

NOMENCLATURE OF BBC RADIO NETWORKS

Note by D.S.B.

We began by looking for a name for the new Popular Music Service. Radio 247 was rejected because there is no guarantee that the programme will always go out on 247 metres. Flowery names such as Radio Elizabeth, Melody Radio, Radio PAM (Pop and Melody) all seemed too fanciful or too precious. So we turned our thoughts towards something simple and functional, and this almost inevitably led us into considerations involving the other radio networks as well as the Popular Music Service.

We emerge with the proposal that all our Sound networks should be renamed. With the Popular Music Service there will be four of them, and we suggest calling them Radio One, Radio Two, Radio Three and Radio Four, respectively. The actual allocation is determined by two factors:

- (a) The existing Light Programme and the new Popular Music Service should clearly be bracketed together.
- (b) It would be foolish to put the existing Third Programme anywhere except on Radio Three.

Consequently we think of the following network titles:

- Radio One - the existing Light Programme
- Radio Two - the new Popular Music Service
- Radio Three - the Music Programme, Study Session and the Third Programme
- Radio Four - the Home Service

This arrangement appears to downgrade the Home Service from its long-established "flagship" status. This is, however, an internal criticism of an internal concept. The Regional Controllers (who warmly support the proposal) considered that the objection carried no real weight.

We would propose a graduated transition, carried out over a long period. The long established names would not disappear overnight, leaving listeners in a state of confusion and making every radio dial obsolete.

For as long a period of indoctrination as might be necessary, the announcers could identify in such terms as "This is the Light Programme on Radio One", until the two terms became synonymous in listeners' minds and 'Light Programme' could slowly be dropped. The Popular Music Service from the start would become "Radio Two". Since Radio Three would carry a plurality of services which must be separately identified, the well-established titles "Music Programme", "Study Session" and "Third Programme" would probably remain in being indefinitely. Announcers would use a simple formula such as "This is the BBC Music Programme on Radio Three".

Initially the Home Service title would become, at full length, "This is the BBC Home Service on Radio Four". But we should probably try to rid ourselves of the meaningless "Home Service" tag as soon as we could, more quickly than of any other. The Regions would give an impetus to this move. They would be identifying "Radio Four from Scotland", and so on, almost from the outset.

The Radio Times implications have not been studied in detail, but they seem unlikely to provide great obstacles.

The views of Board of Management on these suggestions would be much welcomed. If there is general approval of them, a very early announcement is proposed. The changes could take place when the Popular Music Service is introduced, but the sooner the trade begins engraving receiver dials with the new nomenclature, the better.

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