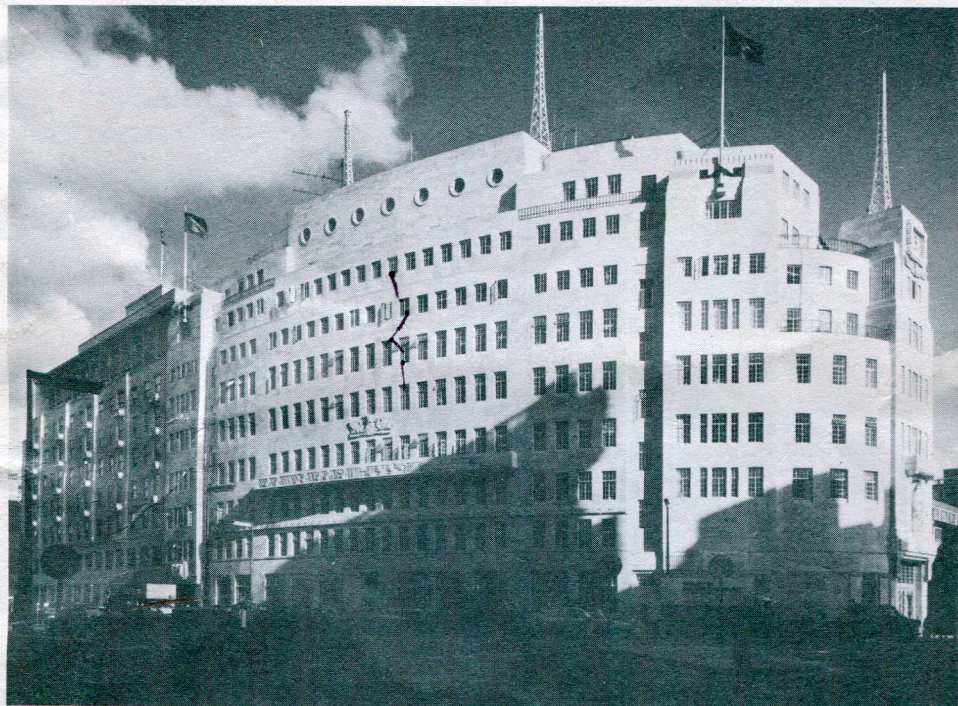


BBC

Technical Operations

radio



trainee

Technical Operators

Technical Operators

in RADIO BROADCASTING

INTRODUCTION

The BBC has gained an enviable reputation for consistently attaining the highest broadcasting standards and most, if not all the programmes produced are available in virtually every home in the United Kingdom. Less well known perhaps is the work of the BBC Technical staff whose expertise makes this possible.

The purpose of this booklet is to describe the work of one group of Technical staff – TECHNICAL OPERATORS in RADIO – and attempts to answer some of the many questions which you might have.

THE WORK OF RADIO TECHNICAL OPERATIONS

Radio programmes and contributions to programmes originate from a surprising number of locations. In London alone, there are approximately



Setting up a tape machine prior to transmission



60 permanent radio studios, whilst special broadcasting facilities have been installed by the BBC in places of interest such as St. Paul's Cathedral, The Royal Festival Hall and the Palace of Westminster.

In addition, Regional and Local broadcasting centres sited throughout the country, together with temporary locations and radio cars can all provide broadcasting material for the national networks.

The material from these 'sources' as they are called has to be arranged into a predetermined order and then 'streamed' into one of the four familiar Radio Networks to be fed to the appropriate transmitters.

This task of collection, assembly, monitoring and routing radio programmes is carried out in London Control Room (LCR) Broadcasting House, the 'nerve centre' of Radio Broadcasting and it is here where the Technical Operator, Radio can be found.

There are a number of separate areas within the LCR but the focal point for each Network is the Continuity Suite. It is here that the continuous output into the network is formed from the various sources, together with technical and programme control during transmission.

Often, the continuity suite acts as a studio itself; this being especially true of Radio 1. In this situation, the Technical Operator works together with the announcer or 'disc-jockey' in the presentation of the programme and is responsible for the operation of all the associated technical equipment, including microphones, tape recorders, disc reproducing equipment and the continuity desk itself.

