probability of limited sponsorship, (d) the relatively high cost of installation of facilities and new sets, and (e) poor profit prospects.

Estimates, by commercial interests, of building an FM station varied from $40,000 to $100,000; sets themselves from $20 to $45 more than AM receivers; sales of FM sets (based on the assumption of full duplication of AM services) about thirty thousand in Sydney after five years.

While the Board was quite firm in its belief that introduction of FM in the UHF band was 'wholly desirable' it appeared to make light of the likely support of advertisers, the inability of most listeners to 'fine-tune' their hearing apparatus to the subtleties of better sound, and the doubt of many (admittedly those interested in commercial radio) that FM was at all necessary.

Estimated capital costs of establishing an urban and regional national network of FM stations varied between $7 million and £24 million – according to where the stations were sited – the lowest figure based on co-siting with existing TV facilities.

Cost of maintaining a monaural or stereophonic service, or both combined, to metropolitan and regional areas according to an ABC estimate, spread from $750,000 a year to $1¼ million. One commercial station, 2CH, operated by AWA, estimated for two transmitters and seven translators for itself $389,000, plus site costs. If however, the licenses of all existing Sydney commercial stations shared costs and common facilities the cost to each could be reduced to $140,000.

The Control Board considered that 'a national FM service can be introduced to Australia for a very modest capital outlay (compared with the present outlay on national broadcasting and television services) and that operating costs will be very moderate'. This may be optimistic when considered with the costs of colour TV, scheduled for 1975, and the capacity of the community to pay for it all.

Planning and preparation of standards for FM are now under way. If events proceed smoothly 1976 will see the calling of applications for licences for the commercial and public stations. What happens from then on is in the hands of the parliamentary gods, the lords of commerce and the gentlemen in between at the ABC.

The general attitude of the FACB towards FM, as expressed at the enquiry, was that existing AM stations could provide FM programmes at much lower costs by duplication of transmissions and sharing of facilities and overheads than anyone starting from scratch. This, they hastened to add, did not imply that FM licences should go only to existing AM operators. (In the United States 75 per cent of AM stations have FM licences.)

Federation stations might be regarded as reluctant participants or each-way bettors – they neither want to be in it; nor out of it.

Some, however, see the introduction of FM as a delaying factor in facing up to a bigger problem; a wide-ranging examination of the need to examine the whole system of frequency allocations in light of developing broadcast demand.

It can clearly be argued, although present commercial stations are not all that keen on pursuing the argument, that vis-a-vis exploding population growths in the capital cities the virtual freezing of stations at their present levels (eg six in Sydney and Melbourne) is out of kilter with (a) U.S. trends and (b) the desirability of introducing other voices with fresh ideas.

It will take time. Nearly twenty years ago the Control Board acknowledged that additional stations in areas of rapidly increasing population was a matter for long-term planning. Since then urban conurbation populations have risen by three million or so. No new licences have been issued in capital cities. How long 'long-term' can stretch is as long as a piece of string. But it obviously does not mean that anything will be done in a hurry. FM has been under discussion for nearly thirty years.

Delays in decision, however, have not been the Board's fault. Over the years ministers in the PMG portfolio have been inclined to be very sluggish. In the United States, cities of comparable size to Melbourne and Sydney over twenty stations providing highly selective programming but covering a wide spectrum of interests.

The technical problems here, are enormous. The present crowded air has demands made upon it – apart from broadcasting stations – by ship and shore stations, aircraft and aeronautical stations, point-to-point services, land mobiles, radiobeacon, portable, experimental, direction finding, and 'special' licensed stations.

Directional aerial techniques (ie at the station transmitter), which help minimize radiation, therefore interference between stations sharing the same channel, have enabled seven new extra-metropolitan commercial stations to be licensed since 1965.

But, while directional aerials alleviate the problem of how to accommodate new stations, they do not solve it. Sooner or later the issue of additional licences in the big cities will have to be met.

But this time, reverse reasoning may apply: waiting for technology to catch up with demand.

CHAPTER TWENTY

How Many Listen?

Ratings – or who listens and looks to what and when – are both bane and benison to the air media. When you get a good rating it is all certitude, smiles and sunshine. When the opposite happens, disbelief, pain and panic.

Such is the power of public preference – as expressed in the surveys – that it has been observed that, if and when, the third world war breaks out, it will be called off within a few days if it does not hit top place as a viewing spectacle on the American networks.

Drawing a line through the fortunes of radio stations is like sky-writing on a windy day: fugitive outlines, rapidly dispersed, fleetingly registered. The mathematical problems are formidable, the philosophical implications varied.

Nevertheless trying to get a reasonably reliable base on which to make audience projections calls for more precise measuring rods than station opinion of superiority, listener protestations of loyalty, mail response to competitions and decorative but suspect coverage maps.

Research into radio listening started in the thirties. W. A. McNair was one of the first in the field. In 1936 he was writing that a worthwhile audience survey had to take note of four major considerations:

1. The potential audience, or the maximum number of listeners who could be reached . . . if all set owners within range could be induced to tune in. One important aspect of this subject is the

distribution of radio ownership both geographically and according to income groups . . .
2. The normal audience, in other words the number of receiving sets actually in use and the number and classification of listeners to those sets, hour by hour throughout the day . . . throughout the week . . .
3. The analysis of sets in use and listeners according to stations listened to . . .
4. The extent to which certain programmes . . . tend to raise a station's share of the total audience above its normal level . . .

Apart from the fact that being 'normal' is now exceptional the aims are still much the same. Only the methods have changed.

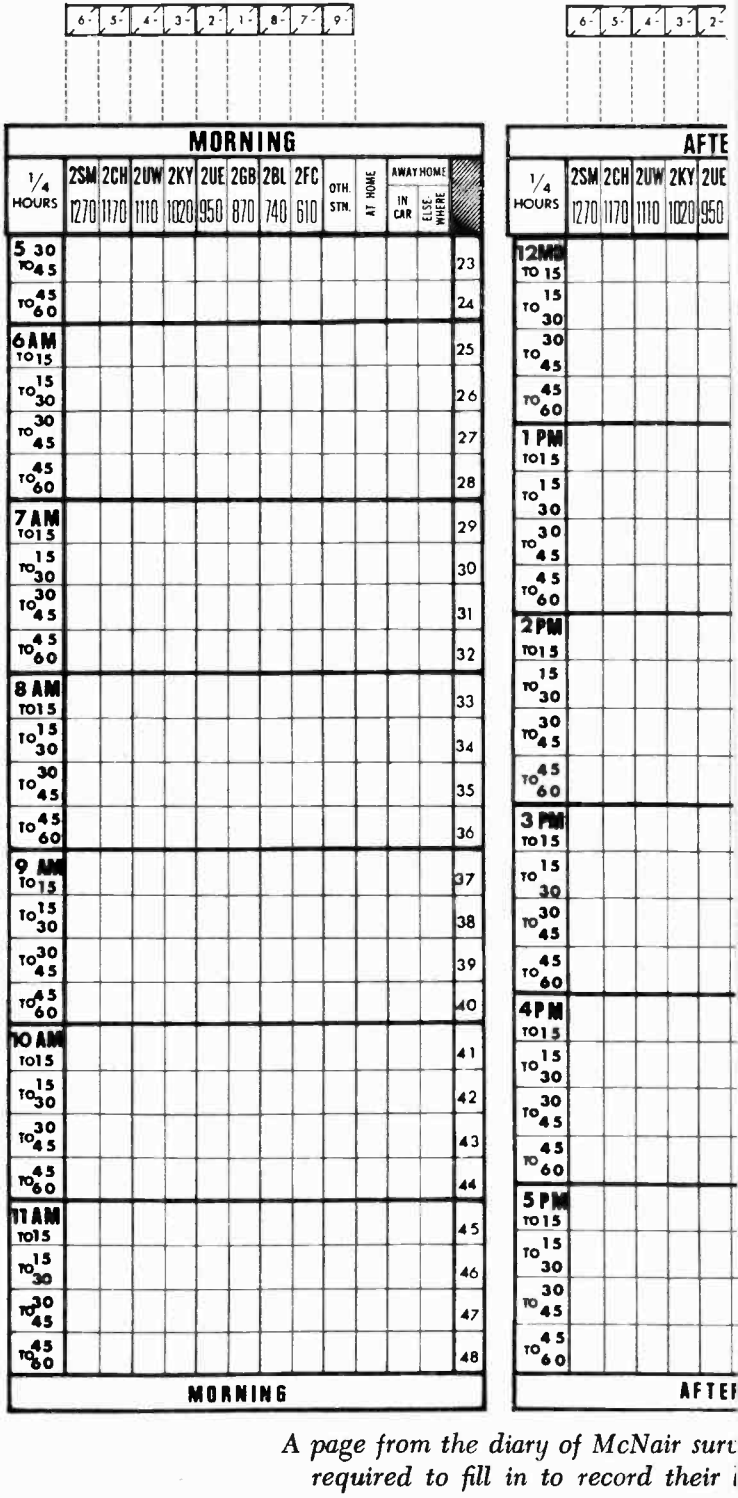
As all surveys can only 'sample' a small proportion of the 'universe' of potential listeners it is obvious that the composition of the part must relate as nearly as possible to the characteristics of the whole. The structuring of the sample is, thus, of prime importance in all testing. Errors of chance can be laid down, statistically – or so they say.

The theory is then, that a representative sample, faithfully recording its actual listening, honestly evaluated and correctly interpreted can throw up a reliable pattern of listening activity. 'Faithfully' is the key word.

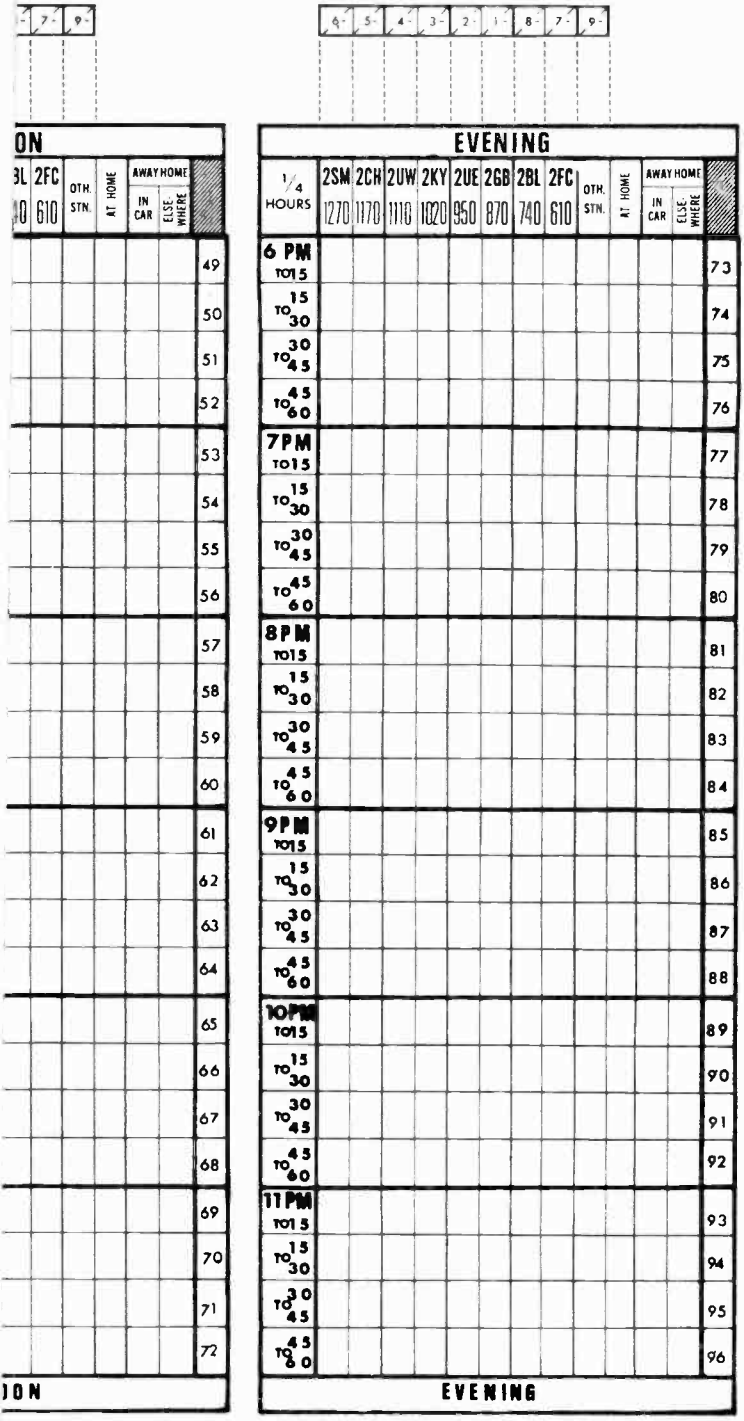
Using telephones, mailed questionnaires, house-to-house calls, schools, McNair carried out six separate investigations – all different in scope and method – between 1932 and 1936.

With commendable impartiality he acknowledged the deficiencies in each. Nevertheless he was able to adumbrate a reference frame that provided useful guidelines for stations, and advertisers of his agency: the best times of the day to advertise, the need to gear rates more realistically to audience size, the favourite personalities and programmes of the day, the degree to which habit influenced the selection of the station, alternatively the percentage of people who 'shopped' around until they came upon a programme they liked, the extent to which they first consulted printed programme guides.

Although the 1932 test related to only two hundred housewives – and interesting now only as historical record – 'favourite commercial stations showed up as 2GB first, followed closely by 2KY,



A page from the diary of McNair surv
required to fill in to record their



showing the squares respondents are
ening from 5.30 am to 12 midnight.

a big drop to 2UW, 2CH, 2UE (all close) and then another long way down, 2SM.

In 1934 the order, including the nationals ran: 2BL closely followed by 2GB. Then a big drop to 2FC, 2UE, 2UW, and a further big drop to 2CH, 2KY, 2SM.

And in 1936, the ten favourite Sydney radio personalities emerged as George Edwards (overwhelmingly the biggest name), followed by Jack Davey, John Dunne, John Harper, Gladys Moncrieff, Jack Lumsdaine, Captain Stevens (the storyteller), Si Meredith, Frank Hatherley and Charles Lawrence.

Bill McNair was then with J. Walter Thompson agency. His research unit operated semi-independently from 1944 until 1952 when he went out on his own to form The McNair Survey. It is now identified not only with radio but television, print, marketing and advertising research in many fields.

McNair is one of the big names in audience measurement today. The other is Anderson.

In 1944 George Anderson, then with 2GB Sydney, undertook a survey for the Macquarie network. After considering the merits and demerits of the various survey methods — mail response, questionnaire, telephone, listener panel, automatic recording devices and personal interviews — Anderson opted for the last-named. At the time he explained that because 'the sample can always be truly representative of the whole . . . it is the best method of gauging the effectiveness of advertising. Information can be obtained speedily. Using aided recall, ie printed radio programmes, the main disadvantage of the personal interview method — the memory loss factor — is reduced to such small proportions as not to affect the degree of accuracy required for commercial purposes'.

He suggested that questionnaires and listener panels might also be used for supplementary or special research 'for there is no one standard perfect method of radio audience measurement capable of covering every type of investigation, nor is there ever likely to be one'.

Anderson suggested that of the three socio-economic classes of radio homes in Sydney, 15 per cent represented the upper class (wealthy and well-to-do people, business executives, professional men, senior public servants); 40 per cent middle class (junior

business and professional men, salaried public servants, clerks, salesmen, skilled artisans, etc.); and 45 per cent industrial class (factory hands, semi-skilled and unskilled workers, shop assistants, pensioners, etc.) And so, in the second two weeks of February 1944, over fourteen consecutive days, Anderson undertook an investigation of Sydney listening habits, claimed to be 'the most exhaustive ever'.

The metropolitan area with three hundred and three thousand radio-equipped homes was divided into twelve zones, one trained interviewer to each zone completed twenty-two interviews each day. The 'class' structuring was based on locality and type of residence. The sampling itself was random. The total useable sample was in excess of three thousand five hundred radio homes.

Anderson's findings covered sets in use Monday to Thursday, with separate graphs for Friday, Saturday, Sunday; that is the total available radio audience.

Then a breakdown of 'programme circulations' which showed, in order, that the ten most popular programmes of those days were The Amateur Hour (programme circulation one hundred and fifty-nine thousand homes), Mrs 'Obbs (one hundred and twenty-two thousand), First Light Fraser (one hundred and twenty-two thousand), Calling The Stars (one hundred and one thousand), Hit Tunes of the Hour (ninety-eight thousand), Lux Radio Theatre (ninety-eight thousand), Rise and Shine (ninety thousand), Martin's Corner (eighty-seven thousand), Digger Hales' Daughters (eighty-six thousand) Macquarie Radio Theatre (eighty-five thousand).

It is noteworthy that eight of the top ten were handled either by the J. Walter Thompson or George Patterson agencies; testimony, indeed, of the strength, astuteness, or what you will of the big two. Only three of the leading programmes were not on 2GB.

From this first study emerged the Anderson Analysis of today – at present the 'official' audience taster for commercial radio.

In 1947, on a national basis, the top night programmes were The Amateur Hour, Protex Show, Calling the Stars, Palmolive Holiday, Cashmere Bouquet Show, Colgate Cavalcade, Martins Corner, Quiz Kids, When a Girl Marries, Lux Radio Theatre. By day, Crossroads of Life and Mary Livingstone MD were the

most aqueous of the washboard weepers. Ratings of 70 per cent of all sets, with regular audiences in excess of two million people, were not unusual.

In 1948 the top three stations in Sydney were, in order, 2UE, 2UW, 2GB. In Melbourne, 3DB, 3KZ, 3AW; Brisbane, 4BC, 4BK, 4QG; Adelaide, 5AD, 5KA, 5DN; Perth, 6IX, 6PM, 6PR; Hobart, 7HT, 7HO, 7ZL; Newcastle, 2KO, 2HD, 2NA.

