

Book Title

'Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Stations in Essex - The Centenary of Brentwood and Ongar Radio Stations'. ISBN: 978-1-80369-382-8 – Paperback, 130 Pages. Published in July 2022 by New Generation Publishing.

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Price & Availability

Available for online purchase from Amazon at £8.99, also Abebooks, Barnes & Noble, Bookdepository, Fishpond.com.au, Waterstones, Wordery.com and others etc.

About the Book

This is the story of two radio communication stations built by Marconi in Essex, a receiving station at Brentwood and a transmitting station at Ongar. The stations were established to provide European and international wireless telegraph services, initially to Berne, Paris and Madrid. Services commenced in 1922 and telegrams were transmitted and received in Morse code at around 100 words per minute. The stations operated in the long wave band and the transmitters and receivers utilised the latest in valve technology. Services rapidly expanded to cover a number of countries in Europe and the Middle East plus Canada and the USA. Further expansion took place when new short wave wireless technology became available later in the 1920s and services were established across the globe.

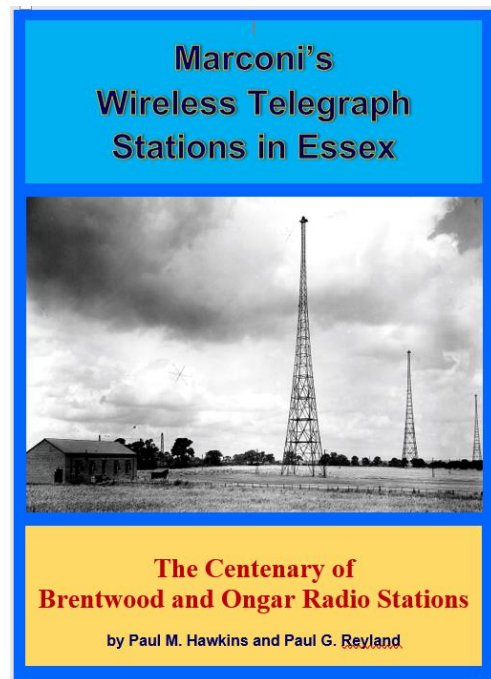
The book describes development and growth of the stations, the challenges faced during WW2, modernisation after WW2, technological changes throughout the 20th century and the eventual closure of the stations as modern satellite communication technology superseded short waves. Brentwood continued to operate until 1967 and Ongar found a new role in the maritime radio service, remaining in operation until 1985.

In the whirlwind of the modern digital electronic revolution the days of analogue electronics are often forgotten if not un-imagined, when international telecommunications was conducted in the absence of satellites or fibre optic cables. Yet for a substantial part of the 20th century radio stations like Brentwood and Ongar played an important part in the development of the international and empire telecommunications network by means of long wave and short wave radio.

These radio systems were operated with minimal automation and a high degree of human intervention, managing and overcoming the limitations and difficulties of long distance radio propagation. The book also has some social history talking about the skills employed, working conditions for staff and their wages.

The book covers the activities of the organisations that owned Brentwood and Ongar radio stations, the Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company, Cable & Wireless Ltd, the British Post Office and latterly British Telecom.

The authors hope that this book will enlighten its readers of the other work that was being undertaken by Marconi 100 years ago.



'Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Stations in Essex'

The story is presented in eight chapters, six appendices and includes an extensive bibliography and an index.

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The book includes: 62 photos, 4 maps, station plans and a system diagram

Research and material for this book has included:

- Investigations into documents and materials held in various archives.
- Access to numerous professional journals, books and publications, all listed in a comprehensive bibliography.
- Anecdotal information acquired from personnel employed by the Post Office and C&W.
- The direct experience of the authors during their employment with the Post Office and their knowledge of radio communications.

Author Biographies

Paul Hawkins spent his whole career working in radio communications. He joined the British Post Office International Telecommunication service in 1967 working at Dorchester Radio Station, then Goonhilly Satellite Station and Bearley Radio Station. From 1980-83 he worked in the USA and from 1983 until his retirement in 2013 he worked for the Thales Company in England, where he was involved in the design of antennas and communication systems for Naval vessels. Radio and its history is a personal interest of Paul and he has published a number of articles in the vintage wireless press, conference papers for the IEE and a book concerning the history of radio communications. He has also given lectures to various groups about radio telecommunications history and at one of these he was fortunate enough to meet Princess Elettra Marconi, the daughter of Guglielmo Marconi.

Paul Reyland was brought up and educated in Brentwood. After leaving school in 1965 he started working at Brentwood Radio Receiving Station as an apprentice. When the station closed in 1967, he was transferred to Ongar Radio Transmitting Station at North Weald to complete his training. He was employed by the Post Office International Telecommunication service, later to become British Telecom International (BTI), for nearly 30 years working mainly in radio and satellite operations. From 1995 Paul worked for the International Maritime Satellite organization (INMARSAT), retiring in 2002. After writing an article about Brentwood Radio Station for the Essex Journal magazine in 2019, it was suggested by his friend Paul Hawkins that they should produce a book to mark the centenary of both Brentwood and Ongar radio stations. This book is the result of their collaboration and research.

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