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STEPHEN WILLIAMS (31.03.08) only son of Rev.H.Clement Williams (30.10.1879) who died in his 107th year, the oldest Priest in the Church of England.

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1922: Developed a passion for "the Wireless" when, after building his small Wireless-set AND making his own crystal, he was able to listen-in on it to the very first BBC "2LO" broadcast on 14th November 1922.

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1926/27: While reading the Lessons in his father's church (St. Martin, West Acton, London) he was heard by two influential people, the famous actress "Miss Compton" (wife of playwright R.C. Carton) and the then BBC "Zoo-man" Leslie G. Mainland ("L.G.M." of the "Daily Mail"). The former gave much encouragement and practical advice on speaking in public and on voice projection. The latter organised a microphone audition (during a White-City outside broadcast) and then offered an engagement (in the Cambridge 'Long-vac' 1928) as Announcer and Programme-organiser aboard the "Daily Mail" broadcasting yacht "Ceto".

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1928: Voyage of "Daily Mail" yacht, (June to September 1928) around the East, South and West Coasts of Britain to "encourage" microphonically, readership of the "Daily Mail", "Sunday Dispatch" and "Evening News", 'selling' their Free Insurances and other attractions. As originally envisaged, this venture would have pre-dated "Radio Caroline" by some 30 to 35 years but was frustrated by technical inability (in 1928) to overcome 'fading' problems of speech and music transmissions from a rolling boat. Nevertheless the tour went ahead, with the substitution for radio-transmission of acoustic dissemination by means of four Siemens-Halske super loud-speakers, each weighing about 6 cwt and capable of carrying music and speech to a distance of 2½ to 3 miles in calm weather.

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1929: Joined the "Daily Chronicle" until that paper was merged with the "Daily News" then transferred to the "Sunday Referee" in both cases concentrating principally on matters radio and the examination of possibilities for closer collaboration between the Press and Radio (rather like Hearst in USA) to their mutual advantage.

1931: Fruit of this came in 1931 in the pioneering of "Special Foreign Broadcasts for British Listeners" over the radio station at Fecamp in France (Radio Normandie) through the collaboration between the "Sunday

Referee" (Mr. Valentine Smith, Director of Publicity and Exploitation and Mr. Isidore Ostrer, Proprietor of the paper) and Captain Leonard F. Plugge (founder of the "International Broadcasting Company" - "I.B.C.") who already held a concession for English-language broadcasting from the Fecamp transmitter and needed aid to exploit it. This it was obvious to both sides, the "Sunday Referee" was well able to provide, by involving Stephen Williams at the Station end.

9 1932: Williams was dispatched to Fecamp by the "Sunday Referee" early in the year to join with Max Staniforth, a publicity man engaged by Captain Plugge, and together they began the serious exploitation of "Radio Normandie", now (with its power increased from 500 watts to 5 kilowatts) capable of covering London and most of the South of England fairly satisfactorily. Through the considerable Press-coverage provided by the "Sunday Referee" and a programme-output of a highly popular appeal and in complete contrast to the BBC's presentation, the new station gained enormous listener-support in fact by the middle of the year, it had written evidence of the regular interest of more than 50,000 listeners through the founding of the "International Broadcasting Club" (a Stephen Williams" idea adopted by the Sunday Referee).

10 In general, exploitation was so successful that at the end of the year it was felt that Fecamp could be left to carry on while Stephen Williams moved to Paris to exploit the publicity potential of Radio Paris (1725 metres, 75/100 kilowatts), then the most powerful station in France. Here he was working with Radio Publicity" (London) Ltd, another British Firm of which he later became General Manager (or in the local vernacular "Directeur- General") Regulations regarding foreigners in France necessitated Stephen Williams having a local status as well as his purely British appointment to Radio-Paris. This was arranged through the association with the Sunday Referee and the General Theatre's Corporation for the latter controlled the Alhambra Music-hall in Paris where Stephen Williams became a "Directeur Artistique". However, since the Managing Director of the theatre was Albert Adams of the famous Adams Music-hall family, the job was something of a sinecure, nevertheless it had many social and other advantages and widened the scope of the Radio-Paris programme-content through the appearances at the Alhambra of such notable Stars as Lys Gauty, Marie Dubas, Lucienne Boyer, Raquel Mellor, Marcelle Chantel,