For a time both Anderson and McNair were employed by stations operating collectively to supply survey material – alternating through the year. In 1972, after tenders were called and four tenderers submitted quotations, the Federation stations decided to use Anderson exclusively for a two-year period 1973-1974.

The decision led to some heartburning and back-biting.

Both organizations, basically, work to the same system, in that diaries are placed in what is considered to be an adequate cross section of homes that are properly representative of the personal and socio-economic characteristics of the surveyed area.

In Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth, Anderson conducts surveys over three ten-week periods during the year, two in Brisbane and Newcastle. McNair reports three times a year in Melbourne and Sydney, twice in Brisbane and Adelaide and once in Perth and Newcastle. The surveys are conducted over six-week periods.

Both Anderson and McNair sample a minimum of two thousand persons, ten years and over, in Melbourne and Sydney, one thousand seven hundred and fifty elsewhere for Anderson, one thousand five hundred for McNair.

Diary homes are required to keep a day-by-day record of their listening, place ticks in each quarter-hour time segment to register listening of not less than eight minutes at a stretch.

McNair has two extra columns to register 'in car' or 'elsewhere' listening.

The basic information supplied to subscribers is broken down into teenagers, men, women, housewives; age groupings of ten-plus, ten to seventeen, eighteen to twenty-four, twenty-five to thirty-nine, forty to fifty-four and fifty-five and over; average listening by quarter-hour segment, and cumulative (ie the number of *different* people who listen over extended periods of up to

one week). McNair also shows other characteristics of the housewife audience, such as working and non-working, with children or without.

Both Anderson and McNair can supply additional, but different, print-outs that enable the average and total audiences to be further refined: such as socio-economic status, occupation in various classifications, smokers or non-smokers, chattel ownership, reach and frequency, specific programme audience characteristics, even down to whether they own dogs or cats.

Over the years both surveys have come to be accepted by stations, advertisers, agencies and interested government instrumentalities as a reasonably reliable guide to the fluctuating fortunes of individual radio stations.

The question most asked about them is that with a restless station-switching audience that no longer reflects sustained listening to the old easily-identified 'name' programmes and with those 'ticks' representing eight minutes of listening or more, how can such post-listening checks adequately reflect the rapid ebb and flow of audience? In theory, for instance, anyone who tunes into a race, or a news service that only lasts three to five minutes and then switches off, is not recorded as a 'listener'.

Furthermore, the diaries are not easy to fill in, despite all the preliminaries, precautions and pre-selling about the need for accuracy and true-bill reporting. And, say some, the theory that listeners can be bothered about even filling in complicated forms immediately or shortly after listening is unsupported by any evidence other than questionable assurance or hopeful assumption.

It can also be argued that as it is more difficult to identify a station by a relatively unknown voice and a three-minute musical item (especially as many stations play virtually identical music) than it is by a longer variety or quiz programme, it follows that a danger exists of a listener's 'favourite' station getting that all-important 'tick'. Particularly with transistors, where separation is often by sound rather than observable tuning. Thus, it might be claimed that traditional 'front-runners' will hold an edge over those of less fortunate circumstance.

But despite the queries the surveys, often with quite dissimilar results, tend to give a continuing pattern of station

popularities that is more valid than individual opinions or unsubstantiated claims.

Nevertheless, in the view of some research men not engaged in keeping track of listeners, the possibilities of error are much larger than is admitted.

By the same score, stations count them as mosaic texts of unerring truthfulness, when the latest survey shows them in a position of saleable advantage.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

Out in the Country

Just as overseas tourists are told that you have to get out of the major seaboard cities to see the real Australia so too, might it be said that the relevance of radio to the community it serves is nowhere better seen than in the country.

Identification with the people and their institutions – economic and social – is positive, highly personal and mutually profitable. If anything, the town's radio station carries a cachet that not even the local paper can match; for whereas most country folk take a metropolitan paper as well as the local 'rag' listening is almost entirely confined to the hometown call-sign.

It was pressure from the country that hastened the separate development of the national and commercial services. It is significant too, that recent surveys show the preponderance of listening to the commercials.

In 1972 three representative regions in the western and southern tablelands of New South Wales, the northern area of Victoria and Murray divisions as far north as Deniliquin, and the Townsville/Maryborough divisions of Queensland covering four cities and seven major towns (total population spread of all three areas approximately three-quarters of a million people) were tested on listening habits over a typical two week period.

Results show that 99.7 per cent of country householders had a radio, 42.8 per cent had three or more sets. 88.2 per cent nominated the commercial operation as 'their local station'.

News, weather, market reports (strong with farmers), general

entertainment, sports, openline programmes, stock exchange information and emergency service calls ranked high in the scale of audience preferences.

But the history of country radio has some fascinating chapters, none more so than the early 'mobile' stations.

The first – known as the Great White Train – toured New South Wales in 1925-26. Over twelve months it visited more than one hundred towns and wherever it stopped AWA engineers ran up mast and aerial and station 2XT went on air with music and talk.

The next was 3YB (now settled at Warrnambool), but from 1931 it travelled the countryside on wheels, first as a bus and then as a train. The 'Y' came from the surname of Jack Young who originated the scheme and the 'B' from his hometown, Ballarat.

'Vic' Dinenny, one-time host of the Golden Age Hotel, Beaufort, was to develop the station. He sold the idea to some business acquaintances, formed a syndicate, talked a reluctant PMG's Department into granting a provisional three-months licence for a twenty-five watt station housed in two converted buses. There were two provisos: they must not go within a thirty mile radius of the five commercial stations then operating in Geelong, Ballarat, Bendigo, Hamilton and Wangaratta and stay at least two miles clear of other towns' post offices. The first broadcast came from Creswick in October 1931. Dinenny sold some advertising to a handful of national advertisers and some locals.

The make-ready wasn't all that easy: one bus was set up as a studio, with two turntables, record library with discs arranged in fourteen complete programmes, enough to cover fourteen broadcasts from 6 pm to 10 pm without repetition.

The transmitter bus carried all the technical gear, with a trailer containing the engine and alternator for power and light.

'In setting up for broadcast' records Dinenny, 'masts were erected one hundred and twenty feet apart with single wire aerial strung between. The vehicles placed beneath the aerial and counterpoise system carried insulators on the roof. Power was plugged in and the earth pin driven into previous salt-saturated

It worked all right and the licence was extended on a yearly ground'.

Eric Welch, race caller, boxing and wrestling broadcaster, quizz panelist on Information Please

One of Australia's longest running radio 'epics', the ABC's Village Glee Club. It ran for twenty-four years

The Colgate-Palmolive Radio Unit, circa the late 'forties

basis. But there were problems – the dismantling and re-erection took time and energy and in wet weather vehicles got bogged. And 'owing to guy lines the plant needed plenty of room to set up and this could only be found in open spaces'.

So, it was decided to switch to rail and arrangements were made in 1932 to use and re-fit a carriage once the home on wheels of Edward the Seventh when he visited this country as Duke of York.

3YB, in new guise, trundled on its vice-regal way; but its days were numbered. With new stations being granted licences in the country it was clear that 'mobility was no longer a proposition'.

Dinenny and his group wanted three fixed licences – and got two, Warrnambool and Warragul. 'The latter was originally offered as Wonthaggi but that centre lacked stability because it was supported by the State Coal Mine, and miners were always ready to go on strike at the drop of a hat'.

Indicative of doubts about the future of radio as a commercial proposition in those days was the fact that, at the insistence of the PMG, local residents were to be offered the chance to invest in the two proposed licences. 'All I could get', says Dinenny, 'were two promises – one for fifty pounds and the other for thirty – neither of which we accepted'.

Today 3UL and 3YB, subsequently bought out by the *Argus*, are now part of Associated Broadcasting Services which also controls 3SR Shepparton and 3CS Colac, and has interests in five other stations in Queensland and Western Australia. In addition the company wholly owns the television station GMV6, Goulburn Valley, plus translators, and has holdings from small to substantial in seventeen others in other states.

After the pioneering of Dinenny and his colleagues much of the subsequent progress of the company is linked to the name of Syd Kemp, ex-sailor, ex-newspaper promotions man and teller of tall (and rarely short) tales.

In bids for business he was often in competition with another real pioneer, Rupert Fitts of the Victorian Broadcasting Network (now comprising 3HA, 3TR, 3SH, 3CV, 3NE) who not only ran stations, he also helped build them, including 3AR. Fitts was one of the small group gathered in a Sydney pub in 1938 who decided to set up the Macquarie Broadcasting Network.

In 1931 Goldfields Broadcasters Limited in Western Australia

was offering 'an opportunity for the listening public' to invest 'in a well-conducted commercial station' in Kalgoorlie. They seemed to place an open-ended valuation on the shares '2/6 on application, 5/- on allotment and the balance as and when the directors shall decide. Calls not to exceed 5/- and to be at intervals of not less than two months'. The opening items in the evening's programme on 16 September read:

8.00 pm Call sign and announcements
8.05 Mayor of Kalgoorlie will speak
8.15 Mayor of Boulder will speak
8.25 Overture by the Goldfields Orchestra
8.31 Mr Charles Gordon will sing two songs
8.36 Boulder Mines Band will now play for you
8.42 A xylophone solo by Mr McCarthy
8.56 Mr Charles Huddle will give you some piano music
9.00 Miss Saunders will sing a bracket of two songs

It was pretty heady stuff.

One thing you can also say about country radio in the early days especially, it really tested your resources. Johannes Factotum had it made compared to the diversified chores performed by the manager cum announcer, cum engineer, cum salesman.

In 1931 the founder of 2MO Gunnedah, Mark Oliver, used to come on air not at any fixed times but just when it suited him. 'He delighted audiences with his comments on the news and his wife Bebe'.

According to Jim Story, manager of 2HD Newcastle and now one of the old-timers of the business, Oliver 'conducted his sessions from his living room and did not bother to close the microphone. There was an endless round of entertainment from the domestic scene not scheduled for broadcast'.

In 1939 the station had a full-time staff of three: A. H. Whistler was the manager, sales manager and announcer. E. Tibbett was the engineer and Hilery Whistler the other announcer. They managed to maintain a breakfast service from 7 to 9, from noon to 2, and at night from 6 till 10. In between, they promoted and sustained a Smilers Club, Pyjama Parade Club and Civic Theatre Club.

7QT Queenstown also got along with three permanent employees and boasted a Chums' Club of nearly one thousand.

The Ridleys and the Higginbothams of New South Wales, the Findlays and Ralphs of Tasmania, the Whitfords of Western Australia, the Woodlands of Queensland were making the airwaves hum, too. Individual names are worth recording: Eric Roberts of 2WG, Alf Wynne of 4MB, Jim Story who had associations with four stations, Ted Gold of 4GR, Jack Ryan of 2CA and 2CK, Alf Paddison of 2KA and 2KM, Wally Grant and Eddie Williams of 2DU and 2PK, J. B. Chandler of 4BC, J. H. Williams of 4MK, Nevill Dixon of VBN. All these played major roles in the development of radio outside the capital cities.

Country radio's role in an emergency was to spark nationwide interest during the Hunter River Valley floods of 1955. Twelve commercial stations formed a network to exchange information, relay urgent messages, instruct people in danger where to go and how to get there.

Stations 2MG Mudgee and 2DU Dubbo were put off the air for periods ranging from a few hours to all day. Water was up to four feet deep in their studios. The power supply failed. Nevertheless, they got back on air with emergency services and played a key role in the dramatic fight against the floods, directing rescue workers, helping people in danger to safer ground, passing on messages to anxious relatives, indicating pick-up points for food supplies, organising army ducks to do the work.

People stranded on rooftops, in need of food, had only to paint a big F and planes made drops. Fodder for livestock was flown in to farmers who marked out a ten-foot square on stretches of dry land. Money, shovels, blankets, clothes, even magnetos for dampened engines of light aircraft, came in as a response to broadcast appeals.

Control Board Chairman, R. G. Osborne, subsequently described station efforts as 'community service of the highest order'.

Just how far people are prepared to go to retain their local station was illustrated in the case of 2QN Deniliquin. The station, established in 1935, consistently ran at a loss. In 1944 the licensee asked the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Broadcasting – predecessor of the Broadcasting Control Board – for approval to transfer the licence to Wangaratta.

Although local people had been a bit backward in supporting 2QN with folding money, in large part because of wartime rationing, the proposal to take their station away stirred them into action. The Mayor called a public meeting and put it to the assembled gathering that 'in order to make life easier on the farms and in the homes it is necessary for us to have a broadcasting station in our centre so that the people may keep in touch with domestic affairs'.

The call-to-arms was answered not only by the council but the Country Women's Association, Farmers and Settlers Association, the church, the schools, the local branch of the Labor Party, graziers, stock and station agencies and businessmen. It's down-to-earth stuff, and simple, but here's how the women of the district put one aspect of their case to the Committee:

> Very often the sister at the Health Centre, who broadcasts in the women's session, had urgent questions to answer which had been brought in by mail from people who had not a telephone or a car and wanted advice in regard to a sick baby. The sister could give a reply sometimes within a few hours of the letter being sent. Without that advice they would have had to bring the baby over indifferent roads or wait for days, during which the illness might become more serious; necessitating hospital treatment. That was a very important session to the district . . .

There were other important considerations, too.

> The station gives the following services: Local news, stock sale reports, public announcements, bush fire warnings and information, educational talks, Junior Farmers' Club news, music (including encouragement to local talent), hospital and Red Cross appeals, war loan rallies and the sponsoring of Murray Valley Development . . . the broadcasting of local market reports . . . on the night preceding sales, makes the station especially valuable to farmers and graziers, particularly those without telephones . . . these reports enable them to decide whether there are any lines of stock they wish to purchase or sell.

But what about cold hard cash to enable the station to operate profitably?

Well, said the witnesses – in sum – 'a concerted effort would be made to retain it. If the cost to each of many were, say £5, they would all be happy to get behind the station, notwithstanding their losses from bad seasons and their obligation to contribute to the war loans'.

In the event, the station stayed put. There were changes in management and it is, these days, a highly successful operation. A good sales representative in Melbourne, Ron Haig-Muir, now the licensee, figured largely in the restoration of the station's fortunes.

The Deniliquin file neatly encapsulates the story, sound and philosophy of country radio. It can clearly be argued that no other business seed is sown so well into the very soil – and mind – of the community.

What happened when television hit the country? Pat Maher, manager of 4NA Nambour, takes up the tale:

> I saw television come to a provincial market and I saw what it did to our programming and our sales figures . . . firstly it stimulated interest in advertising in the business community, secondly it made us more aware of the retailer and of the revenue available through national manufacturers subsidising the retailer. We picked up additional business (huge sums of it) from electrical retailers wishing to sell TV sets and from TV servicemen and from the overall increased interest in media advertising generated by TV's advent . . . our overall sales figures increased . . . and never went back.

Maher confirms what other managers say about the role of the local station: '. . . it sets the pace in many areas of endeavour for the good of the community, conducting appeals for community services like Meals on Wheels, Nursing, Legacy, organising rural field days, sponsoring eisteddfods, learn-to-swim campaigns, road safety education . . . it is a grass-roots relationship, country radio's on-air men are very close to their community, there's an "I believe" quality when they're selling goods and services'.

Ben Whitnall of 4SB Kingaroy adds '. . . it is becoming increasingly evident that the survival of country radio depends on the ability of the station staff to involve itself in the affairs of the immediate area it services'.

4MK Mackay met the TV 'threat' this way:

> Radio Bingo was launched, station personalities took to the beaches and the backwoods as never before, competitions and promotions of every kind were devised and presented. Within twelve months the situation was secure . . . conservatively, local sales have increased by 25 per cent since the advent of TV . . . as it had always done the station connects itself closely to community events, appeals, individual causes. Churchmen, politicians, local government authorities, leaders of primary and secondary industry are encouraged to reveal their philosophies and air their views.

Reported 6KG Kalgoorlie on the occasion of its fortieth anniversary in 1971:

> In the last five years revenue from local advertising has increased by about 200 per cent. Over the last two years total revenue has increased by 55 per cent, local revenue by 100 per cent. Of total revenue 50 per cent is local, 33 per cent is national and 17 per cent metropolitan (ie from Perth).

So much for dark and grim forebodings.

'Listen' to the words of one of the scripts for a recent radio campaign produced by David Webster and Associates for the North-Eastern Co-Operative Society in Wangaratta and broadcast over the local station, 3NE:

ANN: Remember the Co-store in 1906?

V.2: Had board floors and it had counters and you got wonderful service, everybody fell over themselves to take your order.

ANN: Today you'll still find the same old friendly service. But the Co's been growing. Now there are thirteen departments with everything you need. Like the

big Supa Valu supermarket. You can take your pick of the fresh fruit and vegetables, choose your own cuts of fresh meat. Continental foods, the delicatessen, the candy bar. And if you like biscuits, the Co's got the biggest range outside of Melbourne. With a Co-store charge account you can always take home the things you want. We'll carry it to your car, or arrange free home delivery. And there aren't any turnstiles to hold you up on the way out.

SINGING: We've been selling such a long long time.

ANN: Today the Co-store is everything you need.

Friendly, involved, believable — that commercial just about says it all for country radio.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

The Speech of Angels

The sounds of revelry by night are induced largely by the voluptuous swell of music. It is the staple diet of the commercial radio stations these days. It is one word, but it has many meanings: classical, ballad, concert, folk, modern, pop, rock (hard and soft), acid, jazz, boogie, country and western, dixieland, hillbilly, middle-of-the-road, Top Forty, contemporary . . .

The designations are constantly being enlarged as variations on old styles are given fancy names by groups – also with fancy names – who are adding to the old, and not inventing something new.

The shorthand of emotion was how Tolstoy described music. A habit – like smoking or spitting observed an ironic Percy Grainger. The real music lover, said one comic, is a man who on hearing a beautiful soprano in the bathroom – puts his ear to the keyhole. Classical music, from yet another, is something you listen to in the hope that it will turn into a tune. And from the other side of the podium: 'Rock-'n' roll is a modern St Vitus Dance that relieves tensions by sending its addicts into fits of primitive ecstasy. Become a follower and a thousand years of civilization fall away in a single moment'.

