

Droitwich Transmitting Station

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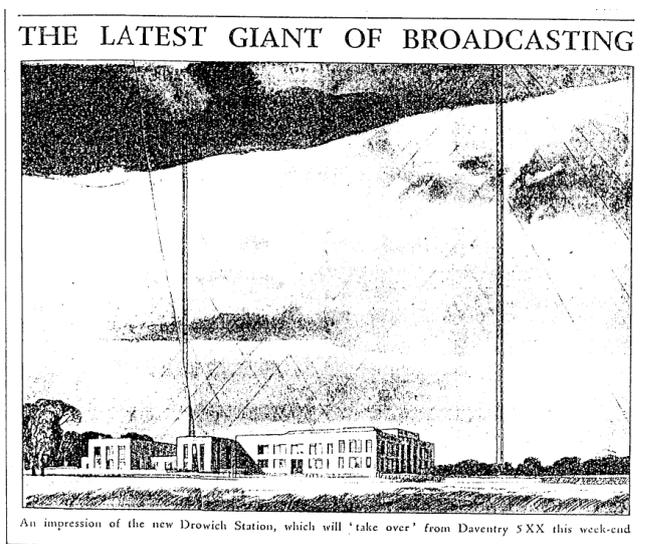
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The tall masts of the Droitwich transmitting station (actually located in Wychbold) are visible from nearly everywhere in Wychbold, Upton Warren and Stoke Prior. At night the red aircraft warning lights can be seen from a long distance. The masts are steel lattice supported by steel guy ropes. The two tallest are 700 feet high and there are also two shorter masts 300 foot high.

The taller masts are the BBC's most powerful long wave transmitters broadcasting Radio 4 longwave on 198 kilohertz, with a power of 500 kilowatts and together with two Scottish long wave transmitters form a network broadcasting at this frequency. The carrier frequency is controlled by a rubidium atomic frequency standard in the transmitter building, enabling the transmission to be used as an off-air frequency standard. The Radio 4 LW signal also carries radio data encoded using phase modulation, giving a time-of-day signal, and radio teleswitch control signals for electric supply systems. The long wave signal can be heard clearly in most of the Republic Of Ireland, particularly along eastern and southern counties and also in much of Western Europe, including Italy and Germany.

The two shorter masts are used for transmitting Radio 5 programmes on AM medium-wave on 693 kilohertz, 1053 kilohertz and 1215 kilohertz. providing coverage for most of the English Midlands and Wales with a very strong signal (150 kW).

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) originally had low power transmitters in most cities. The low power stations were then replaced by new studio centres and high-power transmitters serving the seven regions of the British Isles.



The Droitwich station was one of these new transmitting stations. Building of the transmitter building and masts at Wychbold began in 1933 and was completed in 1934 when transmission of long wave began. The next year transmission on medium wave also commenced.

At first the station generated its own power with 4 large diesel generators but 4 years later it was connected to the public electricity supply.

During the war there were many changes to the operation of the Droitwich station. The station and masts were patrolled by military police. Some changes were made to prevent enemy bombers using transmissions from the station to locate their targets and numerous services to be heard in occupied Europe were introduced. The transmitter was used to send coded messages, read during normal programme broadcasts, to the French resistance.

In the years after the war various technical changes and improvements were made. Additional masts were erected, more efficient transmitters were installed and the numbers of staff required to operate the station was reduced. Today the station continues to be used to transmit on 198 metres but its use may change in the future.