Josephine Baker, Lilian Harvey, Pola Negri, Ramon Navarro, Jean Sablon, Alibert, Pils et Tabet, Charpini, Ninon Vallin and many more - not to mention famous bands like Dajos Bela, Raymond LeGrand, Alfredo Rode's Tzigannes etc. etc.

1933: The French Government had long been intending to curtail or terminate the increasingly numerous programmes in English from important French stations and Radio Publicity was informed accordingly. This meant looking for an alternative Broadcasting Station outside France. There was a big one, barely completed and not yet fully tested in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg. There was also a more 'long-distance' possibility of something in the Principality of Liechtenstein which was vaguely on the horizon. However, Radio Publicity's Chairman Jacques Gonat (French) managed to obtain the Sole Concession for the English-language at the Luxemburg Station and since its tests had proved satisfactory decision was taken to transfer all the English language programmes there from Radio-Paris. And so, on 3rd December 1933 Stephen Williams, as the man responsible for running the Luxemburg concession personally launched the Service by simultaneously broadcasting all the English programmes over the two Stations - Radio Paris 1725 metres 75/100 kw and Radio-Luxemburg 1191 metres 200/250 kw. Two days later the physical move from Paris to Luxemburg took place and thereafter Williams was completely responsible for the exploitation, maintenance and policies of the Service at the then most powerful broadcasting Station in the world. It was all extremely informal and un-bureaucratic and friendly, but the Luxemburg Telephone directory did set out the situation correctly:-

Luxembourg W

20-96	Wilhelmy, Gustave, industriel, bureaux, boul. Royal, 26.
38-13	Wilhelmy-Hoffmann, domicile particulier, boul. Royal, 26.
26-44	Willems, Alph., professeur au lycée, rue des Franciscaines, 1.
45-75	Willequet, Leo, Verlorenkost.
** 56-33	Williams, Stephen, directeur général de Radio-Publicity (London) Ltd., avenue Monterey, 57. **

Williams was the first British Subject by Birth to seek and achieve regular Domicile in the Grand Duchy where even the British Consul was a Luxemburger by birth and where then, hardly anyone in Government or in the Country understood or spoke English at all fluently.

So, having sworn never to compromise the Neutrality of the State or its good name internationally, Williams was virtually left to his own devices to carry on.

14. 1934/36: Assisted consecutively by Bud Batten, Joan Langstaff, Hugh Gee, Gerald Carnes, Laurie and Janet Townes, and Robert Fellowes the business succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations. All "air-time" had to be sponsored, "Spot" announcements were not accepted and the introduction of programmes pre-recorded in the U.K. was not only good economy but most importantly tended to involve the Client in the shows for which he was paying and kept him keen to carry them on. It became quite a 'status-symbol' for an Advertiser to be able to invite his friends to "come and watch my programme being produced and meet so-and-so (the Stars) - Or - come round to our place on Sunday (or Saturday, or next Tuesday week) and listen to it being broadcast." Indeed, Clients were 'falling over each other' to get "on the air" 15. and within three years all the "air-time" available for English-language transmissions had been sold and since the Station's 'raison d'etre' within the international Radio Union was to be truly International no more such time could be made available.

1937/39: The Concession was adjusted and the Service continued on its own momentum with newcomers Ogden-Smith and Charles Maxwell. Williams believing there was the possibility of encouraging a demand by French and German-language advertisers to a level comparable to that of the English-language, decided to 'have a go' hoping to repeat the successes of the early '30's. He failed, finding there were already too many French stations accepting and competing for domestic radio-advertising, while German listeners at that time, with more sinister things on their minds were not thought likely to be very receptive to the messages of sponsored-radio, especially when broadcast from outside the Reich.