It can obviously be argued that there is much tuneless vibration from the plucked strings of hairy things employing amplification as a means of faking orthodox musicianship.

There is also another devilish device. It is possible, mechanically, to increase the speed of studio turntables so that discs recorded at forty-five revolutions per minute spin at forty-seven

rpm. Some American radio stations boast about this interference with the balance of nature as giving them 'a slightly higher sound . . . by raising the pitch, by gaining greater apparent loudness, we cause the listener, when he switches away from hearing a "brightened" tune, to think there's something wrong with the sound when he listens to the other radio stations'.

Is there, some might ask, no end to the tyranny of undisciplined sound from the echoing anvil? But music, apparently, is like art – you know what you like and like what you know.

Happily, music fashions go in pronounced cycles and maybe persuasion by vibration will trail away to an unlamented whisper. There are already signs that music is becoming, in trade terms, softer.

As has been noted already, the air was filled with music from the very beginnings of regular radio. It has endured as the major part of programming. In 1972 'light and popular' music accounted for 54 per cent of programming from metropolitan commercial stations. Ten years earlier 'light and transient' music added up to 49 per cent of total content. In the twenties and early thirties it was more than 80 per cent.

Today it is virtually all recorded and because people have become so accustomed to hearing it, it might well be assumed that it has been an automatic and easily-managed facility. The contrary is the case.

From 1925 there has been a running battle on rights to play and royalties involved with stations on one side, and the composers and record manufacturers on the other.

Forty-eight years ago 3UZ Melbourne was reporting that operation of the station was 'a dead loss' largely brought about by 'royalties on music which amounted to approximately 3/6 for every number broadcast and the £50 royalty for patent and other rights'.

One measure of the way public demand for music, singles, long-play and albums, has built up over the last decade may be taken from the raw statistics. In 1960-61 phonograph records produced in Australia totalled just under seven million. Six years later the number had more than doubled. Latest available figures indicate that production in 1973 will top the twenty-two million mark.

In the early days of radio, music was chosen mostly by personal whim of the station manager-cum-announcer-cum engineer, or subject to the dictates of family and friends.

The first major difference between stations and record manufacturers occurred in 1931 'when a ban was placed on the use of gramophone records for broadcasting by record makers'.

The dispute arose because stations refused to pay for the use of records. They claimed that royalties already paid to the Australasian Performing Rights Association absolved them from other payments.

APRA represents authors, composers and publishers and is affiliated with similar bodies round the world. In short, they represent the owners of the copyright subsisting in the musical work itself. The manufacturers own the mechanical copyright, its application residing in the right to play numbers made under their label.

In the crisis of the thirties the larger commercial stations were able to import records from overseas, the smaller ones had to play, and re-play only those they had in stock. After a while, naturally, a lot of tunes became awfully familiar.

Eventually the dispute was resolved by stations agreeing to pay a fixed sum to the gramophone companies for 'the right to broadcast their recordings'. Ceilings were placed on the number of times each disc could be played. This applied especially to new recordings.

Disagreements flared fitfully over the next twenty years – heating to flash point again in 1955 when the Federation announced plans to ban recordings handled by EMI (Electric and Musical Industries) which distributed Decca, Columbia, HMV, Parlophone, Regal-Zonophone, MGM, London and Brunswick. Stations said they could get along with independent labels like Capitol, Mercury, Philips, Nixa, Clef and W & G. At this stage the ABC was said to be paying in excess of £15,000 a year to EMI. Commercials, however, stated their view that they were promoting sales, in fact, 'since the war the annual sales of records had increased from £2 million to more than £8 million'.

They won a delaying-action victory.

In 1966 a bid was again made by manufacturers for more money from fixed royalties for their labels. The Federal govern-

ment prepared a new copyright act. The then steering minister, Mr Snedden, Attorney General, was to say that:

> I do not think that the record manufacturers should be given a right which would clearly entitle them to collect royalties they do not now receive from commercial broadcasting stations.

The commercial stations' viewpoint, basically, was that they provided a splendid platform for the record manufacturers to promote their product. If it was not there, they just would not achieve such buoyant returns from the sale of records.

The manufacturers, naturally, claimed the argument went back a stage further than that: if the stations did not have their product they either would not be able to operate or would have to set up their own highly expensive production resources.

Mr Snedden's bill never got to the floor of the house because of the elections that year. In 1967 Mr Bowen (who had once represented the record manufacturers before he entered Parliament) introduced another bill that reversed his predecessor's thinking and provided for royalties to be paid by manufacturers. Stations protested vigorously.

But the commercial station's case was complicated by the fact that, at this time, the Australian Broadcasting Commission was, in fact, paying the manufacturers about $40,000 a year in broadcasting royalties. The commercials pressed home the point that, with TV, they were already paying more than $1,000,000 a year to APRA. (This amount varies according to station revenue.)

In a prepared statement the Federation 'vigorously contested that record manufacturers should be given rights to control the playing in public and the broadcasting of records and to demand royalty payments not now received . . . the making of a record is not in the same category as the original creative activity of a composer or author, for whom full copyright protection is properly provided'.

While all these shenanigens were going on stations were developing their own 'music policies'. The determination of what type of music would be played became the cornerstone of stations planning to develop their own particular image.

We now have the Macquarie network stations concentrating on 'Beautiful Music', with the emphasis on 'melody, top world artists and the cream of album resources from all parts of the world'.

Most of the Major network stations play what might be called 'peppy-middle' music to attract the eighteen to thirty-nine age group, although 6PR in Perth and 4BK in Brisbane aim more at the teenage market because of the competitive situation.

Stations like 2CH and 3AK are promoting 'Good Music Radio'. 'Try a little tenderness' is the theme 2CH is plugging. 2WL Wollongong is strong for 'modern releases but not way-out wild pop'. 4IP Ipswich on the other hand has the teenage market dead-centre in its sights. 5KA Adelaide features mostly album programming. 6PM Perth, in a move to 'separate itself' from a contemporary format, promoted a sound called 'Peppermint Radio', aimed at the young twenties. 2GO Gosford, a newcomer to radio, plumped for 'Good Music'. 2KA goes for country music and soft rock.

Some stations were given to hiring — at great cost — American experts to 'format' their music. Others left it to their own bright young men. Eight independent stations — 2SM, 2NX, 2NM, 2LF, 2LT, 2KM, 2KA and 3XY — adopted a common approach, again with the young swingers as their target.

Most stations leave themselves room for quick change of direction, given two or three consecutive poor rating results.

In general it might be said that as far as musical tastes are concerned, anyone over forty gets scant consideration these days — with honourable exceptions.

Meantime the 'right' of the manufacturers to control the broadcasting of their records has been specifically provided for in a new Australian Copyright Act. In theory, they had won their battle. They had the authority to make charges — the amounts involved to be determined by agreement with the stations. In case of any dispute it could be referred to an independent arbitrator.

In practice, no money changed hands. The stations, as previously, just said they would not play the records that were subject to manufacturers' control and royalties. They could carry on because quite a number of records 'first-made' in the United States and imported here were not subject to any imposts. One

or two small Australian companies also kept up a supply to the stations and, if pushed, stations could develop their own joint production facilities.

After a six-month siege hostilities ceased. An uneasy truce ensued. Manufacturers agreed to accept 'time' to advertise their product instead of dollars. Three announcements per week on all stations are provided for this purpose and a card value is set upon them by the largest manufacturer, EMI; and money is dispersed among the participating manufacturers according to usage of records.

But it has been a long-running dispute and is not over yet. It is, in fact, likely to flare again in the not-too-distant future, according to what are usually referred to as 'reliable sources'.

But what about the music itself, the stars of song, the Australian performers?

The last decade has seen a remarkable upsurge in the popularity of Australian singers, groups, and recording companies. The big labels in the last category come from EMI (Australia), Festival, Phonogram, RCA, Astor, Fable and quite a few small, but enthusiastic operators.

Australian voices started to gather strength, in top-selling terms, in the mid 'fifties. There was Daryl Stewart with his recording of 'A Man called Peter', Johnny O'Keefe's 'So Tough' in 1959 and 'She's My Baby' the following year. 1960 too, was big for Johnny Ashcroft's 'Little Boy Lost', Lonnie Lee's 'Starlight, Starbright', Eula Parker's 'Village of Saint Bernadette', Horry Dargie's version of Rolf Harris' 'Tie me kangaroo down, Sport'.

In 1963 about two hundred and seventy titles made the 'charts' – the lists compiled from record sales. Of that, about thirty were by Australian performers. In 1972 of the two hundred or so records that made the Top Forty, about sixty were Australian.

Currently, the individual pop stars in greatest demand would include the three Johnnies – O'Keefe, Farnham, Chester – Colleen Hewett, Robyn Jolley, Matt Flinders, Jamie Redfern, Brian Cadd, Billy Thorpe, Rick Springfield and Russell Morris. The Australian groups that are 'big on the scene' include Blackfeather, Mississippi, Daddy Cool, Country Radio, Sherbet and Jigsaw.

Names in 'show-biz' come and go, especially songbirds. Johnny

O'Keefe has endured for the longest period but others could well follow in his steps.

The greatest seal of success is when a gold label is made – equal to fifty thousand records sold. This is plucking Apollo's lute, enthroned for ever (for a few years anyway) with the all-time greats.

Among those to occupy the celestial seats have been Jamie Redfern, Brian Cadd, Johnny O'Keefe, John Williamson, The Mixtures, Johnny Farnham, Sandy Scott, Slim Dusty, the original Seekers and Ted Mulry.

The Broadcast Act requires licensees to devote not less than five per cent of music time to works of Australian composers. Indicative of how the locals have made some progress is revealed by latest available figures. In 1967-68 average percentage for all commercial stations was 6.95. Last year it was over 9 per cent.

Some stations exceeded 25 per cent: 5SE Mount Gambier, 5MU Murray Bridge, 5PI Port Pirie. Not one commercial station fell below the prescribed limit.

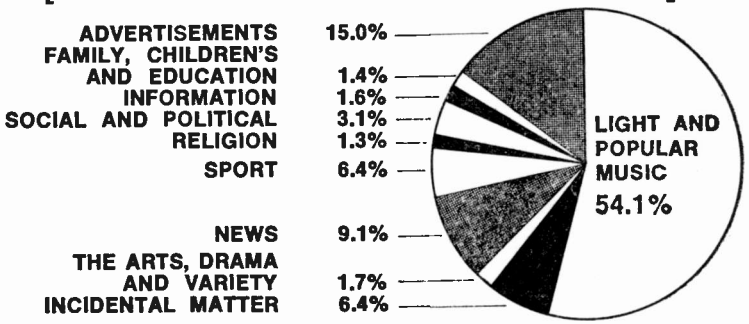
And so, the music goes round and round – the biggest single ingredient in commercial programming formats. And if sometimes it may not console the heart or afford delight to the 'squares', at least it lends comfort to those seeking its constant companionship on their 'trannies'.

Tolerance is gritting your teeth and letting youth go deaf in its own fashion.

Metropolitan Commercial Stations

Composition of Broadcast Programmes

[OCTOBER 1972 AND MARCH 1973 COMBINED]



CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

Here is the News

The talking heads of television, the static typographics of newspapers, the unseen voices of radio: these, plus gossip, the grapevine and occult forces loosely controlled by a phenomenon known as rumour, provide the basis of the information system that keeps mankind in touch with events, real and imagined.

In the early days of radio, arrangements were made with newspapers to supply a service, usually three times a day – breakfast, midday, early evening. It could cost up to £5 a week providing there was a generous plug for the paper.

The Broadcasting Act laid down that 'news or information of any kind published in any newspaper or obtained, collected, collated or co-ordinated by any newspaper, or association of newspapers or any newsagency or service' could not be broadcast 'except in accordance with the terms of an agreement as to payment and conditions between the licensee and the newspaper, association of newspapers, news agency or service'.

At first the newspapers treated radio with amiable detachment, even amusement. A plaything, no less, that posed no threat to their autonomy. Indeed, it was not without significance that the first applicants for licences were from people concerned with selling radio sets. Newspapers just weren't interested – it couldn't last, just a fad.

Associated Newspapers, as already remarked, were the first to acknowledge the possibility of radio becoming a useful ally by propping up the ailing 2BL. The Melbourne *Herald* group also sniffed something in the air when it bought out the 3DB licence.

It was not until 1930 that newspaper interests started to take the new medium seriously. In the following decade, when more than eighty commercial licences were issued, newspapers were among the first in line for PMG patronage. What they could not achieve by immediate franchise, they were to accomplish by subsequent negotiation.

Today the Melbourne *Herald,* the Fairfax group, Australian Consolidated Press, *Advertiser* Newspapers, Hobart *Mercury,* Launceston *Examiner,* Queensland Press, Melbourne *Age,* Elliott newspapers, Northern Star Holdings, the Sullivan press interests in provincial New South Wales, the Albany *Advertiser,* Ballarat *Courier,* Geelong *Advertiser,* Gympie *Times,* Wangaratta *Chronicle,* Western newspapers, The *Workers Weekly Herald* hold direct interests, from total to partial, in more than sixty commercial radio stations. The Murdoch group has now quit all its previous interests.

In 1925, a journal of the day recorded the following intelligence: 'At 12.59½ the warning voice came on telling all to get their watches ready for correction. Then came the stroke of one and the listeners checked their watches. Spoken slowly, and with emphasis, the news then came through'.

On those terms, it must have been a sombre and sobering experience.

Many stations had arrangements to take what they wanted out of the morning and evening editions, provided it did not exceed, say, five minutes. Thus, news up till the middle thirties at least, was mostly just read from items circled by the announcer on duty — and often garbled.

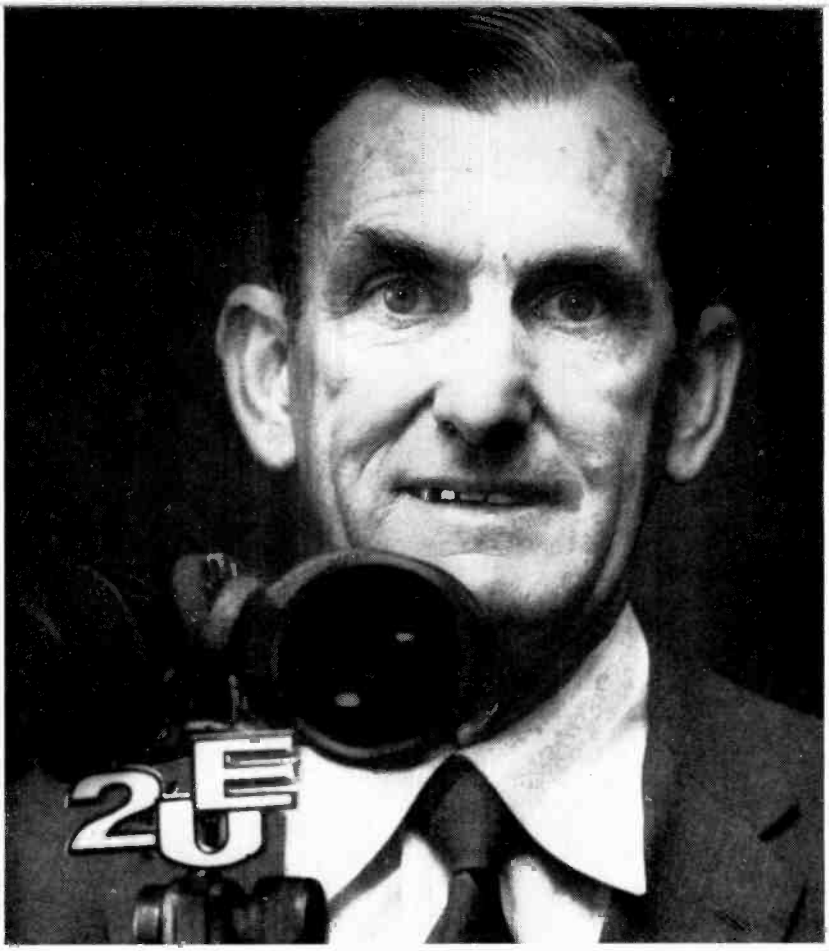
About this time the New South Wales Country Press Association registered its 'alarm' at the inroads commercial broadcasting was making on established provincial press interests — both news and advertising.

The Melbourne press viewed with concern the decision of a new station — 3XY — to set up its own independent news service.

Metropolitan papers — even those with station affiliations — were now getting a bit restless about radio. Up till then papers had been happy to publish programmes as a reader service. Then came the edict — programme listings had to be paid for at normal space rates. In Sydney examination results were denied to stations be-

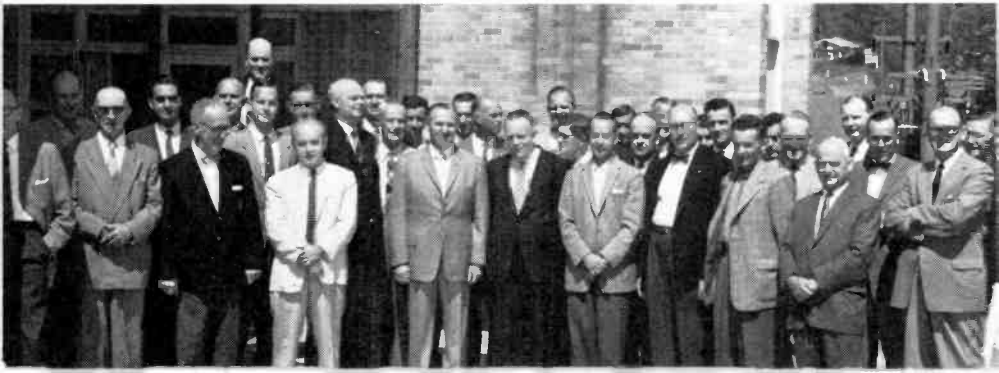
Bobby Limb with child contestant in one of the last of the big-name programmes, 'The Vincents Show', circa 1960

1960 and Bob Dyer's Pick-a-Box was nearing the end of its long radio career



Sydney's Des Hoysted, one of the top race callers of the present era

Delegates to the 1960 Convention of the Federation of Australian Commercial Broadcasters at Terrigal, New South Wales. Lewis Bennett was President



cause the Minister for Education, under pressure, decided such a service invaded 'the domain of the press'.