The Technical Operator is responsible for the technical standard of the programme leaving the continuity on route to the transmitter and must be able to assess quickly the technical quality of a transmission and be able to take prompt remedial action when it is necessary.

The other areas within LCR are concerned with the routing and monitoring of incoming programmes from regional centres and outside broadcasts, the switching of local sources for recording and listening purposes and the routing of programme (network) outputs to transmitters, both local and distant, via a nationwide distribution system. In these areas the work of the Technical Operator includes the use of sophisticated correction equipment and test gear to aid in maintaining the standard of excellence for which BBC Radio is famous.



A fundamental part of the Technical Operators work is close liaison with other departments of the BBC, both programme and engineering oriented. A communications network links LCR to all the manned studio centres and transmitters. This is used, amongst other things, to assist in the rapid tracing of network faults and in the rerouting of programmes when necessary.

At all stages, the technical quality of programmes must be maintained at the highest level and an essential requirement of the job is the ability to assess the technical excellence of high quality sound and to analyse possible causes in the event of any deterioration, bearing in mind that most programme material is produced in stereo and transmitted on the FM/VHF networks which is capable of providing extremely high quality sound at the listeners receiver.



The Central Control Room Area

BBC



Discussion of programme details during rehearsal



The same team during programme transmission



A Technical Operator in the News intake area passing essential information to a studio

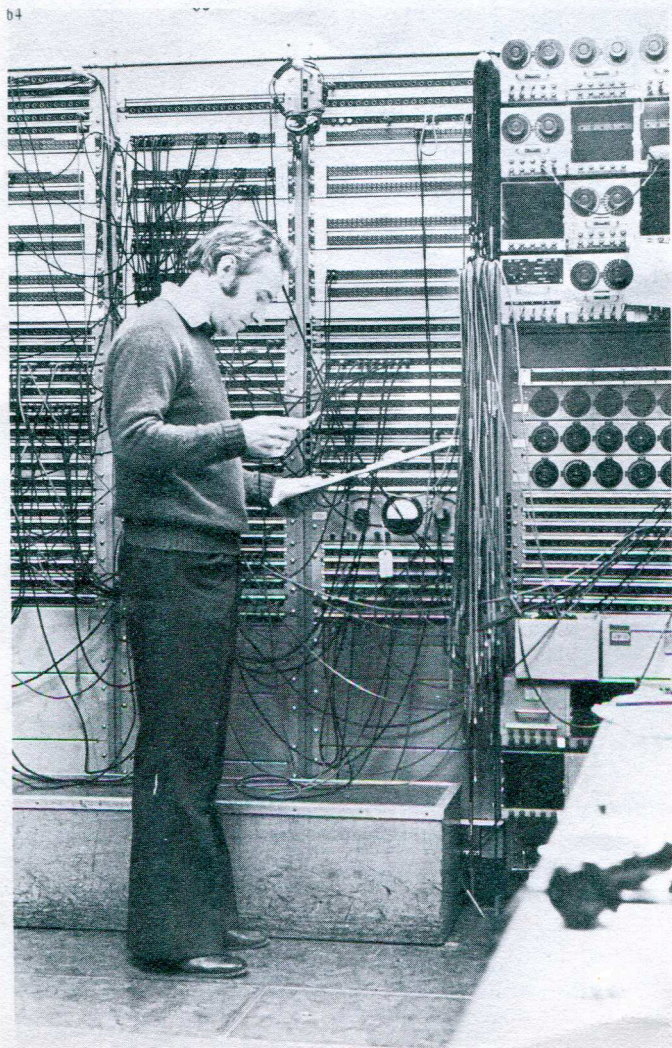
QUALIFICATIONS

The work of a Technical Operator calls for an enquiring and alert mind together with considerable operational dexterity. Appreciation of hi-fi sound is essential and a general awareness of the technical background to some aspects of radio broadcasting such as tape-recording, or electronic/hi-fi construction would be an advantage, as would a personal interest in the programme content of Radio Output — such as 'pop' or serious music.