16. 1939/45: With the outbreak of World War II commercial-broadcasting ceased abruptly for the duration. Through the personal contact of Sir Seymour Hicks' the BBC was sounded-out as to the possibility of Stephen Williams joining them, but he was "not advised to apply". He had been one of the main pioneer Executives of the commercial competition to the BBC, prior to which, although Church Services had

often been broadcast in the mornings, the BBC's main Sunday programme-runs over both the "National" and the "Regional" networks began in mid-afternoon and closed down after the 10.30 p.m. Epilogues. Under Williams' aegis the English broadcasts from the Continent had encroached first on 11 a.m. (Matins-time) and then on 8 a.m. (Holy Communion time) and had continued throughout the Sabbath until the small hours of the following morning. -- (Incidentally, one English newspaper did comment that while the Reverend Williams was preaching the Gospel in his West-London church his son Stephen was encouraging secular interests from a Foreign Wireless station). Furthermore an independent listening survey conducted shortly before the War by Professor Plant of the London School of Economics had established that Sunday commercial listening figures were at least twenty times greater than those of the BBC at week-ends. In addition, Williams had had much to do with wooing away to Luxemburg the BBC's great personality Star Christopher Stone.

17 There was, however, a 'back door' into radio through the newly formed "Entertainments National Service Association" of which Sir Seymour was Controller and Mr. Basil Dean the Director. Through this Williams slipped, re-appearing as "Broadcasting Officer" for the Department of National Service Entertainment and for "ENSA" and as such was "reserved" and "directed" into broadcasting by the Ministry of Labour. 18 Thereafter, working closely with the BBC he was involved with broadcasts from and to the British Expeditionary Force in France and elsewhere wherever British Forces were serving or expected to be serving, and in the production of many such shows. In particular, there were two notable "ENSA" programmes broadcast by BBC which featured Gracie Fields, Maurice Chevalier, Jack Hylton and his Band and other well-known performers. The first was staged in the famous Opera House in Paris with the President of France, Monsieur Albert Lebrum present for the show. This was on 16th April 1940. the second (a 'return match') took place at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London on 30th April 1940 when Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Kent headed the list of V.I.P.s in the audience.

Other National Service broadcasts were established on a regular basis such as the weekly "ENSA Half-hour", the twice-weekly shows for War-workers ("Brighten the Break" and "Break for Music"), "Broadway Calling" arranged by Gertrude Lawrence with American friends. "Works

"Wonders" (amateur talent found in factories by ENSA officilas) and many more. After the war, Basil Dean, as Director of National Service Entertainment made his comments on this period. Some of which were:-

(1940) "...March 29th was the first occasion on which personal messages from soldiers overseas were broadcast to their families at home. The credit for this simple idea, which made instant appeal to the listening millions, belongs to Stephen Williams. The messages were handed in at our entertainment posts in France and teleprinted to London with the names and regimental numbers of the senders. Seymour Hicks read the first of them....On the next occasion Williams proposed that the wife for whom the message was intended should be present when it was read and should reply over the microphone, while her husband listened overseas. Official approval for this was not received until about 8 p.m. on the day before the broadcast. The wife lived in the country and could not be located by telephone. However, thanks to the intervention of the local exchange, a near-by grocer offered to contact her. When he reached her house she was in the bath, so he was forced to talk to her through the door. Hastily turning off the tap she demanded sharply if it were good news or bad. Reassured on that point she declared it was impossible to give an answer while she was having a bath. And so Mrs. Elliott of East Grinstead inauguarated the system of messages from home to men serving in H.M. Forces abroad. Variations of Williams' simple human plan were subsequently developed by the BBC and the various Army broadcasting stations overseas into a two-way traffic of great volume. Echoes of it are heard in the programmes of music broadcast at the request of serving members of the Forces to their families and friends and to the sick."