And then occurred an incident that was newsworthy in itself — the arbitrary decision, without warning, of the PMG in December 1938 to put 2KY, the Labor station, off the air because he did not like some of their comments. Even the press rallied to the station's support and the Honorable Archie Cameron, an autocrat if ever there was one, had to back down, although not without getting at least his half-pound of flesh. The station was made to apologise for its alleged 'past offences'.

Commentaries and outside interview programmes were now significant parts of news presentations.

The Watchman, A. M. Pooley, J. M. Prentice, Eric Baume, A. H. Hauptmann, 'Jock' Garden, Dr W. G. Goddard, Frank Sturge Harty, Uncle Scrim and Crosbie Morrison were oracles of great weight and substance.

The Sydney press, long and since, noted for its eccentricities, was still not all that happy with the brash attempts of radio men to invade the sacred preserves. Newspaper men, not averse to picking up an extra shilling or two by appearing on radio, were specifically banned from going on air. At one stage even advertisers were prohibited from mentioning their own programmes in press advertisements!

Came the war and radio was to be hedged in by fiat and proscription. Most stations arranged to take the BBC news broadcasts, others also took a split from the ABC.

One of the interesting developments of this time was that while commercial stations were permitted to take BBC news sessions, they had to acknowledge that Australian Associated Press (controlled by newspaper interests) had 'rights' in such BBC broadcasts for which the commercial stations were required to pay AAP £1500 a year.

Another wartime event was the inauguration in 1940 of a 'compulsory' news service supplied by the Department of Information at 7 o'clock each night for all commercial and national stations. But it lasted for only a month or so. One of the absurd regulations was that news flashes, between regular services, were restricted to two a day, could be no longer than thirty-five words, and must not be aired more than once.

Said Ray Dooley, Federation secretary in evidence before a Select Committee in 1941: 'I think that on the day that peace is declared we will break that regulation'.

But that regulation clearly demonstrated that while the commercials were lucky to be able to draw on the BBC, and in some instances, the ABC for their wartime news, there was an obvious determination by the news establishment to hold them on a firm leash.

Curiously, when you look back on it, commercial radio played a relatively insignificant role in war reporting. Whereas the ABC had its men in the field, the commercials seemed to see their function more on the entertainment side. One reason, of course, was that they did not have that many men — a lot had enlisted, even though radio was a protected industry. Nonetheless, the war years could scarcely be acknowledged as a period of conspicuous news achievement.

In 1945 plans were discussed for an 'independent' news service for all Melbourne stations. Not much came of it: a half-baked scheme was adopted for stations, except 3DB and 3XY, to take a service from the *Age* and the *Argus*. All but two of the provincials were to join this combined presentation to be broadcast at 6.45 am, 12.30 pm and 7 pm. Then an odd thing happened. The PMG refused to provide landlines, even though country stations were prepared to pay for them. Previously they had taken the split from the ABC — free of landline costs. The 'independent' service did not really get off the ground — at least in the way it was originally envisaged. Why still remains a mystery — but somewhere along the line subtle influences were at work to keep radio in its place.

Post-war, especially after the introduction of television, radio reporting became less reliant on big brother. Whereas many metropolitan stations had been content to draw almost entirely on the resources of the print media, they now realized that with radio's immediacy they had a favourable time factor that could not be matched.

Macquarie's flagship station 2GB Sydney, in the mid fifties, introduced the Sunday news feature, Monitor, expanding the concept of magazine audio-journalism into a continuous five-hour presentation from midday to 5 pm. The station established reciprocal links with the NBC network in America, United Nations

headquarters in New York, the South African Broadcasting Commission, Radio Ceylon, New Zealand Broadcasting Service and the BBC.

'Go everywhere, every Sunday' was the launch pad for this ambitious project with its news, interviews, documentaries and guest spots. It lasted for several years.

The establishment of a separate radio news service in Queensland showed what radio could do when it broke away from the old apron strings.

Nowadays the major metropolitan stations take a basic teleprinter service from newspaper groups (some have their own staff men stationed in daily paper offices), AAP-Reuter wire service supplemented by Compac and Seacom cable links, satellite relays, American network stations, The Voice of America, the BBC and individual or shared interstate correspondents.

Newsreading-journalists are now required to study presentation techniques suitable to radio – crisp colour reporting with the accent on NOW. Radio-equipped cars, aeroplanes, even helicopters are on call to station staff men to travel to wherever news is happening and go on air, immediately on arrival.

As 2UE's editor, Don Angel, has put it: 'Radio, without production problems to delay its immediate access to the public, capitalises on this advantage to bring the story fast to its audience'. He also makes the point that many major news stories break outside newspaper edition times and that today, 'the new role of newspapers . . . in the main, is to report a story, already known to the vast majority of people, in much greater depth'.

Use of telephone voices and on-the-spot OB comment from cars, planes, ships has also been a major factor in stepping up radio's 'nowness'.

Macquarie probably has the most elaborate news organisation of the commercials – with direct relays to forty-three stations at fixed times from its capital city stations plus a twenty-four-hour news-wire service which goes to twenty-eight stations throughout the Commonwealth.

Non-local material is collected, collated, edited in Sydney and fed to participating stations by both landline and teleprinter; the former containing audio voice-clips that can be included in the news to be read by the local announcers.

Corbett Shaw, who heads up a nation-wide staff of sixty journalists sees media in complementary roles:

> Newspapers . . . private, contemplative, where the reader digests the content and can refer back; Television, which cannot be bettered for . . . coverage of such highly visual events as man landing on the moon or a major sports spectacular; Radio, for news as it is happening hour by hour.

It has been estimated that Macquarie spend more than $500,000 a year to maintain their news structure. 2UE with a staff of fifteen radio newsmen, including a permanent man in Canberra, would spend in excess of $200,000 a year – 3UZ probably more than $150,000 a year.

Listeners get not only hard-core news, but comment, background interview; the latter field early covered by such men as Peter Barry, Tom Jacobs, Len Mauger, Norman Banks. 2GB now also covers advertising news, business news. Services to rural areas cover an even wider spectrum.

The Victorian Broadcasting Network (3CV, 3HA, 3SH, 3TR, 3NE) feeds, by teleprinter, metropolitan information about the Newmarket stock sales, wool sales, vegetable and grain prices, Tatt's draws, stolen cars, snow conditions, emergency announcements including floods and bushfires.

According to the Broadcasting Control Board about 10 per cent of time between 6 am and 10.30 pm with metropolitan stations is taken up with news reports, broadcasting, on average, sixteen major bulletins of six minutes duration or more and more than one hundred and eighty shorter or headline bulletins each week. In the country about thirty major bulletins is the average. Country folk may well have cause to be grateful for this favoured position for it was due to the Board's representations that special landline concessions were extracted from the Postal Department for relaying three newscasts a day from the nearest capital city – 'at a nominal charge'.

Apart from the 'information' already mentioned there are additional reports about weather, train and aircraft arrivals, ship movements, seas, snow, surf, public transport, traffic, coming events of the day – even parking spaces available.

Says the Board 'listeners are able to obtain access to the latest news much more readily than from any other medium'.

Three events testify to the degree to which people have come to rely on radio as their first-with-the-news contact. The massacre at the Tel Aviv airport broke at 8 am. It was broadcast at 8.25. Not only that but Australian radio had eye-witness accounts on air before the late morning editions of the afternoon papers carried the bare-facts story.

Then, at 2 pm on Wednesday (not radio's peak listening period), 26 January 1973 the world learned that provisional peace had come to Vietnam. A Sydney survey of how people first got the news revealed that 37 per cent learned about it through radio, 32 per cent through television, 20 per cent through newspapers and 11 per cent by word of mouth.

Not unexpectedly, the percentages for women favoured radio more than men, 43 per cent to television's 33 per cent.

And where did Sydney people first hear the news of the engagement of Princess Anne to Lieutenant Mark Phillips? Says a snap telephone survey by Audience Studies for ARAB: radio 68 per cent; TV 6 per cent; newspapers 18 per cent; word of mouth 5 per cent; can't recall 3 per cent.

News is seen by many station planners as being, perhaps, the obvious area for future programme expansion and it would seem altogether likely that its slow disengagement from the bland paternalism of print will, one day, become complete. (Apart, no doubt, from those stations, which are owned and controlled in their entirety by press interests who still like to regard their radio offspring as second-class citizens).

Unfortunately, some commercial news readers still sound as if that 'second-class' tag has some validity. Up-grading of voices of authority is a task that commercial radio will have to face in the years ahead.

Too many stations still do not appreciate that with radio news you cannot go back on what you have just heard. You must assimilate the information first-up. Consequently there is great value in telegraphing your meaning ahead — especially when it is considered that most news is local — in the sense that people are more interested in what is happening at home than abroad, on the doorstep rather than across the other side of town. Hence the value in re-

writing 'print' copy which says 'Joe Blow, thirty-seven, of Mitchell Street, Randwick was killed today when his car ran off the road' to read 'A *Randwick* man – Joe Blow, thirty-seven' etc. The flag word 'Randwick' concentrates the mind quickly. Why stations have not persisted with a practice introduced by 3KZ in the middle thirties of having one announcer read headlines and another handling the expanded copy is one of those minor mysteries of news appreciation and presentation still to be satisfactorily explained.

Radio's dramatic voice quality is insufficiently appreciated. Why again? Churchill, it should be recalled, made more than thirty key speeches to his sorely-tried people during the second World War. He literally rallied the nation – by radio. Hitler, oddly, did much the same thing until events overwhelmed him.

Radio news, in brief, has still to realize maximum potential.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

The Flashing Light is on

Sport, in Milton's words, was derided by wrinkled Care and Laughter. But it is a very serious business with the commercial stations – third leg of the treble of major attractions you might say.

A top station carrying racing, trots, football and other sundry sports would spend between $150,000 and $200,000 a year to sustain its sporting service. It has not always been played in the best of spirits between the stations and the sporting bodies whose activities have been described by the all-seeing eye.

Back in 1930 some stations agreed not to broadcast racing results because of the difficulties put in their way by racing clubs. There was even a move to reach agreement with the national stations to prevent any betting information going to air.

Oddly, roles were reversed in subsequent years, with the clubs trying to block the dissemination of such intelligence.

Football ran into trouble in those days, too. In Hobart the Tasmanian Football League forbade 7HO from entering grounds because of the belief that broadcasts adversely affected attendances. The following events then occurred: the station's commentators and engineers climbed up two ricketty ladders to a high, but insecure tree branch that gave them a view of the ground. Equipment was then hauled up by a pulley. Although handled under difficulties and considerable discomfort the broadcast went on. To thwart the station 'some person or persons unknown' lit a damp fire to throw a smoke screen, played mirrors into the eyes of the commentators – even strung up a row of flags to try and block out the action.

7HO by judicious movement and deployment of its forces managed to negotiate the obstacles. After a battle of tactics that lasted almost the whole football season a truce was declared — and football broadcasts have continued ever since.

The racing people, even though happy — and anxious — to encourage the early broadcasters, were to become equally intransigent from time to time.

The first 'official' racing broadcasts appear to have been in March 1925 — a 'try-out' of the St Kilda Cup and Steeplechase in Melbourne. As 'the experiment was entirely successful' results and descriptions of the principal races became a feature on 3LO from April onwards. But even before then, in 1923, a Mr W. H. Sweeting, honorary secretary of the Malvern harriers, called the Grand National Steeplechase for AWA's experimental station. Mr Sweeting is reported as having later described events from the old Richmond course, now a housing estate.

A new dimension to the sport of kings was to be given by the appointment, part-time, of a 'young and cheeky' reporter named Eric Welch, then employed by the *Argus*. He was engaged by 3LO to cover both racing and wrestling. The *Argus* went along with the arrangement for a while but then said to Welch: 'One or the other'.

Welch opted for radio.

'What a fortunate decision', he now writes. 'For twenty-seven years life was just what any young fellow would want — to work at what really amounted to a hobby'.

Facilities were not good. Picture Flemington in the late twenties, the October Stakes, Spring rain tumbling down. Eric Welch, overcoatless, standing on an open and very shaky platform, holding race glasses, race book, umbrella and the mike, trying to prevent being blown over in the high wind.

'To cap it all, the race was run in a tropical downpour and Reparation carried black and purple hoops while Mailman carried black and purple sleeves. You can imagine how much alike they looked early in the race. Reparation, however, was a very hot favourite so I stuck with him. The shock came when they were nearing home and I realized it was Mailman . . . who came home like a train and won. Reparation fell in a hole'.

So — how do they pick one horse from another? The secret — according to most callers — is in the colours of the silks, to a

lesser extent the colour and physical characteristics of the horse and the riding style of the jockey himself. It is a calling essentially for the quick of tongue, the nimble of brain, the sober of habit – at least until the last race is over.

Getting those colours fixed in your head before the start is a primary essential. Saddle cloth numbers can help if the caller becomes momentarily confused or loses the run of the race, but more often than not the numbers are obscured or visible only fleetingly.

Short races down the straight six with the callers virtually head on to the horses until the last hundred metres or so, are probably the toughest to call, especially in maiden two-year-old events where, maybe, there are many brand new colours and new names to register.

Fred Tupper, then with 3AW, recalls that when he first went to England and called the English Derby for the BBC, the worthies of that noble institution couldn't believe their ears when they heard him at work.

'Britain's favourite racecaller in those days didn't even look at the race' said Fred. He wore a microphone that picked up his voice only, but into his ear went the whispers of a well-known racing writer. The commentator merely looked straight ahead and repeated what he had been told, slowly and deliberately'.

In America too, Australians were to baffle their colleagues who, by and large, merely gave the numbers of the horses – and only the leading three or four at that – every two furlongs or so. No names, no run-through of the field, just the monotonous flow of 'At the four, its number six, number ten, number four', etc.

They are a rare breed, all right. So how does one learn the tricks of the trade? By practising with a race book and tape recorder – on the course itself – if you can stand up to the amused scrutiny of those around you. But it is a slow and tedious business. Easier to say, it's probably a gift.

And those endowed with this gift are numbered among the most widely known and highly paid personalities of the business. Then . . . Jim Carroll, Ron Anwin, Cyril Angles, Lachie Melville, H. Millard, Keith Dunbier, Brian Hodgman, Arthur Stannard, Con Charlton, Jumbo Sharland, Matt Hynes, Jack Havey, Arthur Lyster, and Harry Solomons.

The last-named – then employed by 3XY – was to be sentenced to six months gaol in 1939 for 'having unlawfully cut wires used for working a telegraph from the broadcasting stand at 3DB at Ascot Vale and with having unlawfully cut wires from the ABC at the racecourse connecting the stand with the ABC studio'.

The plot was that Solomons by putting both these stations off the air, would delay his own call of the race until it was over and arrange with persons unknown to back the winner with starting price bookmakers and collect. Unfortunately, apparently, just before the line went dead 'They're racing' was heard over the ABC. Solomons, it was said, gained nothing – indeed his counsel claimed that the offence was 'more impudent than criminal'. The judge and jury, however, took a less charitable view. Solomons was not the only cross 3XY had to bear.

In 1941 race club hostility flared at Pakenham when Ken Howard, broadcasting from a stand in an open paddock outside the course, saw his broadcast equipment thrown to the ground 'by a number of men'. Fortuitously, a fruit van arrived on the scene, Howard scrambled on its high roof, ran a lead to a telegraph pole fifty yards away, strung the microphone round his neck and went to air on time.

'Amazing Scenes' was how the *Sun* described the interlude.

At Mornington too, 'the club banned telegraphic and telephonic communication from the course and placed screens near the judge's box and in front of the list of riders . . . the meeting was broadcast from the roof of a house half a mile from the finish. The operator used a telescope and a large pair of binoculars'.

Other ruses to try and deter the determined Howard were tried – substitute colours on jockeys, bringing horses back to scale in their wrong order, covering the official numbers board and the correct weight signals. Commented *Radio Times:*

> Howard had no difficulty in describing the events . . . from his elevation he could see right over the screen erected at such great cost by the club.

After one race Howard added the ironic rider: 'The ambulance is now coming back to scale'.

Legal and extra-legal attempts to discourage the broadcasters

continued sporadically over the years. Old hands may recall the action taken by the Victoria Park Racing Club against a Sydney station, trying to stop it from broadcasting from a point outside the course proper. The High Court ruled against the club, which took it to the Privy Council, again to be rebuffed.

In the middle fifties, Sydney stations were instructed not to give any information about prospects or form in the hour before the start of metropolitan meetings. Furthermore, callers could not say anything about the weather or the state of the track. They could mention only starters and riders, the race itself, judges' placings – and no additional comments.

In 1955, Mr K. A. Morrison, secretary of the Victoria Racing Club, declared, 'Clubs do not gain anything from race broadcasting. There is no doubt in my mind about this'.

Other club officials believed that by helping and 'encouraging' SP betting broadcasting caused people to stay away.

These days, more enlightened attitudes prevail – due in no small measure to the ability of such men as Bert Bryant, Bill Collins, Ken Howard, Geoff Mahoney, Joe Brown, Des Hoysted, Johnny Tapp, John Russell and Bert Day to paint vivid word pictures of the sport of kings and whet the appetites of thousands of listeners. 3UZ's Bert Bryant, for instance, is heard over thirty stations in all states every Saturday. His audience is into seven figures.

His call of the Queen Elizabeth Stakes at Flemington on 14 March 1970 is considered one of the enduring classics – and a collector's item.

