

For the love of Radio 4

In our parents' house, in the fifties and sixties of the last century, we had the possibility to listen to the radio by a normal radio receiver as well versus wire broadcasting. The later one was in the barbershop owned by my parents and which was located next to the living room. On the wire radio you could choose from four different programs and under button number four for many hours a week the BBC Home Service, which became Radio 4 in 1967, could be heard. I loved to listen to it, whenever I could. Therefore it was a very surprising present that my wife Jana bought me recently a book from which I didn't hear before.



'For the love of Radio 4, an unofficial companion', written by Caroline Hodgson and Published by Summerdale in Chichester recently, brings

you a lot of facts, figures, program schedules, program information, timeline of the Home Service, information how long programmes are already on the radio - from which many are for several decades. I read this book in one day. I couldn't give myself a rest to do other things.

I think it's a book to be on the table from everyone who loves informative as well as entertaining radio. I would love to mention two special things I noted while reading. The author Caroline Hodgson doesn't forget to mention the influence from Radio Caroline on the BBC as she wrote: 'When Radio 4 was launched in 1967, under the auspices of Managing Director Frank Gillard, it was alongside Radio 1, 2, and 3. Radio 1 was the hip and groovy new kid on the block, while Radio 2 took over from the Light Programme. Radio 4 occupied the Home Service's frequencies and, in 1970, Radio 3 incorporated the Third Programme. The whole shake-up of BBC Radio was, in part, a response to the threat of Pirate Radio stations such as Radio Caroline, which has started broadcasting from a ship off the Essex coast in 1964. In particular, the introduction of Radio 1 symbolised the BBC's largely reluctant acknowledgement that the craze for popular music wasn't just a flash in the pan, but was here to stay.'

Another remarkable item was 'women on the radio'. It was not done that women would present a program on the radio. I always thought they brought a warm feeling through the microphone. History tells something else. The first female voice to be heard on the BBC was that of Sheila Borrett on the Home Service in 1933. Of course people complained as well as the written press. In *Radio Times*: 'panic among the horsehair armchairs, retired colonels muttering darkly over their muffins. In the event it was not the colonels muttering darkly over their muffins.' It seemed that mostly women complained that there was a female announcer and within three months it was decided that there had to come an end to this change in broadcasting. Anyway, 'For the love of Radio 4. An unofficial Companion', is a must for everyone who has love for radio!