"Shortly after the announcement of our Ministry of Labour Service, Stephen Williams suggested that we should include regular factory broadcasts in the scheme. The BBC Officials were loath at first to

entrust the idea solely to ENSA, but after Ernie Bevin's speech at the end of our first concert from Woolwich Arsenal, they could no longer refuse us".

"One day Stephen Williams reminded me that Radio Luxemburg and other commercial stations frequently transmitted their programmes on records. This seemed to be the answer to the problem of the provision of programmes for the Middle East Forces Programme, transmitted daily over the Egyptian State Broadcasting system and relayed by the Palestine Broadcasting Service. Broadcasts that were suitable should be recorded and flown to the Middle East. ... This - and this alone - was the origin of the vast services of recorded entertainment that was later built up..." (i.e. under the "O.R.B.S." Label)

20 Simultaneously with his ENSA activities, Stephen Williams joined Cecil Madden's wartime BBC Overseas Entertainments Unit based on the Criterion Theatre in London and produced many of that Unit's programmes directed to places all over the world. "It's all yours" to distant Forces was a notable one and so was a long-running series in which ENSA co-operated with the Cecil Madden Unit in presenting "London Carries On", written by famous theatrical historian W Macqueen-Pope. Another joint Madden/Williams programme was "Variety Bandbox" with Cecil editing and Stephen directing. This was broadcast weekly from the Queensbury All Services Club in London to a vast Forces audience, with world-famous stars when available, like Bing Crosby, Robert Montgomery, Broderick Crawford and Glen Miller with his American Band of the Allied Expeditionary Force. What with programmes for Cecil Madden's Unit, the BBC Variety Department and "ENSA", there were occasions when Stephen Williams was producing an average of twelve-and-a-half "live" programmes per week.

At the end of 1945 it was arranged that Stephen Williams should return to Luxemburg (this time with the full approval and co-operation of the BBC) to implement a plan for "after the war" which had been agreed between His Majesty's Government and the Luxemburg Government in Exile.

21 1946/8 Luxemburg had been greatly changed by the War. Not so much physically, for the Grand Duchy's 999 square miles were still very attractive despite having been fought over and badly scarred in the North and in the East. The people were so different, like decent

straightforward country people who had 'grown up' in bad company from a big town. Of course they had done exactly that, - occupied for years by the Germans -- then liberated and 'occupied' for months by the Americans. Most of them now spoke and all understood English but their attitude to each other and to outsiders was so different. Some had certainly learned that it pays on occasions to 'shop' one's neighbour. Others presumably from contact with black marketeers, enemy or allied, had become commercially minded almost grasping and seemed to have a 'what's in it for me' attitude. Of course, there had been changes everywhere in the world - the British Government had changed soon after the victory in Europe and the "after the war" plan of the Churchill administration seemed to be of only luke warm interest to Mr Attlee and his socialists. Gone was the Luxemburg-born British Consul and instead a fully accredited British Minister Colonel Nigel Watson. There was even a British Military Mission. The radio station had escaped destruction as the Germans fled, by the heroic intervention of the pre-war Chief Engineer Mattias Felten - the aerial system had been re-orientated to suit the German Propaganda Ministry and a battery of magnetophones - those magnetic tape recorders which (although unknown outside Germany until after the war) have completely revolutionised communications everywhere - were intact and in perfect working order.