It was a two-horse race, Rain Lover and Big Philou, champions both. At the ten, Rain Lover was in front and Big Philou was content to lob along behind. Said Bert:

> There's not going to be any change in the order, I wouldn't think, for at least five furlongs. So about the best we can tell you at this stage is that it's a glorious day in Melbourne. It's a balmy 72, the track's perfect and we're watching one of the best two-horse races, as far as big names are concerned, for many a long day. Well, that's got rid of about two furlongs – let's go over to the mile . . . Rain Lover is still about two lengths in front and Roy Higgins is bowling along on Big

> Philou. Couldn't give a hang at this particular stage. I would think he would be thinking about his little daughter, only a week old . . . At the seven and a half furlong pole and Rain Lover is out in front. Hyland got Higgins' money, too, over the birth of that baby being a daughter and not a son. You can bet your sweet life that Higgins here is after it back and Hyland is just as anxious to keep it because it is pretty hard to get.

But at the two —

> Big Philou is tracking Rain Lover. He's got within three-quarters of a length, now half a length . . . Big Philou draws level on the outside. Higgins went for the whip. So did Hyland . . . they go to the line together . . . Big Philou has won it . . . by gee, I hope so. You'd hate to be wrong in a two-horse race. You'd have to give it up for ever and go back to work'.

It was a photo, but Bertie was right. He is still calling them with colourful phrase and unerring accuracy.

These days, racing clubs and stations get along reasonably well, but if commentators, in the clubs' view, get out of line, swift reprimands and threats of withdrawal of facilities are standard responses. Like the horses, the callers are held on pretty tight rein.

Leading Sydney and Melbourne stations, broadcasting throughout the week, would each pay clubs more than $300 or between $15,000 and $20,000 a year, plus landline costs.

In 1930 football was being broadcast in all cities. The early big-name commentators included Hobart's Syd Jones, Melbourne's Mel Morris and Rod McGregor, Adelaide's Len Ford. Mel Morris made football not only a demanding sport to be described but a draining emotional experience to be shared. His dedication to 'the great Australian game' often moved him to adulatory tears. The audience was sometimes similarly moved, for different reasons.

Later names included Brian Hodgman, Norman Banks, John O'Brien, Pat Barton, Jack Gurry, Charles Laurence, Jumbo Sharland, Ken Dakin, Reg Grundy (now a TV programme packager). George Lovejoy of 4BH must have established an Australian record — at least for rugby — by calling six hundred and forty-four consecutive matches over nearly twenty years.

For blanket coverage, Melbourne, which makes ritual obeis-

ances at football's shrine each Saturday, must hold some type of world record — five stations recording every kick and crunch — and with many old footballers re-living moments of their own past glory. Two stations are actually at it for three and a half hours without a break. It costs stations, collectively, between $8,000 and $10,000 a season for broadcast rights.

Cricket, these days, gets scant consideration from the commercials. Yet they owe much to this most gentlemanly of all sports for it was the simulated descriptions of the English tests in 1930 that gave radio a great sales lift.

Continuous cables were despatched from Lords describing 'every move, every stroke of the bat, every ball sent down'. The sounds of bat on ball, the clapping of the crowd, the roar when a wicket fell, were all faked but it sounded wonderfully realistic and there was only about a three-minute time lag between the fact and the fiction.

Special cable rights for Victoria, South Australia, West Australia and Tasmania were £45 a night. 3DB charged advertisers £20 per half-hour sponsorship — a lot for those days, but they had plenty of takers.

Test cricket, however, was being heard five years previously over 5CL Adelaide. Mr W. C. Smallacombe who described the Adelaide test in January 1925 was highly regarded by listeners, one of whom wrote 'I had my wireless room packed with people from the local police, clergymen, bankers, councillors, lawyers and just about everybody from miles around. Your apt and clear description of the play enabled us to visualize the oval, players and situation generally'.

In Melbourne, 3AR picked up the description and from a loud speaker in a truck driven around the city broadcast the scores to people in the streets. When it pulled up it attracted such big crowds that police ordered it to keep moving.

And in that same year — 'In the white and red corners' — the blundering behemoths of the ring rose to their feet and lunged lethally at each other. The wrestlers were smiting each other, hip and thigh, and there to record the near-death throes of Walter Miller and Al Karasick was 3LO's Norman McCance. His breathless prose is still remembered by some — especially 'He can't get out of it, he can't get out of it — He's out'. Those ringing words

must surely be preserved for all time in the corpus of sporting language.

Eric Welch was also to enter the wrestling and boxing scene shortly afterwards. Rion Voigt was prominent in Sydney, Alex Higgins and Bryn Samuel in Perth. Later came Ron Casey of Melbourne and Ron Casey of Sydney, not related.

Tennis, especially post-war, when Australia unwound its run of Davis Cup successes brought to the microphone such men as Tony Charlton, Ted Harris, Cliff Sproule and Roly Barlee. The latter was to get tangled in the net of names of Miss Hart and Miss Fitch – reversing those first initials in his excitement, much to his own discomfiture but the listener's relish.

Without doubt, the greatest single joint commercial venture was the all-station organization for the Melbourne Olympics in 1956 and subsequently for Rome, Tokyo, Mexico City and Munich.

From Rome, with Clive Waters as team manager and commentator, ninety-six stations took the live relays of events. The cost was just under $20,000. By 1972 it had risen to more than $43,000 with all stations splitting the tab. Melbourne's Ron Casey and Sydney's Ron Hurst have subsequently acted as managers in Tokyo, Mexico City and Munich.

Trots, the dogs, swimming, athletics and golf have all brought colour, pace and audio thrills to the microphone. These days most stations, metropolitan at least, have their own sporting editors and departments; some with up to four permanent racecallers, six football commentators, and maybe twenty part-time experts to handle other sports.

The battle the Federation had to fight to win sporting rights can be measured from this enlightening evidence given to a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1941. Ray Dooley, Federation secretary was asked by Arthur Calwell: 'You would not regard yourselves as offenders against the law if you erected a tower or anything else whereby you could overlook [sports] grounds and broadcast the happening?'

Dooley: No, what we say is that they are denying the public the right to know about certain events. We have the approval of the Privy Council that it is permissable for us to do so. It cost us £4000 to find out about that.

Calwell: And you would take them without offering them any compensation or reward for the service?

— If they gave us permission to go inside we would probably pay and would be prepared to pay for it.

— You would take it otherwise without payment —

— Yes. There has been discrimination against commercial stations in regard to a number of these sporting broadcasts. We know that exclusive agreements have been made which deny the right of access to the commercial broadcasting stations. If they did not want them broadcast you would not refrain from making arrangements by which they could be broadcast?

— If we wanted to broadcast and provided it is in the public interest to do so we would be quite prepared to do that.

Prepared now seems a mild word. Obviously the stations were willing to go to great lengths to do so. Which is what they did — and they won the day.

Saturday afternoon — sport is king — and the listening largesse is, to say the least, always generous.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

If You Can't Laugh, Smile

'Mankind', it has been remarked, 'has an eye-lid that can shut out the world of sight. There is no such equivalent for the ear. It is always open as the prime means of receiving communications'. And eavesdropping, privy to the unguarded moment – or an open microphone – has produced splendid unrehearsed hilarities.

During one broadcast of Coronets of England, the death of Essex called for a specific sound effect – the tolling of Westminster bells. Unhappily, the operator dropped his needle on a wrong track of the 'Effects' disc and up came a cuckoo clock. 'Queen Elizabeth' gave 'reign' to such a lusty hoot of laughter that her false teeth shot out on the studio floor. Nature's bolt, in turn, broke up the whole cast, and try as they might, they could not get re-started. The play had to be abandoned for the night.

. . .

Derek Prentice, BBC wartime voice, joined 3DB after the cessation of hostilities. It fell to his lot to announce the distressing news of a Tamworth housewife who was 'bitten on the funnel by a finger-webbed spider'.

. . .

Alexander Macdonald wrote a lot of radio material for a former Adelaide boy-soprano named Harry Van der Sluys, otherwise Bullet Sluice, otherwise Roy Rene, otherwise 'Mo', otherwise Mr McCackie of Colgate's McCackie Mansions.

Macdonald recalls in his highly-readable autobiography, *The*

Modern OB set up in the home of Graham Kennedy when he was running a programme 1970-71. With him are Brian Newington left and Tim Lynch

Country radio 1973 style. Susan Irvine, broadcasting from 4TO Townsville as 'commander-in-chief' of the Army request session

Ukelele Player Under The Red Lamp, how 'Go for your life, Lady Carruthers' worked its way into the idiom of the land. In a Gay Paree sketch, Mo runs into the noblest bloom of the perfumed British aristocracy – Lady C. Mo asked Lady Carruthers how she was enjoying herself.

> To which she replied coyly, 'I've got something to confess, Mr McCackie – I've been here for a fortnight and I haven't once visited the Louvre'.
>
> His reaction to this interesting news, to be sure, was capable of convulsing the house for a good two minutes; after which he would murmur, in an ear-splitting whisper – 'Oh you poor kid!' Which naturally drew a fresh wave of guffaws.
>
> Her next line was an exit throwaway. 'But now I must go, I must go'.
>
> To which, one night, with an expression of obscene sympathy, Mo added 'Oh yes, go! GO! Go for your life, Lady Carruthers'.

. . .

Arthur Upfield, the author, when negotiating for the rights to readings from his books in the 'thirties, used to send thoughts on his personal notepaper embossed 'All the fame, but no bloody money'.

. . .

George Edwards, old hand at handling passing crises came quickly to the rescue of an actor thrown off balance by the unexpected whistle of a train outside EMI studios – right in the middle of a period drama. Edwards' improvised line 'There goes the Snake Gully Express', while hugely out of time and context, did not 'throw' the cast.

. . .

Giving evidence before a Royal Commission on Lunacy in Westminster, an official of the English Ministry of Health said inmates frequently complained that they were being 'poisoned' by wireless.

. . .

Orson Welles upstaged: In 1925 French listeners, in the middle of a concert, heard an SOS from a steamer, yells and cries of 'Help, we are sinking' – then silence. Part of a radio play being rehearsed in another studio, unfortunately got crossed and was accidentally fed into the station transmission. 'There was great panic among listeners'.

. . .

Four actors – Robert Burnard, Keith Hudson, Richard Davies and Reginald Goldsworthy – refused to take up their parts in an episode of Don Joyce's Passing Parade in 1945 because it tilted at the old school tie.

Public schoolboys all, they objected to the script as 'a sneering, lying attack on an old English institution which has weathered and is still weathering jealous criticism'. The episode was subsequently scrapped because stations also feared its reaction on listeners – and the sponsor.

. . .

Norman Shepherd, *bon-vivant* and colourful character actor of the 'thirties, was a regular patron of the now-gone victualling establishment of Fletcher Chester in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne. He bought his wine, his cheeses, his gourmet foods there. As Governor Bligh, during a recording of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, when he was supposed to say 'I'll have you hanged from the yardarm, Fletcher Christian', he came out with 'I'll have you hanged from the yardarm, Fletcher Chester'.

. . .

The angle of the dangle was of small concern to a 3SH Swan Hill engineer one Sunday morning. Half way up the three hundred foot mast, with spanner and screwdriver in hand, his belt broke and down fell his pants. What to do – drop the implements or

carry on with essentials bared? He kicked off his trousers, carried on his upward way, effected the necessary adjustments and came down to earth, intact and unperturbed, to the plaudits of a small but admiring throng.

. . .

Versatile, volatile Wally Grant, now dead but then with 2LT, Lithgow had everything sparkling and split-second timed for the opening of the station in 1939 by the Postmaster General. Two days before the opening the transmitting mast toppled over. Wally carried on regardless — strung the aerial round accommodating tree-branches — and the ceremony went to air as planned.

. . .

Charlie Vaude of 3DB promised his vast community-singing audience at the Melbourne Town Hall that they were to see 'a man-eating shark'. Up went the curtain and there was his broadcasting partner — Renn Millar — eating a tasty meal of flake.

. . .

Harry Douglas, founder of 2HD, was asked by the PMG in 1925 for a copy of his rates. The reply was terse but to the point: 'I have no advertising, therefore I have no rates'.

. . .

Rocke-Tompsitt, the manufacturing chemists, were highly sceptical of radio, pre-war. On being told that it could sell anything the late Sam Fripp, jestingly, authorized the appearance of ten announcements for a preparation that could clean strawdeckers — about as visible then as the stove-pipe hat. They got more than fifty enquiries, had to whip up an improvised cleaning mixture, and continued with radio from then on.

. . .

One of radio's most accomplished actors, Douglas Kelly, the man from whom the devils had to be cast in ARP's *Prince of Peace* was required to scream – and say a few words – when this miracle was in process. He got so carried away that 'he began to choke . . . slobber, roar and literally foam at the mouth, rolling on the studio carpet', an 'electrifying' performance which left the rest of the cast open-mouthed and speechless with awe for it almost appeared as if the demons had got into Kelly instead of out.

. . .

A 3MA announcer, in a request session for the Mildura Base Hospital, was asked to play 'I Didn't Know the Gun was Loaded' for an inmate great with child. Said he: 'If you didn't know then, I'll bet you know now'.

The same scholarly gent, befuddled by the logo Henry VIII, described the great one as Henry Vill.

. . .

7HO Hobart started off in 1930 with studio manager, announcer, typist all in the one room. A microphone on a clothesline was moved backwards and forwards according to the needs of singer, instrumentalist, announcer, or studio gramophone.

When the announcer spoke, any conversation the manager might be having with a potential advertiser would be suspended. Scatters, as spots were then called, were 1/6 each.

. . .

The Shell Show, just switched to the Macquarie Network, was about to commence before an audience of four hundred, all in best bib-and-tucker. A drum roll, a flourish of trumpets, and up went the curtain at the Comedy Theatre – taking with it the microphone and stand. It fell to the floor, caught by compere Frank Cave – and the show got under way.

. . .

A Brisbane announcer, *circa* winter of 1948, in a chilly studio, announced, 'Your Tiny Hand is Frozen'. He added, 'And so is my arse'. He was put off the air for a week.

. . .

7HT Hobart discovered a boy named Donald Douglas who could do complicated sums in seconds. They devised a show called The Figure Wizard, sent it to Leo Finn in Sydney, then representing several radio stations. The programme was sold to the Major network who in turn sold it to Aspro for national sponsorship.

Young Donald, missing out on a comparatively simple question, told compere Eric Pearce he had a bad headache. Cue for perfect ad-lib commercial:
Said Eric Pearce: 'You must take some Aspro, Donald'.
Said Donald: 'I did and they're no good'.

. . .

'It is with deep regret that we announce the death of . . .' These words, after the morning hymn, preceded by three slow gongs and 'Air on G String' are not unfamiliar to country listeners. Such paid announcements form a useful source of revenue. 3UL Warragul was, and presumably still is, blessed with morticians of congruous name: H. W. Devine and Company, Diggle and Crewes, Kittle and Tuttle – as familiar in those parts as Omo and Coca Cola.

. . .

Religious passions were stirred when 3BO announced with regret the passing of an honourable Bendigonian. 'Requiem Mass', added the announcer, 'will be celebrated at the Presbyterian Church'.

. . .

In the old days, rectifier tubes in the control room of stations, apparently had a habit of becoming 'microphonic'. The effect was a high-pitched howl. It happened on the opening night of 2CH in

1932 when high churchmen from various denominations were guests of the licensee – the Council of Churches. The chief engineer rose to the occasion. Over the offending valves he placed rubber items usually reserved for purposes of a more intimate nature. To avoid upsetting those austere dignitaries a board was placed over the valves. With valves quietened the evening, as they say, passed off without further incident.

. . .

Jack Davey, mostly observed the no-drink rule before and during appearances on air. But on one off-air occasion he fell by the wayside. It was a presentation to two elderly ladies in Horsham, Victoria, who, during wartime, ran a teashop. As a tribute from the Red Cross for the money they had raised, Jack did the honours and added as a gratuitous throwaway plug that 'they own the finest horshop in Teasham'.

. . .

Another true Jack Davey quizz story:

Jack: Right up close. What is a sporran?

Lady (thoughtfully): It's a long hairy thing that hangs down between a Scotsman's legs.

Jack (bursting): It's not the answer written down here – but GIVE HER THE MONEY!

. . .

On relay from London with a description of the coronation of King George VI came the voice of a well-known station personality – and a woman at that: 'Everybody is waving flags. It's wonderful. Even the pawnbrokers have painted their balls red, white and blue'.

. . .

KZ's Ron Atholwood developed a mental block whenever he was called upon to pronounce Rimsky-Korsakov. He'd repeat the

name over and over again before he opened the microphone. He concentrated so much one night that while he got the name right the number came out as 'The Bum of the Flightly Bee'.

. . .

At one stage, rough-hewn Charlie Vaude obviously was not altogether to the taste of the chairman of his board. 'Mr Vaude', he suggested, was 'a less popular attraction than formerly and that advantage be taken of the terms of his agreement to send him to the other states for a while'.

. . .

Interstate rivalry exposed: in 1932 some Melbourne stations decided not to 'undertake any broadcasts in connection with the Sydney Harbour Bridge' opening.

. . .

In that same year stations decided to take advertisements for wine providing it was placed in the late evenings and providing that 'the stations should not be placed in the position of urging people to consume wines'.

. . .

A breakthrough for the troops. Vatican Radio, in 1943, was induced to broadcast the results and starting prices of the Melbourne Cup.

. . .

Melbourne's legendary 'Nicky' introduced a commercial for a Northcote butcher by playing the lyrics of 'The Flies Crawled up the Window'. The sponsor, not amused, cancelled his contract.

. . .

Bob Dyer, losing out on a bet with Jack Davey on who could catch the biggest shark, had to 'valet' for a week. First job — in front of a battery of cameras — polish Davey's shoes, manicure his nails, brush down all his sixty or so suits.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

The Sound or the Fury?

TV folk, prey to the myth of modernity, not so long ago were prone to refer, disparagingly, to their electronic forebear as 'good old steam radio'. But instead of the pressure subsiding the steam gathered a bigger head. Radio, indeed, blew hot and strong; showed no disposition to defer to what had been anticipated as chill winds that might eventually freeze it out of business.

