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## Television Visits the Channel Islands

LAST autumn the BBC's West Region saw its fourth transmitter coming into operation, when the success of the experimental transmissions from Les Platons in Jersey added the Channel Island viewers to the audience already served from Wenvoe, Hessary Tor, and Rowridge. To make this possible, the signal from the Hessary Tor mast on Dartmoor had to be received at Torteval in Guernsey and relayed from there to Jersey for rebroadcasting from the new transmitter at Les Platons. There could in fact be no television in the Channel Islands until Hessary Tor was pushing out a strong enough signal, and those first reports of good reception were a great encouragement: an encouragement, but also a challenge. If we could get a television picture into the islands, might we not also get one out? Could Jersey send a vision signal back to the mainland in the way we had become accustomed to in sound broadcasting? As we settled down to our winter's work, that question became one of the steady topics of conversation in Broadcasting House, Bristol.

Our chief hope was that the Les Platons transmitter, though intended only for local re-broadcasting within the Channel Islands, might be able to send a signal to some point on the South Coast strong enough to be relayed. However, the engineering reports were discouraging and another way had to be found. The next possibility was a link across the much shorter sea-journey to the French coast, to somewhere in the neighbourhood of Cherbourg. Could the French help us to get from there to Paris, and thence by the Eurovision circuit to London? It seemed unlikely, but nevertheless worth trying: we began discussions with the French Television Service, only to learn that they had no vision-cable connecting north-western France with Paris.

A single possibility remained. The French were proposing to send an outside-broadcasts unit to Deauville during part of July—their furthest point westward. The distance from

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DESMOND HAWKINS, the Head of West Regional Programmes, writes about the forthcoming visits by the Region's television outside-broadcast unit to the islands of Herm (Monday), Guernsey (Saturday), and across to Sark next week  
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'Saturday-Night Out' will be spent at St. Peter Port, Guernsey (above), while earlier in the week the cameras will be set up on the island of Herm (left)