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Stephen Williams got the station "on the air" with an English language programme (of sorts) at the beginning of January 1946. He was soon joined by John de Denghy, who had worked with the American Occupational Radio and later by Sergeant Geoffrey Everitt from the British Military Mission. Soon letters began to arrive welcoming the station back and with the aid of every source in Luxemburg of any contribution which might appeal to English listeners, with the help of an English trumpet player, Tommy Dallimore, whom fate must have directed to the Grand Duchy and with as much anglo-oriented ingenuity as everyone could muster, the broadcasts in English carried on, pending something final from the new British Government. There was no actual prohibition of Commercial Broadcasting, but the Exchange Control Regulations made it impossible for a British advertiser to buy and pay for airtime. The BBC was most helpful with contributions of material by land line until in 1947 the Lord President of the Council (Mr Herbert Morrison) sent representatives to Luxemburg who, ignoring the advice of the British Minister and of Stephen Williams (both men on the spot), ran into problems which both had foreseen and gave up. A few days later, the

Lord President announced to the House of Commons that a plan of the previous Administration regarding Radio Luxemburg had misfired and that there was no future for the station but to revert to its previous activities. An absolute impossibility since no British funds could be transferred to Luxemburg. The BBC's friendly and helpful co-operation ceased. Broadcasting in the English language, though, could carry on and time could be 'sold' to British clients, but only by a Luxemburg company floated and operating in England. The Luxemburg franc was a 'gold' currency - if therefore a Luxemburg company with legitimate access to 'gold' used some of that gold to capitalise a company in England, that Luxemburg company registered in the UK could transfer a reasonable amount of earnings which its gold capital had achieved in England. All very complicated but this, in fact, was what was done and indeed, enabled Radio Luxemburg to carry on its English transmissions until the disappearance of the Exchange Control Regulations, after which continuance has been relatively uncomplicated.

22 1948/75 Stephen Williams never found it difficult to work with foreigners on an equal footing but his familiarity with them had made him determined never to work for them. With 'hat in hand' therefore in mid 1948 the address he gave to his taxi driver in London was "Broadcasting House, please". Thanks mainly to Michael Standing and
23 Cecil Madden he was taken in again to the Variety Department first of all, then, entirely due to Cecil Madden, for a brief spell in Television, where alas, he found himself rather bitterly resented by two important
24 lady executives of that service and somewhat weakly supported by the Controller of Programmes. Through the goodwill of Kenneth Adam, Seymour
25 de Lotbiniere, Charles MaxMuller and Frank Anderson he returned to sound radio with the Outside Broadcast Department, thoroughly enjoying himself with a very varied selection of interesting OB's ranging from general interest; musical; moderately dramatic; biographical; educational; pop music; contests; variety shows; people to people programmes like "Down your Way", "Wandering Minstrel" and "Have a Go"; amateur talent competitions; instructional industrial features (e.g. coal mining etc) and almost every form of 'actuality' which could be interpreted into a radio broadcast. Some were one night stands others were serial, some went on and on. The direction of "Have a Go" (Wilfred Pickles) for example continued for 16 years! Fortunately diluted with many other assignments!
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Finally, Rooney Pelletier asked Stephen Williams to join him in what Rooney described as a pleasant sounding pasture for a couple of elderly horses in other words "BBC Radio ~~Enterprises~~". It was a very pleasant pasture and successful too, even to the extent of achieving a "Golden Disc" for the double album recording "Fifty Years of BBC Broadcasting" to celebrate the Corporation's Golden Jubilee in 1972. Stephen Williams produced it, in association with Alan Burgess who directed the week long Celebratory Broadcast.

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Charles Curran, Director General received the Golden Disc from the President of the Phonographic Industry and in thanking them and noting that one of the qualifications on which congratulations had been offered was that £250,000 worth of sales had been achieved, the Director General remarked that a quarter of a million pounds sale would be impressive if their principal business was selling gramophone records, but with a budget of £67 million for broadcasting it was not a figure about which he could get over excited!

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Rooney Pelletier retired through ill health in the 1970s and the "pasture" became less pleasant, to Stephen Williams, at any rate, and when one of Rooney Pelletier's successors (as General Manager BBC Radio Enterprises) - Peter Dimmock - began murmuring in 1975 about "dead man's shoes" and felt he should now retire to make room for new blood, Stephen Williams had no option but to comply with great regret at the conclusion of his "Wireless" associations, but little sorrow at closing behind him the gate of the Radio Enterprises "pasture" where the grass was no longer much to his taste.

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