The signal today is loud and clear – radio is gaining strength – in terms of proportionate advertising support TV is having difficulty in holding the line. Maybe the advent of colour will help it.

Why, the argument ran, would people just listen when they could have sound and picture combined? One picture was worth a thousand words, the camera would make you a living witness to events as they were occurring at that very moment. It was the eye itself – restless, roving – herald of the soul, proteus of passion, the mirror of mankind at work and at play.

It was like saying that one of your senses could be discredited, then disconnected. But it was against nature and nature re-asserted its traditional right to use sound in its exquisitely individual and highly personal way.

Television, unwittingly, helped to re-establish the eternal values for it became more a record of things past, subject to replays of filmed or taped versions of other peoples' proclivities and peccadilloes. An alien face at that – largely cast in American mould, showing up in the lounge-rooms of the nation, reflecting not so much passion as pain, for the rain of bullets was relentless and violence was the transplanted norm.

One thing that can be said about radio is that while much of it is inconsequential and noisy it is seldom nasty and noisome – in the sense of granting sanction to the pistol, the flick-knife, the knuckle-duster as legitimate instruments of social intercourse. Radio is cheerful, living for the day. There's no venom in it. So much of television is yesterday – cheerless, eschatological. There is no tomorrow. Nearly everybody is dead. Or at least most of the people in last night's episodes are not feeling too good. In this context it has been remarked that, in common with film, US television has probably done more to deprave tastes and debauch values than any former resource known to mankind.

Unhappily, emulation of such trans-pacific mores has become contagious, with most Australian dramatic production predicated on similar terminal procedures.

Radio, then, is a 'now' thing – television only occasionally. If, in classical terms, the pleasures of the moment are the only ultimate reality, radio is substance – television merely shadow. It is a totally unexpected reversal for if seeing is believing, radio is a lie. It can't be seen, it can't be touched, it can't be felt, it can't be smelt. How then has such a medium, lacking all sensory capacity except sound, managed to weave a web that holds the world by the ears?

One of the BBC's most distinguished documentary producers, Laurence Gilliam, puts it this way:

> Broadcasting offers to the writer of our time a form of expression and a method of publication that demands discipline, flair in the use of the language to be spoken, and the ability to hold the attention of a vast miscellaneous audience – by words, sound and music. In the last resort all are exercises in the most modern of techniques of that most ancient of all crafts – the art of telling a true story.

Professor C. A. Kirkpatrick of the University of North Carolina says of radio:

> All the warmth, the persuasiveness, the understanding and the memorability of the human voice are available; the same holds for the impact and the effectiveness of sound effects. Conversation, discussion and interviews can be relaxed. Because the listener cannot see either the radio performers or

their settings he can imagine them, identify himself with them and become involved precisely as he prefers. This is impossible for television.

Even Malcolm Muggeridge, who spends a good deal of his time in front of the cameras preparing for his future role as one of the golden presbyters on the right hand of God, felt compelled to admit 'if this telly business were to conk out tomorrow, I wouldn't feel a pang, though it might cost me a penny or two. I'd much rather have the printed word or the spoken word. Those committed wholly to television get consumed by it'.

One test: who would want to see that superb radio programme – the BBC's My Word on the box? It surely could only detract from the immeasurable pleasure of disembodied participation. That is why the BBC has been smart enough to play it by ear.

Consider too, this intelligence. Tests carried out in Toronto with different student groups conveyed the same information via radio, TV, lecture and print. The students, apparently, performed better with the TV and Radio-channelled information than they did with either lecture or print; with TV well above the radio group.

Surprised by the result, it was repeated on a bigger and more sophisticated scale, and with print embellished with better typography and lay-out. TV and Radio again came out on top, but unexpectedly, radio performed the better of the two.

'It was a long time before the obvious reason declared itself', says Marshall McLuhan, 'namely that TV is a cool, participant medium. When hotted up by dramatization and stingers it performs less well because there is less opportunity for participation. Radio is a hot medium. When given additional intensity, it performs better'.

'The ear', says McLuhan, 'is hyperesthetic. The eye is neutral'. 'Given', he says, 'only the sound of a play we have to fill in ALL of the senses, not just the sight of the action. So much do-it-yourself, or completion and "closure" of action develops a kind of independent isolation'. Particularly does this apply to the young who can spin sound into a cocoon, to shut them off, give them privacy, screen out the voices of others and grant them 'immunity from parental behest'.

It took radio quite some time to appreciate the subtleties of

sound, the marvellous mandate conferred by unfettered imagination, the ability from things heard to throw up on the screen of the mind pictures of just-me intimacy; pictures that differed markedly from person to person and reflected, in a very real sense, a vivid multi-coloured spectrum denied to static print or moving TV pictures. Both the former gave you no option but to accept what was put in front of you, eliminating self-implementation and subjecting the viewer to the uniformity of imposed meaning. Subjective reactions, maybe, would or could follow but there was little real choice. Not like the panorama of possibilities conjured up by sound and mind – an inner interpretive process, one sense playing on another, and yours alone. Sound has a discriminatory delicacy (so does smell and touch). Sight is so arbitrary with little or no allowance for nuance and transmutation. The continued popularity of racing, cricket and football broadcasts attests radio's sensory strength. [Curious, in this context, how TV sporting men still talk with the voice of radio, describing, unnecessarily, what the viewer can see for himself. 'The umpire comes in, bounces the ball, up it goes, Morris gets the tap' . . . and on and on and on, in interminable detail. The compulsive urge always to SAY something.] In many respects, perhaps, the incapacity of so many TV commentators to keep their big mouths shut has contributed to the mediocrity of boxed orators and sent many followers of sport back to the older medium where they have to perform part of the 'work' themselves. (Maybe that's the psychopathological clue to it all: the mind is trying to reject formularised, computerised, standardized thinking, it is protecting its desire for autonomy.) For taking the wonder out of it is an indictment of the unimaginative hacks still cluttering up the tubes; especially the fleshy illiterates from the football field who handle English as if it were a second language.

In short, radio leaves the mind free to roam, creating its own sharp images, an 'extension of the central nervous system that is matched only by human speech itself'. No wonder it is, as some stations have called it in their promotions: colour radio – colour it red, colour it blue, colour it what you like, so long as it's *you*.

An American writer, Brock Bower, was to put it this way when talking about radio shows of the past. 'Nothing like them will ever be done on television because they demand the very thing TV has

scotched: imagination. The listener produced half the show right in his own head, taking his lead from a range of voices, a musical bridge, and a few sound effects. The viewer doesn't have to produce anything. It's all there – right in front of him . . . and only an old-time listener can tell what a narrow, little everyday vista it is. Alfred Hitchcock can reproduce HUMAN criminal types . . . but radio could rush you right into eternal evil. It can open to it the land of Faery, Weir, Mars, the Dismal Swamp, the Dark Side of the Moon, literally anywhere imaginable . . . not just police records and the minutes of psychiatric clinics . . . what came after was television . . . it ended up, significantly, with a bunch of puppets'.

But perhaps to redress the balance a little television's way we should quote the words of a former chairman of the US Federal Communications Commission.

> To twist the radio dial today, is to be showed through a bazaar, a clamorous casbah of pitchmen and commercials which plead, bleat, pressure, whistle, groan and shout. Too many stations have become publicly franchised jukeboxes.

So there you are. Nevertheless, in broad philosophical terms there must be something to be said for active aural participation (even if in anger) to bleak visual passivity (in apathy).

While there is still doubt among researchers if the continuous parade of violence on TV and cinema has any significant emulative effect, what some do say is that there is evidence that the young or immature have come to accept it as part of the pattern of living. As such, acceptance – or lack of desire to go to the aid of someone under attack or in distress – must be considered socially undesirable. Radio carries no such stigma.

But enough of churlish asides about TV, even though it was assumed that it would chase radio out of the house: all it did was chase it out of the living room. The cagey old communicator merely gave ground, decided to split forces, and take over the kitchen, the bedrooms, the backroom, the car, and the relatively untouched domain of the outdoors.

The transistor helped it do just that. By almost biblical injunction radio, under stress, went forth and multipled. And how it multiplied. The transistor revolution changed both the economics of the business and the pattern of programming.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

The Crystal Ball

Old-timers in the business — among them enduring characters like Norman Banks — acknowledge that over-addiction to formula thinking or follow-the-leader programming, has given rise to the impression, rightly or wrongly, that too many commercial radio stations sound the same.

'As a result of this', says Banks, 'a lot of people who are essentially creative have just thrown in the sponge and just don't allow their talents to work. There is not much consideration given to "ideas" men these days'.

'There is a greater variety of entertainment on the ABC. Commercial radio has made the mistake of launching into grooves'.

Stations, which to the untutored ear (ie anyone over forty) seem to play the same music and use the same type of trans-pacific-accented deejays, hotly dispute that 'music' stations are much of a muchness. They define their 'sound' in the jargon of the trade — top-forty, middle-of-the-road, album — and so on. If you are too much of a 'square' or a 'wrinkly' to appreciate the differences the fault lies with you and not the station.

It must be conceded that they have a point. And, having said that, what of the future?

Talk to radio station managers about what they see ahead and you find words like 'Image', 'Identity', 'Demographic Targeting', 'Selective Programming', creeping into the conversation.

In passing, it would seem apparent, too, that there is considerable unease about the directions the Ministry for the Media has in mind for commercial radio to follow.

Federation past-president Alan Brown has recently gone on record as saying 'Radio must not be told what to programme in order to serve the special interests of political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations or any other pressure group'. Says 3AW's Ron Fowell,

> I think that the essential ingredients on which radio has based its programming will survive but the method and presentation will change. It will be necessary, however, to ring the changes within the basic image structure. Each station is looking for identity in product. We are all looking for a share of market, importantly a specific share of market. It is no longer possible for any one station to be all things to all people. Having established where we are going in seeking that share of market we will not be able to remain with the same people doing the same thing for ever and ever. We have to revitalize audience interest and to do that we must be more imaginative and inventive. Innovations rather than major changes seem to be the road we must follow.

Fowell sees the stations' greatest need in the foreseeable future as research that goes beyond mere head counts.

'We must' he adds, 'have more motivational information at our disposal so that sales concepts and programming formats can be tailored more intelligently'.

And he sees each station as locally-oriented because local values and interests are the major factor in establishing audiences and markets for advertisers.

There seems to be little reason for assuming that there will be any resurgence of drama, quiz or variety but what does emerge is that the medium must become more professional, more entertaining, more sophisticated.

Station managers admit that there are not enough first-class personalities in the business. Why? Because not enough money is allocated to attract and then develop first-class brains. The point is well taken. Top microphone personalities overseas are men of considerable academic attainment – apart, of course, from their entertainment capability.

Lewis Bennett agrees that radio in the future will reflect the

increasing intellectual stature of both management and microphone personalities.

> We will be looking primarily for men who know what they are talking about, rather than men who merely happen to have a voice considered suitable to the needs of the moment and can read something put in front of them or culled from some 'with-it' magazine. The emphasis will change from 'all sound and little substance' to substance intelligently moulded to radio's increasing call for more sophisticated comment. Unhappily, much of the talk we hear today — both in a musical and informational context — is derivative, platitudinous, immature. We have to face up to the fact that our audience is getting smarter. Radio must also be smart enough to stamp what it says with authority, interest, good humour.

One country station principal, Ron Haig-Muir of 2QN Deniliquin, carries forward this idea of announcers changing to 'informers' — especially in the context of the 'local' station reflecting the needs and drives of the immediate surrounding community. Says Haig-Muir,

> The real key to the sound of the 80s will hinge on the fact that people are more interested in what is happening on their own doorsteps than on those of other people. Because it affects them personally the order of interest in information is domestic, local, regional, Australian and then international — in that order. These informers will staff an information centre which will provide local news, local sporting commentaries, local environmental data, local 'technical' information relating to the industry of the area . . . what cannot be localized will be dropped unless it is of tremendous importance . . . all information will be put to air as it comes to hand and then processed into scheduled information programmes for more detailed release.

Macquarie Network chief executive, Stan Clark, also sees radio in the eighties fulfilling the role of electronic newspapers.

'This' he believes, 'will show up first in the densely populated

areas where early morning home delivery of newspapers will become increasingly difficult because of traffic congestion'.

> The use of the world's telephonic systems has increased the speed and flexibility of radio as a news reporting medium. People will hear news first on radio in the morning, see it on TV at night, and read about it in depth in the papers next day.

Control Board Chairman, Myles Wright, sees Frequency Modulation as the most important development in broadcasting, primarily because it will overcome the present acute shortage of frequencies and secondly because it could open up a 'whole spectrum of other types of programmes'.

Wright sees no dramatic change in the mass preference for music, news and services as we at present know them, but thinks that with enlarged facilities there will be room for 'the imaginative experimenter, the educator, the "public issue" supporter'.

'And', he adds wistfully, perhaps in the voice of the former actor, 'dare I hope that old-fashioned people like myself who believe in radio-drama as a distinctive art form might again hear it from stations removed from the pressures of catering to the mass audience'.

And what of that 'new chum' — the Ministry for the Media to which all commercial radio is now beholden?

Already it has made some moves in the music field. Stations are now required to devote at least 10 per cent of all music time to Australian performers — as distinct from the 5 per cent quota already in existence for Australian composers. The performance quota is expected to go up to 30 per cent by 1976.

Department head, James Oswin, who has been involved in both management and programming for radio and television, would also like to see radio develop thrusts that would take it out of the rut of present orthodoxy.

'While', he says 'commercial radio showed considerable ingenuity in both meeting and overcoming any threat to its viability in the television era it seems to me that there are dangers in assuming that with the music-news-sport formula radio reached the peak of its possibilities and there are no further heights to scale'.

Four of the current top names on the broadcast scene:
Sydney's Bob Rogers and Gary O'Callaghan; Adelaide's Bob Francis; Melbourne's Allan Lappan

ABC's operetta series 'Deep In My Heart' with Lorenzo Nolan, Glenda Raymond, Raymond McDonnell, Cherrill Rowston, Brian Crossley

Gerald Lyons during his talk-back session on 3DB

> Not that these three elements should be discouraged – rather that encouragement should be given to stations to broaden their base. Radio, for instance, has been too reliant on recorded music produced mainly by people anxious to use the medium as a sales vehicle to get their product into the home. They are not really producing for radio as such. Live music and the establishment by the radio industry of its own production facilities seem worthwhile areas for consideration. An increasingly articulate, indigenous, entertaining accent to our sound is not beyond the capability of an industry that has already clearly demonstrated it can chart new courses when it wants to, or has to. We would like to help radio extend its present horizons.

Oswin's assurances may be set against what D. L. Foster, Federal Director of the Federation of Australian Commercial Broadcasters calls the 'unpredictable factors'. These he summarizes as the future extent of governmental interference with the medium and the evolution of community attitudes.

'I am', he says 'deeply concerned that some of our more cherished ideas of freedom of speech and of the press do not seem so important to people today as they were twenty-five years ago. Given that we get through the next decade more or less unscathed I believe the sound of radio in the eighties will be the sounds primarily of speech:– news, information, opinion, controversy, description, dialogue, actuality'.

> I expect music, the other great mainstream of radio programming, to decline in importance because music will progressively become more available to people – as and when they want it – through other means.

Foster's remarks make sense, given the present trends towards proliferation of musical styles and labels. Once it was just a case of classical or popular. Now there are divisions and sub-divisions. First there was rock – now there is hard rock and soft rock and acid rock – whatever that is. Gratifying needs may well become a matter of personal sublimation. It would seem, therefore, that we are in for talk and more talk – desirably more balanced, penetrating, amusing, than it is now.

There is some statistical, or demographic justification for commercial radio re-thinking its dedication to the younger market. Many stations have fallen prey to the myth that the population is getting 'younger'. One of the oft-quoted figures has been that there are more people under twenty-five than there are over. It was not true in 1970, indeed, in an estimated population of 12,551,707, more than 6¾ millions were over twenty-five — nearly a million more than the 'unders'.

Given assumptions based on expected mortality, fertility and migration patterns the Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics anticipates that the five to twenty-fours in 1975 will comprise 35.64% of the population, the twenty-five to sixty-fours 45.93%. By 1980 comparable percentages will be 35.09% : 45.97%. By 1985 the projected distribution will be 34.89% in the younger group, 46.28% in the older.

Apart from age trends it is also worth noting that last known figures (1968-69) showed that median income for all people in the work force aged fifteen to nineteen was $1430; twenty to twenty-four $2470; twenty-five to thirty-four $3370; thirty-five to forty-four $3480.

Thus, age-wise and money-wise over-concentration on youth as the major target of the commercial advertising message would appear of dubious validity.

What of other events, which will help shape radio's future? Men who are actively involved in communications technology say that the next fifteen years will see more changes in our audio-visual world than have occurred in all recorded history.

The cassette, both for sound and picture, is already with us. Satellites are part of the scene and as their radiated signals are unaffected by earthly interference it is not hard to visualize the staging of regular events, the pursuit of trade, the interchange of data and information to hundreds of millions of people in the global village at the one time.

Multi-national corporations are even now weighing up the sales possibilities of sponsoring one-shot telecasts costing an estimated $15 million to reach an estimated audience of ninety million people.

Hire the facilities of three satellites with automatic translation facilities for the audio and you can virtually talk to the whole world in one hit.

It is likely that before the seventies are out – maybe in 1978 – Australia, too, will have its own satellite carrying all forms of telecommunications traffic.

It has been forecast that with a single integrated system in our homes we will have instantaneous access to electronic newspapers, magazines, technical publications, instructional material, direct mail advertisements, ordering facilities on stores. All this plus contact, entertainment, information via telephone, television, cassette, radio, stereo, holograph, microfilm, laser, computer. In other words, a home communications centre or 'homecom' as E. B. Weiss calls it.

And if you don't want to listen or watch or participate right then, well, press a button and consign it all to a retrieval system that will store and play back all you have missed or wish to see or hear again at a time convenient to you.