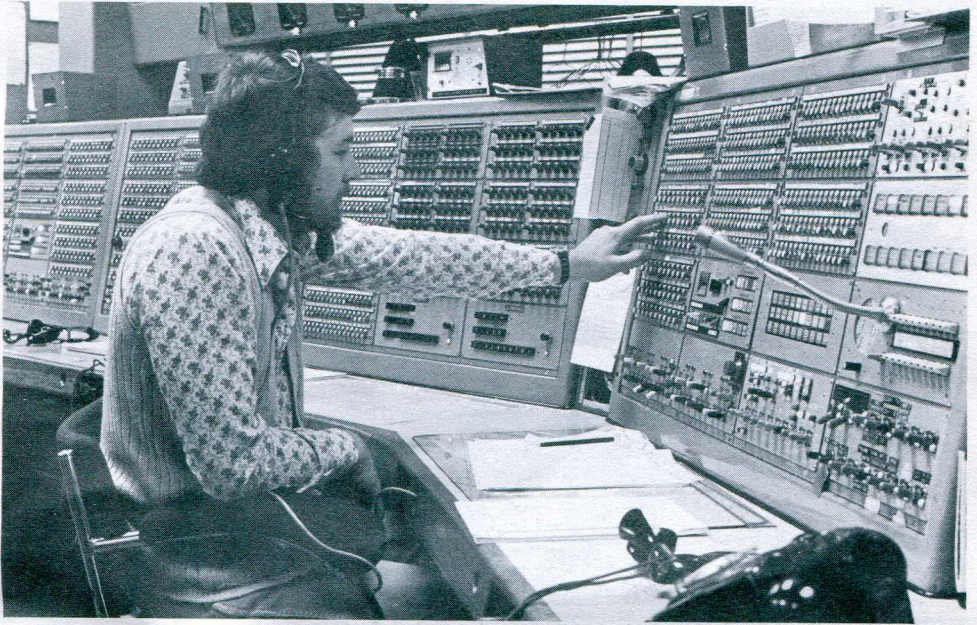
The distribution of programme signals is dependent on the use of complex switching systems and an interest in this aspect of the work should certainly be present initially as at a fairly early stage of progress an aptitude to understand these complex systems is essential.

Applications will be considered from men and women with normal hearing and colour vision, who have 'O' Level passes, or the equivalent, in English Language, Mathematics and Physics and who will be 18 on or before the date of joining.

B/B/C



Setting up equipment
for the transmission
or recording of an
outside broadcast



Solving a problem on the Transmitter Distribution Network

TRAINING AND PROSPECTS

The first year of service is probationary and commences with a 3 month residential training course at the BBC Engineering Training Centre at Wood Norton, near Evesham in Worcestershire. The course includes theoretical and practical training with continuous assessment throughout, together with tests at the end of each Section. Much use is made of advanced training techniques such as student response classrooms (feedback classrooms) and programmed learning methods.

After the satisfactory completion of the first year of service, appointment will be confirmed. In the third year of service, Technical Operators undertake a further formal training course at Wood Norton and consideration for promotion to the next higher grade of Technical Operator will be given after completion of three years service, provided this course and further operational tests have been concluded satisfactorily. Further progress is on merit and subject to vacancies after 4½ years service.



CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND SALARY LEVELS

Technical Operators (Radio) are based at Broadcasting House, London, and **SHIFT WORK** covering the full 24 hours over the whole pattern of week days and weekends is an essential part of the job. Compensatory payments for shift work are extra to the basic salary and additional payments are also made for night shift and weekend duties.

A slip showing current salary scales is enclosed as these are at present under review.

In addition to public and special Corporation holidays, staff are entitled to 4 weeks annual leave.

There is a contributory pension scheme which staff (over 21) may join immediately upon recruitment, but which they are expected to join on confirmation of their appointment.

Facilities provided at Broadcasting House and at the Training Centre include staff restaurants, and at small cost, staff may join the BBC Club, which provides a wide range of social, sporting, artistic and other specialised activities.

APPLICATIONS

Enquiries about vacancies should be addressed to:—

The Engineering Recruitment Officer,
British Broadcasting Corporation,
Broadcasting House,
LONDON W1A 1AA