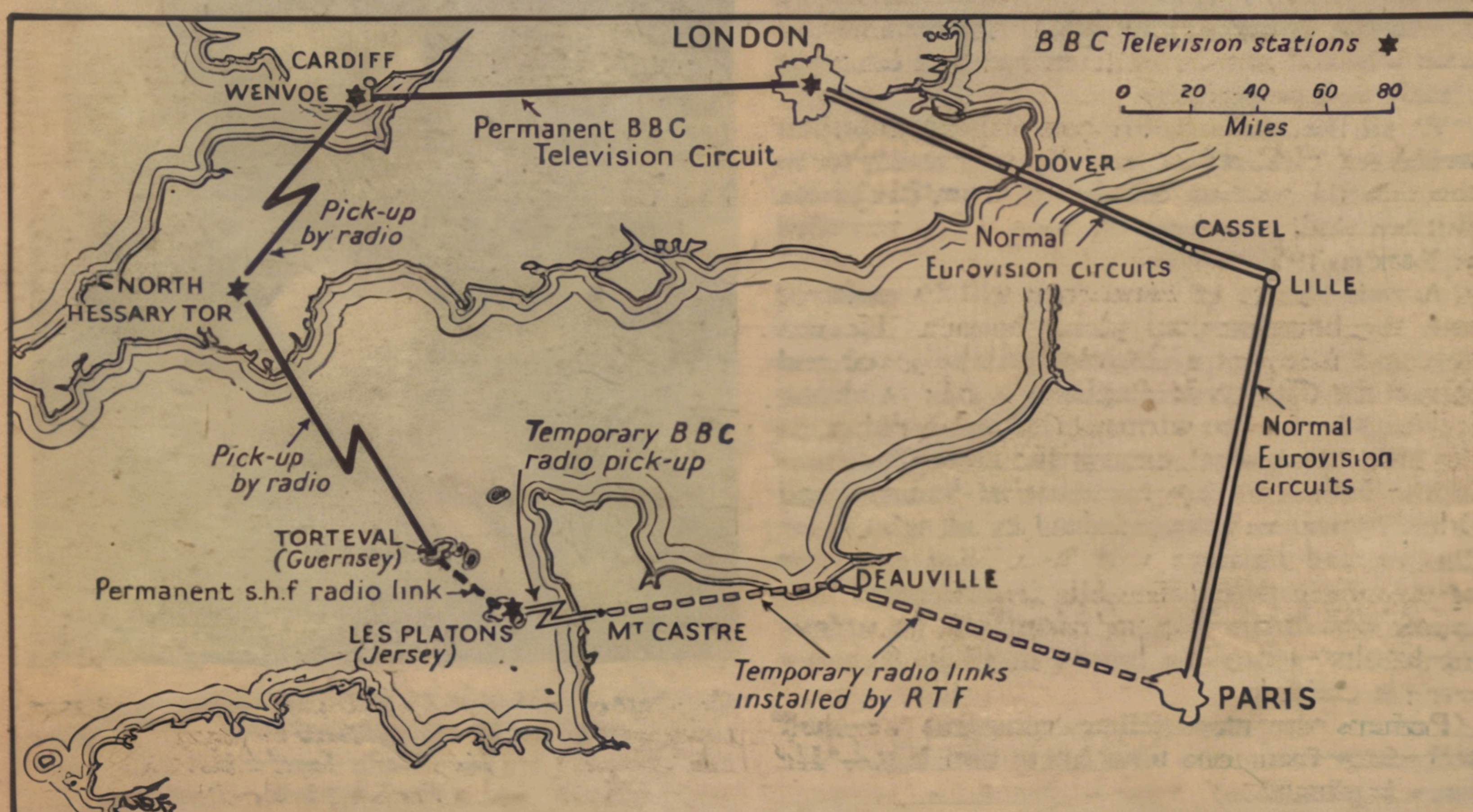
Cherbourg to Deauville could be bridged temporarily by a series of radio links. And in that tentative and short-lived way we could span the gap between Les Platons and Lime Grove—for just so long as the French were in Deauville and the links held. It was technically possible, anyway; but would the French be willing to help us on such a lavish scale? I could only hope that they too would want to see the programmes we hoped to send out from the Channel Islands and that they would respond as we had done to the challenge of a pioneering expedition. When I went to Paris to discuss our plan with Jean d'Arcy, the programme chief of Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française, my misgivings were quickly dispelled: he promised us the technical

aid we needed and he asked us to make suitable programmes available to French viewers.

Engineering tests began at once to establish a reception-point on the Cherbourg peninsula where French engineers using BBC equipment can receive the Les Platons signal, and on Sunday July 8 an advance party of nine of West Region's engineers (out of the 25 involved) embarked with ten tons of equipment in the *Warrior Geraint*, a motor launch which will be the unit's floating base during the next three weeks. *Warrior Geraint* will visit three islands, installing cameras for five programmes (two of them for France) with a local network of some thirteen radio links. She will find only very modest harbour installations in the smaller islands but we believe we can unload enough equipment for our purposes.

If all goes well, what shall we see? Not the famous Battle of Flowers at St. Helier unfortunately because this great spectacle does not coincide with the period when our visit is possible.

This year, therefore, we have concentrated on the bailiwick of Guernsey, in which Herm and Sark are included. Guernsey is a place of happy memories to hosts of holidaymakers and our cameras will be sited in the familiar setting of St. Peter Port harbour. When we visit Sark next week we shall meet the 'queen' of that little kingdom, who still retains her ancient title of 'La Dame'; and on Herm we shall find one of the smallest island populations in the United Kingdom—less than fifty souls enjoying the amenities of a hotel, a farm, a pub, and some cottages in a setting of breathtaking loveliness.



In order to bring this week's pictures from the Channel Islands to television screens in Britain, the signals have to follow the elaborate route shown on the accompanying map. From Herm and Sark the vision signal is received at Torteval over a temporary radio link, passes along the coast of France, and joins the Eurovision circuit in Paris. From there it is carried to London, and relayed to the various BBC transmitters. The accompanying sound goes by separate G.P.O. circuits

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