Weiss has coined a new name for broadcasting. He calls it 'narrow-casting' because 'communication will come under the complete control and discretion of an increasingly sophisticated user'. So, while technology develops this awesome global reach it 'will permit and therefore actually create social conditions that will demand the individual determination of message'.

Will radio, as we know it now, be by-passed and cast into the long silence by this challenging electronic thrust?

If history has any lessons in the field of human communications the answer must be in the negative. The medium survives in all its forms, the new superimposed on the old; but both easily distinguishable.

'Ban the Bomb', 'Kill the Bill' – modern manifestations of the first wall messages all those hundreds of years before Christ – are still with us.

So, too, is the taverner's sign, the merchant's scroll, the artificer's screed. It was expected that with the invention of moveable type and the introduction of newspapers the pamphlet and the poster would disappear. Moving neon would displace fixed cipher. Radio was presumed to damage print and condemn to lingering death the gramophone record. Television was to herald the doom of steam radio and the cinema. Antennae TV was to be outmoded by cable. The cartridge and the cassette were bullets to weaken the hold of the traditional reproductive sound systems.

All appear in relatively healthy state – even the old-fashioned balloon and sky-writing signs still drift lazily over sports grounds. The message seems to be that all informational process has some inbuilt capacity to adapt and survive.

As the commercial radio people say, 'Fifty fabulous years – and the best is yet to come'.

The magic spark is unlikely to be extinguished – ever.

Appendices

APPENDIX A

FACB PRESIDENTS 1931-1973

1931	M. B. Duffy	1953	H. E. Beaver
1932	M. B. Duffy	1954	J. S. Larkin
1933	M. B. Duffy	1955	J. T. Taylor
1934	M. B. Duffy	1956	B. Samuel
1935	A. E. Bennett	1957	J. E. Ridley
1936	A. E. Bennett	1958	B. C. Button
1937	J. B. Chandler	1959	L. C. Hynes
1938	D. T. Worrall	1960	Lewis Bennett
1939	C. F. Marden	1961	C. R. Carson
1940	C. F. Marden	1962	C. R. Carson
1941	V. M. Brooker	1963	M. F. E. Wright
1942	Hon. R. A. King MLC	1964	N. E. Balmer
1943	A. Fairhall	1965	C. R. Carson
1944	O. J. Nilsen	1966	A. D. Faulkner
1945	A. C. Paddison	1967	J. S. Larkin
1946	A. C. Paddison	1968	D. L. Foster
1947	J. E. Ridley	1969	S. R. I. Clark
1948	J. E. Ridley	1970	R. C. Crawford
1949	J. E. Ridley	1971	G. C. Lewis
1950	J. E. Ridley	1972	Sir Lincoln Hynes ÖBE
1951	K. A. MacDonald	1973	A. B. Brown
1952	A. E. R. Fox	1974	L. J. Hyle (President-elect)

APPENDIX B

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF M.F. BROADCASTING STATIONS WHICH ARE, OR HAVE BEEN, IN OPERATION SINCE THE INCEPTION OF THE SEALED SET SCHEME

INCLUDES ORIGINAL AND SUBSEQUENT

LICENSEES

CALL SIGNS

LOCATIONS

DATES OF CHANGES

M. MAGILL
JULY 1973
(Australian Broadcasting Control Board)

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
2SB/BL	Sydney (NSW)	N	Broadcasters (Sydney) Ltd (As 'Sealed Set' station then as 'A' licence)	New South Wales Broadcasting Co Ltd (14.8.28) (As 'A' licence) Australian Broadcasting Company (22.7.29)	Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	13.11.23
2FC	Sydney (NSW)	N	Farmer & Company (As 'Sealed Set' station)	2FC Ltd (1.12.27) New South Wales Broadcasting Co Ltd (As 'A' licence) (14.8.28) Australian Broadcasting Company (1.7.32)	Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	5.12.23
3AR	Melbourne (Vic)	N	Associated Radio Company (As 'Sealed Set' station)	Dominion Broadcasting Co Ltd (As 'A' licence) (1.3.28) Australian Broadcasting Company (8.8.29)	Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	26.1.24
6WF	Perth (WA)	N	Westralian Farmers Ltd (As 'Sealed Set' station then as 'A' licence)	Postmaster-General's Department (20.12.28) Australian Broadcasting Company (1.9.29)	Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	4.6.24
3LO	Melbourne (Vic)	N	Broadcasting Co of Australia	Dominion Broadcasting Co Ltd (As 'A' licence) (1.3.28) Australian Broadcasting Company (22.7.29)	Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	13.10.24
2BE	Sydney (NSW)	C	Burgin Electric Co (As 'B' licence)		Ceased (6.11.29)	7.11.24
5CL	Adelaide (SA)	N	Central Broadcasters Ltd (As 'A' licence)	Australian Broadcasting Company (14.1.30)	Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	20.11.24
3WR	Wangaratta (Vic)	C	Wangaratta Sports Depot		1st station ceased (22.12.25) 2nd station commenced (5.1.31) (See below)	1.12.24
7ZL	Hobart (Tas)	N	Associated Radio Co (As 'A' licence)	Tasmanian Broadcasters Pty Ltd (As 'A' licence) (19.7.27) Australian Broadcasting Company (14.12.30)	Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	17.12.24
2UE	Sydney (NSW)	C	Electric Utilities Supply (As 'B' licence)		Radio 2UE Sydney Pty Ltd (18.3.32)	26.1.25

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
2HD	Newcastle (NSW)	C	Mr H. A. Douglas (As 'B' licence)	Mr W. W. Johnson (1.2.28) (As 'B' licence) Airsales Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (1.10.30) (Service Closed 8.1.41) (Licence Revoked 7.2.41) (Recommenced 15.1.45)	Airsales Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	27.1.25
2UW	Sydney (NSW)	C	Mr O. Sandel	Sandel Radio Ltd (13.3.28) Radio Broadcasting Ltd (22.6.28) Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation Ltd (16.10.33)	Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation Pty Ltd (9.8.38)	13.2.25
5DN	Adelaide (SA)	C	5DN Pty Ltd	V. L. H. Hume and E. J. Hume (8.5.29) (Exors Est E. J. Hume)	Hume Broadcasters Pty Ltd (1.12.30)	24.2.25
3UZ	Melbourne (Vic)	C	Oliver J. Nilsen & Co (As 'B' licence)		Nilsens Broadcasting Service Pty Ltd (6.2.34)	8.3.25
4QG	Brisbane (Qld)	N	Queensland Radio Service (State Government) (As 'A' licence)	Australian Broadcasting Company (30.1.30)	Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	27.7.25
4GR	Toowoomba (Qld)	C	Gold Radio Electric Service (Edward Gold)	Edward Gold (5.6.31)	Gold Radio Service Pty Ltd (15.2.32)	9.8.25
2KY	Sydney (NSW)	C	Trades and Labor Council of NSW (As 'B' licence) (Revoked 19.12.38) New licence granted (24.12.38)	Trustees and Secretary of the Labor Council of NSW (24.12.38)	2KY Broadcasters Pty Ltd (26.10.70)	31.10.25
2MK	Bathurst (NSW)	C	Mockler Bros (As 'B' licence)		Ceased February 1931	11.11.25
2GB	Sydney (NSW)	C	Theosophical Broadcasting Station Pty Ltd (As 'B' licence)		Broadcasting Station 2GB Pty Ltd (23.12.36)	23.8.26
3DB	Melbourne (Vic)	C	Druleigh Business and Technical College Pty Ltd (As 'B' licence)	3DB Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (21.6.27) (As 'B' licence)	The Herald and Weekly Times Ltd (18.10.37)	21.2.27
5KA	Adelaide (SA	C	Sport Radio Broadcasting Co Ltd Service closed 8.1.41 (Licence Revoked 7.2.41) (New Licence granted 25.6.43)	5KA Broadcasting Co Ltd	5KA Broadcasters Pty Ltd (20.1.64)	25.3.27

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
2CZ	Lismore (NSW)	C	G. W. Exton	Call sign changed to 2XN (22.5.30)	Richmond River Broadcasters Pty Ltd (10.2.36)	1.5.30
2XN	Lismore (NSW)	C		Call sign changed to 2LM (10.2.36)		
2LM	Lismore (NSW)	C				
6ML	Perth (WA)	C	Musgroves Ltd	WA Broadcasters Ltd (17.8.33)	Ceased (30.5.43)	19.3.30
3BA	Ballarat (Vic)	C	Ballarat Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Ballarat Broadcasters Pty Ltd	31.7.30
5AD	Adelaide (SA)	C	Advertiser Newspapers Ltd		Advertiser Newspapers Ltd	2.8.30
7HO	Hobart (Tas)	C	Commercial Broadcasters Ltd		Commercial Broadcasters Pty Ltd (10.4.38)	13.8.30
4BC	Brisbane (Qld)	C	J. B. Chandler & Co		Commonwealth Broadcasting Corporation (Qld) Pty Ltd (28.4.37)	16.8.30
4BK	Brisbane (Qld)	C	Brisbane Broadcasting Co Ltd	Brisbane Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (2.5.34)	Queensland Newspapers Pty Ltd (15.11.41)	29.9.30
3TR	Trafalgar (Vic)	C	Gippsland Broadcasting Service Trafalgar Ltd	Station moved to Sale (16.5.32) Gippsland Publicity Pty Ltd (28.6.32) Broadcast Entertainments Pty Ltd (Operator 3.5.36 to 6.2.38, Licensee 7.2.38) Latrobe Valley & Gippsland Broadcasters Pty Ltd (9.2.59) Gippsland Latrobe Valley Telecasters Ltd (19.3.65)	V. B. N. Ltd (27.4.65)	29.9.30
3TR	Sale (Vic)	C				
3GL	Geelong (Vic)	C	Geelong Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Geelong Broadcasters Pty Ltd	31.12.30
3KZ	Melbourne (Vic)	C	Industrial Printing & Publicity Co	*Op* E. H. Dalberg (8.12.30 to 10.2.32)	*Lic* Industrial Printing and Publicity Co Ltd *Op* 3KZ Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (10.2.32)	8.12.30
7LA	Launceston (Tas)	C	Findlay and Wills Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Findlay and Wills Broadcasters Pty Ltd	13.12.30
2MV	Moss Vale (NSW)	C	The Moss Vale Broadcasting Service Ltd		Ceased (16.9.31)	15.12.30
2RI	Albury (NSW)	C	Charles Rice	Call sign changed to 2AY prior to commencement	Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd (1.6.32)	17.12.30
2AY	Albury (NSW)	C				
2NC	Newcastle (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Company		Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	19.12.30

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
3WR 3WR 3SR	Wangaratta (Vic) Shepparton (Vic) Shepparton (Vic) (Previous station also 3WR Wangaratta — see 1.12.24)	C C C	Wangaratta Broadcasting Co Ltd	Moved to Shepparton (4.9.34) Goulburn Valley and North Eastern Broadcasters Pty Ltd (15.1.35) The Argus Broadcasting Services Pty Ltd (4.3.37) The Argus and Australasian Ltd (23.12.57) Call sign changed to 3SR Jan. '36	Associated Broadcasting Services Ltd (1.7.57)	5.1.31
4MK	Mackay (Qld)	C	Williams Agencies Ltd		Mackay Broadcasting Service Pty Ltd (25.11.31)	12.1.31
2MO	Gunnedah (NSW)	C	Mr M. J. Oliver	2MO Gunnedah Ltd (15.9.36)	2MO Gunnedah Pty Ltd (31.5.56)	16.1.31
3BO	Bendigo (Vic)	C	Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd		Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd	4.6.31
2WL	Wollongong (NSW)	C	Wollongong Broadcasting Co		Wollongong Broadcasting Pty Ltd (1.12.36)	18.7.31
4RK	Central Queensland Service Rockhampton (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Co		Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	29.7.31
2KO	Newcastle (NSW)	C	Newcastle Broadcasting Co Ltd	Newcastle Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (14.10.38)	Radio 2KO Newcastle Pty Ltd (11.2.58)	1.8.31
2XL	Broken Hill (NSW)	C	Barrier Broadcast Ltd		Ceased Operations (15.4.32)	18.8.31
3SH	Swan Hill (Vic)	C	Swan Hill Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	Central Murray Broadcasters Pty Ltd (Operator 1.4.37 to 8.7.60, Licensee 8.7.60 to 6.4.65) Gippsland-Latrobe Valley Telecasters Ltd (6.4.65)	V. B. N. Ltd (27.4.65)	27.8.31
6KG	Kalgoorlie (WA)	C	Goldfields Broadcasters Ltd	Goldfields Broadcasters (1933) Ltd (6.5.33)	Consolidated Broadcasting System (WA) Pty Ltd (15.7.69)	16.9.31
4TO	Townsville (Qld)	C	Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd		Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd	5.10.31
3YB	(Mobile station) operating throughout inland Victoria (Vic)	C	Mobile Broadcasting Service Pty Ltd (Ceased 15 Nov 35)	W & W Broadcasters Pty Ltd (18.12.36)		
3YB	Warrnambool (Vic)	C	Recommenced 3YB Warrnambool (18.12.36)	Argus Broadcasting Services Pty Ltd (4.3.37) Argus and Australasian Ltd (23.12.53)	Associated Broadcasting Services Ltd (1.7.57)	13.10.31
6PR	Perth (WA)	C	Nicholson's Ltd		Nicholson's Broadcasting Services Pty Ltd (22.4.63)	14.10.31

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
3HA	Hamilton (Vic)	C	Western Province Radio Pty Ltd	Gippsland-Latrobe Valley Telecasters Ltd (6.4.65)	V. B. N. Ltd (27.4.65)	24.10.31
2CA	Canberra (ACT)	C	Mr A. J. Ryan	A. J. Ryan Broadcasters Ltd (4.7.32) Canberra Broadcasters Ltd (1.11.37)	Canberra Broadcasters Pty Ltd (21.2.56)	14.11.31
3AK	Melbourne (Vic)	C	Akron Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	Melbourne Broadcasters Pty Ltd (2.5.34)	General Television Corporation Pty Ltd (4.3.69)	29.11.31
2CO	Riverina and North-East Victoria Service Albury (NSW) (Formerly 2CO Corowa)	N	Australian Broadcasting Company		Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	16.12.31
2GN	Goulburn (NSW)	C	Goulburn Broadcasting Co Ltd	Goulburn Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (14.6.37)	Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd (29.9.69)	17.12.31
2SM	Sydney (NSW)	C	Catholic Broadcasting Co Ltd	Catholic Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (20.9.37)	Broadcasting Station 2SM Pty Ltd (22.9.45)	24.12.31
4BH	Brisbane (Qld)	C	Broadcasters (Aust) Ltd		Broadcasters (Aust) Pty Ltd (14.10.38)	2.1.32
5PI	Crystal Brook (SA)	C	Midlands Broadcasting Services Ltd		Midlands Broadcasting Services Ltd	7.1.32
2CH	Sydney (NSW)	C	New South Wales Council of Churches' Service	*Op* (4.4.33 to 28.7.44) Council of Churches Broadcasting Company *Op* Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd (from 28.7.44)	Council of Churches in NSW Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (5.5.70)	15.2.32
3AW	Melbourne (Vic)	C	Vogue Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		3AW Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (20.4.36)	22.2.32
5CK	Lower North Service Port Pirie (SA) (Formerly 5CK Crystal Brook)	N	Australian Broadcasting Company		Australian Broadcasting Commission (1.7.32)	15.3.32
2WG	Wagga (NSW)	C	The Friendly Farmer Broadcasting Syndicate (changed prior to issue of 1st licence to Riverina Radio Broadcasting Co Ltd)	Riverina Radio Broadcasting Co Ltd (29.6.32) Riverina Broadcasting Co (1.7.42) Riverina Broadcasters (31.1.56)	Riverina Broadcasters (Holdings) Pty Ltd (29.6.64)	29.6.32
4RO	Rockhampton (Qld)	C	Rockhampton Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		Rockhampton Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	2.7.32

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
7UV	Ulverstone (Tas)	C	North Western Tasmanian Broadcasters Ltd (originally located at Ulverstone)	Changed to 7AD Devonport (9.3.40)	Northern Tasmania Broadcasters Pty Ltd (1.11.33)	6.8.32
7AD	Devonport (Tas)	C				
4MB	Maryborough (Qld)	C	Maryborough Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		Maryborough Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	16.8.32
6BY	Bunbury (WA)	C	Bunbury Broadcasters Ltd		Ceased (31.7.35)	16.4.33
3MA	Mildura (Vic)	C	Sunraysia Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Sunraysia Broadcasters Pty Ltd	25.5.33
3HS	Horsham (Vic)	C	Wimmera Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	3DB Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd (16.5.36) Changed to 3LK Lubeck (24.12.36) Changed to 3LK Horsham (1.2.72)	The Herald and Weekly Times Ltd (18.10.37)	11.9.33
3LK	Lubeck (Vic)	C				
3LK	Horsham (Vic)	C				
6IX	Perth (WA)	C	West Australian Newspapers Ltd	WA Broadcasters Ltd (17.5.45) WA Broadcasters Pty Ltd (16.11.49) TVW Ltd (16.7.70)	6IX Radio Network Pty Ltd (9.11.72)	27.11.33
2GF	Grafton (NSW)	C	Grafton Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd (1.12.67)	15.12.33
6AM	Northam (WA)	C	Northam Broadcasters Ltd	6AM Broadcasters Ltd (1.4.37) 6AM Broadcasters Pty Ltd (2.7.48)	Consolidated Broadcasting System (WA) Pty Ltd (15.7.69)	1.6.34
2BH	Broken Hill (NSW)	C	Radio Silver City Pty Ltd		Broken Hill Broadcasters Pty Ltd (15.5.73)	30.6.34
5MU	Murray Bridge (SA)	C	Murray Bridge Broadcasting Co Ltd		Murray Bridge Broadcasting Co Ltd	16.9.34
4AY	Ayr (Qld)	C	Ayr Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Ayr Broadcasters Pty Ltd	1.10.34
2WO	Tamworth (NSW)	C	Tamworth Radio Development Ltd (callsign changed to 2TM prior to commencement)		Tamworth Radio Development Co Pty Ltd (29.11.56)	27.2.35
2TM	Tamworth (NSW)	C				
4WK	Warwick (Qld)	C	Warwick Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd (11.12.67)	South Queensland Broadcasting Corporation Pty Ltd (28.2.73)	6.5.35
7NT	North Tasmanian Service Launceston (Tas) (Formerly 7NT Kelso)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	3.8.35

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
4AK	Oakey (Qld)	C	Brisbane Broadcasting Pty Ltd		Queensland Newspapers Pty Ltd (15.11.41)	31.8.35
4IP	Ipswich (Qld)	C	Ipswich Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		South Queensland Broadcasting Corporation Pty Ltd (3.3.64)	2.9.35
2KA	Katoomba (NSW)	C	Radio Katoomba Ltd	2KA Ltd (26.5.38)	Transcontinental Broadcasting Corporation Ltd (7.4.60)	7.9.35
3XY	Melbourne (Vic)	C	Station 3XY Pty Ltd		Licensee: Station 3XY Pty Ltd Operator: Efftee Broadcasters Pty Ltd	8.9.35
5RM	Renmark (SA)	C	River Murray Broadcasters Ltd	Hume Broadcasters Ltd (Operator 1.9.37 to 31.3.53)	River Murray Broadcasters Pty Ltd (11.2.64)	30.9.35
7BU	Burnie (Tas)	C	Findlays Pty Ltd		Burnie Broadcasting Service Pty Ltd (1.7.36)	19.10.35
4PM	Port Moresby (Papua)	C	Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd		Ceased operations (16.12.41)	25.10.35
3MB 3CV 3CV	Birchip (Vic) Charlton (Vic) Maryborough (Vic)	C C C	Mallee Broadcasters Pty Ltd	Changed to 3CV Charlton (31.3.38) Central Victoria Broadcasters Pty Ltd (14.12.38) *Op* Mr E. Holloway (1.4.40 to 30.11.41) *Op* J. R. Birt Pty Ltd (1.12.41 to 1944) Moved to Maryborough (5.10.43)	V. B. N. Ltd (19.3.65)	26.10.35
2GZ	Orange (NSW)	C	Country Broadcasting Services Ltd		Country Broadcasting Services Pty Ltd (15.4.72)	31.10.35
3GI	Gippsland Service Sale (Vic) (Formerly 3GI Longford)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	31.10.35
2QN	Deniliquin (NSW)	C	Deniliquin Broadcasting Co Ltd	Regent Broadcasting Co (14.8.41) Southern Riverina Broadcasters (28.5.37)	Haig-Muir Broadcasting Pty Ltd (2.12.63)	2.11.35
4BU	Bundaberg (Qld)	C	Bundaberg Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Bundaberg Broadcasters Pty Ltd	16.12.35
2AD	Armidale (NSW)	C	Northern Broadcasters Ltd	Armidale Newspaper Co Ltd (30.6.36)	New England Broadcasters Pty Ltd (14.1.54)	5.2.36

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
4VL	Charleville (Qld)	C	Charleville Broadcasting Service Pty Ltd (NB: A previous station 4CH Charleville (R. W. Gaskin) was granted approval for a licence on 28.8.30 but was later withdrawn)	Edward Gold (1.7.37)	Charleville Broadcasting Co Ltd (1.1.39)	12.2.36
2LV	Inverell (NSW)	C	Northern Broadcasters Ltd	Northern Broadcasters Pty Ltd (25.1.37) Changed to 2NZ (25.1.37)	Northern Broadcasters Pty Ltd (25.1.37)	30.3.36
2NZ	Inverell (NSW)	C				
4CA	Cairns (Qld)	C	Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd		Amalgamated Wireless (A/asia) Ltd	2.5.36
4LG	Longreach (Qld)	C	Central Western Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	Longreach Printing Co Ltd (2.10.39) E. B. Connor (23.9.49) E. B. Connor and Company (1.7.54)	Central Queensland Broadcasting Corporation Pty Ltd (11.2.58)	5.5.36
2DU	Dubbo (NSW)	C	Central Western Radio Services Ltd		Western Broadcasters Pty Ltd (2.11.37)	3.7.36
2NR	Northern Rivers Service Grafton (NSW) (Formerly 2NR Lawrence)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	17.7.36
2RG	Griffith (NSW)	C	Murrumbidgee Broadcasters Ltd	Irrigation Area Newspapers Ltd (5.5.37)	2RG Broadcasters Pty Ltd (17.7.53)	14.9.36
6WB	Katanning (WA)	C	WA Broadcasters Ltd	WA Broadcasters Pty Ltd (16.11.49) TVW Ltd (16.7.70)	6IX Radio Network Pty Ltd (9.11.72)	26.9.36
4QN	North Queensland Service Townsville (Qld) (Formerly 4QN Clevedon)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	26.11.36
6WA	Western Australia Regional Service Wagin (WA) (Formerly 6WA Minding)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	7.12.36

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
6GF	Goldfields Regional Service Kalgoorlie (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	10.12.36
2BS	Bathurst (NSW)	C	Bathurst Broadcasters Ltd	*Op* Transcontinental Broadcasting Corporation Ltd (1.3.39 to 31.12.40) *Op* Messrs Croke, Lambert & Graves (6.1.41 to 10.3.41)	Bathurst Broadcasters Pty Ltd (14.7.38)	1.1.37
3WV	Western Victoria Service Horsham (Vic) (Formerly 3WV Dooen)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	25.2.37
7HT	Hobart (Tas)	C	Metropolitan Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Metropolitan Broadcasters Pty Ltd	19.4.37
6PM	Fremantle (WA)	C	6PM Broadcasters Ltd	Changed to 6PM Perth (21.8.41)	Consolidated Broadcasting System (WA) Pty Ltd	22.4.37
6PM	Perth (WA)	C				
2CR	Western Districts Service Orange (NSW) (Formerly 2CR Cumnock)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	29.4.37
3UL	Warragul (Vic)	C	The Argus Broadcasting Services Pty Ltd	The Argus and Australasian Ltd. (23.12.53) A. J. Hancock and B. W. Donaldson as trustees for a company to be formed in accordance with the conditions prescribed in the letter from the Postmaster-General to J. F. Williams Managing Director, The Herald and Weekly Times Ltd dated 25 February 1957 (22.3.57)	Associated Broadcasting Services Ltd (1.7.57)	18.5.37
7QT	Queenstown (Tas)	C	West Coast Broadcasters Pty Ltd		West Coast Broadcasters Pty Ltd	29.5.37
5SE	Mt Gambier (SA)	C	South Eastern Broadcasting Co Ltd		South Eastern Broadcasting Co Ltd	3.7.37
4ZR	Roma (Qld)	C	Maranoa Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		Maranoa Broadcasting Co Ltd (14.4.43)	23.7.37
2HR	Singleton (NSW)	C	Hunter River Broadcasters Pty Ltd	Known as 2HR Lochinvar (from 1940) Changed to 2NX Bolwarra (14.1.54)	Hunter Broadcasters Pty Ltd	30.8.37
2HR	Lochinvar (NSW)	C				
2NX	Bolwarra (NSW)	C				

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
2XL	Cooma (NSW)	C	Cooma Broadcasters Pty Ltd	*Op* Mr & Mrs A. W. Evans (1.9.38) to 16.2.40) *Op* Mr R. P. Reynolds (17.2.40 to 30.11.41)	Cooma Broadcasters Pty Ltd	30.8.37
2MW	Murwillumbah (NSW)	C	Tweed Radio and Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		Tweed Radio and Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	2.9.37
2KM	Kempsey (NSW)	C	Radio Kempsey Ltd		Radio Kempsey Ltd	20.9.37
2BE	Bega (NSW)	C	Bega and Far South Coast Broadcasters Ltd	Cooma Broadcasters Pty Ltd (4.3.41) J. A. Kerr (26.5.41)	Radio 2BE Pty Ltd (31.10.60)	30.9.37
2PK	Parkes (NSW)	C	Parkes Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		Parkes Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	5.10.37
6GE	Geraldton (WA)	C	Great Northern Broadcasters Ltd		Great Northern Broadcasters Ltd	6.10.37
5AN	Adelaide (SA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	15.10.37
4QR	Brisbane (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	7.1.38
7EX	Launceston (Tas)	C	7EX Pty Ltd		7EX Pty Ltd	5.2.38
2LF	Young (NSW)	C	Young Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Young Broadcasters Pty Ltd	16.2.38
7DY	Derby (Tas)	C	North East Tasmanian Radio Broadcasters Pty Ltd	Changed to 7SD Scottsdale (26.7.54)	North East Tasmanian Radio Broadcasters Pty Ltd	26.2.38
7SD	Scottsdale (Tas)	C				
4SB	Kingaroy (Qld)	C	South Burnett Broadcasting Co Ltd		South Burnett Broadcasting Co Ltd	11.3.38
5AU	Port Augusta (SA)	C	Port Augusta Broadcasting Co Ltd	(Service Closed 8.1.41) (Licence Revoked 7.2.41) (New Licence Granted 25.6.43) 5AU Broadcasters Ltd (3.2.61)	5AU Broadcasters Pty Ltd (20.1.64)	25.5.38
7ZR	Hobart (Tas)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	22.6.38
2MG	Mudgee (NSW)	C	Mudgee Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	(Ceased 21.5.42) (New Licence Granted 28.9.44) (Recommenced 13.10.44)	Mudgee Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	2.7.38

John Eden, with Geoff McComas, on his breakfast show on 3DB

A jovial Jimmy Hannan, also star of television, during his 3UZ morning session

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
6WN	Perth (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	5.10.38
2CY	Southern Tableland Service Canberra (ACT)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	23.12.38
2CZ	Cessnock (NSW)	C	Coalfields Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	Changed to 2CK Cessnock prior to commencement	Hunter Broadcasters Pty Ltd (14.1.54)	9.1.39
2CK	Cessnock (NSW)	C		Changed to 2NM Muswellbrook (14.1.54)		
2NM	Muswellbrook (NSW)	C				
4AT	Atherton (Qld)	C	Atherton Tablelands Broadcasters Pty Ltd		(Service Closed 8.1.41) (Licence Revoked 7.2.41)	15.2.39
2LT	Lithgow (NSW)	C	Lithgow Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Lithgow Broadcasters Pty Ltd	30.6.39
3CS	Colac (Vic)	C	Colac Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		Associated Broadcasting Services Ltd (11.1.66)	7.10.39
6TZ	Dardanup (WA)	C	Nicholson's Ltd	Known as 6TZ Bunbury (From 1949)	Nicholson's Broadcasting Services Pty Ltd (4.2.63)	11.10.39
6TZ	Bunbury (WA)	C				
4QS	Darling Downs Service Toowoomba (Qld) (Formerly 4QS Dalby)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	17.10.39
4AT	Far North Queensland Service Atherton (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission (See previous commercial station)	National Station commenced on (27.1.41) (Using same site and transmitter etc as the former Commercial Station)	Australian Broadcasting Commission	27.1.41
6MD	Merredin (WA)	C	WA Broadcasters Ltd	WA Broadcasters Pty Ltd (16.11.49) TVW Ltd (16.7.70)	6IX Radio Network Pty Ltd (9.11.72)	5.7.41
6KY	Perth (WA)	C	People's Printing and Publishing Company of Western Australia Ltd	Westland Broadcasting Co Ltd (19.3.58) Suntimes Broadcasters Ltd (12.11.68)	Swan Television Ltd (7,3.73)	23.10.41
4GY	Gympie (Qld)	C	Gympie Broadcasting Company Ltd		Gympie Noosa Broadcasters Pty Ltd (1.5.73)	3.11.41
2NA	Newcastle (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	20.12.43

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
6GN	Geraldton Regional Service Geraldton (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	3.2.45
9PA	Port Moresby (TPNG)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	1.7.46
5DR	Darwin (NT)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission	Changed to 8DR (5.7.60)	Australian Broadcasting Commission	12.3.47
8DR	Darwin (NT)	N				
4QL	Western Queensland Service Longreach (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	19.3.47
4KQ	Brisbane (Qld)	C	The Trustees of the Queensland Branch of Australian Labor Party		Labor Broadcasting Station Pty Ltd (15.6.61)	7.5.47
4QB	Wide Bay District Service Maryborough (Qld) (Formerly 4QB Pialba)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	14.1.48
6CI	Collie (WA)	C	Nicholson's Ltd		Nicholson's Broadcasting Services Pty Ltd (22.4.63)	29.5.48
2NB	Broken Hill (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	29.7.48
2NU	Northern Tableland Service Tamworth (NSW) (Formerly 2NU Manilla)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	9.11.48
2TR	Taree (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	15.11.48
5AL	Alice Springs (NT)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission	Changed to 8AL (5.7.60)	Australian Broadcasting Commission	30.11.48
8AL	Alice Springs (NT)	N				
2LG	Lithgow (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	3.10.49
4QY	Far North Queensland Service Cairns (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	20.1.50

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
5LN	Port Lincoln (SA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	14.11.50
4QA	Pioneer District Service Mackay (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	18.1.51
6NA	Narrogin (WA)	C	People's Printing and Publishing Company of Western Australia Ltd	Westland Broadcasting Co Ltd (19.3.58) Suntimes Broadcasters Ltd (12.11.68)	Swan Television Ltd (17.3.73)	20.1.51
4GM	Gympie District Service Gympie (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	17.8.51
4SO	Southport (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	11.10.52
2CN	Canberra (ACT)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	21.1.53
6BY	Bridgetown (WA)	C	WA Broadcasters Pty Ltd	TVW Ltd (16.7.70)	6IX Radio Network Pty Ltd (9.11.72)	24.1.53
2RE	Taree (NSW)	C	Manning Valley Broadcasting Pty Ltd		Manning Valley Broadcasting Pty Ltd	21.2.53
5WM	Woomera (SA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	18.9.53
2KP	Mid-North Coast Service Kempsey (NSW) (Formerly 2KP Smithtown)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	29.1.54
3NE	Wangaratta (Vic)	C	Wangaratta Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		Wangaratta Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	27.3.54
3WL	Warrnambool (Vic)	C	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	4.9.54
7QN	West Coast Service Queenstown (Tas)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	25.9.54
2ML	Murwillumbah (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	23.10.54

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
2BA	Far South Coast Service Bega (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	7.5.55
6NM	Western Australian Regional Service Northam (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	1.7.55
5MG	South-East Service Mount Gambier (SA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	26.9.55
6VA	Albany (WA)	C	Albany Broadcasters Ltd		Albany Broadcasters Ltd	10.3.56
6AL	Western Australian Regional Service Albany (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	23.4.56
5PA	South-East Service Naracoorte (SA) (Formerly South-East Service Penola (SA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	14.12.56
2VM	Moree (NSW)	C	Moree Broadcasting and Development Co Ltd		Moree Broadcasting and Development Co Ltd	12.1.57
2GL	New England Service Glen Innes (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	5.2.57
5MV	South Australian Upper Murray Service Renmark (SA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	31.7.57
2WN	Wollongong (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	6.3.39
8TC	Tenant Creek (NT)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	5.7.60
8KN	Katherine (NT)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	7.7.60
4MI	Mt Isa (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	11.7.60
8DN	Darwin (NT)	C	Darwin Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Darwin Broadcasters Pty Ltd	12.12.60
4LM	Mt Isa (Qld)	C	North Queensland Broadcasting Corporation Pty Ltd		North Queensland Broadcasting Corporation Pty Ltd	5.7.61

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
2AN	Armidale (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	19.2.62
9RB	Rabaul (TPNG)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	15.12.62
6DL	Dalwallinu (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	23.11.63
6CA	Carnarvon (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	26.2.64
2UH	Muswellbrook (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	29.6.64
4NA	Nambour (Qld)	C	Maroochy Broadcasting Co Ltd		Sunshine Coast Broadcasters Ltd (14.5.73)	9.10.64
4QO	Upper Burnett Service Eidsvold (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	29.11.65
4QD	Central Western Queensland Service Emerald (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	4.2.66
4QW	South-West Queensland Service St George (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	7.4.66
6ED	Esperance (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	3.6.66
2CP	Cooma (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	31.12.66
4AM	Atherton-Mareeba (Qld)	C	Far Northern Radio (Tablelands) Pty Ltd		Far Northern Radio (Tablelands) Pty Ltd	15.9.67
4KZ	Innisfail Tully (Qld)	C	Coastal Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Coastal Broadcasters Pty Ltd	30.9.67
4GG	Gold Coast (Qld)	C	Gold Coast Radio Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd		Gold Coast Radio Broadcasting Co Pty Ltd	30.9.67
6BE	Broome (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	31.10.67
6DB	Derby (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	30.11.67

Call Sign	Location	Class of Station	Original Licensee	Other Licensees	Present Operating Authority	Date Service Commenced
6PH	Port Hedland (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	26.2.68
6BS	Busselton (WA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	22.12.69
4CD	Gladstone (Qld)	C	Gladstone District Broadcasting Pty Ltd		Gladstone District Broadcasting Pty Ltd	17.8.70
8HA	Alice Springs (NT)	C	Alice Springs Commercial Broadcasters Pty Ltd		Alice Springs Commercial Broadcasters Pty Ltd	2.3.71
5LC	Leigh Creek (SA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	30.6.71
9GR	Goroka (TPNG)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	14.8.71
9LA	Lae (TPNG)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	14.8.71
9MD	Madang (TPNG)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	14.8.71
4HU	Hughenden (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	1.10.71
2GO	Gosford (NSW)	C	Central Coast Broadcasting Pty Ltd		Central Coast Broadcasting Pty Ltd	19.11.71
5SY	Streaky Bay (SA)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	31.5.72
2ST	Nowra (NSW)	C	South Coast and Tablelands Broadcasting Pty Ltd		South Coast and Tablelands Broadcasting Pty Ltd	4.6.72
2BY	Byrock (NSW)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	15.8.72
4MS	Mossman (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	26.2.73
4JK	Julia Creek (Qld)	N	Australian Broadcasting Commission		Australian Broadcasting Commission	31.7.73

Index